

Tidbit Archives – The 175th Anniversary Project

Display Case: Can you shed some light on some of the memorabilia?

In 1948, the Men's Club had a Mr. Deterding build the trophy case which now stands in the hall between the educational building and the church. One of the items in the trophy case is the Star Flag which hung in church during WWII. But, we still need information on the trophies in the case. We have found no record of the dart ball teams, for example, that won those trophies. We need your help. To see how you can share your memories (or the memories handed down to you by members now enjoying heaven), [click here](#).

United States Military Veterans: Do you have information on members of St. John's who were/are veterans?

"Alfred Dannenbrink joined the St. John's Young People Society in September 1933 at age 15. He quickly became a leader for the group serving on Entertainment, Social and Ice Cream Social committees. September 36, Alfred was one of three elected to serve as ushers for the church from the Young People. In 1938, Alfred was elected Vice-President and October 1939, he was elected Treasurer. While serving as Vice-President, the Young People Society voted to join the Lutheran Church Walther League on May 5, 1939. World War II began December 1941. Private First Class of the Illinois 81st Infantry, Alfred Dannenbrink, died at the battle of Peleliu Island, Philippines on October 8, 1944. Among the many honors awarded to Freddie were the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, Marksmanship Badge, World War II Victory Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, and Combat Infantry Badge. Freddie Dannenbrink was not only a strong leader for St. John's Youth Group but served as a strong leader for his country."

Church Choir: After 1960, the Ladies Aid voted that when a member of the Ladies Aid passed away, the ladies would sing at the funeral with practice the night before.

Speaking of singing, we found references to a church choir and Christmas concert as late as the early 2,000's, but we have no information the choir's history or other activities. Can you help?

Translating Church Records in German Script: Sometime in the history of our congregation, the council minutes from 1848-1858 were lost. But, we do have the minutes from 1859-1940, all of which are written in German Script. Concordia Historical Institute at Concordia Seminary is making copies of the fragile pages and preserving them electronically. The copies will then be sent to an individual in Cleveland, Ohio, for translation into English. There are few people who can still read German Script, which is quite different from regular German cursive writing.

Church Bells and The Lord's Prayer: We used to ring the church bell at the beginning, middle, and end of the Lord's Prayer. The tradition was brought from Germany when horsepower was still supplied by actual horses. Farmers who were in the fields planting or harvesting on Sunday morning could hear the bell and know when to join in at least that much of the service. With the advent of power equipment, it

became more difficult to hear a church bell. We discontinued the practice in September 1979. However, it still continues at Holy Cross, Collinsville.

Congregational Leadership: St. John's has had strong leadership throughout its history. In the 1940s, Edwin Kruse served as chairman of the congregation for 10 years. In the 1950s, Henry Hanebutt served as chairman for another 10 years. In 1986, Fred Miller began his tenure as the congregation's chairman and served until his death in 2005. During his nineteen years of serving the Lord and St. John's, Fred helped lead efforts in 1986 to write a new congregational constitution that would, in 1988, enable women to become voting members of their congregation. Also during Fred's tenure, St. Peter's and St John's became a dual parish in order to share the costs and services of a single pastor. Fred Miller is the father of Jill Phegley.

More United States Military Veterans: Usually we think of younger people serving in the military. However, Rolla Ling was 36 when he was drafted in 1943 for service in World War II. Following basic training, he was stationed at Ft. Lee, Virginia, as a Medical, Tech 5. Later, Rolla was sent to Ft. Lewis, Washington, where he went through basic training again to qualify for further medical training. He was finally stationed in the Philippines as part of the Philippine Liberation under General MacArthur and was discharged in 1945. Rolla Ling is Marlene Ling's father.

Church Finances: In 1903, Ernst Rowold was the congregation's Foresitzer. Foresitzer is German for "the one who sits in front" or the person we now call the Chairman.

The final Treasurer's report for 1903 was very simple:

Income: \$512.25

Expense: \$508.01

Balance: \$5.24

The Lutheran Hymnal: January 1, 1951, St. John's made the switch to *The Lutheran Hymnal* from the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book*, which was likely published in 1927 and based on a 1912 version. It had 566 hymns, but no accompanying music for the hymns or the services. *TLH* was published in 1941, but St. John's chose to stay with the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* for another 10 years.

The Lutheran Hymnal has 660 hymns with accompanying music for the services and hymns. St. John's ordered 200 copies at \$1.34 each for a total of \$268.00. *The Lutheran Hymnal* came to be revered over the years, but it was not immediately well-liked. In fact, a notice in the bulletin at Holy Cross, Collinsville, asked that members of the congregation not put *The Lutheran Hymnal* on the floor to use for a footrest!

Former Pastor Family Stories: Edgar George Fischer was pastor at St. John's 1909 – 1917. He was called from St. John's Lutheran Church in Beaumont, Texas, where he had been the first resident pastor. His wife, Sophia Ellen (nee de Vedig), had been born in the Bahamas. They had ten children. The family left Ruma to serve a church in Millstadt. In 1921, they moved to Gotha, Florida, where Pastor Fischer served as a missionary.

One of their daughters, Sophia Anna, later recalled that she was two when the family moved to Ruma. That first winter she developed pleurisy pneumonia and had a drainage tube inserted into her pleural cavity, with her right arm tied down. Because she was forced to use her left hand during that time, she became ambidextrous.

Disaster and disease is not unique to 2020: In 1854, the area suffered a severe drought when it didn't rain from June to just before Christmas. Wells and streams dried up. People waded across the Mississippi in knee boots. Prairie grass dried up. Livestock died. Little grain was harvested. Bread was baked with black flour and bran. The cost of flour rose from \$3.00 to \$20.00 per barrel. Then, in December when it finally did rain, the weather turned cold and the Mississippi froze.

Yellow fever, typhoid, measles, scarlet fever, whooping cough, diphtheria and croup, influenza, dysentery, tuberculosis, pneumonia, cholera, and smallpox were all deadly diseases in the late 1800s and early 190-+0s. In 1905, the most serious site of a smallpox outbreak in cities over 100,000 was St. Louis with 95.8 cases per 1,000 residents.

What Did Early Members Do for a Living: The list below, gleaned from several decades of early Baptism records for St. John's, includes various occupations as well as how many members worked in those jobs. The German word for the occupation is followed by the English word. How interesting that several of those German words are common local family names.

12 arbeiter – worker; 219 landwirt - farmer; 6 schmidt - blacksmith; 10 schumacher – shoemaker; 5 zimmermann – carpenter; 7 wirth – innkeeper; 3 wagenbauer – wagon maker; 5 schneider – tailor; 2 cooper – wood stave barrel or pail maker.

An online version of an 1875 publication about Ruma states that F. Hanebutt ran a hotel-saloon, and Henry Kueker ran a brick hotel with a dance hall in 1872.

According to church records, in 1906 St. John's enlarged the church with a bell tower, balcony, altar room, and pastor's study, using bricks from a dilapidated hotel in Ruma. The bricks for the additions may have come from the Hanebutt or Kueker building.

Women's Suffrage: In the January 1984 voters' meeting, voters passed an important resolution to invite **all** communicant members to **attend** voters' meetings. However, only voting members could vote. Women's suffrage at St. John's was still a few years in the future.

At the next voters' meeting, in September of that year, seven women were present. Four women also attended the regular voters' meeting in January of 1985. At a special February meeting that year, voters discussed the age of voting, women's suffrage, a voting majority, and keeping the unity of the church.

Three years later, in January 1988, nine women and 17 voting members attended the meeting where the voters approved a revised congregational constitution to be submitted to the Synod district offices for their approval. They returned it for more revision. Voters revised and resubmitted, and in September 1988, the constitution was finally approved by the Synod. Voters in our congregation adopted it that same month.

The minutes for the meeting in September 1988 record that Art Wegener made a motion that was seconded by Elroy Hanebutt to approve Dolly Wegener, Helen Liefer, and Donna Krause as new voting members of St. John's. Women were allowed to vote in our congregation 140 years after its founding.

The next regular meeting, in January 1989, records 19 voters and several women present. Marlene Ling was accepted as a voter, and before the meeting was over, her mother, Mathilda, was also accepted.

