

History Of
St. Matthew's
Lutheran Church

In the 1870's a nucleus of German Lutheran's immigrated to this country and settled in the vicinity of Nortonville, Kansas. Being a religious people and concerned with public worship members of this group contacted the already established congregation of St. John's, Millwood, Kansas for assistance. The members of St. John's gave their consent and thus Rev. Droeggemueller came to serve these people in 1886. He began with a membership of four with services held once a month. His trips here to Nortonville were made with horses and farm wagon. Nortonville continued to be a preaching station served by pastors of St. John's for the next twenty-four years.

Rev. Emil Polster began serving the Nortonville Lutherans in 1894. During the next three years the membership began to grow. Under Rev. Polster's leadership and guidance, St. Matthews became a congregation.

On February 12, 1897 in the old Washington School House a charter was drawn up and adopted creating "der Evangelical Lutherishen St. Mathaeus Gemeinde bei Nortonville, Kansas." Also on this date the German Constitution was drawn up and adopted. At the time of organization the congregation consisted of 19 communicant members.



Building in which the organization of the Lutheran Church took place.

THE EIGHT CHARTER MEMBERS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH



Fred Niemann



Henry Niemann



Karl Niemann



Carl Lang, Sr.



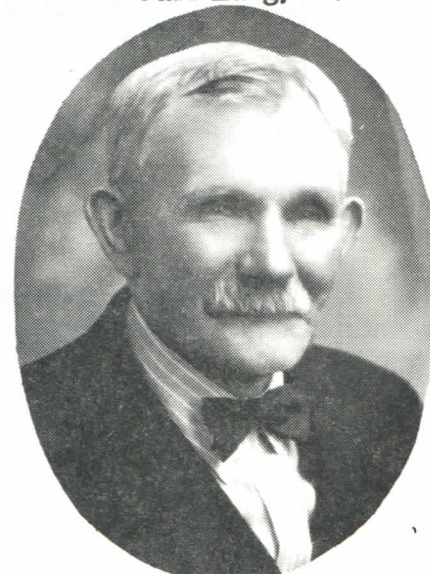
Carl Lang, Jr.



George Ziegler



Chris Kloepper



William Wehking, Sr.

According to the records of the new congregation, the first Baptism listed was that of Frank Ernst Perry Ziegler on Jan. 2, 1898. The first class was confirmed on March 27, 1898. The class consisted of John Ziegler, Adam Ziegler, Jacob Ziegler, Fred Niemann, John Niemann, Marie Niemann and Rosa Niemann.

In the fall of 1897 Rev. Polster was stricken with serious throat trouble. At which time the young congregation employed a vicar, Julius Huchthausen to serve them.

From 1897 to 1900 services continued to be held in the Washington School House. Feeling the need for a separate house of Worship, St. Matthews began a building program. Land for the new church was donated by Henry Niemann. The men and women of the congregation gave a great deal of time and donated long hours with loving care to the completion of the church. Also much of the material was donated so that the total cost came to \$1,081.60. The New house of Worship was dedicated to the Glory of God in August, 1900.

Among the members of the congregation there are many fond memories regarding the church. Such as the wood burning stove located in the middle of the church which made it very warm for those who sat close, with the temperature dropping considerably for those who sat toward the outside. It was the custom of that time that during the service the men and women were separated, with the women and children sitting on one side, and the men and older boys on the other.

Because at this time there was no Sunday School, an integral part of the Sunday morning Service was the Question and Answer period. At the end of the service the children would come to the front of the church and the pastor would question them concerning various parts of "Luthers Small Catechism." This was to have been taught to them beforehand by their parents.

The German Lutheran Church in the country near Nortonville.

