



Celebrate
CHRIST
100
LUTHERAN CHURCH
CENTENNIAL

WEBSTER GROVES, MISSOURI

1897 . 1997
ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET

CHRIST
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LUTHERAN-CHURCH

WEBSTER GROVES, MISSOURI

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ANNIVERSARY
B O O K L E T

PUBLISHED THE 14TH OF MARCH, 1997

The Early Days...

ily members worked for families or businesses in Webster Groves.

In the 1880s a lawsuit that had tied up the sale of land in Webster Groves was settled, and the Missouri Pacific became more cooperative for commuters, allowing further settlement and building. Lots were subdivided and houses were built, no longer Italianate summer homes with tall, arched windows, but large Queen Anne houses with towers and bay windows and open porches across their fronts.

A small business district clustered near the station on Gore Avenue: groceries, livery, hardware, tobacco, a barber shop and a saloon. When the Frisco Railroad laid track through Old Orchard and Kirkwood, business districts grew there, as well. Edward Joy, a real estate investor, moved Ulysses Grant's log cabin to Log Cabin Lane to serve as his office. His son Justin built Queen Anne houses with fancy carving throughout the Old Orchard area.

Archbishop Kenrick established a



667 Atalanta Avenue

Atalanta Avenue. They held their dedication service on June 27, 1909. The white frame building, still standing in Webster Groves, held 65 people. Built without a basement, it was heated by a "cannon-

ball" stove. The first altar was made by one of the members from an old office desk, turned so its back faced the congregation. Unfortunately, the building, located on a side street in the middle of a block, was difficult to find. However, the congregation, which grew from 52 members in 1910 to 62 names by 1914, worshiped on Atalanta Avenue until 1923.



At the conclusion of the First World War, the congregation felt the need for a full time resident pastor.

In the spring of 1915 they called a young, recently-graduated seminarian, George Luecke, Jr., as their pastor. Luecke was a pastor's son from Winfield, Kansas, who had attended schools in Winfield and



Rev. George Luecke, Jr.

Atalanta Avenue. They held their dedication service on June 27, 1909. The white frame building, still standing in Webster Groves, held 65 people. Built without a basement, it was heated by a "cannon-

Conover, North Carolina. With Pastor Luecke's youthful and vigorous leadership, the congregation grew rapidly.

By 1920, the population of Webster Groves had grown to 10,500. The membership of Christ Lutheran Church, which had grown to over 100, called for a larger and more suitable building. In 1920 or 1921 the congregation bought a large lot at the southeast corner of Lockwood and Selma Avenues, adjoining the newly-built high school. Between 1923 and 1924 a building committee of five men oversaw the building of a handsome, \$30,000



"The Chapel" at Lockwood and Selma.

brick church building that held 150 persons. It included a basement assembly room, a kitchen and other facilities. The members referred to this church, located on the southern edge of their property, as "the Chapel," since they intended eventually to build another, larger structure on the northern side.

By the time the congregation had paid off its mortgage a few years later, the space had begun to pinch. The Sunday School had been forced to use space in the neighboring high school and, with weekly attendance around the 200 mark, it became necessary to hold two services on Sunday morning. In spite of the hard time of the Great Depression, in 1934 the congregation began a building fund for a new,

The Early Days...

Catholic parish in 1886. The Sunday School Movement that swept the country in the late 1880s inspired the non-denominational Tuxedo Park Union Sunday School which met in a barn.

Commuters settling in Webster Groves included James Case, board member of the Suburban Railway Company. In 1896 he persuaded them to build a streetcar line from the City of St. Louis down Summit Avenue in Old Orchard and out Lockwood through Kirkwood to Meramec Highlands. Its thousand-foot-long viaduct across the valley of the River Des Peres was the longest street railway bridge in the world.

Rustic and carefree, life in Webster Groves was interrupted in 1896 by a shocking murder-robbery of a visitor. Although unincorporated Webster had no police, three young men were seized as the perpetrators and narrowly escaped lynching.

The community had dirt roads and board sidewalks. Each house had an outdoor privy, water from a cis-

The Early Days...

tern, and heat from coal stoves. Some families had horses and carriages, but many people walked to the station or livery stable. Families raised chickens and tended gardens. Children picked up the mail at the Post Office in Grant's log cabin or Prehn's Grocery.

