



1950 - 1975

GOD IS GOOD AND HIS MERCY ENDURES FOREVER

God continued to rain down His blessings on our church during the third quarter of the 20th century. This was a period of much progress in the growth of First Lutheran. It was a time when the name "First Lutheran" was adopted from the previous "First English Lutheran." Three called pastors served the congregation from 1950 - 1975. They were Pastor Daniel Ondov, Pastor O. William Luecke and Pastor Paul Blunck.

Highlights of these years were:

- Our first vicar in 1959.*
- Mission congregations in Stevensville and Superior.*
- Our first kindergarten.*
- Trinity Lutheran Superior became daughter congregation of First.*
- Remodeled the church and built parish hall*
- Rev. Al Pullmann as missionary at large helped plan second church.*
- First Lutheran assisted building churches in Seeley and Condon.*
- Hired first full-time secretary and organist.*
- Purchased house for offices and classrooms.*
- Created Lutheran Community Center Corp..*
- Provided Collateral for purchase of building for day care etc..*

Daniel Ondov was called to First Lutheran from his pastorate at Rudyard, Montana in September 1950. The congregation's membership grew rapidly during this time. A different parsonage was purchased at 180 North Avenue West, at a cost of \$18,500, with the help of a loan from the Church Extension Fund.

Pastor Ondov started mission congregations at Stevensville and Superior, Montana, and served both places for a time. The Stevensville mission closed after a very few years, for a lack of interested people in the area.

In September 1955, the church opened its first kindergarten with Mrs. David (Hazel) Crerar as the first teacher. Later Mrs. Frank (Christine) Barth joined the staff.

Some remodeling of the church interior was accomplished during Pastor Ondov's pastorate. The choir loft located above the altar was removed and the altar was moved back. Further remodeling of the church interior was done after the Parish Hall was completed.

First Lutheran was assigned its first vicar shortly before Pastor Ondov accepted a call to Nebraska. In 1959, Norman Raedeke assisted First Lutheran as vicar under the guidance of Pastor Krause of Pablo. After 1960, First Lutheran had no vicars until the program was resumed in 1970.

1951 Disbursements	
Salaries	\$ 3815.00
Light and Water	141.92
Office Supplies	219.19
Postage	121.40
Church Upkeep	101.99
Church Supplies	511.41
Fuel and Gas	268.99
Telephone	87.83
Sunday School	278.13
Film	21.36
Missions	900.00
Debt	575.00
Parsonage Expense	130.28
Insurance	146.42
Pension Fund	142.38
Lutheran Witness Subs.	97.50
Taxes	96.90
Lutheran Hour	40.00
Pastoral Conference Equal.	8.40
Convention Equalization	35.44
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	
	\$ 7741.60
BALANCE IN THE BANK	
	\$ 1509.44
	\$ 9251.04



*Pastor Ondov
At First Lutheran
1950 - 1959*



Elsie Garner and Christine Barth - teaching.

Successor to Rev. Ondov was O. Wm. Luecke, who was installed on May 1, 1960. In August 1960, Trinity Lutheran Church of Superior was organized as a daughter congregation of First Lutheran. It had been served as a preaching station since 1952.

For several years, the Planning Board had been discussing the need for more adequate worship and training facilities for the growing congregation. In 1961, the Board decided it would be best to stay in town at the Higgins and Daly Avenue location in order to serve the University of Montana students, rather than relocate in the suburbs. The congregation submitted their plan to the Montana District and the following resolution was adopted in the 1961 convention held in Laurel:

Resolved, that the Montana District grant First Lutheran Church of Missoula \$15,000 at the present time, so that this money, together with a loan of \$60,000 from the Church Extension Fund, will enable them to continue with the first state of their building program - with the understanding that an additional grant will be requested in some future year when, under the blessings of Christ they become able to proceed also with the building of the new church in the place of the present old structure.

In March 1962, the contract for the Parish Hall building, as designed by the architectural firm of Witwer and Price (Stewart Price was a member of the congregation) was awarded to the Collins Construction Company of Kalispell in the amount of \$52,776. Construction was begun in April and completed in August of 1962. The building provided large and small classrooms for Sunday school and kindergarten, an auditorium, kitchen, and a small gymnasium; this building adjoined the church.