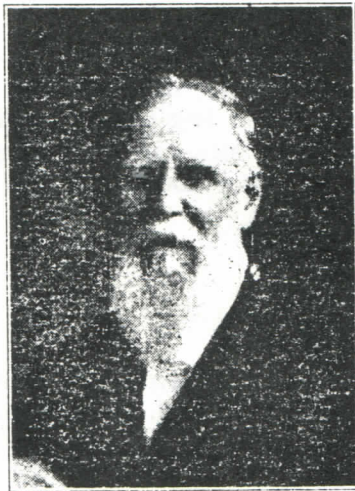


In 1905 the Rev. J.J. Timkin, also of Milwood, began his service to the young congregation. English was introduced in the church services in 1908 with an English service being held every fifth Sunday.

Hoping to receive a resident pastor in the near future the people undertook the task of erecting a parsonage for the pastor and his family. This task was completed in 1909 at the cost of \$1,400.00.

In 1910 the prayers of the young congregation for a resident pastor were answered. A call was sent to Rev. G.W. Ruhl which he accepted. He began at a salary of \$500 a year. However, much of the food for his family and the grain for his horse was donated. The period of his ministry among us was brief as he accepted another call in 1912.

In Feb. 1913 a call from St. Matthews was accepted by Rev. G. Wolf. He was pastor here for only six months when in July he was called to his eternal home by a cerebral hemorrhage. His remains were laid to rest in the Nortonville Cemetery.



The Rev. Philip Gottfried Jung.

Rev. G. Jung began his ministry in Nortonville in 1914. It was through his interest in young people that a young peoples society was begun in 1916. This group later became established with the International Walther League on July 19, 1920. Up until the time of Rev. Jung, St. Matthews had been an independent organization. However, in 1916, under the leadership of Rev. Jung, St. Matthews became affiliated with The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. In Nov. 18, 1921, twelve ladies of the congregation gathered together and decided to form a service group within the church, which became known as The Ladies Aid. The first president of this group was Mrs. Eda Ziegler, Vice - president; Mrs. Lena Traue, Secretary-Treasurer; Mrs. Margaret Nieman. The Ladies Aid joined and was a charter member of the Lutheran Womens' Missionary League on May 16, 1943.

Saturday School for the religious instruction of the children began in 1919 and has continued through the present.

On Jan. 15, 1926, Rev. Jung was taken from our midst to enter his Eternal Reward.

Again in our history God blessed us in that a call was sent to Rev. E.F. Guenther, which he accepted, and began his ministry among us during the same year, 1926. It was at this time that many changes were made within the congregation especially concerning language. Until this time all church matters were conducted in German. Because of a recent War with Germany, German Lutherans suffered many hardships. Finally on Aug. 18, 1926 the Voters Assembly voted to record all further minutes in English and to have services of German and English on alternating Sundays. And on April 27, 1929, it was voted to have English every Sunday and German Services twice a month. In September 1926 it was felt that additional religious instruction of the children was needed and thus a Sunday School was established. On January 2, 1927 in order to complete and further educate the children the Voters' Assembly discussed starting the Christian Day School. At a meeting on August 18, 1927 there was a motion to buy school equipment and to begin a full school. This was accepted and school opened on September 12, 1927. At this same meeting the question of the advisability of relocating of the church from the country to the community of Nortonville was first brought up.



Under Rev. Guenther's guidance the Men's Club was organized in July, 1928. On December 14, 1944 this organization became affiliated with the Lutheran Laymen's League.

The constitution of St. Matthews was translated into English, revised and adopted in 1928. During the year 1929 Rev. Guenther accepted a call to Clay Center, Kansas. He returned to be guest speaker at the Golden Anniversary on February 16, 1947.



