



History of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Yorkville, IL

150th Anniversary Edition – 2016 Member of the ELCA

The origins of our congregation begin when Rev. Carl Richard Riedel came to Kendall County to form a new German Lutheran ministry. He immigrated to the U.S. from Germany in January 1849 and by 1850 had found his way to Fort Wayne, Indiana. Due to the need for more Lutheran ministers in the U.S., he entered the seminary at Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1850, which was being run by the newly formed Missouri Synod (the synod having been founded in 1847). In 1853 he graduated from the seminary and chose to come to Illinois.

Kendall County was created in 1841 from portions of Kane and LaSalle counties, and at that time Yorkville was designated as the county seat. By vote of the county in 1845, the County Seat was moved to Oswego. In 1860 a referendum was passed to move the County Seat back to Yorkville, but due to all available manpower and resources needed to build a new courthouse and move the records being tied up with the Civil War, the move didn't actually take place until 1864 after the war had ended. In 1853 when Rev. Riedel chose to come to the county, Oswego was therefore the county seat, and it is in Oswego that he chose to start his new ministry.

Rev. Riedel was ordained in Oswego on Sunday, December 18, 1853, exactly one week before Christmas. It is unknown exactly where this service took place, and whether it was in the town of Oswego or just in the township of Oswego since both places have often become synonymous with each other throughout history.

In all likelihood, it probably didn't take him long to discover that he had a problem starting a German Lutheran ministry in Oswego. By 1853 another pastor named Rev. Ernest Henry Buhre had already started serving German Lutherans in Oswego. Rev. Buhre was never a Missouri Synod minister and had started out in New York serving as a missionary pastor for the Methodist Episcopal Church throughout much of the 1840's. By 1850 he was living in Williamsburg, NY with the John Scharschug family, now serving as a Lutheran Minister, but was also involved in the Dry Goods business with John Scharschug. By 1853 both Rev. Buhre and Mr. Scharschug had moved to Aurora, IL. The Scharschug family purchased 140 acres of land on the east side, which is now all part of Phillips Park. The Scharschug Woods in Phillips Park is named after the Scharschug family, and was a popular picnic area since at least the 1830's. Rev. Buhre then began a German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Oswego by 1853. They constructed their own church building at Polk and Franklin streets in 1858.

Oswego was quite small in the early 1850's as compared to what it is today, and by 1853 they also had a Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian church, and soon after a Baptist church as well. Although Oswego was growing due to it being the county seat, there was still a limited number of German Lutherans to serve, so Rev. Riedel began moving more towards the Long Grove area, where he found more German Lutherans.

Long Grove was not a town, but rather an area, named for the long grove of hardwood trees the early settlers to Kendall County discovered. It is located south of Yorkville along the south side of what is Rt. 71 today. It begins to the west just inside of Fox Township and runs east along Rt. 71 until it crosses Rt. 47. At that point it heads slightly north to the top of the hill along the south side of Van Emmon Road, continuing eastward back to Rt. 71, a total of nearly 5 miles. The county fairgrounds and Harris Forest Preserve are both located in the Long Grove area, with High Point Road and Legion Road forming the southern boundary. The only actual town in the Long Grove area was Pavilion.

In the 1855 special census of Illinois, Rev. Riedel, his wife and first child were living in Kendall Township of Kendall County. According to the Lutheran Almanac, he was living in Pavilion. The earliest records of our church show that he was serving people in Oswego, but soon there were more and more from the Long Grove area. During this time there appears to be no consistent place where worship services were held, and they may have actually been held in members' homes, or in single room schoolhouses.

The earliest record which Rev. Riedel recorded in our records is for the death of Maria Schnieder, the infant daughter of David Schneider, on November 2, 1853. David's wife, Magdalena (nee Henne), is the second death recorded, which took place on December 22, 1853. Both appear to have taken place in Oswego, though it is not known where they were buried.

The first Baptism in our records recorded by Rev. Riedel took place on November 27, 1853 for Christian Heinrich Harning, the son of Christian and Anna (nee Bergh) Harning. It is not listed as to where it took place.