By 1896 the thriving community boasted beautiful homes, a progressive, 24-year-old school district, and four established churches, *cont. on next page*

larger church building.

During 1940-41 the congregation chose architect Theodore Steinmeyer, a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Committee on Church Architecture, to assist them and Herman Gall, the congregation's president, appointed a building committee of men and women. At first the group intended to build an addition to the chapel building. But soon they found that an entirely new building was needed. In 1920 the congregation purchased the lot and rectory at the southwest corner of Lockwood and Selma from Holy Redeemer Catholic Church and sold its former property to the Webster Groves School Board, which still uses the 1924 church building for its offices.

Ground was broken for the current church

The New Church, 1942...the realization of a dream.



"Architect Theo. Steinmeyer designed the structure, the art glass windows and all the furniture. The building itself is of Bedford stone with a tile roof. The style of architecture is English Gothic.

Much symbolism has been incorporated—in the altar, the rose window in the chancel, and the window medallions and symbols on the outside of the building. The theme of all these symbols is Christ—the name of our church.

Our building includes a large basement auditorium with a stage and a complete kitchen. There are 15 separate classrooms, a parlor, a secretary's office and pastors' study." Total cost: \$70,000; present replacement cost estimated at over \$1 million.

building in August, 1941. The cornerstone laid on November 2, 1941, and dedication services were held during the week of November 8-15, 1942.

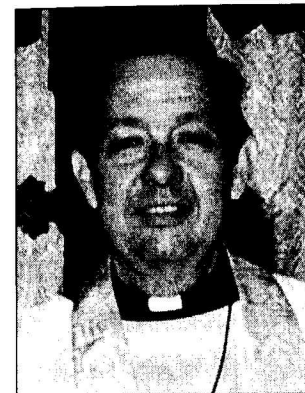
Rev. Luecke retired in 1960, after serving the members of Christ Lutheran Church for his entire 45-year career.

In 1960 the congregation called Rev. Warren Gritzke from Toledo, Ohio, who served the parish for 16 years.

Rev. Gritzke was of a more moderate inclination. During his ministry at Christ Lutheran, the congregation gained many insights into Christian ecumenical activity due to Rev. Gritzke's active interest in church unity, but not without some controversy.

Conversations regarding possible merger with nearby Bethany Lutheran Church, a congregation of the former American Lutheran Church located at Fairview and Glen Road, stalled and failed. When an after school Youth Center for highschoolers was begun at Christ Lutheran Church in response to appeals from young members, 20 members of the congregation left for various reasons, many joining a new Lutheran church in the area.

Like the other Missouri Synod congregations of the early 1970s, Christ Lutheran also became involved in the controversy that afflicted the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod during that time. The congregation was one of those which decided to form the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC) with the goal of affiliating with a different Lutheran synod. In 1983 Christ Lutheran



Rev. Warren Gritzke

The Early Days...

each organized in 1866: Emmanuel Episcopal, First Congregational, Webster Groves Presbyterian, and First Baptist. All that was missing was self-government.

In March a petition signed by 2/3 of the taxable residents was presented to St. Louis County requesting incorporation. On April 2, 1896, the incorporation was approved, and local druggist, W. Scott Fleming, was appointed the first mayor. Webster Groves' boundaries were marked by Bompert Avenue in the east, Jackson Road on the south, Berry Road on the west and Newport Avenue on the north. A year later the City of Webster Groves annexed adjoining subdivisions, including Old Orchard, Selma, Sherwood Forest and Tuxedo Park, extending the city's boundaries.

(Thanks to the Webster-Kirkwood Times for this historical material available in their Webster Groves Centennial paper.)

Saint Louis Newspapers

March 14, 1897

St. Louis is third largest manufacturing center in the US after New York and Philadelphia.

Russia proposes sending 2000 troops to Crete to compel Greece to withdraw.

A boxing bout scheduled between James Corbett and Robert Fitzsimmons is canceled.

A business depression slows mercantile growth.

Chocolates: 2lb for 25 cents. A 3-piece bedroom set: \$8.50. A 4-room frame home in Webster on a 50x150' lot: \$900.

William McKinley is president.

The English Church of Our Redeemer is dedicated in south St. Louis; it cost \$6,500.

even hosted a convention of the AELC.

