

# Sharing Jesus from Generation to Generation

*As Good Shepherd celebrates its anniversary, this is the 5th in a series of articles on church history.*

## **A History of The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd**

On April 5, 1957, 13 families from Our Savior Lutheran Church, Mankato, living in west Mankato, met to form a new Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod mission church. A constitution was accepted on April 26, and on May 7 (two days after “Good Shepherd Sunday”) the group chose the name “The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd” and elected officers.

In the summer of 1957, Pastor E. J. A. Marxhausen, of New Ulm, began serving as vacancy pastor. The first service of worship was Sept. 8. Worship was held at the Seventh Day Adventist church, 317 State Street, Mankato, rented for \$100 per month.

Rev. E. P. Kauffeld installed as Pastor Dec. 22, 1957. There were 61 communicants and 106 baptized members. In February, property was purchased at what would be 937 Charles Ave., near the west end of Blue Earth Street. Building a parsonage began in May and groundbreaking for the church was Aug. 28. On Dec. 14, the church cornerstone was laid and the parsonage dedicated nearby. When the church was dedicated on Sept. 13, there were 146

communicants and 246 baptized members.

Growth continued, even though a group of founding members left to return to Our Savior. Pastor Kauffeld served until 1966. On April 2, 1967, Rev. Ronald Bongard was installed as pastor. He served until 1975.

Due to a financial deficit, the congregation had to consider closing the church, but after Pastor Victor Roth was installed Oct. 12, 1975, the trend was reversed. During this time, the church participated in a local TV program “Keys to Happiness”. Membership grew to 350 communicants and 482 baptized members by 1977, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, when Pastor Roth was called away.

Rev. Michael Dooling was installed as pastor Aug., 8, 1987. Oct. 8, 1990, the church mortgage was burned. Rev. Dooling served until 1994. In the years of Pastors Roth, Dooling and Coop, before the church had an air conditioned building, Good Shepherd held a service of worship in Sibley Park during the summer, which drew many guests.

Rev. Gregory Coop was installed as pastor Dec. 4, 1994. The membership list was adjusted to reflect a lower number of active baptized members. During this time the congregation was considering building maintenance issues and the Minnesota South District was seeking to establish a mission congregation in North Mankato. On Feb. 27, 1997, in the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, Good Shepherd purchased 10.7 acres

in North Mankato to relocate and do outreach.

In July, 1998, the Charles Ave. building was sold to Victory Life Church. The worship was held at Sibley Park, Garfield School and MSU Campus Chapel. “Hymnal Supplement ‘98” was used for worship. Construction of a new building at 2101 Lor Ray Drive began in June 1999. On Sept. 17, 2000, the new building was dedicated, with worship held in the fellowship hall. Although not all members made the move, baptized membership stood at 346. In 2001, Little Lambs Preschool was begun, taught by Tracy Mielke.

Rev. Gregory Coop served until 2002. In the interim, while the congregation was being served by Rev. Monte Meyer and Rev. Roger Raebel, the church purchased a new hymnal, “Lutheran Worship” and a committee began to explore starting an elementary school. On July 20, 2003, Rev. Vance Becker was installed as Pastor. Also in 2003, Deaconess Kathy Lock began serving part time. In 2004, planning began for an elementary school and a sanctuary.

In Sept. 2005, a kindergarten class was begun, taught by Alice Brase at Good Shepherd. In December, work began on a sanctuary. In fall, 2006, Carolyn Garman and Linda Becker were added to the staff to teach elementary grades and the sanctuary was dedicated Oct. 1. In 2007, the congregation celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary along with a program to increase gospel outreach.