



A History of
Salem Ev. Lutheran Church
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
1847-2022

This booklet relating Salem's 175 years of history was compiled from various sources, primarily the 150th anniversary booklet written by Pastor Winfred Nommensen shortly before his death. Mr. Steve Miller, Salem's archivist, provided most of the information for the opening chapter and was also very helpful with the gathering of photos. It is the prayer of the anniversary committee that this history booklet and the anniversary celebration will lead God's people to give thanks to him for his grace to this congregation throughout the years, as well as inspire current and future members to receive and support the proclamation of Christ's peace in this place.

*Professor Joel Otto
Epiphany of Our Lord, 2023*



“And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8). Because it was founded on Christmas Day in 1847, this congregation eventually took the name “Salem,” which is the Hebrew word for “peace,” from the angels’ song to the shepherds (Luke 2:14). From its humble beginnings 175 years ago to its present form today in 2023, God has abundantly blessed Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church on North 107th Street in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Through divine providence, through divine guidance, and through the divine Word and sacraments, God has showered his grace on Salem. He has made Salem a beacon of Christ’s peace to the people of this church family and in this community. Salem is still proclaiming Christ’s peace 175 years after its founding.

Through the means of grace, God has touched the lives and the eternities of thousands of souls. One hundred seventy-five years of proclaiming Christ’s peace at Salem have seen 3,424 baptisms, 3,155 confirmations, 1,033 Christian marriages, and 1,187 Christian burials.

Abounding in grace and still proclaiming Christ’s peace after 175 years—what an abundant blessing!

I. The Founders

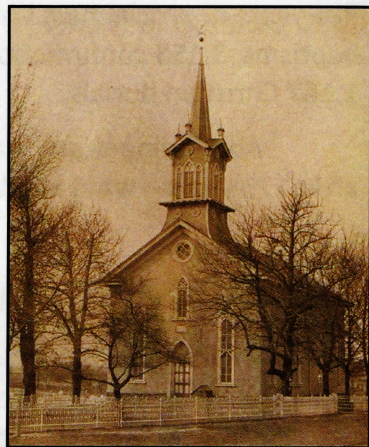
Unlike most Lutheran churches in the Midwest whose founders were immigrants straight from one of the many German states, Salem Lutheran Church was, for the most part, founded by second and third generation Americans, specifically from Pennsylvania. While Salem was founded on Christmas Day in 1847, we need to go back over two hundred years before the founding to begin our history.

The Thirty Years’ War (1618-48) was the greatest and final religious war between the Roman Catholic nations and Protestant nations of northern Europe. Although the war was

imbued with political and nationalist factors, it also had the intention of converting all Protestants back to Roman Catholicism. The war ended with a Protestant victory which allowed Lutheranism and Calvinism to exist legally. However, the area that is now Germany and Austria, large swaths of which were populated by Lutherans, was so devastated by the years of war that it took over a century to rebuild and repopulate the affected lands.

The end of the war also did not end continued attacks against Protestants in religiously disputed areas, especially the Platz (Palatinate) region of Germany along the Rhine River. This prompted many people from that area to leave the Old World and look for both religious freedom and better economic opportunities in the New World—America. Many German immigrants arrived in eastern Pennsylvania in the late 1600s and early 1700s during the colonial period.

In about 1730, one of the congregations that was founded by these immigrants was established as Indianfield Lutheran Church (today it is an ELCA church called Little Zion Lutheran Church) in Telford, Franconia Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, about twenty-five miles north of Philadelphia. The congregation was part of a Lutheran Reformed parish in that area (a “Union” church). In 1748, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg established the first Lutheran synod in America—the Pennsylvania Ministerium. He is known as the patriarch of the Lutheran church in America. He personally visited Indianfield to conduct services in the early years.



Little Zion Lutheran Church

In the late 1830s and early 1840s, a group of about forty

families, including several congregation leaders, left Indianfield Lutheran Church and headed west in covered wagons for Granville Township, Milwaukee County, in the territory of Wisconsin. At that time, Wisconsin was considered the frontier of the United States (the Far West). Granville Township was bounded by present-day County Road on the north, 124th Street on the west, Hampton Avenue on the south, and 27th Street on the east. The group sent several scouts in the late 1830s to scout out the land of Granville Township. One of those scouts was Abraham Leister, the father of Isaac Leister. Abraham is recorded as the first person buried in West Granville Cemetery in 1845, although his marker is long gone.

The most prominent name of these Pennsylvania Germans from Indianfield was Samuel Wambold who was born in nearby Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He was the leader of this exodus from Pennsylvania which finally settled in Granville and Menomonee Falls. He is mentioned several times as the founder of Salem. He helped organize the congregation, was elected as one of the first elders, and was one of the “master builders” who constructed the first church of logs and dedicated it on June 17, 1849. Wambold owned not only farmland but he also built a wood mill in the 1840s on the Menomonee River just north of Mill Road. Undoubtedly, he used his wood mill to process the logs used in the construction of Salem’s first church building.