The first marriage he performed took place on January 14, 1854 between Friedrich Wilhelm Lippold and Elizabeth Schacker. This probably took place at the Schacker family home, but it is unknown where that was located.

The first communion service for our members took place on April 9, 1854 and was held in Oswego. There were 10 people who took communion that day, including both men and women. A total of 4 communion services were held in 1854, in Oswego, rural country, Oswego and Long Grove respectively.

During his time here, Rev. Riedel also served German Lutherans in the Willow Springs area (now St. John's Lutheran in Darien), and was perhaps one of the first ministers to serve the German Lutheran Society in Lyonsville (now Lyons). A number of years later they eventually formed Zion Lutheran Church in Lyons.

In September 1856, Rev. Riedel said farewell to Kendall County and moved to New Minden, in southern Illinois. His last record in our books was a Baptism on September 7, 1856. His second child was born in New Minden on October 3, 1856.

After Rev. Riedel left, we were then served by Rev. Johann Andreas Friedrich Wilhelm Müller, typically referred to as J.A.F.W. Müller, and sometimes also known as the alphabet pastor because of all the letters used in his name. He had just become the full time pastor at First St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Chicago.

Beginning in 1857, the "Chicago Missouri Lutherans", comprising of Rev. Müller at First St. Paul's and Rev. Wunder at First Immanuel in Chicago, began a great missionary effort, and it was based mostly out of First St. Paul's. This resulted in many new congregations being formed throughout the Midwest. To do this, Rev. Müller was given 3 assistants, Rev. William Heinemann (starting in 1857), Rev. Gotthilf Simon Loeber (starting in 1858) and Rev. Herman Friederick Früchtenicht (starting in 1860). By the time these 3 assistants started, Rev. Müller was already serving our members on as regular a basis as he could. We do find in our records though where Rev. Heinemann served us a couple of times in late 1857 and early 1858. Rev. Loeber served us on quite a few occasions from the fall of 1858 to the fall of 1859. Rev. Früchtenicht served us a couple of times in the summer of 1860. Rev. Müller continued to serve us as best he could through August of 1860 though.

On August 1, 1859, three of our members, Frits Colman, Henry Colman and William Colman purchased a small plot of land at Block 16, Lot 4 in Yorkville from Daniel G. Johnson for \$250. The deed says they were Trustees of the Lutheran Church in Yorkville. On this land was a small brick building which had previously served as the second school house built in Yorkville (constructed in 1842), but was no longer being used as a school. This now became a permanent place of worship for the congregation.

By late August 1860, Rev. Früchtenicht appears to have taken us over on a regular basis. He continued to live in Chicago during this time. By November 1860 he had moved to Ottawa and was installed on November 26 as the first pastor of Zion Lutheran Church. He continued to serve us through the winter, and until well into March 1861.

Rev. Buhre appears to have left the Oswego German Lutheran Church by late 1860. Both they and our congregation then placed a call to Rev. George Michael Zucker, who was serving in Champaign, IL. He was installed into both of our congregations on December 20 & 21, 1860. Now, the church which had made Rev. Riedel look in the direction of Yorkville for more German Lutherans to serve in the county, was served by the same pastor.

Rev. Zucker sought to better organize the congregation. During the time he was here, a secretary's book was started. The first entry took place on September 29, 1862, when 5 people were elected as trustees to varying length terms ranging from 1 to 5 years. Through 1867, trustees were elected on September 29 each year. Minutes were very minimal in the early days, but we do know that on March 25, 1864, 41 members signed up to pledge paying for the pastor's salary and the house rent.

On June 5, 1864 it was resolved that the German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Yorkville would be turned into a residence and a small building of 12' x 18' would be added on. Heine Mülke (who may have been a member of the congregation or a brother of member G. Mülke) agreed to do the work, building the foundation under the addition and paving it, and converting the large portion of the building into 3 rooms, for \$150. It is not known how quickly the work was done though, as we continued to own the property for at least another year and a half.