Remodeling of the church from a plan, also designed by Stewart Price, was begun in August of 1962. General contractor for the work was a member of the congregation - Carl Olofson. The remodeling doubled the seating capacity, bringing it to 300. A church office, a pastor's office and a student lounge were a part of the project. Later, the front part of the church was brick-veneered and a small addition constructed to unify the architecture of

OUR OFFERINGS				
		Home	Missions	Bldg.
JANUARY 3	-	\$171.56	\$ 64.14	\$ 6.00
January 10	-	235.53	103.45	-
January 17	-	228.00	55.10	62.25
January 24	-	178.60	73.80	15.00
January 31	-	190.98	57.75	5.00
Needed by				
January 31	-	1700.00	700.00	-
Received by				
January 31	-	1004.67	389.24	88.25
The Lord has prospered us; are we ALL giving as the Lord has blessed us?				

From a 1960 bulletin.



Pastor Luedke and confirmands Bieberdorf, Llebechuk, and Schwaderer



Altar of the church in 1960



Above, Reuben Tietz, vice-chairman of the building committee, turning over the spade to Carl Olofson.

Other members of the building committee were Art Brackebusch, Wally Jensen and Henry Rosenau

Above right and below are scenes from the ground breaking ceremony..



the church and parish hall. Still later, a covered, concrete walkway was constructed between the church and the hall.

It is interesting to note that the original church building at Higgins and Daly was made in the form of a cross. The original narthex, nave, chancel, and back meeting room formed the main beam of the cross; and the office kitchen and Sunday school rooms formed the crossbeams. The cross formation can be viewed from above.

Pastor Ondov returned to Missoula as guest speaker at the dedication of the parish hall.

The church continued to grow under Pastor Luecke's leadership. He broadened the reach of the Gamma Delta Society to include not only University enrolled students, but also those of college age who were employed in the community or attending business or technical schools.



First Lutheran - August 1962 - before remodeling of the church.

In February of 1964, Rev. Albert G. Pullmann, pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Eureka, Montana accepted a call as missionary-at-large for the Montana District.

His chief assignment was to establish a second parish of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, in Missoula. In addition he was to serve the mission station at Superior. First Lutheran released 22 families from their membership, which were to form the nucleus for the membership of the second parish for Missoula. Land had been purchased near the corner of South Avenue and Reserve Streets, in the Fort Missoula area, with a Church Extension Fund loan. A constitution was prepared and the name "Good Shepherd Lutheran" chosen for the new group. A charter from the State of Montana was ready when problems arose. An agreement came to light that the various Lutheran churches in Missoula had promised one another that no Lutheran group would build a Lutheran Church within three miles of one another. Unfortunately, the land purchased for the Good Shepherd Lutheran group was only about one mile distant from another, already established Lutheran church. Also, First Lutheran began to have second thoughts about losing so many members to Good Shepherd, which would leave them basically in an inner city position. Therefore, they asked the District to reconsider its plans for the new congregation. This factor, combined with problems with the Church Extension Fund director, caused the Mission Board to call a halt to the establishment of the Good Shepherd mission. This ended all plans for forming the Good Shepherd Lutheran congregation, and the 22 families were reinstated to membership with First Lutheran. Later, in 1966, a successful attempt for a daughter congregation was culminated in the establishment of Messiah Lutheran Church in the Rattlesnake area of Missoula.



Finishing the remodeling in 1962

Pastor Luecke accepted a call to Huntsville, Texas, in June 1965. Pastor Pullmann served First Lutheran as interim pastor after Pastor Luecke left. Also, during this time, Pastor Pullmann conducted a survey of people in the Seeley-Swan country who might be interested in having Lutheran services in those areas. He had a good response and began holding regular services there. Besides being a minister, Rev. Pullman was a good carpenter. He developed the idea of building inexpensive A-frame type churches in the Seeley Lake and Swan Valley areas. A. E. Martinsen, a real estate broker from First Lutheran Church's congregation, donated land in the Seeley Lake area for the construction of a church. Land was purchased at Condon, in the Swan Lake area, and Pastor Pullmann successfully directed the completion of two very attractive, rustic, churches.