Shortly after the log church was built, Samuel died of cholera. A short note in Salem’s corporate records reads:

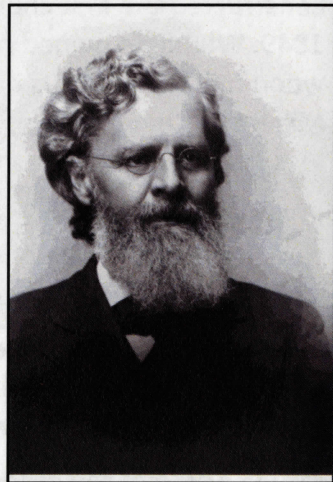
Samuel Wambold—the founder of our church passed away on July 12th, 1849, after he finished almost everything that he wanted to accomplish. God bless his ashes. He was born in Pennsylvania and immigrated to Wisconsin.

Some of the other founders of Salem are listed as Fredrich Barndt, Aaron Leister, Peter Herzwurm, and Christopher Wagner.

II. Beginning in Grace (1847-1868)

The 175 years of fellowship based on the love of God in Christ Jesus had its beginnings here on a day which more than any other reminds us of that love, Christmas Day, in 1847. Salem was originally named the German Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed Church of Granville Township. The organization had been promoted by laymen, who assumed a prominent role not only in the birth of the congregation, but also in its growth and development through the years. Salem began with a nucleus of twenty families. The fellowship established by God's grace at Salem has been strengthened through the years by special gifts from God to his church. God has given pastors and teachers "to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph 4:12). He has given different gifts and abilities to each of those called workers, gifts which were to be used faithfully in his service. Of the workers together with the Lord here at Salem it can certainly be said that some have planted, others have watered, but God has made it grow (1 Cor 3:6).

The group of twenty German families that made up this congregation in 1847, both Reformed and Lutheran in theology, held services without the benefit of a church building or pastor for seven months. On July 23, 1848, Pastor H. L. Dulitz was chosen to serve them for a period of six months. In January 1849, when Pastor Dulitz's term was up, the still churchless congregation called Pastor Paul Meiss. He was an unordained, unlicensed cobbler/minister who leaned toward Reformed theology rather than toward the Lutheran branch of the church from which the Salem Evangelical Lutheran



Pastor H. L. Dulitz

Church of today descended. Due to problems with his doctrine and practice at Salem, Pastor Meiss was relieved of his duties in December of 1849.

Prior to Pastor Meiss' dismissal, the congregation built its first worship facility—a church made of logs at a total cost of \$108.78. That building was located somewhere behind the former teacherage, which was once across 107th Street from the Landmark Church. On June 17, 1849, the new church was dedicated. Attending the dedication services were Pastors Muehlhaeuser, Weinmann, and Meiss, whose meeting at Salem almost one year later would mark the beginning of the Wisconsin Synod's history.

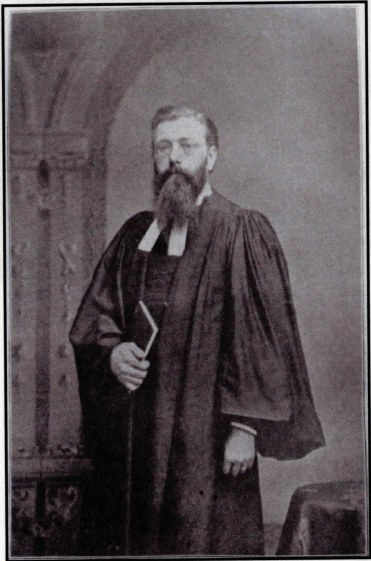
On December 16, 1849, Pastor W. Wrede was called to replace Pastor Meiss. Wrede taught sound Lutheran doctrine from the pulpit and did much to bring an end of the Lutheran-Reformed conflict in the congregation, at least for the Lutherans. Wrede had attended a meeting at Grace Lutheran Church in what is now downtown Milwaukee on December 8, 1849, with Pastors Muehlhaeuser, Weinmann, and Meiss. At that time, the four decided that if their efforts were to be rewarded with the firm establishment of Lutheranism in the area, they would have to join forces. At this meeting they decided to form what eventually became the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The first meeting of this new synod was held at Salem on May 26, 1850. For this reason, Salem is often called "the Birthplace of the Wisconsin Synod" (a special historical marker in front of the Landmark Church notes this event). Pastors Muehlhaeuser, Weinmann, Wrede, Meiss, and a newcomer,



Pastor Pleuss, attended that first meeting. Together they represented eighteen congregations and signed the constitution of "Die Erste Deutsch Evangelish-Lutherische Synode von Wisconsin." A salesman with the American Tract Society was also introduced, and, after some discussion, was turned over to Pastor Wrede for instruction to prepare him for the holy ministry.

