

History

History of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church - Carrollton, Illinois

The earliest communion record located is dated May 22, 1935 and lists the following as having communed on that date:

Mrs. Ernest Scharffenberger, Mr. Fred Ellers, Mrs. Louisa Graber, Mrs. Christina Konselmann, Mrs. Mabel Wilson, Mrs. Lena Nichols, Mrs. Norman Schumm.

The communion records show that Mr. and Mrs. Arch Willenburg partook of the Lord's Supper in our congregation as early as March 3, 1937 and Mrs. Dorothea Schroeder as early as April 7, 1939

When still stationed as missionary in Jerseyville, Illinois, the late reverend Norman G. Schumm canvassed the town of Carrollton, Illinois and decided to conduct Lutheran services here. The first service was held in the Episcopal church in Carrollton on January 15, 1933. After some time, Pastor Schumm took up residence in Carrollton renting the building at 116 North Seventh (now known as 120 North Seventh Street) which was later purchased by the congregation and used as residence by our teacher. Pastor Schumm continued to serve also the congregation in Jerseyville while a resident of Carrollton. Mr. Max Beck, student of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis came to take his place and served until June 1938.

From June 1938 till May 1941 the Rev. William J. Reiss served as Pastor. The Jerseyville and Carrollton congregations having ceased to function as a dual parish, Pastor Reiss lived in Carrollton and served there. In November 1938 he started mission work in Roodhouse. The Lutheran services in Roodhouse were later transferred to White Hall in 1940. Pastor Reiss entered the army as chaplain of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod on February 1967. After 25 years and 8 months, Chaplain Reiss closed his army career by assuming the post of executive secretary of the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A.

From 1941 to 1942, the Rev. Carl Busch of Gillespie served Carrollton as the Vacancy Pastor. Mr. A. Lehenbaur, student of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, served the White Hall-Carrollton dual parish, living in White Hall.

The Rev. Otto Strothmann took charge of the dual parish in July 1942. When given charge of a third parish, Waverly, he moved from White Hall to Waverly,

some 50 miles distant. This proved unsatisfactory and with encouragement from the mission board of the Southern Illinois District, which had all along been subsidizing them, the Carrollton-White Hall congregations called a Pastor from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in the person of the Rev. Arthur O. Kaul.

The Rev. Arthur O. Kaul became Pastor of the two congregations in November 1946, when the Rev. H. J. Witzgall installed him as Pastor. A house and lot located on the south side of the city alley at 120 North Seventh Street was bought by the Carrollton mission church from Herman G. Santag for the price of \$5,500.00 on August 27, 1946. (This is listed in the Greene County court house in book 162-p.537).

In 1945 the Lutheran mission in Carrollton adopted a constitution and became formally organized. In the fall of the same year a Christian day school was conducted in a renovated chicken house standing where our present church building is located. Mr. Herman J. Speckhard became the teacher of the school in the fall of 1946. The school was then being conducted in the machine shop located in back of the Greene County National Bank in Carrollton, Illinois.

Construction of the present church building got under way in 1946. From the fall of 1947 till the closing of the school in January 1958 after teacher Speckhard had accepted a call to St. Stephen's Lutheran school in hickory, N.C. the school was conducted in the basement of the church. The church was dedicated for the worship of the Triune God on November 21, 1948. Up to that time our congregation worshipped in the Episcopal church except for several of the earlier years when services were held in the Christian church.

A parsonage located at 214 north 7th street on a 90 by 115 foot lot was purchased on the 30th day of April 1947 from Orville H. and Lucille A. Lovekamp at a price of \$8,000.

Pastor Kaul, during his Pastorate in Carrollton, originated the publication "The Lutheran Evangelist", which later came to be known as "The World Wide Evangelist". In 1948 the Carrollton congregation, now known as Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, joined Synod. Toward the close of his Pastorate Pastor Kaul also had charge of St. John's Lutheran church in Kampsville, Illinois. Pastor Kaul accepted a call to Austin, Texas and left Carrollton in August 1949.

The Rev. Holland H. Jones, professor of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis served our congregation during this vacancy, from August 1949 thru October 1949.

The Rev. A. C. Meier served as Pastor from October 1949 till March 1952 when he accepted a Pastorate at Free Soil, Michigan. While here he served Carrollton and Jerseyville.