Rev. George Kettner

Rev. George Kettner served St. Matthews from 1930 to 1942. Shortly after Rev. Kettner arrived a committee was appointed to canvas members concerning the relocation of the church from the country to the city of Nortonville. After a great deal of discussion, on May 25, 1930 the Voters Assembly agreed to a relocation. A committee was appointed to purchase land in town. Finally in 1933 the building of the church began. It was completed and dedication services were held on January 28, 1934. Speakers at the Dedication of the church were Rev. Henry Blanke of Leavenworth and Rev. Geo. Hoyer of Topeka. There was no parsonage for the Minister and his family in town so property was rented until such time as suitable accommodations could be acquired. In 1942 they purchased a house near town that served as a parsonage until the present parsonage was erected in 1954.

While Rev. Kettner was still here the Christian Day School was disbanded.

During his ministry here, he was also asked to serve as Pastor at St. Paul's, Effingham, Kansas, through the Mission Board.

Rev. Kettner accepted a call to Redeemer Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, Kansas in 1942.

After a short vacancy, Rev. R.L. Lammers accepted the call to serve St. Matthews. He began his ministry here in 1943.

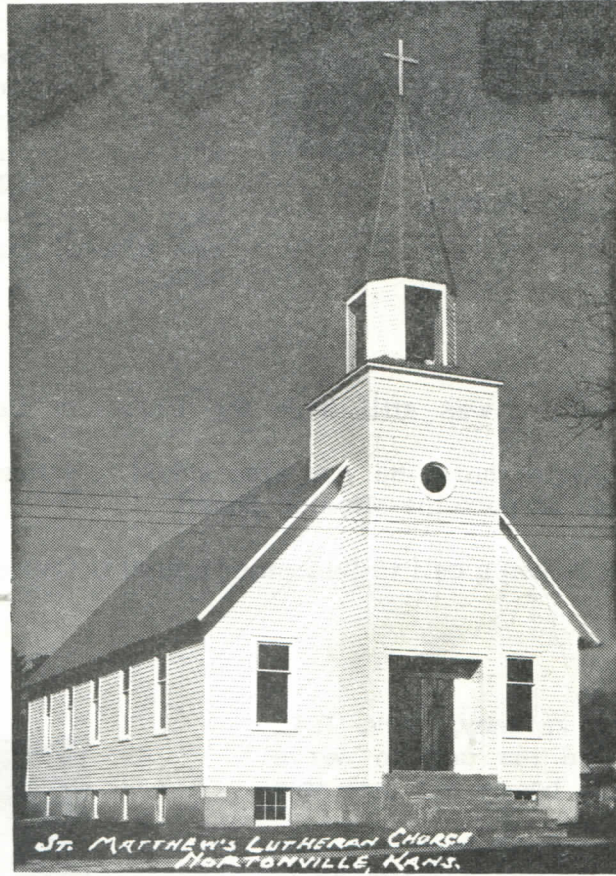
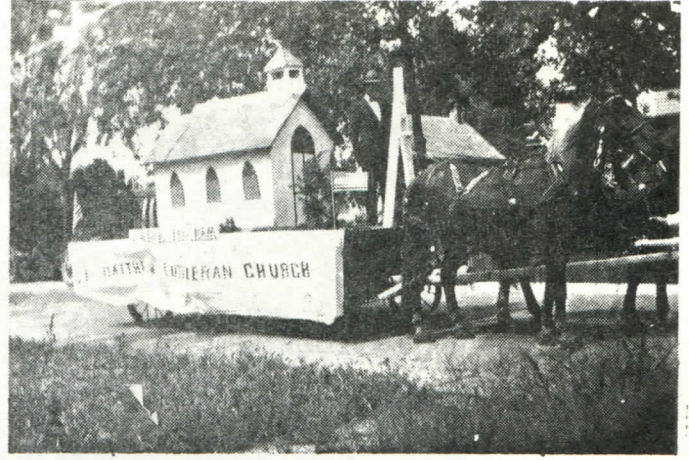
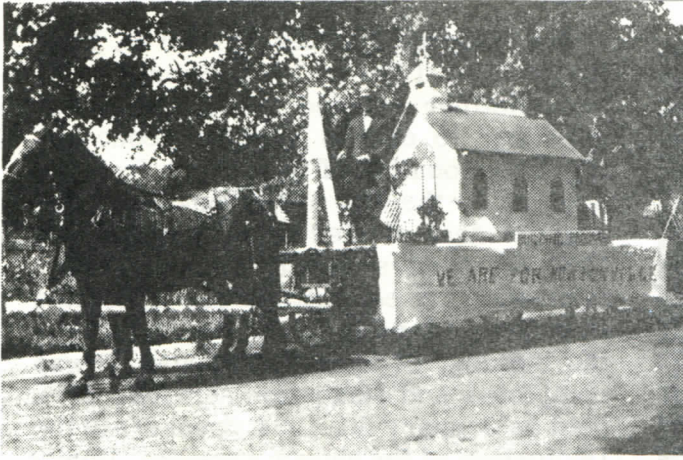
While Rev. Lammers was at St. Matthews, the 50th Anniversary of the organization of the church was celebrated on Feb. 16, 1947. During this day of celebration we had as guest speakers, Rev. G. Kettner, Rev. E.F. Guenther and Rev. C.C. Niemann.

