

Pasterhusen

6/2/1940

Dedicated
by
Pastor
Husen

THIS IS OUR STORY

This beautiful church school and parish house, which we dedicate today, is the material expression of a vision haunting the members of Old St. Mark's for many years. Early in his pastorate the present pastor discovered a desire within the leaders of the parish to possess that modern equipment and those building facilities so necessary to the carrying on of an effective parish program of Christian work and education. With the rapid development of a youth and religious education program early instituted in the pastorate this desire became a conviction within the mind of the church council that immediate steps should be taken to provide more adequate quarters for the adopted work. The climax came in council meeting with the adoption of a resolution in 1929 that the congregation embark upon a "Greater St. Mark's Church Expansion Program" to cover a period of years, characterized by the gathering of funds each Easter Day and by all organizations within the parish cooperating in the attainment of this goal. We smile now when we recall that hopes and ambitions were then expressed for the construction of a \$250,000 edifice located in another section of the city.

Enthusiastically we all put our shoulders to the wheel and our hands into our pockets. Easter offerings of \$9,500, \$10,500, \$11,500, \$13,500 in cold hard cash were gathered in the lush years of the "roaring twenties" and the more somber thirties. With such liberality and unanimity the attainment of our goal appeared to be only a few years away.

But alas, alas! Something happened! We have yet to discover what actually did take place but this one thing we know. Banks closed, fortunes vanished, positions disappeared, incomes ceased, and with them disappeared much of our building fund, our hopes, our desires, our dreams.

As though it were not enough to have our dreams "crashed out" by the worst financial storm ever to hit America there came another storm on St. Patrick's Day, 1936, that filled our church with some twenty feet of water above the cellar level. This catastrophe necessitated repairs and refurbishing to the extent of approximately \$5,000 and appeared at the time to flood away forever our hopes for "The Greater St. Mark's."

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." This truth proclaimed for all time by the prophet, Isaiah, kept reverberating in the minds of the leaders and people of our parish. Each succeeding year found us with a larger church school and a growing congregation dedicated to the work and mission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Crowded assembly rooms, packed corridors, foul air, complaining worshippers made worship anything but pleasant and inspiring. All realized something should be done to remedy this deplorable situation. Some determined that something must be done if the congregation was to continue its forward movement.

Then came the anniversary year of 1937, when the congregation resolved at its January congregational meeting to celebrate its eighty-fifth birthday. In his report to the congregation the pastor courageously proposed that the "Greater St. Mark's Expansion Program" be re-launched as the major achievement of the anniversary celebration. Discussion early revealed that within the congregation existed at least four distinct groups: Those who believed it foolish to spend money upon a building situated upon our present location because of the flood hazard and type of neighborhood; those who desired to spend money solely upon a new church for worship purposes only; those eager to spend the money already gathered upon a new parish and educational building; and those who were content to let well enough alone. What headaches some of us retired with in that year! After much debate, after many congregational meetings, after several ballots by mail of the congregation, council agreed that the majority of members were favorable to the investment of the funds at hand, and those we would gather, in a new building designed for educational and fellowship purposes.

When the issues of location and type of new building were settled to the satisfaction of all, council approved the presentation of provisional plans prepared by Messrs. Louis Welker, Jr., Arthur A. Rianhard, and a committee elsewhere named, to the congregation assembled for the anniversary banquet in the Young Women's Christian Association in the late fall of that year. The interest manifested by those assembled encouraged the council to solicit estimates for several buildings with different dimensions.

Eager to enlist the support of all parish groups and to satisfy all, those entrusted with the program proceeded slowly and wisely. Then a new and entirely unexpected factor presented itself.

In 1937 a new and different musical choir program for the parish was adopted. Great success immediately featured it. In the summer of the following year a rain storm penetrated through an aging church roof and extensively damaged the organ that had faithfully served the musical needs of the congregation for several score years. To spend much money upon this instrument appeared to be penny wise and pound foolish. Yet council fully realized that to replace this worn-out instrument with a new one might seriously jeopardize the building program about to be launched to provide for the religious education and fellowship needs of the congregation. Council shrewdly determined to let the members of the congregation share the burden of decision by the degree it supported in a financial manner an effort to gather funds adequate to supply both needs. A booklet was prepared, the solicitation of the members made, and the pledges and contributions counted. After an intensive study of the gifts and givers council resolved to install a new organ and to proceed with the proposed building operation, with the understanding always in mind that no large debt was to be incurred. Orders, "full speed ahead," were given to the building committee, of which the capable Frank A. Kelley graciously consented to act as chairman.