Pastor Wrede remained at Salem until 1853 when he took a call to Racine. In 1855, he returned to Germany. On July 3, 1853, Pastor W. Buehren was called. He served until November of 1860. During Buehren's tenure, the Reformed branch of Salem formed the West Granville Presbyterian Church which is still located at the southwest corner of 107th Street and Fond du Lac Avenue. The Lutheran group was in the minority and Pastor Buehren favored the Reformed group. For about three years, Salem left the Wisconsin Synod. But by 1860, with the departure of Pastor Buehren, the situation was resolved and Salem petitioned for reinstatement in the Wisconsin Synod. When this



Pastor J. Henry Sieker

was granted, it brought to a conclusion the unionistic arrangement which had begun ten years earlier. The next pastor, Pastor Rausch, preached his first sermon on November 25, 1860. Pastor Rausch served Salem for only ten months.

Salem's first fulltime resident pastor was Pastor J. Henry Sieker who arrived in September of 1861. Pastor Sieker was twenty-five years old and a recent graduate of Gettysburg Seminary, the seminary of the Pennsylvania Ministerium (he was the first pastor to come out of the Wisconsin Synod and the only pastor in Wisconsin Synod history to

graduate from Gettysburg). He came with a deeper concern for the Lutheran Confessions than previous pastors.

Pastor Sieker found a congregation which, under God's blessing and guidance, was ready for steady growth. Soon the congregation realized that its present structure would not suffice as a house of worship for their rapidly growing church, and thus decided to "build on a suitable site." The



1863 church with original steeple

quarter acre on which the log church stood was deemed unsuitable. When a member by the name of Jonas Barndt donated a parcel of land across the street, they decided to build a new church there. The Salem Church, now known as "The Salem Landmark Church," was built of yellow brick complete with a bell tower. The church was dedicated on October 25, 1863. The steeple was later trimmed down to its present form. The congregation purchased a bell for the tower twenty-five years later, in 1888, in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the new church building.

Four years after the dedication of the new church, Pastor Sieker accepted a call to Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. He later served as the president of the Minnesota Synod. In 1868, Salem called Pastor H. Hoffman to serve as pastor.

III. Continuing in Grace (1868-1946)

It was under Pastor Hoffman's guidance that the Christian day school was opened. The voters of the congregation approved the opening of a school in 1868. But it wasn't until 1872 that the school finally opened, and the earliest existing records of the school are from 1885. Pastor Hoffman served as the first teacher. Since he was also serving two other congregations, however, Julius Neils was called as the first teacher in 1873. The newly built church was already planned with a classroom in the dirt floor basement. The students initially went to school only during the summer months. In 1887, Mr. L. B. Hoffmann was called to serve as the new teacher and principal.



Pastor H. Hoffman

Salem is unique among early Wisconsin Synod congregations because it held services in English from a very early date. Because the early founders were from Pennsylvania, they arrived in Wisconsin with a working knowledge of English. Records indicate that English and German services were held on Sunday mornings at the time of the building of the 1863 building. However, not every pastor was fluent in English which sometimes caused some challenges.

Pastor Hoffman served Salem from 1868-1895. The next pastor to served Salem was Pastor C. F. Duecker. During his years of service, the congregation built a parsonage in 1896 at 6679 N. 107th Street at a total cost of \$1,400. The costs were kept down because



1896 parsonage

congregation members donated the labor. Pastor Duecker served Salem until 1900. When Teacher Hoffmann resigned in January of 1897, Mr. G. Bauer was called.

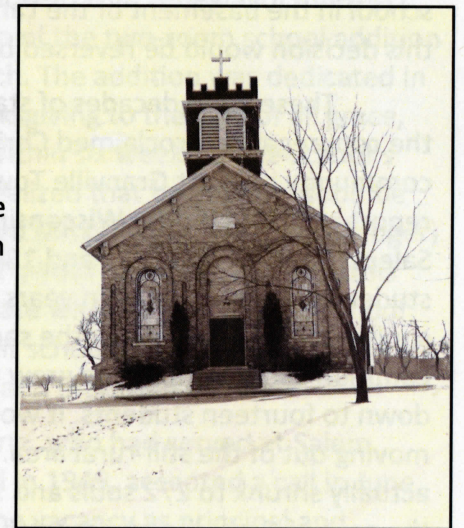
In 1900, the congregation extended a call to Pastor Walter Hoenecke. About eighteen months later, Teacher Bauer resigned, and Mr. John Prager was called to take his place.



Salem school, 1912

Christian secondary education came to the Milwaukee area when Lutheran High School was established in 1903. This is the predecessor to Wisconsin Lutheran High School. It is presumed that Salem was involved with supporting the high school since its founding.

In 1910, Pastor Hoenecke accepted a call to Bethel Lutheran Church in Milwaukee. Pastor P. Kneiske was called and served for ten years. On January 18, 1920, the congregation was stunned with the sad news of the death of their teacher, Mr. Prager. During the summer of 1920, Mr. C. Lemke succeeded Mr. Prager as teacher at Salem Lutheran School. Later that same year, Pastor Kneiske accepted a call to St. John's in nearby Lannon.