The Churches at Seeley Lake and Condon

During construction of the A-frame churches, nine young teenagers from First Lutheran and other Montana congregations formed a summer work camp at Seeley Lake and did a major share of the early construction, especially clearing the land, mixing and pouring of concrete, gathering the logs, and laying the foundation and erecting the A-frames. It was also at this time Rev. Paul Blunck first came to Missoula.

He had taken time out from his service as a minister to acquire a Master of Education degree in the area of human relations counseling from Montana State University at Bozeman, Montana. At the completion of his studies in June, 1964, and before being called to a pastorate, he was hired as a carpenter and pastor by the District Mission Board chairman, Leo Tormoehlen, to help take care of the vacancies in the area and help Pastor Pullmann construct the chapels at Seeley lake and Condon. The two pastors served as everything from construction foremen and laborers to camp counselors. Pastor Blunck and Mark Richlen (one of the teenagers) even overhauled the old International truck when the engine burned out.

After Pastor Luecke left for Huntsville, Texas, in June, 1965, First Lutheran was again in the position of calling a Pastor, and Pastor Pullmann was called as vacancy Pastor. Pastor Blunck was commuting to Missoula on weekends while completing the work on the Seeley lake and Swan Valley churches. Pastor Blunck's family took residence in the parsonage during the summer of 1965 to look after the house and lawn until a new pastor accepted the call to First Lutheran. The church leaders, recognizing personal abilities and appreciating an opportunity to save on relocation expenses, extended the call to Pastor Blunck. On October 3, 1965, Pastor Blunck was installed as Pastor to First Lutheran.



Pastor Blunck in his office - February 1966.

Late in October 1965, the Bluncks moved out of the parsonage at 180 North Avenue. The congregation had previously agreed to change its policy of providing a parsonage for its pastor to one of providing a housing allowance. This gave the pastor the freedom of selecting his own living quarters, which would be more suited to individual taste and needs.



Choir in 1967 - Directed by Dori Balko

During Pastor Blunck's service, the church hired a full-time secretary and organist, Val Uetzmann, through the Parish Worker's program. Val's arrival coincided with the church office's first new IBM electric typewriter - and the retirement of the old manual machine. The vicarage program was resumed in 1970, with Vicar Gary Heckman, and was continued for a number of years.

Because of crowded conditions and a need for more classroom space, the Planning Board was directed to investigate properties in the church area for possible purchase. In 1970, the congregation leaders presented to the voters and obtained approval to purchase the residence property adjoining the church property to the south. The residence was purchased for \$17,000 with the aid of a loan from Church Extension Fund. The lower floor area was first remodeled to provide badly needed quarters for the Pastor and Parish Worker. The garage and upper floor area provided needed additional classroom area. In 1975 the remodeling and carpeting of two upper floor classrooms had been completed, with time contributed by the property and maintenance committee.

In 1969, the congregation participated in what was called "Spiritual Life Mission". The SLM was a program of congregational self-evaluation which was being encouraged and offered through the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. During the week of February 3-9, the Rev. Wilbur C. Cain of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, spent the week with our congregation and Pastor to aid in the self evaluation effort and to formulate recommendations and a suggested course of expansion to following in coming years. During SLM, a series of evening services were held along with evaluation sessions with the congregation, the church leaders, and Pastor Blunck. It was during the SLM that the course of First Lutheran was to be significantly altered, giving rise to both the concept of what was called the "Salt and Pepper Ministry" and the "Satellite Concept."

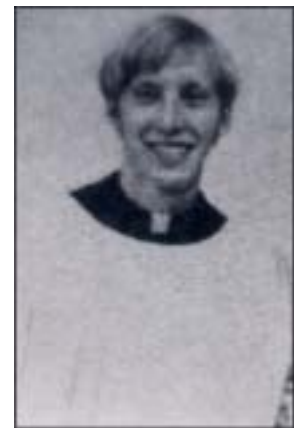
An evaluation of Gamma Delta and, in general, First Lutheran's position with respect to the University community led to the concept of "Salt and Pepper Ministry". The Salt and Pepper Ministry never really got off the ground due to lack of financial support both in the congregation and the district, but the concept was valid. The idea was to involve selected Lutheran students in the University Ministry by providing spiritual leadership and scholarship funds to enable interested students to witness for our Lord on the campus. No special facilities were required in addition to those already available: only motivated people and financial aid to allow the students to have more free time to witness.