Sunday, September 1, 1939, witnessed the dedication of a fine Moeller organ of 27 ranks of 1,896 pipes controlled by 56 stops and the transformation of our choir chancel at an approximate cost of \$11,000. This marked the completion of the first step in "The Greater St. Mark's Program." It is unnecessary to add that this action has met with the hearty approval of our members.

Sunday, October 1, 1939, found us engaged in ground-breaking ceremonies for the new building. Those who participated in this event were Louis Welker, Jr., building committee; R. M. Vickers, church school superintendent; Mrs. Harry Bond, Cotta president; Mrs. Mackey Maloney, Dorcas president; Mrs. LaRue Herman, Semper Fidelis; Charles Yoder, young people; Harry Bond, brotherhood; Mrs. L. H. Welker, Missionary; Eva Zellers, church school pupil living nearest the new building; Sister Mildred and the pastor.

The cornerstone was laid with appropriate services Sunday, November 26. With the aid of an amplifying system two congregations, one in the church auditorium and the other outside in Jefferson Street, participated in this service. Those who shared the placement of this stone were: Louis Welker, Jr., vice president of church council; R. M. Vickers, church school superintendent; J. M. Carlson, member of church council with longest term of service; Sister Mildred, and the pastor. Mr. Vickers inspiringly addressed the two congregations.

We should note here that the plans of this building were prepared by Arthur A. Rianhard, a building architect who has been for years a member of our congregation, by Louis Welker, Jr., and his committee of members most closely identified with the work of the congregation and most cognizant of its needs. They were then diligently studied and approved by the church council. To become completely certain that we had made no mistakes and that we would have when finished a building absolutely the last word in modern church house construction, wholly adequate and suited to our needs, the expert services of Dr. Henry E. Tralle, Washington, D. C., noted church consultant architect, were next secured. Our unshakeable conviction is that the best thought in the congregation, community, and country has gone into the planning, construction, and equipment of this building.

We cannot forget the services rendered by the committee in charge of fund solicitation, headed by Albert L. Schaefer. When despair sometimes came upon us this committee by their enthusiasm and determination always found good and generous friends to provide the funds necessary to carry on.

When sufficient funds are gathered the second floor of this building will be completed. This will provide for the increasing needs of our primary, junior, and intermediate departments. Here will be located a lovely and worshipful children's chapel, the heart of the building. Class rooms, choir rehearsal room, sewing and quilting room, and an office for Mr. Snell will feature this section. When this floor is completed at an estimated cost of \$12,000 our congregation will possess one of the best equipped and up-to-date parish and educational houses in our United Lutheran Church. If we continue to work together as one family of God in Christ in the coming years as we have in the past, this new day for St. Mark's will quickly come.

Thus Old St. Mark's continues a glorious past into a brighter future. This new equipment combined with the zeal and spirit of the people guarantees the future of the parish. We shall be forever grateful to the consecrated and generous friends of the Lord Jesus Christ who have worked with Him in making possible this lovely creation. We thank and praise Him who implanted His Spirit within our hearts and minds and who gave us the means and the strength to do this work. May His Spirit ever dwell with us and in OUR CHURCH.

COLLECT

Lord God of our fathers, Who of old time hast accepted them that labored willingly upon the house of God, and hast filled men with Thy Spirit to devise skillful works in all manner of workmanship for the service of the Church: We thank Thee that Thou hast enabled us to build this church school and parish house to Thy praise, and we beseech Thee to accept the completed labors of our hands to Thy glory; and that in this beautiful house we and our children may worship, study, and serve Thee; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

This folder has been made possible by the following firms and persons whose names appear below. We extend our thanks to them.

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