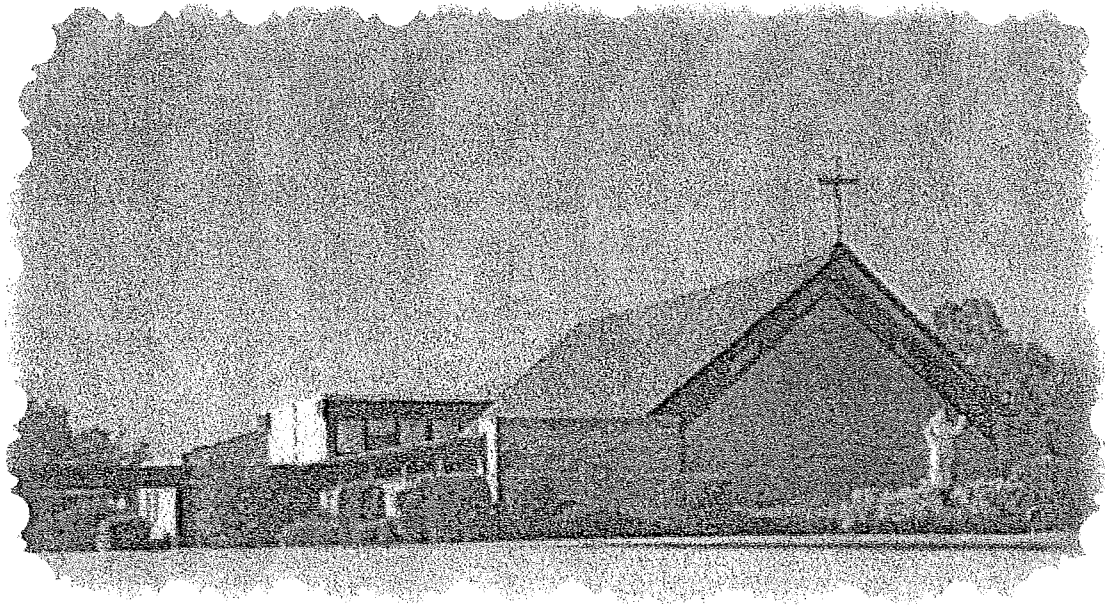


Historical Highlights

St. John's Lutheran Church

Ladysmith, WI



90 Years of Blessings And Counting.....

1981 - 2006

Compiled by: Kathy Flohr

October 7, 2006

Historical Highlights

1981-2006

Compiled by Kathy Flohr

October - 2006

1981 dawned as an anniversary year for St. John's. The congregation was 65 years old and the new church building was 20 years old. On April 26th a special "Old-Timers" anniversary service was held. People dressed in old-fashioned clothes; the men sat on the lectern side of the church and women on the pulpit side just as they did many years ago. On February 21, 1981 St. John's Senior Choir participated in a special Lenten concert featuring 7 area churches, Ladysmith High School Choir and Mt. Senario College choir under the direction of Karen Ek. In July a Williams sound Personal PA remote hearing aid station was installed to assist our members who have a hard time hearing during the service. It was installed as a memorial by the family of Nora Diederich.

On July 24, 1983 theological candidate Martin E. Shimko was ordained into the Holy Ministry of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod at a service here at St. John's. On November 6th a special "Luther Celebration" was held commemorating the 500th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther. In 1984 St. John's member Lisa Rydlund was selected by the Camp Luther Camp and Retreat Board as Volunteer of the Year – 1983. The entire sanctuary was carpeted that year. In December 1984 word was received that Pastor Eldore Messerschmidt who served St. John's from 1956 to 1966 passed away. Many friends from St. John's attended his funeral service at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Marshfield, WI on Dec. 15th.

At the annual convention of the LCMS in 1986, it was decided that women may hold voting membership and may serve as officers of the congregation as long as these positions are not directly involved in the specific functions of the pastoral office or violate the order of creation.

In 1987 on June 28, the morning worship included the burning of St. John's mortgage. The final bill of indebtedness on the church, parsonage and classroom buildings was paid. A Christian Preschool was established and

began enrollment in September, with 13 students enrolled. Marilyn Saulsbury, Ann Dehmer and Dana Woebeking were teachers the 1st year. In mid – November the oil burner of the church was converted to a natural gas unit. Furnace repairs were made at a cost of \$7531.00

A special service was held on Sunday, Sept 18, 1988 in recognition of Pastor Barg's 35th anniversary of ordination and completion of 20 years of service here at St. John's, and he and Bessie's 35th wedding anniversary. President Arleigh Lutz (Wausau) was the guest speaker and Rev. Martin Shimko was the liturgist.