Mailbox Stakes: The parking lot on the east side of the church was once a road that continued to the south through what are now fields. At that time, the church mailbox was located along the road and in front of the parsonage.

In September 1951, the post office wanted that mailbox moved and sent a letter to Pastor Eugene Vetter concerning it: "Your mailbox isn't located on the route. Please move your mailbox to the rock road on the corner. The mail carrier isn't required to leave the route to serve patrons. Please move by October 15."

Pastor Vetter, Henry Hanebutt, Gustave Krause, William Hapke, Alvin Wolter and Edwin Kruse wrote a letter in response arguing that, "since the public school bus delivers pupils to the school and picks up pupils to return home using that roadway, it would seem that the mail man could deliver mail along that 450-foot extension of what is a public all-weather rock road."

The post office must have relented since our mailbox is still located along the extension.

Original Church Location: In 1848 Diederich and Louise (Peters) Kueker donated one acre of land where the first log church for our congregation was located on the southeast corner of our church cemetery along Mill Road.

What's in a Name: Martin Luther was baptized on Martin of Tours Day and was so named. Members of St. John's were named after their sponsors. Men were sponsors for boys and women for girls. In October of 1867, Pastor and Anna Noll's daughter was baptized and named Anna Maria Carolina Sophia Gertrude Noll after her five sponsors.

New Church Building Decision: Two weeks after deciding to build a new church (where we still worship) next to the parsonage, 40 members attended a meeting at which 26 of them pledged \$1535.00 for materials and supplies. Frederick Degener, Frederick Hanebutt, and Henry Brase were chosen to serve on the building committee. The church was to be 30 feet by 50 feet and constructed of brick. Members offered to haul the needed lumber and other materials from Belleville.

Celebrating the Reformation: The 400th anniversary of the Reformation was celebrated on September 16, 1917, with an 11:30 German service in the woods of the widow of C. W. Schrieber at horse Prairie. Teacher Walter Von Dissen directed the mass children's choir. Pastor Edward Fischer had the closing prayer and blessing. The afternoon English service was at 2:30.

German Services Required: The first constitution of the church was for the "German Evangelical (Spiritual) Congregation on the Horse Creek, Randolph Co., Illinois." It was named the *German* Evangelical Congregation...because the service... "is to be held in German as long as it is requested by at least three voting members."

Keeping the Church Warm: In 1953, coal won out over fuel oil in a 16-2 vote for the new furnace. However, an oil stove was installed in the school, and an electric heater was put in the mother's room of the church. By 1978, propane had become the fuel of choice, and the coal shed was sold.

Hymn Sing Sunday Tradition: Pastor Russ Weise began having a hymn-sing prior to the service on the third Sunday of the month. Members of the congregation could pick favorite hymns and songs from the hymnal and the little red songbook, *Sing to the Lord*. The monthly hymn-sing continued for next 38 years until the Coronavirus Pandemic in March, 2020.

Required Contributions: From voter's meeting minutes over the years: Beginning in May 1879, all new members were required to contribute \$5.00 to the church treasury. This requirement was abolished in 1900.

To Update or Not to Update...Hymnals: From voters' meeting minutes: In 1885 the congregation discussed purchasing copies of the new Lutheran Hymnbook of the Missouri Synod. The edition they were using from Germany cost twice as much to replace as the Synod's new hymnals. It was thoroughly discussed, but action was postponed.

Property for the New School: From voters' meeting minutes: In 1885 Pastor Schrader offered one acre of land to the congregation as the location for a new school building.

Notes from 1973 Voter Meetings: In 1973 our congregation celebrated its 125th anniversary. In other business that year, we began to lock the church. The oil rights to the cemetery were sold to the Lovelady Co. And, after first deciding not to have Lenten services, Pastor Kuring, Jr., vacancy pastor from Trinity Prairie, suggested we have the Lenten services on Sunday morning.

Parsonage Expense: In 1880 a frame parsonage was built for about \$1,100.00.

Drinking Rules: When the rules for the Fellowship Hall were set up in 1967, beer was allowed in a corner of the hall basement.

Chicken Dinner: An annual chicken dinner was inaugurated on Sunday, February 7, 1971. For the first years, the church council was in charge. Later, church organizations organized the dinner.

Death in the Pulpit: Trauma hit "The Little Church with the Big Welcome" at a Lenten service on March 3, 1964. Earl Ruez remembers that evening, "I was in attendance at the mid-week evening Lenten Service. He (Pastor Henry Kuring, Sr.) had just entered the pulpit and began his sermon with his favorite greeting, 'My Christian Friends...' Then the Lord called him home. Some members immediately gave CPR but to no avail."

Financial Planning?

The financial records found so far for St. John's date back to 1891. At least until 1940, the finances were based on yearly pledges for the pastor's salary, for congregation expenses, and for the school. Parents pledged toward whichever class their children were in. A record was kept as to whether the pledges were fulfilled. To make budgeting and bill-paying even more difficult, the offering, which consisted mainly of "klinker geld" or loose change, was collected only on the last Sunday of the month.

Last week, we saw how the financial needs of the church were met with pledged money that could be paid anytime throughout the year. A record dating to the 1920's indicates that individual women and church organizations also pledged toward the pastor's salary. In 1932, Mrs. Wolter, Mrs. Wegener, Mrs. Huebner, Mrs. Lyddan, and Mrs. Kueker contributed \$23.00. Also in 1932, seventeen members of the Young Peoples' Society contributed \$22.75.

The fact that parishioners pledged the pastor's salary meant that what he received varied from month to month. In 1893 the pastor was paid \$21 in March, \$62 in April, and \$3.75(!) in May. After receiving \$15 in November, he wasn't paid for December until early January with \$111. However, that left the congregation short by \$22.25 which was paid in February. Thus, his 1894 salary didn't begin until March. That pattern persisted well into the 1930's.

In 1893, the pastor's salary (gehalt) was raised from \$381.50 to \$400.00. Today, that would be \$11,438.64. At the time there was no inflation, and the buying power of a \$1.00 today is 3.5% of what it was in 1893. By 1921, Pastor E. Schuessler was receiving \$600.00. Pastor Buenger's salary in 1924 was \$900.00. Pastor Schrader's pay was raised to \$945.00 in 1939.

A practice that Pastor Jansen remembers in his home church was that of leaving small change on a plate when registering for communion to reimburse the pastor for the cost of buying wine and bread. According to St. John's records, when Pastor Buenger resigned in August 1929, he was owed \$13.00. In 1934 Pastor Vetter received \$15.73 for communion registration.

Organists: In 1921 St. John's paid Barthne Duesengerg \$320.00 for an organ. That year Vera Schuessler, 16-year-old daughter of Pastor Schuessler, was paid \$15.00 for playing the organ from July to September. She may have been filling in for Hermann Stamm who was the regular organist until 1938 when Henry Schrader took over.

During the Season of Lent

In 1965, Henry Kuring, Jr., who was the pastor at Trinity, Prairie, led the Lenten services in Ruma on Thursday evenings. During vacancies in earlier years, when the church was heated by coal, Lenten services were held on Sundays.

In 1956, Daylight Savings Time was instituted nationwide. The church services would remain at 10 a.m. regardless of the season. At the time, some believed that DST would have disastrous effects on farmers. Hay would not dry, be put up green, catch fire, and burn down the barns. People also fear cows would not get milked on time and develop mastitis.

In 1907 nine young people were confirmed on March 24. Among them was Doris Wilkening who was born April 29, 1893. Her father was Wilhelm Wilkening. The record book did not list mothers' names. Pastor Wilk gave her the passage Offenb. 2:10. The last book in the German Bible is Offenbarung des Johannes, "Apocalypse of John" or as we know it, Revelation.

The practice of confirmation on Palm Sunday was carried over from Germany. In Germany, the school year ended around Easter. In order to be promoted to the Gymnasium, somewhat equivalent to high school, a student needed to be confirmed. The new school year then began sometime after Easter. The churches were under the Ministry of Religion arm of the government.