During Pastor Knieske's tenure, the Ladies Aid of Salem purchased a pipe organ in 1918. This is the organ that has been serving Salem for over 100 years. The organ had been sitting idle in a theater in Chicago. Prior to the purchase and installation of the pipe organ, worship was led by a foot-pumped reed organ which had been purchased in 1901.



At its annual meeting in January of 1921, the congregation extended a call to Pastor F. Gundlach who served at Salem until 1947. Under his leadership, Salem observed its diamond jubilee in 1922. The special anniversary project was the purchase and installation of stained glass windows at a cost of \$530. Three teachers served at Salem during this period of time: Mr. Lemke (1920-1936); Mr. John Meyer (1936-1938); and Mr. F. W. Schultz (1938-1942). In 1942, the controversial and difficult decision was made to close the school in the basement of the Landmark Church. As will be seen, this decision would be reversed before the end of the decade.

These were decades of stable membership at Salem as the congregation proclaimed Christ's peace to the mostly rural community of West Granville Township. The earliest statistical report available for the Wisconsin Synod is 1927. That year, Salem reported 296 souls and 186 communicants with thirty students in the school. Ten years later, in 1937, the number of souls remained essentially the same (291) while the communicant membership grew to 217 although the school was down to fourteen students. It would seem that families were moving out of the still-rural area. By 1947, the congregation had actually shrunk to 272 souls and 195 communicants. However, the area of Granville was soon to undergo profound changes as the suburban sprawl of Milwaukee made its way to the northwest corner of the county.

IV. Growing under Grace (1947-1977)

The seventh resident pastor—and twelfth overall—was Pastor Raymond L. Wiechmann, who served at Salem from 1947-1959. His service at Salem was marked by the 100th anniversary in 1947. In preparation for the centennial, the church was remodeled extensively, with the finishing of the basement in 1946. In thanksgiving for 100 years of God's grace, the congregation embarked on the rebuilding and updating of their pipe organ. That project was finished in 1948 at a cost of \$3,500.



Pastor Ray Wiechmann

The renewal of efforts toward nurturing young souls with a program of Christian education came in 1947 when the children of Salem were enrolled at St. James Lutheran School on 60th and Lloyd Streets in Milwaukee. That renewal of interest ultimately led to the dedication of the two-room school addition built onto the rear of the church. The addition was dedicated in September of 1949. With thanksgiving to the God of all grace, Salem school was reopened. Within six weeks of the school's reopening, the congregation realized that they would soon be needing more space. They called Miss Myrtle Schaezel (Gauger) to teach half of the school's forty-four students. It was at this time that they began to negotiate with the Maple Tree School District for the purchase of their school building and the triangulate seven-acre plot of land that it sat on.

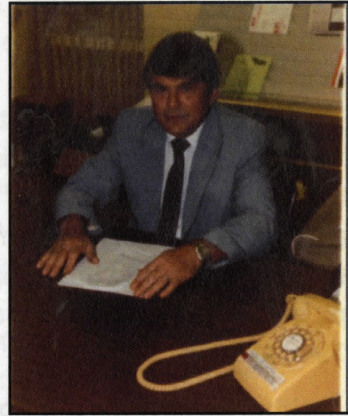
Principal Melvin Schwartz, who had served at Salem when the school was reopened in 1949, accepted a call in June of 1951. Mr. Otto Blase filled the vacancy as principal and teacher until January of 1952 when R. Roloff was called. R. Roloff was the first teacher to live in the new teacherage at 6671 North 107th Street which was completed with the congregation's

dedicated labor in July of 1952 at a cost of \$9,500.

By August of 1953, because of its growing enrollment, Salem added a third teacher to its school, Miss Glennis Luhmann. Due to an increase in numbers at worship services, Salem began holding two services each Sunday.

Mr. Roloff resigned in February of 1954. The congregation called Mr. Gerald Berger to replace him. Shortly after Mr. Berger began serving at Salem, the congregation voted to purchase the Maple Tree School building for \$78,000. The building was dedicated for the purpose of Christian education in December of 1955, and soon after classes were held in it. By 1957, the congregation had more than doubled in size since the 100th anniversary celebration in 1947: 685 souls (up from 272) and 418 communicants (up from 195) with a school enrollment of 142 students. Young families were moving into the growing area of West Granville Township.