*Val Uetzmann -
was our first Parish Worker and
she stayed at First Lutheran until
1969 when she moved to St. Louis.*



Office for Pastor and Parish Worker.



*Dan Wurster
Vicar 1971-1972*

From the SLM the “Satellite Concept” was born. Although this program was started in the Lutheran Community Center, it was not fully developed as originally conceived. The Satellite Concept originated because First Lutheran asked itself the question “why have another bedroom community church” located in the residential or bedroom area of Missoula? While another church facility would have been nice, it was concluded that much better utilization of our present facilities could be made. After much study and thorough research, the church council adopted the concept to be presented to the congregation.

On March 9, 1970, the Satellite concept was presented for adoption and passed as the guiding principle for future growth to First Lutheran. The concept rested easily for a few months until the work started on formulating the Lutheran Community Center and Day Care activities.

To clear the way for the Day Care, the voter’s assembly, on July 25, 1971 passed a resolution calling for the creation of a second non-profit corporation called the Lutheran Community Center (LCC). This corporation was created from the congregation’s expansion philosophy which was to follow the SLM recommendations, and which was to conduct the business of the church in this community outreach program.

In 1973, the voter’s assembly passed a resolution allowing a day care facility to be opened and operated by the LCC in the Parish Hall. Mrs. Joyce Kruckeberg was chosen to be the administrator. This initial center provided day care facilities but did not perform other social and counseling functions as it was hoped each satellite center eventually would. The day care was a beginning, however, and its initial year of operation was blessed by being financially self- sufficient and by gaining a reputation for conducting a quality program.

After the initial year of operation, an extension was granted to continue using the Parish Hall facilities. During this year, however, the LCC, having had an eye out for possible purchase of property, was able to secure a loan from Synod for \$60,000, with First Lutheran providing its facilities as collateral. The LCC purchased the old fraternity house located at the corner of Gerald and Daly. The funds obtained from Synod were for special projects only and were not available to the congregation for regular expansion or improvement work. The funds were obtained without interest and with only 1% nominal service charge for handing the loan and payments.

With the \$60,000 loan, \$40,000 was used to purchase the building and \$20,000 was to be used for badly needed repairs and remodeling. Pastor Blunck’s carpenter and mechanical skills again came in handy when he was given the responsibility for organizing and accomplishing a major remodeling project. Together with Bob Krueckeberg and the help of many other members, the work was begun.



*Philip Kelly
Vicar 1972-1973
Our first vicar from the
seminary in Springfield, Illinois .*



*Vicar Glenn Zander
Vicar 1973-1974*



*Daniel Bohlken
Vicar 1974-1975*

The remodeling work consisted of adding major bathroom facilities, rearranging the downstairs, overhauling plumbing and electrical systems, adding a fire escape, fireproofing the boiler room, fencing the play yard, and meeting other health, fire, and educational requirements along with many more minor items necessary before occupation could begin. Much remodeling work remained and continued as personnel and finances were available. The LCC building carried on a day care program for 60—70 children, housed our Vicar, and provided 8 room spaces for Gamma Delta students.

In 1974 and 1975 the church congregation busied itself with preparations for celebrating its 75th anniversary. Much painting and maintenance work was completed on the church facilities in preparation of this celebration. A special thank offering was initiated to finance the travel and other expenses of the celebration and of the printing of the 75th Anniversary Book. The celebration was held October 19 at the First Methodist Church. A choir anthem - “Acclaim Our God” - was specially commissioned for the event by church member John Gibson and was performed by the choir.



*Robert Hinz
Vicar 1975-1976*



*Pastor Blunck, Congregation President
Norman Balko, Missouri Synod President
Dr. J. A. O. Preus. Dr. Preus was special speaker
at the 75th anniversary celebration.*



*Oct. 19, 1975 - First Lutheran's 75th Anniversary
“Committed to Serve the Lord Faithfully”
Pictured are Stewart Price, Art Brackebusch, and
Carl Olofson.*



Choir at the 75th Anniversary service in 1975.