In April of 1989 Pastor Barg received a call to St. John's and Immanuel Lutheran congregations of Caroline WI. After prayerful consideration he declined the call. However, in November he announced his retirement and that he accepted the call to those congregations. They have been without a pastor for 5 years and are asking for a retired pastor to serve them. Pastor Kenneth Roever of Prentice, WI served as our vacancy pastor. On August 6th at a special service, the new stained glass chancel windows were dedicated. The four windows contain 12 symbols of the church and were presented by Arnold and Roberta Saulsbury as a memorial to Pastor and Bessie Barg. On December 31st 2 services were held, the second service was followed by a pot luck dinner and many farewell speeches for Pastor and Bessie Barg as this was their last Sunday with the congregation.

On Sunday July 29th, 1990 our service was conducted by Pastor Barg who had come back to St. John's to officiate at previous commitments. He had the privilege of announcing that Pastor Brent Berkesch from Brownsville, Texas had accepted the call to serve our congregation. The installation service for Pastor Berkesch was held on Sunday evening, August 26th. Installing pastor was Rev. Kenneth Roever. Others assisting were 6 Pastors of Circuit 4 of the North WI District and Rev. Ralph Danielson of Eau Claire, WI. The service was followed by a dinner. On September 2, 1990 Pastor Berkesch conducted worship services for the first time at St. John's. In October, the Preschool held their first annual Halloween carnival.

In January of 1991, a Macintosh computer and printer were purchased for use in the church office. The voters Assembly approved the Organ Fund and moved for the purchase of and installation in time for St. John's 75th anniversary. A new pictorial directory was planned and pictures were taken

at the Photio, a local photography studio. A new Allen Electronic organ was installed in March. St John's celebrated our 75th anniversary on June 9, 1991. Former Pastor David Brockopp presented the sermon with Pastor Berkesch conducting the liturgy. At a 3:30 pm anniversary service Vice President Rev. Donald Schultz of the North WI District presented the sermon while our former vacancy Pastor Kenneth Roever conducted the liturgy. Pastor Berkesch played the organ. On June 23rd, at a special 3pm service, our new Allen organ was dedicated to the Glory of God. Pastor Berkesch played and conducted the service. In October St. John's published their newsletter "The St. John's Epistle" for the first time.

In July 1993 our new Shulmerick Nova Bell Carillon was installed. It was a gift from Milton Hocking, the Helen Sandon Estate and John and Ann Lesik.

A new roof was completed on the church in June of 1994. Also a new Nativity Scene was displayed on the lawn for the first time the Christmas of 1994. It was a gift from the families of Dennis and Debra Flater and Jim and Judy Drehmel.

On June 25, 1995 our congregation surprised Pastor and Vanessa Berkesch with a special service on the occasion of his 10th anniversary in the ministry and their 11th wedding anniversary. He was presented with a white stole, the only color he didn't have. Pastor Barg conducted the worship service. Several family members surprised the Berkesch family by attending the special event. The service was followed by a potluck dinner. In November we started holding "Contemporary Worship" once a month. The Folk Group leads the singing during these services and the music is provided by guitar and piano.

June 2, 1996 was our 80th anniversary Sunday. Rev. Victor Kuerschner, son of former Pastor Edwin M. Kuerschner presented the sermon, while Pastor Berkesch conducted the liturgy. The service was followed by a potluck brunch. In June we added another summer service on Thursday evenings to be held outside, weather permitting. In July, we welcomed former Pastor David Brockopp in the continuing celebration of our 80th anniversary. On Sept. 1st Rev. Don Johnson, brother of Gil Johnson, from Lander, WY presented the sermon as part of our 80th anniversary celebration.

We replaced the flat roof portion on the church in **1997** at a cost of \$23,000. In October, a statue of Jesus called “The Listener” was erected on the south side of the church. It was donated in memory Bernie Rydlund by his family. It is a beautiful addition to our church grounds. On November 30th new blue Advent altar paraments were dedicated. They were a gift from Rita Much, and the families of Andy Lesik, Ernest Miller, Edward and Mathilda Selinske and Louis Tomasovich.