Historical Tidbit Countdown to 2023:

From now on, each week we will highlight, in chronological order, information from each year of our congregation's history. This week we begin at the very beginning...

Born in 1827, young Rev. Karl Johann Strasen emigrated from Jurgenhagen, Mechlinberg, Germany in 1846, completed his studies at Fort Wayne, and arrived at Trinity, Horse Prairie, in 1847. In 1848 he began holding services for settlers between Horse Creek and Camp Creek and founded our congregation on **Nov. 4, 1848**. That same year members of St. John's purchased an acre of land for a church and cemetery and then built a log church on the southeast corner of that acre. The cemetery remains.

In 1849, Rev. Karl Johann Strasen took a call to Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Collinsville. Rev. Gotthilf Weitbrecht then began to hold services at the Horse Prairie Evangelical Church and Horse Creek, Salem Church. Just recently, Pastor Jansen was able verify that we were originally known as *Salem Church* and would not take the name St. John's Lutheran Church, Ruma, for several years.

In 1850, after Pastor Strasen left, the 13 charter members who signed the first constitution of St. John's, all immigrants from Hanover, were: Frederick Degener, Henry Kueker, F.L. Kueker, F. H. Kueker, H.F. Kueker, Dieterich Kueker, Dieterich Gerberding, William Kueker, H. Kuhlmann, Henry Dankenbring, Carl Bense, Henry F. Goetting and Frederick Bruening. That first constitution is displayed in a frame on the back wall of the church.

One of our first baptisms was in October **1850** – Marie Louise Knoke, daughter of Heinrich and Dorothea (Degener) Knoke. Our young congregation's first marriage was also in October 1850 when Friederick Liefer, son of Conrad and Maria Dorothea (Hanebutt) Liefer, married Sophia Luebke, daughter of Conrad and Louise (Bicknasen) Luebke.

In 1851, House Sparrows were first released in the United States. The Illinois General Assembly granted a charter to Northwestern University. And, our congregation celebrated one baptism and one marriage. In January, Heinrich Dauel, son of Wilhelm and Marie (Kruse) Dauel, was baptized. On January 23, Heinrich Hapke, son of Heinrich and Maria (Plinke) Hapke, married Caroline Kruse, daughter of Heinrich and Louise (Dierks) Kruse.

In 1852, a Yellow Fever epidemic in the U.S. killed 8,000 citizens of New Orleans alone. St. John's mourned its first death on December 28 when Heinrich Kruse died at age 42. We also celebrated our first confirmands that year. Their family names will sound familiar: Friederich Ludwig Wilhelm Hanebutt, son of Friederich and Catharine (Degener) Hanebutt; Heinrich Ludwig, son of Conrad and Dorothea (Hanebutt) Liefer; Ernst August, son of Friederich and Sophia (Saches) Stamm; Marie Louise, daughter of Bar and Maria Degener.

In 1853, Rev. Heinrich Anton Eppens began serving our congregation as our next pastor. He served until 1859. He also was of the United Evangelical/Reformed church. He had spent 1840 -1844 studying for the ministry and was sent to America by the Bremer Mission Organization to continue his preparation for a preaching license. He received his license at St. John's Evangelical Church (South Lindberg).

In 1854, this part of the Midwest suffered a severe drought. It didn't rain from June till just before Christmas. Wells and streams dried up. People could wade across the Mississippi in knee boots. Prairie grass dried up. Livestock died. Little grain was harvested. Bread was baked with black flour and bran. A barrel of flour rose from \$3.00 to \$20.00. In December when it did rain, the weather turned so cold that the Mississippi froze.

Meanwhile our congregation confirmed three young men, buried three members ages 30, 38, and 39, and married two couples.

In 1855, both churches, Horse Prairie (not Trinity) and Horse Creek (now St. John's) were quite small. Rev. Eppens had so few students that he asked to teach and confirm the young people from both churches together. The first class was confirmed at Horse Creek (now St. John's). The next year's class was confirmed at Horse Prairie.

Elsewhere in 1855 - On January 23, the first bridge over the Mississippi River opened in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In 1856, during Rev. Heinrich Eppens' pastorate at St. John's, the congregation bought five acres of land one and one half miles southwest of the first church location for \$50 from a Mr. Clark.

Elsewhere in 1856, Mendel began his research on genetics while the first eggbeater with rotating parts received a patent.

In 1857, our first constitution was for a congregation that was both Lutheran and Reformed. Licensed or ordained pastors from either the Lutheran church or Reformed church could be called. Also, the constitution states that their teachings be based on both Luther's Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism of the Reformed Church. In the first constitution, the congregation named itself, "The German Evangelical Salem Congregation, near Horse Creek." This tells us that the congregation was a member of the Evangelical Church body at that time.

Elsewhere in 1857, Illinois State University, the first public university in Illinois, is established in Normal, Illinois.

In 1858, both churches, Horse Prairie (not Trinity) and Horse Creek (now St. John's) were quite small. Pastor Eppens realized that neither Horse Prairie nor the Horse Creek could survive since each was so near the other. He advised the Horse Creek congregation to disband and join with Horse Prairie.

Elsewhere in 1858, on March 30, pencils with attached erasers were patented, and on September 14, Fordyce Beals patented his six-shooter revolver which would be produced by E. Remington & Sons.

In 1859, Pastor Eppens left, and Pastor Froun was called to what is now St. John's. A log parsonage was built on the five-acre parcel in 1860, thus Pastor Froun became the first pastor to live within the bounds of the congregation. His time at St. John's was brief, however. He served only from from 1859 to early 1860.

In the first constitution, the congregation named itself, "The German Evangelical Salem Congregation, near Horse Creek." This tells us that the congregation was a member of the Evangelical Church body at that time. In the March 12, 1859, meeting, they became a fully Lutheran congregation, but not a member of the LCMS.

Elsewhere in 1859, Florence Nightingale published "Notes on Nursing: What It Is and What It Is Not."

In 1860, Rev. Johann Caspar Noll became pastor of St. John's in the summer of 1860. On October 27, 1860, members discussed "two constitutions" in a meeting of the congregation. Pastor Noll spoke in favor of the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. That constitution was then adopted.

Signers of the Lutheran constitution were: Henry Wegener, Henry Brase, H.C. Smith, Charles Schweir, Otto Steffens, William Stamm, Dieterich Rabe, Frederick Hanebutt Jr., Marie Dowell (widow), Henry Liefer, Henry Hapke, Louis Hasenmeyer, Henry Niemeyer, Henry Knoke and Charles Hanebutt.

At that same meeting, "It was resolved that the new Record Book be adopted and made to take the place, so far as applicable, of the old record book, which had been fraudulently carried away and destroyed or taken from the possession of the society."

The year 1861 marked the beginning of much unrest at St. John's. The Illinois Synod that was formed in 1846 at Hillsboro joined the General Synod in 1848. The General Synod was made up of several small synods and became a rallying point for the small synods who wanted to remain Lutheran rather than being absorbed into other church bodies. This was a time of great flux in the church of Martin Luther during which it struggled with establishing what it meant to be Lutheran. The General Synod did not adhere to strict Lutheran confessional. The Bible and the Lutheran Confessions were not mentioned in its constitution. In fact, the General Synod was so broadly evangelical that it lost sight of the essentials of Lutheranism. A summary of its doctrine might be: We confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the ground of our faith and hope. However, the doctrine of baptism for a rebirth (regeneration) and the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper was largely rejected in the General Synod.

We may assume that Pastor Friedrich Erdmann, a member of the Illinois Synod and General Synod who came to Trinity, Horse Prairie in 1853, was instrumental in bringing the newly ordained Johann Noll to St. John's Horse Creek in 1860. Noll is listed as a member of the Illinois Synod from 1860-1866.

Pastor Noll began teaching school early in 1861 in a room set aside within the log parsonage. A school board was appointed that year to make rules and regulations for the school.

In 1862, St John's was a member of the Illinois Synod - not the Missouri Synod. In this general period, the congregation experienced much unrest. Because of doctrinal division relating to the Lord's Supper and the Lutheran character of the congregation, a number of members left the young congregation.

Pastor Noll and his wife, Anna, had a son, Otto Emil Dietrich Noll, on December 21, 1862.