The turmoil of this period took its toll. Membership at Christ Lutheran was generally in decline, although a number of members from Concordia Lutheran Church in Maplewood joined during this time, many of whom are still active members at Christ Lutheran today. Weekly attendance was in the 40s, and frequent discussion at voters meetings revolved around how to increase the membership. The members maintained their schedule of parish activities, however, including the annual picnic, ice cream social, Easter breakfast, pancake supper and work days.

After Rev. Gritzke left in 1976, the congregation was served by seminary professors and Sem-inex vicar James Bailey. In July of 1980 Pastor Bailey was ordained and installed as full time pastor. During his ministry, Christ Lutheran Church again began to grow.



Rev. James Bailey

The congregation decided to improve its facilities by adding air conditioning. It also reached out in service to the community by donating the use of its facilities to the Webster Groves Day Care Center from 1973 to 1983.

By 1982, weekly attendance had climbed to the mid 70s. When the parish celebrated its 85th anniversary that year, 125 people attended a reunion bar-be-que. The next year over 80 people were attending worship each week. It was during these years that Stella Waldeck, who had served as church secretary at Christ Lutheran Church for 55 years, re-

tired.

By 1986 the congregation was able to report to the AELC that it numbered 189 baptized, 157 confirmed and 139 communicant members. Though the choir included only six members, on Easter morning they sang the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah*.

In 1987 members of Christ Lutheran attended the constituting convention of the Missouri-Kansas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, formed by congregations of the AELC, the LCA and ALC to create the largest Lutheran church body in North America.

In June of 1980 Christ Lutheran had held a joint service with the members of Living Word Lutheran Church, former members of Village Lutheran Church of Ladue, who had been worshiping in a Methodist chapel. Other joint worship occasions and a joint VBS helped form a promising relationship. By 1988 the two congregations had decided to merge and celebrated their union in festive services in September of 1988. Membership now stood at 277 active members.

The merger brought the Rev. Arden Mead, pastor of Living



Rev. and Mrs. Arden Mead

Word, to the new congregation, now called simply "Christ Lutheran Church."

Rev. Mead, formerly pastor of Village Lutheran Church, is a writer and creative force not only at Christ Lutheran but at Creative Communications for the Parish, which publishes his worship and devotional writings.

DATELINE Webster Groves

1900 Webster Groves' population has grown to 1,895.

1902 The city requires residents to be vaccinated against small pox.

1910 Webster Groves has a population of 10,500.

In **1917** Webster Groves High School is given a World War I Armory, which becomes the school's gymnasium.

1932 Webster Groves City Hall, including clock and bell tower, is completed.

1937 Local blue law is repealed allowing movies to be shown on Sundays.

1940 Residents vote to extend the city's southern boundary to Highway 66.

1943 Webster Groves YMCA opens, then moves to 17 East Lockwood. North Webster Y opened in 1945.

1997 Centennial Highlights

March 14

Centennial celebration with a catered dinner for the congregation at the Shrewsbury Knights of Columbus dining facility.

May 17

Picnic in Ivory Crockett Park, north Webster, marking 15th year of Webster/Rock Hill Ministries.

June 29

Reunion service to which former members have been invited, followed by a picnic on the church grounds.

October 26

Reformation service/Octoberfest celebration followed by a picnic on the church grounds.

November 16

Special service to mark the 55th anniversary of the dedication of the present church building.

In 1992, at the request of the MO-KAN Synod, Christ Lutheran underwent an intense self-examination, resulting in a new constitution. With both pastors working on a part-time basis, the congregation hired a business manager to attend to the management of the congregation. In 1993, after a leave of absence, Rev. Bailey accepted a call to a parish in Kansas.



Rev. and Mrs. Richard Wehrs

Christ Lutheran called the Rev. Richard Wehrs as co-pastor in November of 1993 to share pastoral responsibilities with Rev.

Mead. Rev. Wehrs is an artist and teacher, as well as a pastor. Together Christ Lutheran's two pastors lead the membership in unique approaches to worship and Christian expression.