In 1949 St. Paul's of Effingham was disbanded. A number of their membership transferred to the St. Matthews congregation.

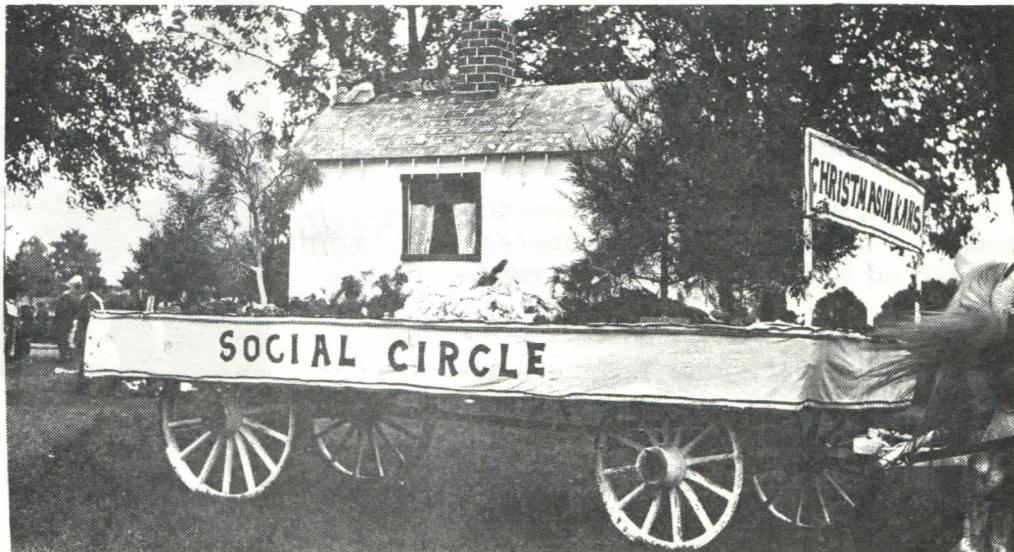
In April of 1949, Rev. Lammers accepted a call to Mount Calvary Lutheran church, Marysville, Kansas.