Elsewhere in 1862, 250,000 men from Illinois fought for the Union Army during the Civil War.

1863 - Anna must have been several years younger than her husband, Pastor Johann Noll. They already had four children when they arrived in 1860: August, Wilhelm, Elise, and Johann. Katharina was born in October of 1860, and between 1862 and 1874, while at St. John's, the Nolls had six more children.

The baptism records of the congregation also reveal that women were sponsors for daughters and men were sponsors for boys. That practice extended into the 1900's. Children were named after their sponsors. For instance, on January 19, 1868, Anna Dorothea Louise Maria Degener was baptized. Her sponsors were Anna Elizabeth Noll, Dorothea Degener, Louise Kueker, and Maria Rabe.

1864 -In the book celebrating the 150th anniversary of Trinity Lutheran Church, Jane Lucht describes the situation that developed in the next few years, "Although a member of the General Synod until 1867, Pastor Erdmann could not subscribe to all the doctrines and practices of that synod...As his protests remained unheeded, he together with other pastors, severed connections with the General Synod in 1867. (The Illinois Synod split in 1867) Immediately these pastors organized the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Illinois and other states, of which pastor Erdmann was president seven years."

The split in the original Illinois Synod likely explains why Pastor Noll is listed as a member only from 1860-1866. In 1871 the newly-formed Illinois Synod joined negotiations that led to the formation of the Synodical Conference in 1872 with the Missouri Synod, Wisconsin Synod, Ohio Synod, and others.

In 1880 the Illinois Synod became part of the Missouri Synod, though congregations and pastors were not obligated to join the Missouri Synod. St. John's did not join LCMS until 1931.

In 1865, the Civil War ended. Two members from St. John's fought in that war, and only one returned.

Joseph Roethely, who was born February 9, 1817, served in the Navy. He died December 11, 1870, and is buried in St. John's Cemetery.

William Conrad Degener fought with the Army and died June 21, 1864, from wounds he received in the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain during Sherman's March through Georgia. William was only 19. He is buried at Marietta Georgia National Cemetery

In 1866, Pastor Noll, who was pastor of St. John's from the summer of 1860 through November 2, 1878, left the Illinois Synod.

In 1867, the General Synod did not adhere to strict Lutheran confessional. In fact, the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions were not even mentioned in its constitution. A summary of its doctrine might be: We confess Jesus Christ as the son of God and the ground of our faith and hope.

The General Synod largely rejected both baptism being for a rebirth (regeneration) and the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. This led to the

Illinois Synod split in 1867. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Illinois was started the same year and later joined the Missouri Synod in 1880. Individual congregations didn't have to join. In fact, St. John's didn't join the Missouri Synod until 1931.

In 1868, on March 16, the congregation unanimously decided to build a new congregational school. Dimensions: 22 feet long, 20 feet wide and 9 logs high. Pastor Noll had been teaching school in a room set aside in the log parsonage since 1861.

On December 3, Trinity Lutheran, Horse Prairie, dedicated a new brick church. J.C. Noll was one of the preachers.

Elsewhere in 1868: Christopher Latham Sholes received a patent for an invention he called the "Type-Writer."

In 1869, while at St. John's, Pastor Noll's wife, Anna Elizabeth (nee Schlunk), was a sponsor for at least six of the congregation's infant daughters and two of Pastor Carl Schrader's children in 1882 and 1886.

Elsewhere in 1869: On May 10, the first Transcontinental Railroad, linking the eastern and western United States, was completed at Promontory Summit, Utah, with the golden spike.

On December 7, American outlaw Jesse James committed his first confirmed bank robbery in Gallatin, Missouri.

In 1870, Joseph Roethely, who was born in 1817 and served in the Navy during the Civil War, died December 11. He is the only Civil War veteran buried in St. John's Cemetery.

Elsewhere in 1870: On June 26, the Christian holiday of Christmas was declared a federal holiday in the United States.

The "Hidden Years" Finally Uncovered

Until 2021, the minutes for voters' meetings from 1859-1941 have been "hidden" from the congregation's historians because those minutes were written in Old German, a language no one in the area could read.

Pastor Jansen reached out to Concordia Historical Institute at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis for help. First, the fragile pages in our old record books were carefully photographed in the Archive Recovery Institute. After months, all the records were finally photographed and copied so they could be sent to Ziggy Rein in Cleveland, Ohio. There, Ziggy spent the next year first transcribing the Old German into German and then translating the German into English. Thanks to his work, we now have available more than 80 years of rich congregational history for the historical book, *Grace Upon Grace*, which the Jansens are helping to create in time for our anniversary celebration in 2023.

Special thanks to Ziggy Rein who volunteered his services and to Concordia Historical Institute who waved all fees for its work in preparing the record books for Ziggy's work.

In 1871, during a January 4 meeting, Pastor Noll was allowed to preach at Livelys Prairie every eighth Sunday.

On May 29, a special congregational meeting was held to decide how to get the church road open again after it was closed by H. Wegener and R. Clarks. But, since there were different opinions and since more exact information about the actual situation was needed, the matter was postponed to a future meeting.

In 1872, the minutes for the January 3 voters' meeting state, "Mr. H. Wegener will give (us) the church road if the congregation delivers 1,000 fence rails to him. The congregation acceded and asked for a deed for it. This church road is to be opened with three weeks."

In the same meeting voters decided the Pastor's salary was to be made up by freewill contributions up to the sum of about \$300. The trustees of the congregation agreed to collect signatures for the Pastor's salary and the contribution is to be paid semi-annually.

1873 - From the minutes of the January 8 voters' meeting: "Schwier took over the grave digging again for a year; he namely gets for a grave for an adult \$2 and for a child, \$1.50. The persons concerned have to turn to Trustee Henry Hochmeister who lives near the cemetery and pay C. Schwier right away for the grave digging."

Also from the January 8 minutes: "After total disbursements, a treasury balance remains for next year of \$8.84."

1874 - From the minutes of the January 7 voters' meeting: The old church should be sold and demolished; and it is to be sold on January 17th in the morning at 10 o'clock to the highest bidder. At this occasion an attempt is to be made to sell the old fence rails, in order to get a new plank fence around the church yard.

Also in the January minute: Friedrich Knigge took over the grave digging at the same price as was done by Carl Schwier, \$2 for adults and \$1.50 for children. The depth of the grave for adults must be 5 and a half feet and for children 5 feet.

1875 - From the minutes of the January 6 voters' meeting: Fr. (Friedrich) Knigge can't nor wants to dig graves at the present price. He asks for \$3 for a grave for adults and \$2.50 for one for a child, which was then approved.

The road between the properties of J.O. Wolter and F. Degener was discussed for a lengthy time. Many desired to have it opened again, but no resolution was reached on the congregation's part. The general opinion was that the friends in Ruma would probably take care of the opening of this road.

1876 - From the minutes of the January 5 voters' meeting: The women shall by freewill collections seek to acquire the curtains for the church. Regarding the firewood for the parsonage, school and church, every member of the congregation is to do his duty. Resolved that a new smoke house should be built for the Pastor.

1877 - From the minutes of the January 3 voters' meeting: The school house to be built shall be 18 feet long, 12 feet wide and 9 feet high to the roof. Also, there shall be a partition which separates the schoolhouse from the summer kitchen. Further, it shall get two doors and a window, and the thresholds must be of iron. Also in the Jan. 3, 1877 minutes: Resolved that the churchyard be cleaned up and the debris from the old church be leveled and that should happen next spring. (This clean-up was first mentioned in an 1875 meeting, but this time a date was set.)

1878 - From the minutes of a special Oct. 4 voters' meeting to discuss plans after the sudden Oct. 2 death of Pastor Noll. Resolved, the parsonage be relinquished to the widow of Pastor Noll as residence for a year with everything that goes with it. A tombstone will be erected for Pastor Noll and the money for it will be collected by free will collection. Mrs. Noll and her son continue the school until a Pastor is here again.