Rev. Zucker also appears to have had us create our first constitution as well. According to an article published in the Kendall County Record on September 7, 1938 about our 75th anniversary, Rev. Zucker is listed as having signed the constitution. The current whereabouts of that constitution is unknown. On July 6, 1865 it was resolved that anyone who hadn't yet signed the constitution could still do so.

Our first Confirmation class was also held during the time Rev. Zucker served us. On May 4, 1862 he Confirmed one student, Christoph Kollman, who was 18 years old at the time.

Rev. Zucker lived in Oswego and then Bristol Station during his time with us and continued to serve our congregation until November 1864. He then accepted a call to Immanuel Lutheran in Proviso, IL (Hillside today).

The search was on to find a new pastor and in early 1865 we placed a call to Rev. Johannes Jacob Strieter. He had been serving in the Native American Indian areas of Marquette County, Wisconsin, but the weather was taking a toll on his health and he was looking for somewhere else to preach. He received 4 calls, but only accepted 2, ours and St. Paul's Lutheran in Aurora. He moved into the parsonage in Aurora, but served both of our congregations. He also founded Immanuel Lutheran in Hinckley in the spring of 1865, another church which is no longer Lutheran near Hinckley, and attempted to get something going in Plano as well. He also traveled to Batavia from time to time to serve German Lutherans there too.

When he arrived, we were already talking about constructing a church building, but where? Different members wanted it in different places so that they didn't have far to travel. During this time the brick building we owned in Yorkville was being converted into a residence, so worship services were held in the Brown School, located at the south-east corner of what is now Rt. 47 and Walker Road. Eventually, George Nolte and his wife Aine offered 2 acres of their land which the congregation accepted, and on March 1, 1866 the congregation purchased it for \$60.

On January 17, 1866, Caroline Nolte (probably a daughter-in-law to George Nolte) had passed away and was buried on that same property. She was a member of our church, and is the first burial in what is today our church cemetery.

On January 13, 1866 at a congregational meeting held at George Nolte's, it was decided to sell the brick house in Yorkville and use the money to buy bricks for the new church building (possibly referring to the foundation as the building was otherwise a wooden structure). This new building would be located at the top of the hill on the south side of the cemetery. It is unknown when construction actually began, or when the new church building was completed. It is certain that it must have been a glorious day when the church was completed and dedicated. However, there appears to be no record of the dedication ceremony, though it is certain that the building was completed in 1866. There is also no record of how much the brick house sold for, or who it was sold to, or when it was actually sold.

Amazingly enough, the brick house still exists to this day. As of 1905 it probably still looked very much like it did when we sold it in 1866. Since then the addition we added to the back has been enlarged and yellow siding has been placed over the brick, as well as the rest of the house. Its address today is 402 W. Ridge Street. It is one of the oldest buildings in Yorkville.

Now that we had a proper church building, Pastor Strieter suggested opening a school and hiring a school teacher. Class would be taught in the new church building. He then went to the Teacher Seminary in Addison and brought back Mr. William Henry Bewie, who had served as a Hospital Steward in the 38th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment of the Union Army during the Civil War. He was to begin teaching school in mid-August and on September 27, 1867 he was accepted into membership of our congregation. As we had no place for him to live, Friedrich Kollmann was to board him and receive \$75 per year for his hospitality. He would also do his laundry for 50 cents. The first school directors were Friedrich Hage and Friedrich Kollmann.

Problems arose between Pastor Strieter and St. Paul's church. As we were not able to support him on our own, in 1869 he announced that he would be leaving. At this time we were then served by Rev. Carl Wuensch, who was now serving as the pastor at Immanuel Lutheran in Hinckley and living in their parsonage.

