

## Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

1874 - 1949

It has been said of the pioneers that they were so busy making history that they did not have time to write it. This is true also of the early period of the history of our village and of the congregation. From the sources at our disposal we learn that the Lutheran settlers of Oak Lawn, which was known in former years as Black Oak, held their first Lutheran preaching service in about the year 1867. The first pastor to conduct services was Pastor Wunderlich from Tinley Park. He conducted the services in a school house on the northeast corner of 95th St. and 55th Ave. Those were the "horse and buggy days" when there were no paved streets or highways, and so the services were held only every other Sunday at the most. The next pastors to serve were from Blue Island, Pastor Reinke, followed by Pastor Ernst. It was during the period of service of Pastor Ernst that the small group of Lutherans decided to organize. This organization took place on February 9, 1874, three-quarters of a century ago. And this is the event which we are commemorating at this time. It took place in a school house on the corner of 95th st and Cicero Ave., where the congregation worshipped at this time.

The first church council was composed of three members; John Hill, Joachim Lange, and John Sabs. Almost six years after the date of organization it was decided to call a pastor. That was Jan. 1880. The following year it decided to build a church. Mr. Joachim Lange donated a plot of ground for this purpose. This was located at what is now known as 5000 West 95th St. Elected to the building comm. were J. Sabs, C. Mickow, and F. Hilgendorf. Building operations proceeded and on Oct. 9, 1881 the church was dedicated. Serving the church at the time was a student named Nichols. In 1882 Pastor Duborg of Blue Island was called to be the first resident pastor of the church. He accepted the call and served until 1884. He was succeeded by Pastor H. Eisenbach, who served until 1889, Pastor J. D. Meyer came next and served until 1895. He was followed by Pastor A. Scheffler. In 1906 Pastor Paul B Brockhaus accepted the call and remained as pastor for twenty years. He was succeeded by Pastor J. H. Prange in 1926. It was during his pastorate the the present church edifice was built. In the year 1943 Pastor Prange was called to another field of labor, and Pastor Oscar Smith of Richmond, Ind. was called. He served until Oct 1947. During the six months vacancy which ensued Student Herbert Wolf served as supply pastor. In April, 1948 the present pastor, Herbert Hafermann, formerly of Thomasboro, Ill. came to Oak Lawn.

Throughout the years the Word of God has been faithfully preached and taught, The Sacraments administered, souls were added to the church and cared for through the ministrations of the church. The passing years may have brought many changes, but the work of the Kingdom has gone on without interruption for three quarters of a century. For this we give thanks to God this year.

### The New Trinity Church

The second Sunday in June also commemorates the ninth anniversary of the dedication of the present church building. This event stands out in the latter part of the history. As the years went by it became more and more evident that the old church on 95th Street was no longer adequate for the growing congregation. There was no longer room for the growing Sunday School and there were no facilities for social events and organizational activities. So it came about that in the late summer of 1939 the congregation decided to build a new church and to seek a new location.

Subsequent developments have shown that this was a wise decision. A building committee was chosen, and immediately went to work. On Oct. 15th the ground was broken. The cornerstone was laid Nov. 19th, Finally the new church was dedicated on Sunday, June 16, 1940

Members of the building committee were the pastor, John Tanner, Albert Benck, Walter Aevertmann, Julius Hein, Daniel Holm, James Franks Arthur C. Jorn, John Benck, Albert Brandt, and Fred Sievert.

At the time of the dedication of the church the communicant membership of the congregation was 365; the baptized membership about 500 and the Sunday School enrollment near 200.

At the present time the confirmed membership of the congregation is 540, the baptized membership 800, the Sunday School enrollment is 320, with 75 more children on the cradle roll.

The records of the church date back only to the year 1882. Official acts performed by the supply pastors were no doubt recorded in the books of the congregations they served. But from the year 1882 there are recorded the following official acts; 1,215 baptisms, 957 confirmations, 356 marriages, and 516 funerals.

#### The Ladies' Aid

Since its organization March 28th 1916 the Ladies' Aid Society has remained active through the years and has been an important auxiliary organization. Charter members of the organization were Mrs J. Jorn, Mrs. W. Hilgendorf, Mrs. C. Sahs, Mrs. C. Vick, Mrs. E. Mecklenburg, Mrs. G. Termunde, Pastor P. Brockhaus, Mrs. I. Rick, Mrs. P. Brockhaus, Mrs. F. Lange, Mrs. W. Aulwurm, Mrs. J. Hosmann, Miss M. Sahs, Mrs. L. Hoffman, Mrs. O. A. Albrecht, Mrs. H. Krueger, Sr. and Mrs. W. Vick. Other charter members were Mrs. J. Krueger, and Mrs. J. Voegele.

#### The Sunday School.

Trinity Church has never lagged in its interest and zeal in Parish Education. From the beginning the emphasis has always been on thorough Christian instruction. This was one of the prim motives that brought about the erection of the church plant with its parish hall accommodating a number of Sunday School classes. The present Sunday School numbers 26 classes, from the nursery class for three years olds, through the various departments, including a High School department and Young Adult group, preparing for church service, to the Adult Bible Class. In order that the interests of the Sunday School shall not be considered a separate item in the work of the congregation, but shall tie up with the general program of the church, the superintendent of the Sunday School is a member of the church council, and one of the elders from the church council is a member of the Sunday School Board.