Due to there being no snow on the ground in January of **1998**, a burning permit was required to burn the Christmas trees at our annual Epiphany Fest. Longtime member, Ida Johnson, celebrated her 103rd birthday on September 20th. Anne Towers presented the church with a gift of \$12,500 in memory of her two sisters; Linda Falge and Susan Hein, both former members of St. John’s.

On August 19, **1999** the Thursday evening service featured old – time hymns. It was enjoyed and very well attended.

Entering A New Century with God

In **2000** our pews were recovered with a beautiful burgandy fabric, replacing the old orange upholstery at a cost of \$5400. As there were no 8th graders in **2000** there was no confirmation held at St. John’s.

2001 began with our first strategic planning meeting held on January 13th. This was an opportunity to discuss present and future ministry opportunities for us here at St. John’s. In May of **2001**, the first children who attended St. John’s Preschool graduated from high school. In July, new floor tile was installed in the Fellowship Hall. Paul “Butch” Carlson, son in law of Violet Woebeking was ordained at St. John’s on July 22nd. Pastor Schultz from Wausau, Pastor Barg and Pastor Berkesch participated in the ordination. A special prayer service was held on September 13th to remember the victims of the vicious attacks on our country of September 11th.

2002 saw the building of a new, much larger storage shed in October to replace the old one.

April 27th of **2003** was Pastor Berkesch’s last service with us. He accepted a call to Spooner. A special farewell luncheon was held for him and

his family following the 10:30 am service. Pastor Arleigh Lutz was here on April 29th to help begin the process of calling a new pastor. Pastor Gary Lodholtz of Phillips was named as our vacancy Pastor. A calling committee was appointed and calls extended to several pastors during 2003. In January of 2004, a call was issued to Rev. Jeffrey Ahonen of Garland, Texas, and on Sunday, February 29th it was announced that he had accepted the call. On May 1st he was installed as the 12th pastor to serve St. John's, and on May 2nd Pastor Ahonen conducted his first service here.

In July of 2005 seven members of St. John's Youth Group, along with Pastor Ahonen and Youth Leader, Shelley Barg, traveled to St. Louis to attend the "Higher Things" National Youth Conference. Starting in September, a monthly celebration of our member's birthdays will be held. It is named "Birthday Roses" in honor of our oldest member 102 year old Rosa Kunkel. Pastor Barg returned to the pulpit for both services on October 16th in honor of Lutheran Heritage Month.

Jun 8, 2006 was the 90th anniversary of St. John's. A new historical pictorial directory for the congregation was completed to commemorate the occasion. A special 90th Anniversary celebration was scheduled for October 7, 2006, with a worship service at 12:00 pm; a catered dinner following at 1:00 pm. Former pastors who are surviving, were invited to participate in the worship service. Families of former pastors and sons of our congregation who have become pastors were invited to attend the festivities as well. Special choir and band music were a part of our worship service. During the dinner hour, talented individuals (of all ages) from the congregation were invited to provide entertainment for our guests.

The members of St. John's are grateful for the 12 faithful pastors God has provided, to lead us through 90 years of abundant blessings. We truly have much to be thankful for as we continue in His Word and Work!

90 Years Of Blessings and Counting.....

+ Servants of the Lord in Ministry at St. John's +

1915 - 1917	Reverend Ernest Schwartz
1917 - 1918	Reverend R. Reichmann
1918 - 1919	Reverend F. Gohlke
1920 - 1924	Reverend C. B. Voelz
1924 - 1927	Reverend H. Proehl
1927 - 1934	Reverend Lawrence Gallman
1935 - 1955	Reverend Edwin M. Kuerschner
1956 - 1966	Reverend Eldore Messerschmidt
1967 - 1968	Reverend David Brockopp
1968 - 1989	Reverend Edgar E. Barg
1990 - 2003	Reverend Brent G. Berkesch
2004 -	Reverend Jeffrey A. Ahonen

+ + + + + + + +

Our Parish Record

	BAPTISMS	CONFIRMATIONS	WEDDINGS	FUNERALS
1916-1926	46	10	2	1
1926-1936	112	110	31	27
1937-1946	130	80	33	11
1946-1956	151	93	36	16
1957-1966	290	251	72	76
1967-1976	174	182	101	96
1977-1981	100	90	56	38
1982-1986	80	74	29	49
1987-1991	53	38	26	27
1992-1996	71	39	29	57
1997-2001	60	41	27	51
2002-2005	38	37	20	45