In 1959, Pastor Wiechmann accepted a call. In 1957, Pastor Wiechmann had been elected to serve as chairman of the Southeastern Wisconsin District Mission Board. In 1963, he was called to be the first full-time administrator of the Board for Home Missions. In 1967, he accepted a call to Bay Pines Lutheran Church in Seminole, Florida, and in 1973 was elected as



Principal Gerald Berger



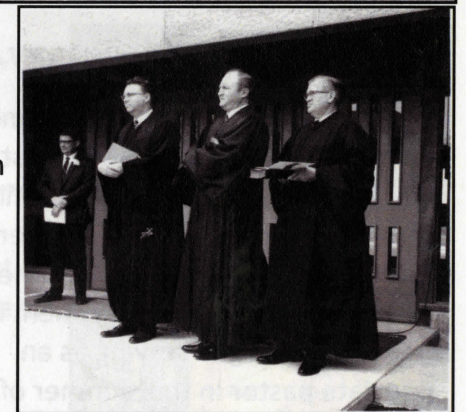
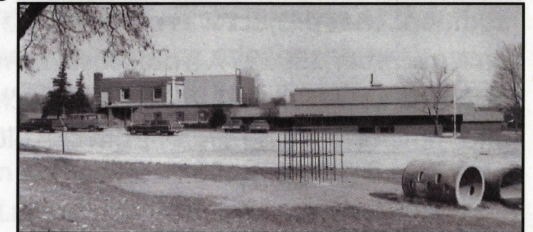
Pastor Winfred Nommensen

the first district president of the South Atlantic District.

The congregation called Pastor Winfred Nommensen, who began his duties as pastor at Salem in October 1959. The Lord of the church graciously granted steady growth to Salem's fellowship. Starting in January of 1967, Salem's ministry was supported by an assisting preacher, Pastor Robert J. Voss, who served as president of Milwaukee Lutheran Teachers' College and then as the administrator for the synod's Board for Worker Training.

Ten years after Pastor Nommensen had arrived at Salem, and many new students later, the congregation added a gymnasium, kitchen, and two new classrooms to the school. The cost of the addition came to \$192,000. Dedication services for the new addition took place on April 20, 1969.

Shortly after the dedication, the congregation, at the encouragement of the District Mission Board, began thinking about branching out in a unique way. With all of the growth on the far northwest corner of Milwaukee County, there was opportunity for mission work. On December 5, 1971, Salem dedicated its daughter congregation, Risen Savior Evangelical Lutheran



Dedication of school addition

Church, located on the corner of 95th Street and Brown Deer Road. The initial costs of the mission were borne almost entirely by Salem.

In 1972, when the congregation was 125 years old, Salem was conducting three services each Sunday in its church building. The congregation had again basically doubled in fifteen years: 1,293 souls (up from 685 in 1957) and 912 communicants (418 in 1957). Also, the school had added nearly fifty students in the previous fifteen years. The congregation recognized the need for a larger worship space and began planning a new sanctuary, as well as a new classroom addition. That project was completed and ultimately dedicated on November 13, 1977. Total costs came to \$520,000. This included new stained glass windows, chancel furnishings, pews, and moving the pipe organ from the old church into the balcony of the new sanctuary.

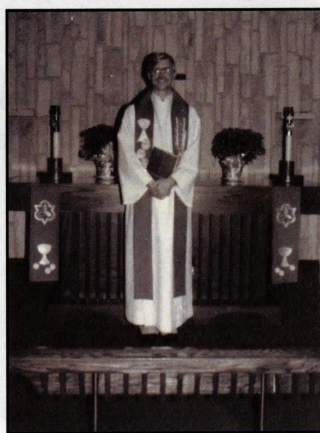


Groundbreaking for the new sanctuary

V. Abounding in Grace (1977-1997)

Increasing membership and additional responsibilities for Pastor Nommensen finally led to the calling of a second pastor. Pastor David Rosenow, a 1980 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, was assigned to Salem for his first call and began serving as an associate pastor in the summer of 1980.

By 1984, the school's enrollment was up to 250 students with eleven



Pastor David Rosenow

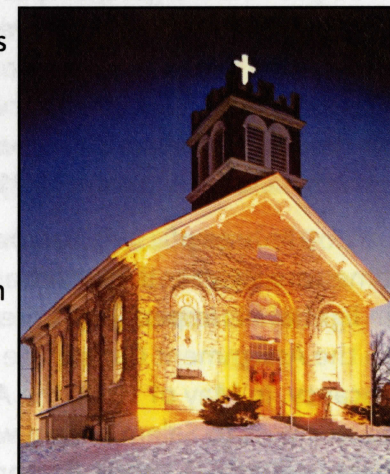
teachers as called servants of the congregation. Due to health reasons, Mr. Berger resigned his call as principal and teacher in 1985. Mr. Gerald Lanphear was called to replace him as principal. The congregation also called Mr. Steven Carlovsky to serve as teacher and assistant principal. He began his service at Salem for the 1987-88 school year.



When the new sanctuary was constructed in 1977, there were questions about the future of the old sanctuary and school building. Principal Gerald Lanphear

Eventually, it was declared a historical landmark. In 1981, the WELS Historical Institute was established. Within a few years, the Salem Landmark Church received a new purpose as the WELS Museum. Salem entered a working relationship with the WELS Historical Institute where the Institute has maintained and refurbished the Salem Landmark Church with the goal of restoring it to its condition in the late 1880s. In 2013, the 150th anniversary of the Salem Landmark Church was celebrated. A new historical marker was dedicated and the cornerstone was opened.