On February 8, 1870 the congregation purchased 10 acres of land from Frederick and Mary Hardekopf for \$1000. This property was located about one half mile south of the cemetery property and is where the current church building is located in 2016. The deed for the sale indicates that William Collman and George Nolte made the purchase, acting as trustees of the 1st German Lutheran Church Society (Emanuel). This is the first known time when the name Immanuel is recorded as being used in the name of our church. Immanuel is a single English translation of the original Hebrew word and Emmanuel is a double English translation, the original Hebrew word being translated to Greek first and then to English. Both words mean the same thing, "God with us".

In 1871 it is also evident that our church was also referred to as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Long Grove. In other references it is also called the German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Long Grove. The German language was still being used exclusively at this time, and Long Grove refers to the Long Grove area, which we were closer to than Yorkville.

A small house sat on the 10 acres of land that was purchased, approximately in the same location that our parsonage does today. Repair work was done on the house and the land around it was cleared.

By September 1870, Rev. Wilhelm Hallerberg accepted our call to be pastor. The house on the newly purchased land wasn't quite ready yet when he arrived, and he was boarded by Heinrich Wilkening for \$3 per month. Eventually the house became ready and Pastor Hallerberg moved into it, being the first of our pastors to live in a parsonage that we provided.

In 1872 Rev. Wuensch left Immanuel in Hinckley. Pastor Hallerberg now served both of our congregations. Since we had our own school teacher, on weekdays he would also travel to Hinckley to teach their school. This continued for the remainder of the time that Pastor Hallerberg served us.

On March 7, 1870, teacher Bewie was released from his duties as the school teacher due to an illness. Friedrich Kollman, being one of the school trustees, was to travel to Addison to obtain a new teacher. It appears that Mr. Kretschmär then became the teacher. Mr. Kretschmär, his wife and child were again living with Friedrich Kollman, who was receiving \$12 for boarding them.

At the 25th anniversary celebration of the Missouri Synod in St. Louis in 1872 a reporter misunderstood a conversation and wrote that the synod would be building an orphanage next to the Teachers Seminary in Addison similar to the one they had in St. Louis. There was no support for the orphanage and it was actually decided that an orphanage would not be built. By early 1873, money was received for the purpose of the orphanage and so the people of northern Illinois took it as a sign from God that the orphanage should be built. Pastor Hallerberg was a part of the negotiations regarding the orphanage and on May 31, 1873 he presented to the congregation the proposal to build the orphanage. Immanuel's members agreed to support the orphanage, and in doing so became one of the 12 founding congregations of the orphanage.

The orphanage became a huge success, and Immanuel continued to support it throughout the 1870's. In 1877 the orphanage held its first Orphan Festival on the grounds of the orphanage to help promote the orphanage and to raise money. 5,000 people from all over the Chicagoland area showed up that year. Among them were members of our congregation. For those of our members who were unable to attend, we held our own festival the following Sunday to raise money for the orphanage.

Later in 1873 Pastor Hallerberg left. We then called Rev. Johann Heinrich Dörmann to be our pastor. As with Pastor Hallerberg, he too served Immanuel in Hinckley and taught their school, while serving our congregation and living in our parsonage. This continued for nearly a year when in late 1874 the Hinckley church called their own full time pastor.

During 1874 two new rooms were added to the back of the church building, totaling an area of 16 x 28 feet. This would now serve as the living quarters for the teacher such that he would no longer need to be boarded by a member of the congregation. A cellar was also constructed under the entire church as well. A 7 foot wide by 7 foot deep cistern was also added for use by the teacher in 1875.

In January 1875, Pastor Dörmann requested permission to travel to Morris on the third Sunday of each month for an indefinite period of time to serve German Lutherans in Morris. The congregation gave their approval, and thus was without a pastor one Sunday a month. Newspapers in Morris show that he continued to travel to Morris until at least December 1879. Very few newspaper archives exist in Morris during the 1880's, so it is impossible to know how long he continued going to Morris.

On June 1, 1876 a vote was taken as to whether we should join the Missouri Synod of Ohio and other states. All of our teachers and pastors up to this time, including Pastor Dörmann, were members of the Missouri Synod. The vote passed, and as a congregation we would now be granted a delegate to attend the synodical conventions. Only our pastor and teacher had that privilege prior to this.