While the congregation attended to its own needs—forming a Kids Club and a Crossways Bible Class, and adding exterior lighting, pew cushions and an electronic piano, for example—it also continued its tradition of ministry beyond itself. The congregation developed bonds of fellowship with a sister congregation, St. Paul Lutheran Church of West Plains, MO, through exchange visits and help in paying off its mortgage. Members also participated in a Habitat for Humanity project, and the congregation sponsored a seminarian.

The congregation took another large step forward in expanding its fellowship in 1996 when several dozen families who had formerly worshiped as Luther Memorial Lutheran Church in Richmond Heights de-

cided to join Christ Lutheran in Webster Groves. Their diversity and Christian gifts have enlivened the worship and fellowship at Christ Lutheran and necessitated planning for an expansion of pastoral service and worship opportunities. Average attendance now exceeds 170 each week.

PREVIOUS CHRIST LUTHERAN ANNIVERSARIES

MARCH 4, 1934—Tenth anniversary of the dedication of the chapel.

November 8, 1942—Dedication of the present church building. Christ's pastor, Rev. George Luecke, Jr. preached at 11 a.m. Rev. Karl Kurth of Grace Lutheran Church, St. Louis (from which came Christ's founding members) preached in the afternoon, and Rev. George Luecke, Sr. of Columbia, PA, preached at a service on the following Wednesday.

1947—50th anniversary of the congregation celebrated with a series of weekend services, Rev. Luecke, Dr. Martin S. Sommer, and the Rev. O.A. Geiseman of River Forest, IL, preaching.

1955—40th anniversary of Rev. George Luecke, Jr.'s ministry celebrated in 1955, featuring Dr. William Arndt and Dr. Paul Bretscher of Concordia Seminary preaching.

1956—60th anniversary of the congregation featuring Rev. Alfred O. Fuerbringer, president of Concordia Seminary, preaching in the morning and the Rev. Elmer Maschoff of Glendale Lutheran Church in the afternoon.

1982—85th anniversary of the congregation and 40th anniversary of the building, featuring Rev. Dr. Harold Hecht, president of the English Synod, preacher and Professor Robert Bergt, guest violinist. A week later the Rev. Dr. John Tietjen, president of Seminec, preached.

1995—a steering committee, led by Dr. Elmer Kraemer, began to plan the congregation's 100th anniversary celebration. (List of members on p. 12)

Ceremony Dedicating the Present Church Building

November 8, 1942.

"Official Opening... The builder will hand the key to the pastor, who, with appropriate words, shall unlock the door. The president of the congregation will then open the door. After this, the pastor shall call upon the name of the Lord and then, the ministers, carrying the Bibles and the elders carrying the sacred vessels, shall proceed into the church, followed by the congregation, walking slowly and devoutly. After the Bibles and the sacred vessels have been deposited in their proper places the congregation shall be seated."

OUR CENTENNIAL YEAR ROSTER OF MEMBERS

(As of March 1, 1997)

Carol Arrington
Christopher Arrington
David & Christine Austin
Douglas Austin
Ernestine Bartee
Rev. Dr. Robert & Thelda Bertram
Elmer & Delores Bibb
Carrie Lawrence
Cory Lawrence
Craig Lawrence
John & Paulette Bley
Leslie Bley
Alexander Bley
Thomas Bley
Michael Bley
Ellen Bohanan
Ron & Patti Breunig
Carrie Breunig
Meghan Breunig
Harry & Virginie Brightman
Peter Brightman II
Justin Brightman
Dorothea Brockschmitt
Del & Jo Chase
Linda Clerk
Lisl Clerk
Dr. Cathryn Cohen
Maureen Collins
Dacia Collins
Edith Cooper
Paul & Floy Cornelsen
Carolyn Crowe
Andrew Crowe
Wally & Dolores Culver
Langford Cunningham
Julie Damalas
Michael Damalas
Susan DeBusk
Kim Donermeyer
Timothy Donermeyer
Kevin & Diane Drollinger
Andrea Drollinger
Katherine Drollinger
Elizabeth Drollinger
Ruth Edwards
Lois Flaxbart