1879 - Pastor Schrader was serving at St. John's Pastor, but we do not have the exact date he began. He had apparently moved into a new parsonage because Mrs. Noll was still living in the old parsonage. From the minutes of the May 18 voters' meeting: It was decided to reimburse Pastor C. Schrader the travel money on part of the congregation in the total sum of \$46.

1880 - From the minutes of a voters' meeting in 1880: The question was put, how the new parsonage is to be built, with green square wood or wholly with pine. By a majority of votes the new parsonage is to be built totally with pine wood. The motion that the new parsonage should have a hall was voted down by a majority. The new parsonage is to be 36 feet long, 28 feet wide, and a 12-foot height reckoned from the foundation to the roof and is to have 4 similar rooms. The basement is to be 7 feet deep and 14 feet by 18 feet in size. This plan was adopted by a majority of votes. However, the congregation held in reserve to take over, free of charge, all the delivering as well as the manual labor, except the bricklayer (mason) and two building requirements are to be advertised. One would be what the contractor asks if he supplies all the wood, pine, and the other would be what the contractor asks if the congregation supplies the material itself.

1881 - From the April 3 voters' meeting minutes: The motion was made about how the congregation should proceed most appropriately with the members who haven't fulfilled their congregational obligations so that it works for the welfare of the congregation. It was decided that the right to vote will be taken from all the members who have not fulfilled their obligations and monetary contributions and suchlike up to the day when they have paid their contributions. Pastor is authorized to collect the money in arrears from the respective members. If such members have not fulfilled their congregational obligations by August 15 of this year, they are to be excluded from the congregation and lose their rights in the congregation and its property.

1882 - From the minutes of a voter's meeting: Concerning the curtains for the church windows, the women of our congregation shall collect for that.

The question was proffered by the trustees whether the buildings on the congregation shouldn't be insured. It was resolved that the church and the new parsonage, in addition to the smoke house and stable, were to be insured by an insurance company.

1883 - From the minutes of a voter's meeting: In regard of infant Baptism of those whose parents do not belong to the congregation, it was resolved that those who live within the community but don't want to join the congregation and nevertheless want to have their children baptized in the church are to be held to pay \$3.00 into the treasury of the congregation for every infant baptism.

1884 - From the minutes of a voter's meeting: It was resolved that those who have been self-excluded for not supporting the church shouldn't be buried in the cemetery of the congregation. It was further resolved that the ones that are expelled can't be entered into the church book as godparents.

1885 - Two points from the minutes of a voter's meeting: 1. The Pastor asked whether the American Bible Society should continue to exist in our congregation or not. The congregation resolved that the Bible Society be discontinued. 2. The question was brought up in the meeting whether the congregation wouldn't do better by introducing the St. Louis hymnal since the ones coming from Germany are more than twice as expensive. After the matter had been deliberated, each one was to think about the matter.

1886 - These notes from the minutes of a voters' meeting create a bit of a mystery: Regarding Pastor's Noll tombstone, it was resolved that Mrs. Noll should purchase the stone. The trustees are to safe keep the money until the stone has been bought by Mrs. Noll. (Pastor Noll died suddenly at home on Wednesday, October 2, 1878. He had been Pastor since the summer of 1860. The congregation in a voters' meeting on October 4, 1878, resolved, "That a tombstone be erected for Pastor Noll, and the money for it be collected by a freewill collection." That would have been 8 years ago.

1887 - From the minutes of a voters' meeting: Regarding the pump organ, it was resolved that the repairs are to be paid by the congregation. The question about changing to a hymnal from St. Louis which would be cheaper instead of from Germany was again presented. It was voted down by resolution of the congregation. Likewise, the question whether we would want to acquire another stove was declined.

The Pastor, in a talk, strongly urged each one and demonstrated that it is the Christian duty of every member of the congregation to earnestly cooperate with getting the roads to the church open so that they wouldn't always be blocked. A committee was formed to try to get the church road open by a petition, and to report about it to the congregation in a meeting in spring.

1888 – From the minutes of a voters' meeting: The church road was brought up. The road committee chosen the previous year was requested by congregational resolution to intervene legally against all those who didn't want to open the road.

It was resolved that a new cemetery be established close to the church. Details are to be discussed in the next meeting. However, it shall be at the discretion of every congregation member to bury his loved ones in the old or new churchyard. (A new cemetery was never brought up in the minutes again and St. John's is still blessed to have its original one.)

1889 – For some reason there are no minutes for 1889. However, a new practice was begun: "Should an unnatural death occur in our congregation, it was resolved, that the corpse can indeed be buried in our churchyard, but far away from the congregation in the north-east corner designated for that."

1890 – From the August 24 voter's meeting minutes: A supplication letter from a congregation near Cape Girardeau, Missouri, was submitted and read asking to let our Pastor Schrader leave in peace. It was resolved by a majority to let Pastor Schrader leave in peace.

From the November 16 minutes the same year: Rev. E. H. T. Schulze was called as Pastor. A freewill list was undersigned by the members present for the newly called Pastor's salary. The result of the list was \$252.00. In the call, he was promised \$300 plus housing, free furnace and other casual earnings that may crop up for baptisms, funerals and weddings. (Rev. Schulze was Pastor for St. John's from 1890-1899).

1891– From the July 19 minutes: It was resolved that a schoolhouse similar to one in Ruma, 30 feet long, 20 feet wide with a modification to the height is to be built. The trustees have been appointed as building committee and are authorized to make known publicly that a schoolhouse is to be built by our church, in order to be able to accept bids.

The following Sunday the report by the appointed committee was received. Bids were received from Louis Heinsins of \$494, from John Benninger for \$560, and from Henry Rexhause for \$435. Reshausen's bid was accepted to build the schoolhouse for the sum of \$435. Additionally, it was yet resolved that a well should be dug. The digging was consigned to Heinrich Knigge for \$50 by contract.

1892 - From the January 2 voter's meeting minutes: A vote regarding the new hymnals was held. It was unanimously decided that the hymnals published by the Missouri Synod are from now on to come into use beginning February first of this year. The hymnals will be coming from St. Louis and not Germany.

1893 – From the January 2 voter's meeting minutes: Next Sunday, a collection is to be taken for those injured by the storm in Red Bud, bearing in mind: "Let us not become weary in doing good" to everyone.

1894 - From the Jan. 2 voter's meeting minutes: Instruction in the school is to be only in German from now on. The Bible is to be used mainly in religious instruction.

1895 - From the Jan. 2 voter's meeting minutes: At the north side of the church, posts with rails are to be placed to tie up the horses. It shall be at everyone's discretion to tie up his horse where he wants. Thus, they should be available for mutual use.

Everyone is to bring sawed wood for the church, school, and parsonage from now on. Everybody is requested to bring a real good load so that there won't be a shortage of wood at the church.

1896 - From the January 2 voter meeting minutes: It was resolved that if nonmembers buy their loved ones' graves in our churchyard and promise to pay for the graves but then neglect to pay the \$5, they can be legally prosecuted by the vestry. From now on, no nonmember will be permitted to buy his loved ones' graves in our churchyard without permission from the vestry and \$5 being paid in advance for every grave. Also, in the future no pastor of a different faith may officiate in our churchyard, except he is united in the same faith with us.

1897 - From the January 2 voter's meeting minutes: Every year fifty cents are to be collected from every member for organ playing. The grave digging has been assigned to Fritz Knigge and namely for the price of \$2.50 adults and \$2 for children.

1898 - From the January 3 voter's meeting minutes: It was resolved that all members in arrears are yet to be granted six months' time to pay. If they stubbornly refuse until then, the Pastor is to have the right to turn them away from the Lord's Supper. It was resolved that all young people who have already attained the 21st and 18th year of age are to be held to also contribute their part toward the Pastor's salary.

1899 - From the January 2 voter's meeting minutes: The Pastor would like to have the catechism published by the Missouri Synod introduced here. Thereupon a committee was chosen who will check out the catechism and after three months report to the congregation whether they approve of the catechism. The congregation will decide then whether the catechism published by the Missouri Synod will be introduced at St. John's or not.

1900 - From the minutes of the January 2 voter's meeting: Members admitted now won't have to pay an admittance fee of five dollars anymore. It is now freely up to everyone who wants to join the congregation if he is of one faith with us.