Professor E. C. Zimmermann served as vacancy Pastor from St. Louis from April 1952 until February 1954. After the Rev. Karl F. Breehne of Redeemer Lutheran church, White Hall accepted a call into another parish Professor Zimmermann served as vacancy Pastor also of the White Hall congregation as well as in Carrollton.

On February 14, 1954, the Carrollton and White Hall congregations jointly called the Rev. Henry F. Peckman to serve the dual parish. He made his home in Carrollton. Pastor Peckman was a graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. He graduated in 1929. He also did post-graduate work in this school in 1936-1937 and 1944-1945. He was a native of Paola, Kansas. Through the efforts of Pastor Peckman Our Redeemer Lutheran, working through the Lutheran Refugee Services, brought a Yugoslavian family to the United States of America.

Pastor Peckman preached his farewell sermon to Carrollton and White Hall churches on April 24, 1960. He left Carrollton and White Hall dual parish to be installed on May 8, 1960 as Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Bunker Hill, Illinois. After Pastor Peckman left Carrollton Our Redeemer Lutheran Church was served by vacancy pastors until June 1961.

The property at 120 north 7th, street, which had housed teacher Speckhard and his family at one time was put up at public auction and was sold to the highest bidder on September 17, 1960. It was purchased by James Reifstedk and his wife Marilyn Reifstedk for \$5,400.

The Rev. Keith Arnold Gerberding accepted a call to the dual parish, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Carrollton and Redeemer Lutheran Church White Hall and was installed the 4th Sunday after Trinity (June 25, 1961) at 3 p.m.. Pastor Gerberding received his ministerial education at Concordia High School and College in Fort Wayne, Indiana and at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. His vicarage assignment was at Ponca City, Oklahoma. He received the Bachelor of Theology Degree from Concordia Seminary in 1960. After a year of post-graduate study he was granted the Master of Sacred Theology.

Rev. Gerberding accepted a call to teach at University of Texas, and he moved from Carrollton on August 9, 1964.

From August 1964 until July 4, 1965 the church was vacant. During this time one of the vacancy pastors serving out of synod was the Rev. Donald L. Deffner.

On Sunday, July 4, 1965 at 7:30 pm the Rev. Theodore William Schroeder, Jr. was installed as Pastor of the Carrollton and White Hall churches. He served until October 1966. Rev. Schroeder is a 1965 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. While attending Concordia Seminary Rev. Schroeder served as Vicar at St. John's Lutheran Church, Adrian, Michigan (1963-1964). During Pastor Schroeder's stay in Carrollton Redeemer Lutheran Church at White Hall was closed (April 10, 1966).

On April 1, 1967 we became a self-supporting church with no financial subsidy from Synod.

From June 5, 1966 to August 1, 1971 Our Redeemer was vacant. During this time we were served by the following ministers and professors from the Missouri Synod:

Rev. Tom Gredner, Rev. Wayne Schroeder, Rev. Professor Andrew Weyermann, Rev. A. S. Ledebuhr, Rev. Robert J. Werberig, Rev. Dr. Edgar Krentz, Rev. Dr. John Constable, Rev. Donald L. Deffner, Rev. Dr. Alfred Van Rohr Sauer, Rev. Dr. William Danker, Rev. Harold Wendt, Rev. Brunour, Rev. Rentner, Rev. Carl Volz, Rev. Prof. Arthur Wincent, Rev. Dr. Ralph Klein, Rev. Dr. Walter Bartling, Rev. James Nickel, Rev. Clarence Harms, Rev. Larry Heimsoth, Rev. Prof. Arlis Ehlen, Rev. Marcus Pera, Rev. Donald Hinchey, and Rev. David Mennicke.

During this vacancy period Rev. Duncan Stevenson served from June 1, 1967 through July 30, 1968, when he became ill and entered the hospital with terminal cancer. Rev. Stevenson, a native of New York City, received his religious training at Concordia College in Bronxville, New York and graduated in 1926 from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. He served 27 years as a missionary in Southern India returning to the United States only three times during that time.

August 1, 1971 through October 31, 1976 William Edward Schmidt served as dual parish Pastor for the Kampsville and Carrollton congregations.