Tom Frillman
Susan Frillman
Adam Frillman
Myrtle Gegenbauer
Jennifer Grimm
John & Laura Haffenreffer
Christopher Haffenreffer
Lisa Haffenreffer
Annie Haffenreffer
Mabel Hardin
Rev. Dr. Kenneth Haugk
Gary & Renate Hawn
Kenneth Hawn
Kevin Hawn
Virginia Hayes
William & Helga Hayes
Dan & Sue Hearty
Megan Cromer
Robert & Helen Hedderig
Laura Hely
Mildred Heiner
George Hessler
Gwen Hickman
Michael & Kristin Hill
Virginia Hixson
John Hoffmann
David & Patty Hopper
Frances Horvath
Mike & Sandy Hoyer
Jesse Hoyer
Matthew Hoyer
Harriet Imrisik
Hans & Val Jacoby
Kim & Jack Joern
John Joern
Jacob Joern
Jacey Joern
Jordon Joern
Louise Jones
Dietrich & Judy Karnuth
Anne Marie Kettler
Nancy King
Irmgard Koch
LeRoy Koehler, Jr.
Judy Koepke
Steve & Shannon Koosman
Elmer Kraemer

James Kuemmerle
Jerry & Kathy Kuziel
Jason Kuziel
Myrtle Kuziel
Jeffrey Kuziel
Gary & Elsie Lang
Chuck & Carolyn Lange
Richard & Libby Leuchtman
Daniel Leuchtman
Alexandra Leuchtman
Kami Leuther
Samantha Leuther
Taylor Leuther
Keith & Nancy Lissant
LeRoy & Iris Ludwig
Michael & Marti Majino
Matthew Majino
Elsa Manske
Dr. Paul & Sandra Manske
Ethan Manske
Claire Manske
Louisa Manske
Elaine Maxeiner
Howard & Leigh McGee
Barbara McMillan
Colin & Kris McPherron
Rev. Dr. Arden & Ellen Mead
Nicholas Hilgendorf
David & Tanja Mead
Peter & Beronica Mead
Ruth Meeker
Tim & Kristin Miles
Heather Miles
Hannah Miles
Mitchel Miles
Maxwel Miles
Cay Moehle
Steve & Linda Mueller
Timothy Mueller
Richard Mueller
Ashley Mueller
Don & Donna Munger
Kerry Munger
Bradley Munger
Sandra Munger
Lucille Murray
Rev. Dr. Larry Neeb

Gale & Bettie Nunn
Robert & Joan O'Brien
Jennifer O'Connor
Ryan O'Connor
Morgan O'Connor
Donald & Kay Paul
Daniel & Donna Pelkey
Joey
Dorothy Perry
Ernestine Petering
Faith Phillips
William & Wendy Picking
Lydia Picking
Daniel Picking
David Pull
Lou & Dottie Raether
Merle & Lydia Reischauer
Muriel Reuss
Donald & Gloria Richardson
Alan & Mary Richter
Andrew Richter
Bradley Richter
Greg Riggs
Bob & Joan Rivas
Brian Rivas
R. B. Robinson
Sylvia Rogers
Tess Rogers
Cletus & Emiley Romay
Mark & Janet Rook
Sara Rook
David Rook
Jerry & Margaret Ryan-DeBonis
Vic & Flo Saeger
Dr. Daniel & Janet Sahn
Nathan Sahn
Elias Sahn
Aaron Sahn
Zachary Sahn
Matthew Sahn
Eric & Jean Sauer
Michelle Sauer
Frank Sauer
Gene & Libby Sauer
Marie Schaeffer

Charles Schneider
Kathryn Schneider
Bill & Harriet Scholle
Ben Scholle
Glenn & Marion Siems
Bill & Georgia Sippel
Thor & Doris Skaar
Jeff & Jacqui Skoglund
Daniel Skoglund
Mark Smith & Jill Hunter
Michael Smith
Tore Stole & Rosemary Kunz
Garth Stole
Bryn Stole
Dane Stole
David & Christine Stratmann
Andrew Stratmann
Jeff & Sharon Thomsen
Adam Thomsen
Amanda Thomsen
Paul & Christine Toelke
Alexander Toelke
Gary & Brenda Toohey
Dr. Claudia Trautmann
Rev. Robert & Anita Trautmann
Lottie Travis
Ingeborg "Pete" Treuer
Dillon & Berniece Trulove
Robert & Wilma Trulove
Kelley & Tim Truss
Jessica Truss
Amanda Truss
Nicholas Truss
Lee Tufts
David Tufts
Al & Ann Vendt
Sally & Jim Wachtman
Michael Wachtman
Jennifer Wachtman
Ruth Wagner
Bob & Helen Weber
Rev. Richard & Beth Wehrs
Eric Wehrs
Timothy Wehrs
Margie Whiteman