Also from those minutes: there will be eight months of school kept from October first to June first of the year. Instruction may be given in German or English.

1901 – From voter meeting minutes: Two women, Mrs. Minna Sievers and Mrs. Maria Rabe, were admitted as contributing members. (Prior to this year, women had not been recognized as contributing members - only men.)

The Pastor has been authorized to admonish the people from the pulpit for everyone who enters the church late.

1902 – from the minutes of the October 25 voter's meeting: The congregation abandoned its intention of laying out a second new churchyard cemetery behind the church, for the sake of peace. The congregation will bear Mr. N. N.'s expenses for the digging up of his dead loved ones.

Also, the church constitution is to be changed so that instead of "Vosteher" the term "Trustees" is used.

1903 – From the minutes of the November 1 voter's meeting: The meeting was concerning the Matter of a Call. The meeting was opened by Pastor Meyer with prayer. Pastor A. W. Wilk, Pastor at Stuttgart, Arkansas, was chosen unanimously at our Preacher and Pastor. A call is to be issued to Pastor A. W. Wilk, which was done immediately. Note: (Rev. Arthur Wilhelm Wilk was pastor for St. John's from November 1903 through 1909.)

1904 – From the minutes of a voter's meeting: The salary of the Pastor was increased by \$50.00 so that now \$450.00 must be collected annually. Those who don't have wood and also a team don't have to bring wood in the future but have to split the wood at the parsonage.

1905 – From the December 3 voter meeting minutes: Resolved that a steeple to the church is to be built, and at the South side and North side a room is to be built at the steeple, and each room is to have stairs to be able to get to the gallery which is to be built at East side of the church. The steeple is to be made of brick (namely the wall above the ground) and should have a thickness of two feet. The steeple is to measure 12 by 12 feet. The rooms at the steeple are to be 12 by 10 feet. The steeple is to be roofed with slate. The brick wall is to correspond to those of the church. The gallery is to get only two posts. The congregation commits itself to transport all materials, such as sand, lime, lumber, bricks and cement from Red Bud or Evansville, except water. The contractor should transport water himself or get it at the church as he likes. The contractor has to take care of boarding himself. Every congregation member who has a wagon is to get one load of sand until the new year. All members who have not yet signed up for the new construction are to be once more urged to do so by Pastor Wilk. The contractor has to provide his tools and men. The congregation doesn't want to concern itself with that.

1906 – From voter meeting minutes: The empty land in the cemetery may be given to someone to sow oats or grass, but so much room must be left for people to be able to get to the graves. Resolved that yet another man be approached concerning the steeple construction; Mr. Fritz Droege's offer hasn't been rejected yet by us. Permission was granted to the Pastor to write sometime to an architect in St. Louis.

1907 – From voter meeting minutes: Beginning with January 1, 1907, every three months a regular congregational meeting is to take place.

Resolved that smoking and chewing tobacco in the church will not be permitted. Loud talking is also not to be tolerated from now on. The resolution is to be publicly proclaimed by the Pastor from the pulpit.

1908 – From voter meeting minutes: The first four pews at the men's side in the church can be used by (married) women or Jungfrauen (maidens) if there is not enough room to be had at the women's side.

1909 – From May 16 voter meeting minutes: Congregational meeting resolved that Pastor Wilk may be dismissed in peace to a sister congregation in Steeleville, Illinois. Since the local congregation is vacant, the Pastor was charged with writing to the president of our district for a candidates' list.

June 27: Congregational meeting was held to issue a call to Pastor Edward Fischer present Pastor at Beaumont, Texas.

July 27: Pastor Edward Fischer accepted the call to be St. John's pastor in a letter. (The installation took place in September. Pastor Edward Fischer was pastor for St. John's from 1909 – 1917).

1910 – From voter meeting minutes: Young girls are to use the pews reserved for them at the men's side; therefore, not to take a seat on the gallery.

Young members who don't attend congregational meetings regularly are to be put under church discipline.

1911 - From the Aug. 20 voter meeting minutes: The congregation realizes the importance of a teacher and it resolved therefore to call and employ a teacher. It was resolved by ballot that the salary of the teacher be raised in the same way as the Pastor's salary. It was also resolved that the Pastor collect signatures for the teacher's residence, for land and for the teacher's house. However, building a residence (house) for the teacher is not to begin until a call for a teacher has been sent.

1912 – From the March 10 voter meeting minutes: The members present resolved unanimously to call Teacher J. F. Briel from Scribner, Nebraska as teacher of the congregation school, as the call letter had been accepted earlier already. (Note: Prior to 1912, the pastor served as the teacher for the congregation's school.)

From the April 2 voter meeting minutes: Resolved that the teacher's salary is to be collected by Officer H. Eggers and that the young women (unmarried women) of the congregation are to scrub the school on Tuesday.

1913 – From the January 2 voter meeting minutes: Resolved to build a chicken coop by the teacher's residence and to buy English and German ABC cards for the school.

The Treasurer is to give a report from now on about all submitted moneys of the congregation.

1914 – From the February 1 voter meeting minutes: Teacher Briel asked the congregation to dismiss him because he isn't able to teach school due to his health. His request was accepted after long discussion.

From March 29 voter meeting minutes: The congregation voted whether it wants to call a teacher again. The result was to call again. Calling the teacher was postponed. Since the congregation is without a teacher at present, WM. D. Wegener was asked to play the organ, for which he was promised 25 cents per Sunday.

1915 – From voter meeting minutes: The treasurer reported the pastor and the teacher have received only \$114 in the six months for their salaries. From the salary of the Pastor and teacher, \$275 were missing. It was resolved to raise the money for the salary.

1916 – From voter meeting minutes: Two young people have sinned against the sixth commandment and asked, through the pastor of the congregation, for forgiveness. It was resolved to forgive them. Resolved that all those who give offense, trouble are to appear before the congregation and must ask for forgiveness.

1917 – From voter meeting minutes: Pastor Fischer said he would have initially liked to have a room upstairs in his house since he had planned to take in his mother. But now that she is accommodated elsewhere, he foregoes the extension of the room upstairs. To this the comment was made that this money could be used for painting. Perhaps Pastor Fischer's successor wouldn't have such a large family, and therefore he wouldn't need this room.

1918 – There are no recorded minutes about calling Rev. Ernest Schuessler, but he served St. John's from 1918 – 1922. In October 1918 voters resolved to make the school 100 percent English and to have a divine service in English every third Sunday night. From later voter meeting minutes in 1918: at a later meeting at night, it was resolved to turn the public or general divine service 100 percent into English. On December 22, it was resolved to have a German divine service on the first Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

1919 - From voter meeting minutes: A coal shed is to be built by the school with the trustees to see to it that it is built. Holy Communion is to be administered to the confirmands immediately after confirmation. It is resolved to buy the Christmas Liturgy for the entire congregation and that a collection will be taken for the Christmas Tree on Sunday, December 7th.

1920 - From voter meeting minutes: Resolved to have a collection for Concordia on the third Sunday in January. In an April meeting, it was resolved that we will engage a candidate as teacher for seven months and the salary will be \$65 a month, with the salary to be procured voluntarily.

1921 - From voter meeting minutes: The question of who can be buried in the church cemetery arose. It was resolved that anyone who is a member of this church and adheres to God's Word and the Holy Sacraments can be buried in our church cemetery; however, they have to pay \$5 for the grave. He who has self-excluded or is excluded by the congregation can't be buried there.

1922 - From January voter meeting minutes: it was resolved to rent the teacher residence to Edwin Kruse for \$3 a month. Each voting member is to pay 25 cents annually for organ services.

1923 - From voter meeting minutes: It was decided that the organ player will receive \$5 a month and that the organist is to pay the costs for pumping the organ out of the \$5. Mr. Edwin Kruse will again rent the teacher residence for \$3 a month. The congregation is looking for a new pastor. It was decided that the new pastor is also to teach school and preach in German. His salary will be \$900 and include free heating and housing, pasture for one horse and a cow, and other incidentals.