Rev. R.L. Lammers



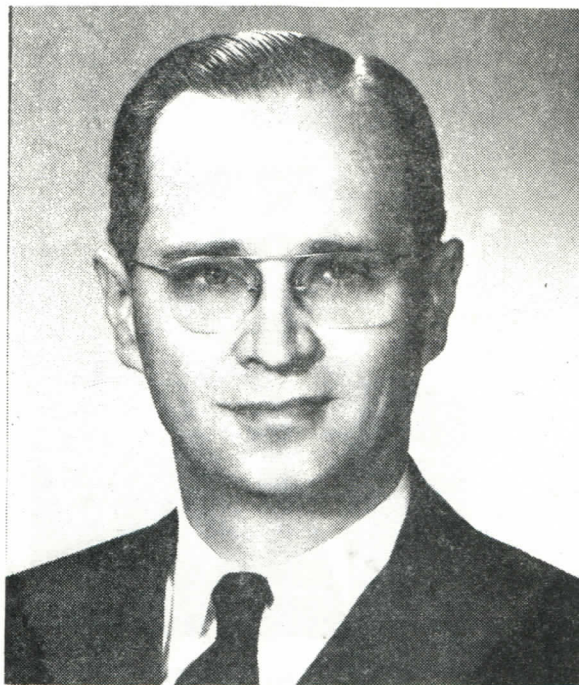
Church at Lafayette and Elm completed in 1933.



Rev. Theodore Schmidt, a Missionary in the South American Fields, accepted the call to St. Matthews in 1950.

During his ministry in Nortonville the Voting Assembly decided to observe Communion on the last Sunday of the even numbered months rather than quarterly.

Rev. Schmidt accepted a call to Le Grange, Texas in 1952.



Rev. Theodore Schmidt



Rev. K. Juengel

In 1953 the prayers of the congregation were again heard and Rev. K. Juengel received and accepted the call to serve the congregation. Under his direction the parsonage near town was sold and a new one was erected on the church property.

In 1956 Rev. Juengel accepted a call from our midst.

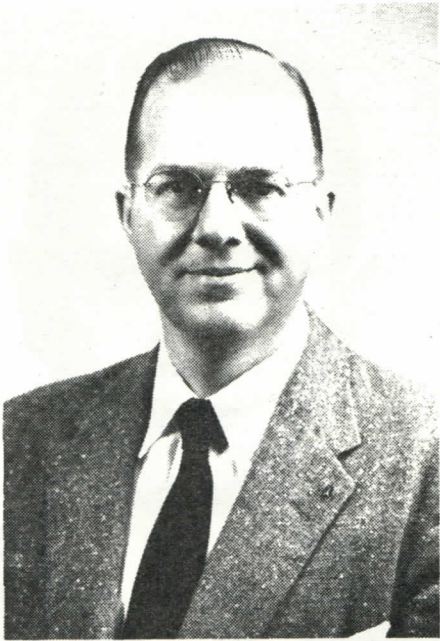
The congregation was indeed fortunate in that after only a short vacancy Rev. E. Wilms accepted the call of St. Matthews in early 1956.

In June of 1956 the first Vacation Bible School was organized. Classes were held for children from age 5 through the 8th grade.

After suffering a stroke in 1959 he resigned from the ministry and left Nortonville to go to Wichita.



Rev. E. Wilms



Rev. R.A. Brammer

After a vacancy of two years on Nov. 19, 1961 Rev. R.A. Brammer was installed at St. Matthews.

Again more adequate facilities were needed. The question of remodeling or rebuilding the church arose.

After four years of faithful service, Rev. Brammer accepted a call to Good Shephard Lutheran Church in Port Arthur, Texas in 1965.

June 1967 was a time for rejoicing at St. Matthews. The congregation had contacted the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri asking that a young Minister be assigned to them. Rev. M. Koberg arrived here June 21, 1967 and was installed in this, his first pastorate, on June 25, 1967.

Rev. Koberg is the son of Rev. and Mrs. E. Koberg of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He attended Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota and Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, graduating there in 1963. With the exception of one year vicarage under Rev. G. Krueckerberg, formerly of Leavenworth, at St. John's Lutheran Church, Lombard, Illinois, Rev. and Mrs. Koberg made their home in St. Louis, Missouri while he completed his studies. He received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Concordia Seminary on May 26, 1967 and was ordained by his father on June 11, 1967 at Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