In 1983, Pastor Nommensen was elected to serve as the District President of the Southeastern Wisconsin District of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. In 1988, WELS began providing seminary graduate assistants to serve in the congregations where district



presidents were the pastor. In the initial years, these pastors would serve the congregation of the district president for two years and then be reassigned to a different call. In 1988, Pastor Martin Spriggs was assigned to serve as graduate assistant at Salem. 1988 also marked the high-water mark for Salem's membership: 1,627 souls and 1,145 communicants. The school reached its peak of 299 students a year later. The proclamation of Christ's peace was producing fruit by God's gracious hand. During 1988, there were thirty-nine child baptisms and four adult baptisms, twenty-one teen confirmations and forty-three adults became members by confirmation or profession of faith.

In October of 1989, Pastor Rosenow accepted a call to Hutchinson, Minnesota. In January of 1990, Pastor Daniel Simons accepted the call to serve at Salem, arriving just prior to the Lenten season. In May of 1990, Pastor Spriggs was reassigned to Summerville, South Carolina. At the same time, Pastor Mark Voss was assigned to serve Salem as the second two-year graduate assistant.



Pastor Mark Voss

In July of 1990, Salem began calling for a third full-time pastor. After several calls were declined, the congregation went to the synod's Assignment Committee with a request for a pastor. Pastor Snowden Sims was assigned after he had served for two years as a tutor at Northwestern Preparatory School in Watertown. He began serving in the summer of 1991.

In June of 1992, Pastor Nommensen retired from full-time service after thirty-three years of faithful ministry at Salem. In light of his impending retirement, the congregation had gone to the Assignment Committee once again to fill the approaching vacancy. In May of 1992, the Assignment Committee reassigned Pastor Voss to Salem. Salem was now served by three full-time pastors: Pastor Simons, Pastor Sims, and Pastor Voss. Pastor

Nommensen continued to serve the congregation as a part-time visitation pastor.

In the early autumn of 1993, Pastor Sims accepted a call to serve as a professor at Northwestern Preparatory School. The congregation decided not to call to replace him.

In the late spring of 1996, the congregation granted a request from Mr. Lanphear that he be relieved of his duties as principal in order to teach full-time here at Salem. Mr. Carlovsky received and accepted the call to serve as Salem's next principal. He began serving the school as principal for the 1996-97 school year. In May of 1996, Mr. Daniel Grunewald was assigned to teach at Salem and to serve as assistant principal and athletic director. Mr. Grunewald filled the vacancy left when Mr. Bruce Bintz accepted a call to teach at Wisconsin Lutheran High School.



Principal Steve Carlovsky

With two pastors, one living in the 100-year-old parsonage and the other living in the teacherage, it was decided that new housing was needed for the pastors. A new subdivision was going up on Green Tree Road to the west of 107th Street. In 1996, Salem purchased the model home for that subdivision. Several years later, another home was purchased. Those two homes continue serving as parsonages for the Salem pastors.

In 1997, the congregation celebrated 150 years of God's abounding grace. At that time, Salem's membership stood at 1,235 souls and 943 communicants with 156 students in the school.

VI. Still Proclaiming Christ's Peace (1997-2022)

Beginning in the early 1990s, many families with children began moving outside of Milwaukee County to Waukesha, Washington, and Ozaukee Counties. In addition, the Baby Boomer generation was primarily done having children by the mid-1990s. This showed up in a decrease in both the membership of Salem since the late 1980s as well as the school enrollment. However, despite these numerical decreases, Salem has still been proclaiming Christ's peace over the last quarter century. New opportunities and new audiences for the gospel have surfaced and God's people at Salem have continued to be a beacon of Christ's peace.

After about ten years of Pastor Simons and Pastor Voss working together, Salem underwent a change in pastoral leadership when Pastor Voss accepted a call to Lake Orion, Michigan, in 2003. After a vacancy of several months, Pastor Michael Bartsch, who had been serving as a missionary in Bulgaria, accepted the call to serve as Salem's associate pastor.

Pastors Simons and Bartsch served together for ten years until Pastor Simons accepted a call to Ascension Lutheran Church, a mission congregation in Macomb, Michigan, in the summer of 2013. At the end of 2013, Pastor Bartsch retired for health reasons. During their decade of service, while the membership of Salem declined to 727 souls and 603 communicants, the proclamation



of Christ's peace continued to produce fruit. Sixty-two adults were instructed in God's Word and joined Salem during their decade of service. It was also during this decade that Salem became a member of the Kettle Moraine Lutheran High School Federation. Salem continues to be a members of both the KML and WLHS federations.

Meanwhile, Salem Lutheran School itself was experiencing changes, challenges, and opportunities. Other WELS schools in Milwaukee were experiencing enrollment declines. In 2002, when Redemption Lutheran School closed, Salem entered an arrangement with Redemption. Mrs. Doris Koeller and Mr. Gary Heiman, who had been teachers at Redemption, joined Salem's faculty and some Redemption children began attending Salem. In 2006, when St. James Lutheran School closed, Mr. David Nelson was called to serve as principal at Salem and some students from St. James enrolled at Salem. Mr. Carlovsky continued to serve as a teacher.