1924: From the January voter meeting minutes: The trustees were given permission to hire a man to keep the churchyard clean. Each member has to pay 50 cents to the senior trustee to keep the cemetery clean, and the congregation will place some new tie-up posts.

1925: From the March voter meeting minutes: it was decided that the gravedigger will be provided with a few boards which will hold back the earth when he digs a grave. Since there are not many who understand German anymore, after communion is given and the confession of sins is said in German, the confession of sins should be followed by a brief version in English.

1926: From January voter meeting minutes: it was resolved to have regular congregational meetings twice a year only, January and July. It was resolved that Mr. Edwin Kruse be paid \$5.75 from the treasury for pumping the organ (payments) that are still in arrears for the years 1923, 1924 and 1925.

1927: From voter meeting minutes: The organist and pastor will be paid quarterly and if the money doesn't come in, the treasurer may borrow it. Each voting member has to pay 35 cents to the organ pumper.

1928: From the January voter meeting minutes: the vice-president was present on behalf of the president concerning the payment of salary and to prevent the church from getting deeper in debt by borrowing. The congregation resolved that every congregation member of age personally borrow the money for the salary if the member doesn't have it. From the February voter meeting minutes: the congregation resolved to borrow \$137 from the bank that it owed Pastor Buenger from 1927.

1929: From January voter meeting minutes: A vote was taken for an English Divine Service. Ten were for the English service and 23 were against. There would be no English Divine Service. The congregation resolved to give Henry Schrader a small strip of land so that the so-called church lane could be made into a public road.

1930 – From voter meeting minutes: Resolved to have an English Divine Service once a month. The school is to be repaired and the pastor's stable is to be painted. A small corner of the pastor's pasture is to be fenced off for car parking.

1931 – From voter meeting minutes: The congregation resolved to join the synod. Also, to acquire the envelope system to collect gifts for God's Kingdom. The teacher's residence is to be covered with new roofing.

1932 – Ed Kueker's offer to pump the church organ for \$12 per year was accepted. Harry Wilkening's offer to clean up the cemetery twice a year for \$20 was accepted.

1933 – From January voter meeting minutes: The following were accepted as members: Alva Ruez, Gustav Krause, Henry H. Liefer and Albert Kueker. It was resolved that crushed rock be put in front of the church. The congregation talked about purchasing a new furnace.

1934 - From voter meeting minutes: The Salary Treasury was in arrears of \$137. The amount in arrears for the furnace was \$131.50. The balance in the Treasury was \$101.15.

1935 - From voter meeting minutes: Heinrich Stamm was chosen again as organist for fifty cents a Sunday. It was resolved to have a financial report printed and to paint and repair the parsonage. It was also resolved to sell graves to non-member brothers in the faith as follows: one grave for \$3 and two for \$5.

1936 - From January voters' meeting minutes: The election of a new pastor was discussed. The pastor is to get free fuel in the form of wood or coal. Candidate Carl W. Schrader was called unanimously.

1937 – From voters' meeting minutes: Resolved that Elmer Kruse can only have pigs on the north and east sides of the teacher's stable. Elmer Kruse is to pay \$5 rent from today on for the teacher's residence; however, the Ladies Society can keep the two northern rooms. Smoking in the divine service and in meetings in the church is prohibited.

1938 – From voters' meeting minutes: New members include Harry Degener and Paul Kruse. Resolved that we acquire collection baskets for the worship collections. From now on, divine services are to alternate between English and German.

1939 – From voters' meeting minutes: The congregation will pay \$25 to be supplied with crushed rock for our church road. The building of a new toilet was entrusted to the trustees.

1940 – From voters' meeting minutes: Resolved to have a new sanitary toilet at the school built by C.C. Camphouse and to remove the old one behind the kitchen. The school is to be freshly painted. Resolved to give Pastor Schrader two Sundays off, and not have a divine service on one of those Sundays.

1941 - Sigmund Thies and Fred Schoenbeck were accepted as new members. A motion was made and seconded to keep the old hymn book instead of getting new ones; also to give \$15 to school to buy things needed for one year.

1942 and 1943: In the Jan. 1, 1942 meeting, voters decided that, as an act of patriotism, they would drop the German language for the duration of the war. German Lutheran congregations remembered the pressure and prejudice applied to them by both government and citizen groups during WWI. In 1943, the effects of war rations were felt. The Ladies Aid could not get coffee or sugar for their monthly meetings.

1944 and 1945: In 1944, Edwin Kruse's janitorial duties included building the fire, cleaning the church, cutting the grass, and ringing the first bell prior to a service. In 1945 at the October 4 meeting of the Ladies Aid, Pastor Friedrichsmeyer spoke of the need for a hall or recreation room by making a basement under the church. Twenty-two years later, the current fellowship hall was built and dedicated.

1946 and 1947: A Men's Club was approved by the voter's and on April 26, 1946, Pastor Friedrichsmeyer opened the initial meeting with a scripture reading and prayer. Besides the pastor, six men were present: Edwin Althoff, Edwin Kruse, Elmer Dannenbrink, William Wegener, Herbert Wegener, and Henry Schrader, Sr. In 1947, digging a basement under the parsonage took most of the year with the dedication on August 31. The congregation decided to buy a furnace for the parsonage, and in October a furnace without a blower was purchased from Mr. Vogt of Red Bud for \$365.

1948 and 1949: We celebrated our Centennial throughout 1948, and Pastor Friedrichsmeyer finished a book on the congregation's history. Six stained glass windows and the chancel window were donated, along with the altar cross and candles. The Ladies Aid sanded and refinished the church floor. Pastor Friedrichsmeyer preached his farewell sermon on January 7, 1949. The congregation concentrated on calling a new pastor. Six pastors were called that year. All declined. Rev. Schaefer served as the vacancy pastor while seminary students were engaged on the first and second Sunday of the month.

1950 - 1953: We had been without a pastor for more than a year and a half when Candidate Eugene Vetter, fresh from the seminary, was installed as our pastor. His time with St. John's was short, however. He accepted another call and left on October 28, 1951. In 1952, St. John's again went in search of a pastor. After seven calls were declined, Rev. William Frank Bahr accepted our call and was installed on November 16. In 1953, the voters approved of fixing the stall in the barn so Pastor Bahr would have a place for his chickens.

1954 and 1955: These were years of repairs and improvements. Since the well would go dry in especially dry years, a well-driller needed to go down another 50-60 feet. Water needed to be piped to the parsonage, and water was hauled to the pastor's cistern. The school needed a new floor, and the church floor needed repair. The altar and pulpit were scheduled for repainting.

1956 and 1957: Voters decided on a cemetery policy that allowed no members to transfer their grave sites to someone else and that allowed only a LCMS pastor to officiate at a committal service. Daylight Savings Time was instituted nationwide. During the summer of 1957, the church was remodeled and painted. The altar, lectern, and pulpit that had been painted white were returned to a wood finish by Ted Mueller of Chester.

1958-1961: Rev. Henry Kuring, Sr., was installed on June 15, 1958. His salary was \$300 per month plus \$50 car allowance. In 1959, the communicant membership was 161. In 1960, the voters discussed purchasing new church pews, and on October 15, 1961, the new pews were dedicated.

1962-1964: St. John's school closed at the end of the school year in May 1962. In 1963, the price of a grave site was increased to \$5. As St. John's entered 1964, Pastor Kuring prepared to retire and planned to resign as soon as another pastor accepted the call. The agreement would remain in effect until June 1. The plans never got as far as June 1. Pastor Kuring died suddenly during the March 3 Lenten service.

1965-1966: After the 1964 passing of Pastor Henry Kuring, Sr., 1965 was a year of calls being declined. In 1966, Pastor Martin Gehrt accepted the call and was installed on June 26, 1966.

1967: 1967 was a busy year. A piano for the church was added to the list of improvements. The construction of an educational building took place with the cornerstone laid after the morning service on October 1. On October 8, the building was dedicated with an afternoon service where Rev. Kenneth Wegener was the speaker. On Reformation Sunday, October 29, St. John's celebrated the centennial of their church building which had been dedicated in March of 1867. Rev. Walter Vetter, who served as pastor from 1930-1935, was guest speaker.