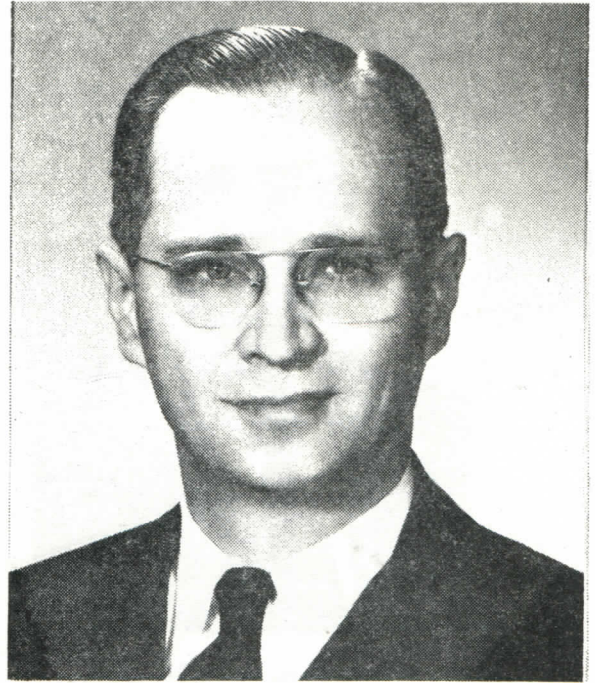


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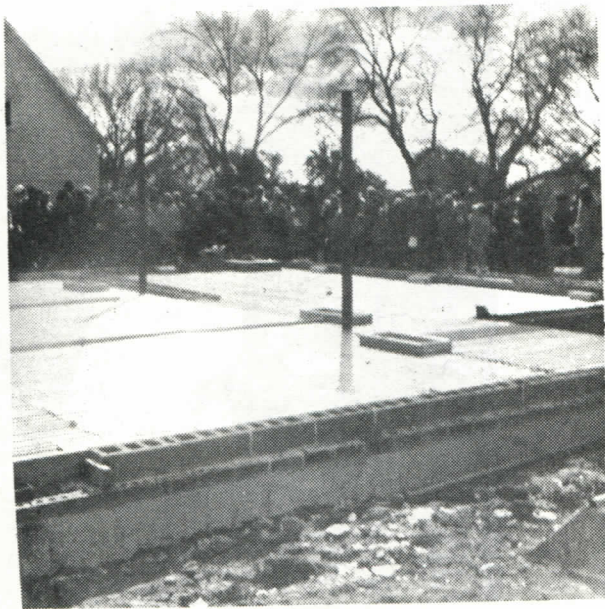
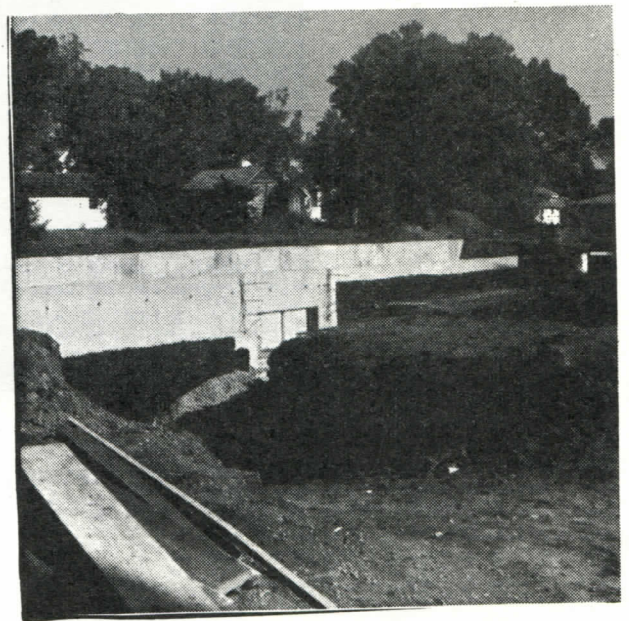
Rev. E. Wilms

With the Grace of God the congregation has continued to grow, and as it grew the building program became one of great importance. After a great deal of discussion and many prayers it was decided to build a new church. On August 3, 1969 the Groundbreaking for the New House of Worship was held immediately following the Morning Service. The Cornerstone was laid on October 26, 1969.