Charles & Linda Willey
James "Jay" Willey
Lisa Willey
Claudia Charles Williams
William F. & M. L. Wischmeyer
William P. & Gina Wischmeyer
Anne Wischmeyer
Karl & Shirley Wolf
Nina Wright
Dr. John & Sue Zempel
Chris Zempel
Joey Zempel
Ellie Zempel
William Zempel

Church Council

David A. Austin, President
Paul Toelke, Vice President
Kristin Hill, Secretary
John Haffenreffer, Treasurer
Keith Lissant
Sandra Manske
Joan O'Brien
Harriet Scholle
Mark Smith

Anniversary Committee

Elmer Kraemer, Chair.
Ginny Hayes
Patty Hopper
Pastor Arden Mead
David Mead
Peter Mead
Larry Neeb
R.B. Robinson
Gene Sauer
Thor Skaar
Mark Smith
Paul Toelke
Kelley Truss
Pastor Dick Wehrs
Bill Wischmeyer
Karl Wolf



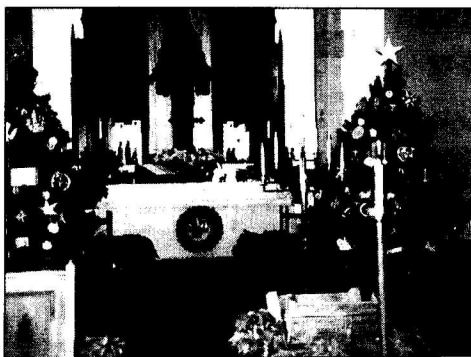
The 1928 Confirmation Class: (top row) Howard Hermann, Martin Meile, Kenneth Brockmann; (middle row) Virginia Boylan, Edward Keoneman, Russel David, Catherine Troske; (lower row) Margaret Frerking, Josephine Serie, Pastor Luecke, May Troske, Janet Schneider



Cornerstone laying for the new sanctuary, November, 1941



Dedication of the new sanctuary, November, 1942



The sanctuary at Christmas, 1988



The sanctuary at Easter, 1989

Through the Years at Christ Lutheran Church



Pastor Mead teaches a 1992 Adult Bible Class



Leroy and Martha Koehler use the new elevator in 1991



Workers on one of the "work days" help to beautify the grounds



Mark Smith as sausage maker in 1991. Mike and Sandy Hoyer stand ready to help



Look at the kids in our 1992 Vacation Bible School



Don Munger, Al Vendt and John Hoffmann enjoy the September, 1993 barbecue



Our newest member, William Grant Zempel, baptized on March 2, 1997

Key to the Art Glass Windows

by Davis Art Glass Company, St. Louis

Windows beginning in southwest corner:

- 1- The Trinity
- 2- The Creation
- 3- Conception and birth of Christ
- 4- Birth of Christ
- 5- Christ's suffering
- 6- Christ's death on the cross
- 7- Resurrection and eternal life
- 8- Christ's victory over devil and sin
- 9- Crown with three shields for Father, Son and Spirit
- 10- Judgement and Justice

Windows beginning in northwest corner:

- 11- The faithful come for nourishment
- 12- Christ, the open door
- 13- The Chi Rho and the Eucharist
- 14- The lamp of the Word of God
- 15- Christ as Good Shepherd
- 16- The Lord as Mother Hen
- 17- Christ, the Rock of Ages
- 18- The Mighty Fortress, our God

Rose Window:

The Lamb standing with the banner of victory

The Choir Windows:

Pelican as symbol of the Atonement
Ship as symbol of the Church
Luther's Coat of Arms

The Organ

The current organ was built by the Schlicker Organ Company, maker of renowned instruments, including the one in the chapel at Valparaiso University.



The 1997 Anniversary Booklet was produced by Larry Neeb and edited by King Schoenfeld. Special thanks are due to Virginia Hayes and Elmer Kraemer for their assistance in gathering and checking historical data. The booklet cover was drawn and designed by Sally Beck. © Copyright 1997 by Christ Lutheran Church.

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

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