1968-1970: On February 4, 1968, Pastor Gehrt announced that he would retire but continue to serve as acting pastor during the call process. He continued in that capacity until January 1973. In 1969, the slogan, "The Little Church with the Big Welcome" began to appear on the Sunday bulletins. In 1970, Pastor Gehrt asked for some relief from mowing the parsonage lawn. The voters decided to contact Dwain Schrader about mowing the lawn.

1971-1973: St. John's annual chicken dinner was instituted on February 7, 1971. In 1972, the Teacherage/Janitor's house, which stands across from the schoolhouse, was sold to Charles and Aldina Schrader. In light of the 125th anniversary coming in 1973, work began on a booklet and a pictorial directory of the congregation. During 1973, in the midst of what would be a 23-month vacancy in which 11 calls were issued, the congregation celebrated its 125th anniversary. While plans were underway to celebrate, plans for remodeling the church were also being made.

1974-1976: In 1974, Rev. Martin A. Hauser accepted our call and was installed on November 24. In 1976, St. John's joined with St. Patrick's Catholic Church in manning a stand at the Ruma Bi-Centennial celebration. St. John's also held an open house during the 200th year celebration of our nation's founding. The Ladies Aid purchased new flags for the church.

1979: The practice of ringing the church bell during the Lord's Prayer was discontinued in September. Until then, the bell was rung at the beginning, the middle and the end of the prayer. That practice was carried over from Germany when horsepower was quietly supplied by horse power. Any farmers who may have been in the field planting or harvesting on a Sunday morning would be alerted to the Lord's Prayer and could join in at least that much of the service.

1980: St. John's decided to sell gravesites for \$100 to members and others in good standing with the LCMS. It was approved by a 16-3 vote to allow Father Flack to participate in Patricia Wegener's wedding. The voters also raised the organist pay to \$10 a service.

1981: On May 3, voters approved the Men's Club installation of a new ramp in front of the church. In July, the west gable and south side of the roof received major damage from straight line winds. Bricks were knocked in and scattered onto the top of the ceiling inside, and about half the roof was ripped from the building and scattered over the church yard. The storm was part of a system that spawned a tornado.

1982-83: On May 30, 1982, Rev. Russell Weise was formally ordained as an LCMS pastor and installed at St. John's, Ruma. He had been serving as vicar here since July 1980. In 1983, the Men's Club received approval to tear down the old barn and build a 24x48 pole building.

1984-85: In January 1984, Pastor Weise accepted a call to Messiah Lutheran in Alton, Illinois. At the May voter's meeting, voters discussed the age of voting, women's suffrage, a voting majority, and keeping the unity of the church. The congregation decided to draw up a framework to revise the constitution. At this time, only men were voting members. Rev. Brian Feicho was installed at St. John's on July 21, 1984. In September 1985, Pastor Feicho began to serve as vacancy pastor to St. Peter's Evansville.

1986-87: In early 1986, St. Peter's approached St. John's to form a dual parish. Their pastor had retired, and all the calls they sent out had been declined. The two congregations worked out the details in many meetings throughout the year. On December 14, Pastor Brian Feicho was installed at St. Peter's, Evansville, as a dual parish pastor. In 1987, since Pastor Feicho and Tanya were living in the parsonage at Evansville, St. John's decided to rent their parsonage for \$250 a month. The revised constitution was finished in late September with attention given to women's suffrage, enabling women to vote and hold office. It was published for 3 weeks for the congregation to review.

1988-89: In the annual January meeting in 1988, the revised constitution was approved by the voters and would be sent to the Synod to be ratified. By the September meeting, the constitution had been returned for minor changes. The voters adopted the changes at that same meeting and submitted them to the district. Women could now be voting members of St. John's, 140 years after its founding. The first women to be approved as voting members were Dolly Wegener, Helen Liefer, and Donna Krause. In the January 1989 meeting, Marlene Ling and Mathilda Ling were accepted as voters. In May, Deb McCutcheon and Kimberly Wolter were accepted as voting members.

1989-1992: In April 1989, Pastor Feicho accepted a call to Indiana. By September, Rev. Stephen Lane was installed. In May 1990, a church directory was completed. In September 1992, a bid was approved to repair and repaint the stained glass window frames.

1993-1995: \$5000 in repairs were done to the rental house. With the flood of '93, some members of the Renault congregation suffered damage, and St. John's held a door collection to help those members. In 1994, a closet was built in the fellowship hall for the Ladies Aid. A 150th anniversary committee was set up in September 1995 consisting of: Marlene Ling, Martha Hanebutt, Fred Miller, Dwain Schrader, Del Prange, and Art Wegener. The anniversary would be celebrated in 1998.

1996-1997: In May 1996, a feasibility study showed high interest in supporting a Lutheran high school in the area. The handicap ramp in the back of the church was completed, and approval was given to build a cabinet in the sacristy for gowns. A proposal for air conditioning the church was well supported, and by June 8, 1997, A/C was installed and ready for hot weather.

1998-1999: Throughout 1998 we celebrated our 150th anniversary with monthly events. In 1999, the elders discontinued the use of the sign-up book for communion and implemented the use of attendance cards.

2000-2001: In March 2000, Pastor Lane ended his 11 years of ministry with St. John's and St. Peter's. Rev. Paul Bramstedt served as vacancy pastor. Paul and Charlie Schrader were thanked for digging graves for 30 years. In June 2001, Pastor James Leistico was ordained and installed as pastor to St. John's and St. Peter's.

2002: By April, the sound system had been installed in the church, and installation of air conditioning in the fellowship hall was underway. On December 1, the pin oak tree on the front church lawn was dedicated to God's Glory. It had been planted in memory of Roger Kruse who died July 14, 2002.

2003: While a major redecoration of the church was taking place, worship services were held at St. Peter's. The cry room was ready for use after Becky Carroll, Abby Schlie, and Kelly Barbre finished painting a Noah's Ark mural on the walls. Deb McCutcheon led a new youth group called The Fellowship. Members were young people from both St. John's and St. Peter's.

2004-2006: In 2004, Randolph Monument Works began repairing stones in our cemetery. Joy and Terry Meyer rented the parsonage in 2005. The "Move the Kitchen Upstairs" project was completed in 2006.

2007-2010: The church bricks were resealed at a cost of \$7,600. A pictorial church directory was completed in 2009. The Art Wegener family replaced the beeswax altar candles with oil candles in 2010.

2011-2012: After 31 years as chief bulletin printer, Art Wegener turned the job over to Linda Schulz. After 50 years, the Men's Club decided not put on the annual Chicken Soup dinner. Instead, the Council decided to host a fried chicken dinner. After 18 years, the last church newsletter was printed for January/February 2012.

2016: In the May 2016 voter's meeting, voters approved having the church roof, parsonage roof, and schoolhouse roof power-washed and painted. In June, the 20-year-old church air conditioners developed a leak. Both were replaced with new ones.

2017-2018: On June 25, 2017, Pastor Leistico was granted a peaceful release to accept his call to a congregation in Canada. His last day was July 31. On August 1, retired pastor Rev. Thomas Handrick became the new vacancy pastor for St. John's and St. Peter's. In the September voter's meeting, voters approved the removal of the old parsonage. Byron Zipfel was to demolish the house, dig a hole, and bury everything by mid-January 2018.

2018-2019: Rev. Handrick accepted the call as a part-time pastor for St. John's and St. Peter's. He was installed on August 9, 2018, at St. John's. After being instituted in 1971, the Chicken Fry would not be held in 2019. The Thanksgiving service was combined with both congregations.

2020-2021: In 2020, approval was given to spend \$9,700 to have the cracks in the interior walls of the chancel area repaired and the entire chancel area repainted. Deb McCutcheon created a website which was ready for use in June. In November, the Men's Club disbanded. In April 2021, Pastor Handrick retired due to health issues.

2022-2023: Pastor Randy Fischer was installed to serve both St. John's and St. Peter's on February 6, 2022. In August, the fellowship hall roof was replaced and new gutters installed. In January 2023, we began celebrating the 175th anniversary of the founding of our church. Each month saw a special recognition or celebration, leading up to our November 5 big celebration.