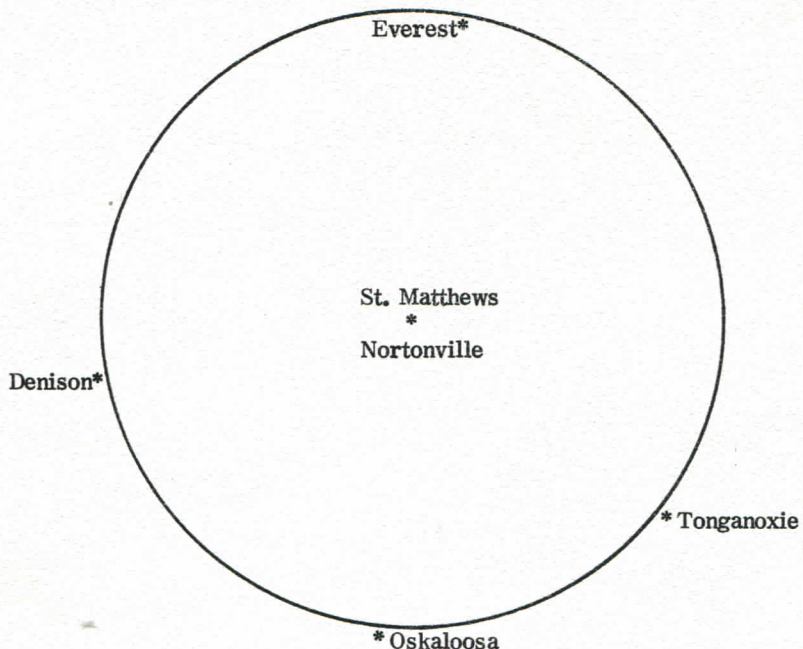
Julius Niemann Harold Buttron, Henry Moeck, Rev. Koberg, Ernest Westerman,
Ralph Nolting, Albert Gigstad, Harold Dietrich, Albert Nolting, -----





From a beginning of four persons the congregation has now grown to a membership of 253 with 187 of that number being Communicant members.