In 2003, following a growing trend in WELS and recognizing a need in the community, Salem began a 4K preschool program with seven students and added a 3K program the following year. Mrs.



Chrystal Kesting, the wife of a seminary student, served as the first preschool teacher. In 2005, Mrs. Anna Bartsch was called to oversee the entire early childhood program and after-school care program that was also established. Because of enrollment decline, the 3K program was ended in 2019. Over the years, the preschool program has served to be a feeder into the rest of the school.

The congregation faced a crossroads with the school in 2011. The enrollment had declined to fifty-three students. Until this time, there had been resistance to entering the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. But in 2011, Salem recognized the opportunity entering the program might provide for the proclaiming Christ's peace to more children in the community. Immediately, the enrollment jumped to eighty-one students in 2012. Mr. Nelson had retired at the close of the 2010-11 school year, and Mr. Carlovsky was again called to serve as principal. He oversaw the first few years in the Choice Program until he retired in 2014. Mr. Nicholas Bush, who had been serving in Midland, Michigan, accepted the call to serve as Salem's principal in 2014.

Over the next several years, an additional faculty member was added every other year as the enrollment continued to increase. By 2017, the enrollment for preschool and elementary school stood at 161



New fellowship space

students and the school was fully staffed with one teacher per grade. The old Maple Tree part of the school building was showing its age. Additionally, there was a desire to upgrade fellowship, office, and bathroom spaces for the church. In 2020-21, during the COVID pandemic, a new school addition of six classrooms, expanded fellowship and office space, and new bathrooms were completed at cost of \$2.8 million.

Further changes, challenges, and opportunities were faced by Salem with the departure of Pastor Simons and the unexpected retirement of Pastor Bartsch. Pastor Ron Heins, a



Refurbished sanctuary

Antonio, Texas, accepted the call to be Salem's lead pastor and he arrived in August of 2014.

Pastors Soukup and Raasch brought new ideas and new energy to Salem's ministry. A refurbishment of the sanctuary occurred in 2015. The pews were refinished and repadded. New carpeting was installed in the aisles and vinyl tiles were installed under the pews to improve acoustics. The chancel was completely redone with the altar brought out into the chancel, the lectern converted to an ambo, and the baptismal font receiving a facelift. A new projector screen was installed. The communion rail was removed, and hardwood flooring was installed. New lighting and a new sound system completed the \$200,000+ project.

Salem tried new ideas for outreach to the community: monthly drive-through breakfast, turning the church picnic into a community block party, and hosting a basketball camp. They have helped give Salem an identity in the community and provided new avenues and audiences for proclaiming Christ's peace.

In the summer of 2018, Pastor Raasch accepted a call to Menasha, Wisconsin, where he had the opportunity to use his Spanish language abilities. Pastor Jeremy Wosje, who had been serving two congregations in South Dakota and was also a

classmate of Pastor Raasch, accepted the call to be associate pastor. He arrived toward the end of 2018. In the summer of 2019, Pastor Soukup accepted a call to a mission restart in Killeen, Texas. Over the next three years, Salem issued twenty-two calls for a lead pastor. Seminary



Pastors Meier and Wosje

Professors Joel Otto, David Bivens, and Aaron Christie, as well as Pastor Dan Sims, the director of WELS Christian Aid and Relief, whose wives were all serving on the Salem school faculty, provided preaching and teaching assistance during the three-year vacancy. Despite the lengthy vacancy, Salem navigated the COVID pandemic shutdown and completed the building project. Pastor Paul Meier, who had been serving in Neenah, Wisconsin, accepted the call in the spring of 2022 to serve as Salem's lead pastor. As of this writing, Salem has 584 souls, 492 communicants, with an enrollment of 167 students in the school.

As Salem celebrates 175 years of existence, it stands poised to continue being a beacon of Christ's peace to this community. A new organ project and a new playground for the school are in the planning stages. The recently completed building project demonstrates the investment Salem is making in the future. The church and school are staffed by faithful called workers. As has been the case throughout its history, Salem continues to be blessed with lay people interested in growing in God's Word and invested in the ministry of the congregation. By God's grace, Salem will still be proclaiming Christ's peace to the glory of God's name and the advancement of his kingdom in this community for generations to come.