The woodwind orchestra was granted permission to accompany the singing in church, so long as it did not overpower the singing, otherwise that permission would be revoked. Said permission was revoked for a while, but then restored again later. The congregation also had a choir, which was to take their seats at the top of the church, near the chancel.

It is not known when Teacher Kretschmär left. In the fall of 1877, Mr. Helmreich became the teacher. He would receive \$325 a year for teaching, and free housing.

An organ for the church was also purchased in the fall of 1877 from a man in Lockport for \$180.

Teacher Helmreich remained about a year and then left in the fall of 1878. Pastor Dörmann and his daughter, Minna, were then in charge of the school until a new teacher could be found. Minna was also given permission to play the organ for as long as the school was in session and whenever she wanted to. By March 1879 it is possible that Mr. Grosse was the school teacher, though the record is unclear about this. By April 1879 it is clear that Minna was again teaching the school. By August a new teacher, Mr. Paul Friedrich Wilhelm Otto, was obtained from the Teacher's Seminary in Addison.

A Children's Festival was begun each year on July 4. These were held at Mr. Ahrens' forest. Today these have basically progressed into what we have as the Church Picnic. For many years, well into the 1900's, they were held at members' homes who had wooded areas surrounding them, and known as picnics in the woods.

In 1879 a new kitchen was built at the parsonage. The cost for the addition came to \$106.90. Pastor Dörmann also put in an additional \$2 and a few cents for the chimney. In the fall of 1880 a barn was also constructed at the parsonage that was 18 x 26 feet and 16 feet high.

Indoor plumbing was a luxury which the congregation did not have. Outhouses were used at both the church and parsonage. They were moved and rebuilt a number of times. In March 1877 it was also decided that the outhouse seats should be raised, the reason being so that no one would fall in.

In 1872 five Lutheran synods joined together to form a church fellowship called the Synodical Conference. The Missouri Synod was one of these. Rev. C.F.W. Walther of the Missouri Synod became its first president. At a meeting of the Western District of the Missouri Synod in 1877 the topic of election of predestination came to a public discussion. Rev. Walther dismissed the idea of single predestination in favor of double predestination. This began more discussions between the synods of the Conference. In 1881 the Joint Synod of Ohio left the Conference over the predestination controversy because it didn't agree with Rev. Walther. In 1883 the Norwegian Synod also left.

On May 23-24, 1881 a general pastoral conference of the Missouri Synod was held in Fort Wayne, Indiana. At this time a vote was taken regarding the thirteen theses which Rev. Walther drew up regarding the election of predestination. It was adopted and became the official declaration of faith on the issue. Pastor Dörmann was adamantly opposed to the thirteen theses and voted against it because it was not completely in harmony with Scripture.

On May 30, a congregational meeting was held at Immanuel to discuss the issue, and why our pastor had voted against the Missouri Synod's stand on the election of predestination. The congregation seemed to be split as to whether he acted appropriately, so the President of the district, Rev. Heinrich Wunder, was asked to come to Immanuel to have a debate with Pastor Dörmann over the election of predestination, and allow the congregation to then make a decision.

On June 20, 1881 the debate took place. Both pastors did their best to prove their stand on the issue, debating back and forth, using Holy Scripture and the confessions of the church as their arguments. There is no doubt that this had to have been a major battle of theology at its best, with Immanuel's members as their audience. After the debate, the members of Immanuel were still divided, with both sides claiming their debater proved their arguments and that the other one failed to do so. A vote was taken, and 17 members voted that Pastor Dörmann's arguments were to be accepted, and 15 members voted that they could not accept Pastor Dörmann's arguments.

This was a historic vote for sure. A vote that would have far reaching consequences, even to the present day. The 17 member majority effectively said that they wanted nothing more to do with the Missouri Synod. They also wanted no further discussion of the issue either. Thus, Immanuel would be permanently leaving the Missouri Synod.