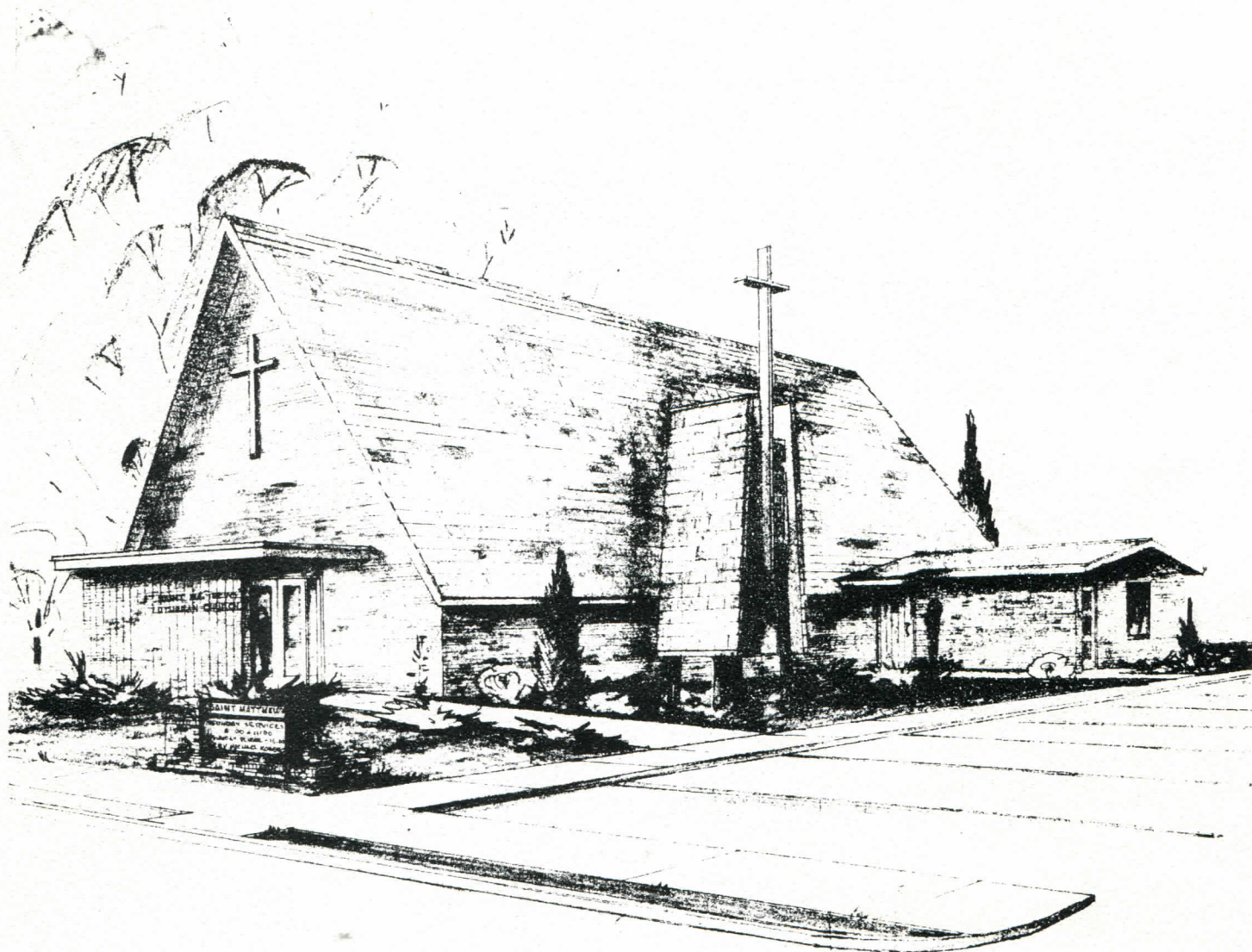
With St. Matthews Church as a focal point there are arms of welcome extended in all directions. St. Matthews Parish embraces a large area. If one could start at one point on the perimeter and drive a full circle he would travel approximately 1,256 1/2 miles.



St. Matthews New House of Worship has been completed. The first services were held in the Church during Lent, March 18, 1970. Confirmation was held on Palm Sunday, March 22, with seven Confirmands. They are, Ann Metzger, Cheryl Wehrkamp, Rosa Sewell, Nancy Reder, Vicky Nolting, Mark Hatchell and Mark Niemann. The Dedicatory Services are to be held April 5, 1970. The guest speakers are Rev. K. Juengel, a former Pastor of St. Matthews, and Rev. C.C. Nieman, a former member of St. Matthews.

The congregation of St. Matthews feels that they have truly received God's Blessings in these past years. We pray that He will continue to look upon us with pleasure and through His Word and by His Grace grant us continued success in "Reaching, Preaching and Teaching."

Presented by St. Matthews Walther League
Special Committee: Linda Nolting, Chairman;
Cheryl Niemann, Eric Niemann



Congregation

Pastor: Rev. M. Koberg
Chairman: Jim Niemann
Secretary: Kenneth Nieman
Treasurer: Kenneth Martin

Board Of Elders

Henry Moeck, Chairman
Julius Nieman
Albert Gigstad

Board Of Trustees

Ernest Wehking, Chairman
Ralph Nolting
Steve Westermann

Board Of Education

Arthur Johnson, Chairman
Junior Niemann (Ex. Off.)
Wyatt Fuhrmann