VI. Appendix 1: Called Workers at Salem

Pastors

Rev. H. L. Dulitz (1848-49)
 Rev. Paul Meiss (1849)
 Rev. W. Wrede (1849-53)
 Rev. W. Buehren (1853-60)
 Rev. Rausch (1860-61)
 Rev. J. H. Sieker (1861-67)
 Rev. H. Hoffman (1867-95)
 Rev. C. F. Duecker (1895-1900)
 Rev. Walter Hoenecke (1900-1910)
 Rev. P. Knieske (1910-20)
 Rev. F. Gundlach (1921-47)
 Rev. Ray L. Wiechmann (1947-59)
 Rev. Winfred Nommensen (1959-92)
 Rev. David Rosenow (1980-90)
 Rev. Martin Spriggs (1988-90)
 Rev. Daniel Simons (1990-2013)
 Rev. Mark Voss (1990-2003)
 Rev. Snowden Sims (1991-93)
 Rev. Michael Bartsch (2004-13)
 Rev. John Raasch (2014-18)
 Rev. Timothy Soukup (2014-19)
 Rev. Jeremy Wosje (2018-present)
 Rev. Paul Meier (2022-present)

Principals

Mr. Julius Neils (1873-87?)
 Mr. L. B. Hoffmann (1887-97)
 Mr. G. Brauer (1897-1910)
 Mr. John Prager (1910-20)
 Mr. C. Lemke (1920-36)
 Mr. John Meyer (1936-38)
 Mr. F. W. Schultz (1938-42)
 Mr. Melvin Schwartz (1949-51)
 Mr. Otto Blase (1951-52)
 Mr. Earl Roloff (1952-54)
 Mr. Gerald Berger (1954-84)
 Mr. Gerald Lanphear (1985-96)
 Mr. Steve Carlovsky (1996-2006;
 2011-14)
 Mr. David Nelson (2006-11)
 Mr. Nicholas Bush (2014-23)



Teachers

(in alphabetical order)

Mrs. Hannah Arrowsmith	Mr. Gerald Lanphear
Miss Connie Bachmann	Mrs. Joan Lanphear
Mrs. Anna Bartsch	Miss Glenda Luhmann
Miss Jean Bassler	Mr. Kurt Maciejczak
Mrs. Amanda Berg	Mrs Sarah May
Mrs. Marie Berger	Mr. Collin Mayer
Mr. Bruce Bintz	Mrs. Susan Mayer
Mrs. Elisabeth Bishop	Mr. Matthew Miskowski
Mrs. Brandi Bivens	Mr. David Nelson
Mr. Zachary Bork	Mrs. Helen Nommensen
Miss Joan Brinkmann	Mrs. Laura Otto
Mr. Steven Carlovsky	Mrs. Stephanie Pasillas
Mr. Thomas Carmichael	Mrs. Angie Pechman
Miss Pat Chasty	Mrs. Sally Petersen
Mrs. Kristin Christie	Mrs Michelle Pena
Mrs. Marlene Timmerman Cox	Mrs. Grace Reko
Miss Julia Cross	Miss Elizabeth Remias
Mrs. Martha Deibert	Mrs. Luba Rohrback
Miss Lorna Ehke	Miss Cindy Ross (Foerster)
Mrs. Dawn Ferch	Mrs. Georgene Walton Schuett
Mrs. Barbara Fishbach	Mr. Thomas Schulz
Miss Kathy Fruedenwald	Mrs. Christy Schwalenberg
Mrs. Myrtle Gauger	Miss Phyliss Schwantes (Gresens)
Miss Anita Gensmer	Mrs. Emily Seeber
Mr. Vernon Gentele	Mrs. Patricia Seelow
Mr. Daniel Gresens	Mrs. Stacy Shrum
Mrs. Carol Griffin	Mrs. Jean Sievert
Mr. Daniel Grunewald	Mrs. Jennifer Sims
Mr. Gary Heiman	Mrs. Marie Sprengler
Miss Debra Heinz	Miss Mary Streiter
Mrs. Rachel Hirsch	Miss Erika Stueck
Miss Nancy Hiles (Halfman)	Miss Cathy Szelag
Mrs. Kristie Huet	Mrs. Max Thompson
Mrs. Elizabeth Jahnke	Mrs. Katherine Scheele Turnbull
Mrs. Crystal Kesting	Mrs. Grace Ungemach
Miss Miriam Kiester	Mrs. Alice Herbst Watchke
Miss Carolyn Kloth (Vosberg)	Miss Sally Wesolowski (Voss)
Mrs. Doris Koeller	Mr. Daniel Whitney
Miss Linda Koeller	Mrs. Jennifer Yahnke
Mrs. Hillary Koelpin	Mr. Troy Yerks

VII. Appendix 2: Sons and Daughters of Salem Who Have Served in the Ministry

This list is based on information shared by various members of Salem. Since it only includes people who have served since the 1970s, it is an incomplete list.

Pastors

Roy Rose
David Tiarks
James Seelow
Terry Yahr
Jeff Seelow
John Moll
Daniel Moll
Todd Krueger*
Brian Krueger*

Teachers

Sandy Bremer
Carol Baranyk (Widmann)
Carolyn Kloth (Vosberg)
Michael Miller
Lynne Langenohl (Kelm)
Susan Rose (Sprengeler)
Stephen Schaefer
Sandra Wesolowski
James Moeller
Joan Ozburn (Schroeder)
Judy Ozburn
Jo Moeller (Bostedt)
Joel Berger
Paul Berger
Sandra Voss
John Gainey
Scott Sievert
Emily Kuphal

* The Krueger brothers attended Salem Lutheran School but were members at Risen Savior.