On the Eighth Sunday after Trinity (August 1, 1971) at 10 am He was installed at the Kampsville Church. Rev. Schmidt received his elementary and high school education at Voorheesville Central School in New York's Hudson Valley. Upon his graduation in 1957 he enrolled at Concordia Jr. College in Bronxville, New York to study for the holy ministry. After spending two years at Bronxville he continued his studies at Concordia Senior College in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He graduated from the Senior College in 1961 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts. He then enrolled at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, graduating, May 28, 1965 with the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. From 1965 to 1971 he served Way of the Cross Lutheran Church in the inner city of Detroit, Michigan.

On March 11, 1973 for all legal records, the Carrollton church changed our name officially from, "The Lutheran Mission Church," to "Our Redeemer Lutheran Church".

On the twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost, October 19, 1975 we dedicated several church renovations including; a new altar, extended chancel, new pews, four seasonal dossal curtains (which take turns hanging behind the altar depending on the season of the church year), four communion cloths designed to match the dossal curtains, a new ceiling, wall-to-wall carpeting, and fresh paint. In addition the church parsonage was given a new roof and new guttering. The guest speaker for the dedication was former Pastor Henry Peckman of Bunker Hill, Il.

On September 19, 1976 Pastor Schmidt resigned from St. John's Lutheran Church in Kampsville, Illinois. He then became the full time minister of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Carrollton, Illinois when our church voted on September 23, 1976 to hire a full time minister and on October 24, 1976 extended a call to Pastor Schmidt. He accepted the call on Sunday, October 31, 1976. He and his family moved to the Carrollton parsonage on November 6, 1976. His installation as a full time Pastor was on the Third Sunday in Advent, December 12, 1976 at 3 pm.

On January 19, 1978 President Alvin Kollmann granted Our Redeemer the right to continue as members of the Southern Illinois District. He supported the congregation's decision to keep Pastor Schmidt as Pastor when Pastor Schmidt was removed from Missouri Synod and became (for a time) a member of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). The congregation promised that should Pastor Schmidt ever leave, then the congregation, as a member of the Missouri Synod would call for their next Pastor a member of the Missouri Synod.

On October 4, 1978 the congregation voters assembly unanimously approved a 28 by 60 addition for the fellowship hall. On November 18, 1979 we celebrated a "day of thanksgiving and dedication for our fellowship hall". Pastor Gerberding preached at the morning service. Pastor Kaul preached at a special 3:30 pm service attended by 164 joyous people!

On February 14, 1982 the new "Lutheran worship" (hymnals) were introduced to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church.

On November 29, 1982 Pastor Schmidt was re-instated in the Missouri Synod, and in front of Our Redeemer's members he was officially welcomed back at church services at the 8 and at the 10:30 am services on January 16, 1983 by district president Alvin Kollmann. Rev. Schmidt left Our Redeemer on March 26, 1989 when he accepted a Call to Marion, Illinois where he served until his retirement.

On April 27, 1989 The congregation extended a Call to Rev. Jeffrey Meyers who was about to graduate from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, and after graduation he accepted that call and was installed on June 11, 1989. Rev. Meyers remained at Our Redeemer until March 31, 1995 when he accepted a call to serve in Lenexa, Kansas.

Again Our Redeemer called a Seminary Graduate, and on June 11, 1995 Pastor Joseph Pellegrino was installed as pastor. Pastor Pellegrino served until December 27, 1998. During his time as Pastor Our Redeemer began hosting an Annual Cornfest on the first Sunday of August. In the short vacancies both before and after Pastor Pellegrino's years of service Our Redeemer was served by Pastor Reuben Ankney from Kampsville, Illinois as vacancy pastor.

Our current Pastor, Rev. Steve Jacobsen began serving Our Redeemer on July

25, 1999. And in the decade since he began serving the church's membership and attendance have remained fairly stable. With good stewardship the congregation has managed to finish many of the improvements started before Pastor Jacobsen came especially the matching wood pulpit and lectern and a new Organ. And the fellowship hall has been updated with new carpeting, roof and major renovations in the kitchen and Pastor's office. The church also has added a storage shed, lit sign, new playground equipment, a commercial ice machine and new freezer.

May God continue to richly bless us as He has in the past.