For their own conscience sake, the 15 members who could not accept Pastor Dörmann's arguments chose to hold a special meeting on July 24, 1881 at the house of Wilhelm Kollman to form a new congregation. They asked a former minister, Pastor Johannes Strieter, who was now serving at Immanuel in Proviso, Illinois, to chair the meeting. The new congregation would be called Evangelical Lutheran Cross Church.

So it is that the very sad and painful division of Immanuel's congregation began. The 15 members severed their ties with Immanuel. The split severely divided families and created ill will amongst everyone. The scars this left on everyone who were members at the time would never be erased from their memories, and in some cases, even the children and grandchildren who would also hear about it long after the fact.

In September 1880, Teacher Otto married Sarah Sophia Kollmann, who was a member of our congregation. Mr. Otto resigned as our teacher just a few days after the vote. He stayed with the Missouri Synod by then teaching at St. Paul's Lutheran in Aurora. In September 1881 we hired Mr. Rudolph Kohler as the teacher, but he stayed just 16 days and resigned. He was followed by Mr. Heinrich Goessner.

Immanuel now needed to find another synod to become a member of. We were not alone in this quest as others had also left the Missouri Synod, and there were yet others looking for a new synod. Pastor Dörmann met with the pastors from some of these congregations and formed the Evangelical Lutheran Conference, of which he was elected President. The conference consisted of 15 pastors, 3 teachers and 3 lay delegates. They then petitioned the Joint Synod of Ohio and other states to create a new district which would cover parts of Illinois and Wisconsin and allow the conference congregations to join. In October 1882 at their national convention the petition was accepted and the Northwestern District was created. Immanuel was now officially a member of the Joint Synod of Ohio and other states, often referred to as the Ohio Synod.

Most district conventions at the time were held in churches. Pastor Dörmann succeeded in having the first district convention of the Northwestern District held in Yorkville, with Immanuel as the host. From May 30 - June 3, 1883, pastors, teachers and delegates convened at Immanuel to discuss doctrine and set policy for the new district. Membership in the district grew rapidly, and now consisted of 26 pastors. We would remain a member of the Ohio Synod until 1930 when a merger would cause it to join with other synods to become the American Lutheran Church.

In November 1883 Pastor Dörmann accepted a call to First German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Blue Island, Illinois. A call was then placed to Rev. Frederick Emil Fickeissen who had been serving in Meadville, Pennsylvania. He began in December 1883.

Pastor Fickeissen remained only 6 months and left in June 1884. Teacher Goessner also left in June 1884. We then asked District President, Rev. H.A. Allwardt to suggest someone who would be interested in being both pastor and teacher. An appropriate choice was made when he suggested Rev. Wendelin Linsenmann. The previous year he had 47 students in his confirmation class, and after leaving our congregation he would eventually become Director of Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw, Michigan.

During Pastor Linsenmann's time new wooden benches were made that would accommodate approximately 40 children. The church benches were also repaired. The parsonage was also updated with a new brick foundation in the cellar, inside the of the old foundation, leaving an air chamber between them. New wire and board fencing was also placed around the pastors property, and a new well dug, north of the parsonage.

In 1888 Pastor Linsenmann asked to be relieved of his duties because of headaches he was experiencing, and suggested that we get a younger pastor. After closing the school for 3 months to give him a break, the congregation decided to let him go in peace.

A much younger pastor was indeed in our future. In June of 1888 Rev. Adam Aaron Dapper was then called to be our next pastor. He was straight out of the seminary in Columbus, Ohio. He served us until August 1890 when he asked to accept another call he had received.

In June of 1889 we again hired another teacher. This was Mr. Georg Friedrich Doepping, who always used his middle name Fred. Of all of our teachers, he served us the longest, from 1889 to 1895, a total of 6 years. Up until this time, Mr. W. Kunder had served us the longest, a total of nearly 5 years. Like Mr. Otto before him, Mr. Doepping also married a member of our congregation, Miss Alma F. Lippold, during the time that he served us. After leaving our congregation in 1895 he moved to Wisconsin.

In May 1891 we then called Rev. August Vockrodt to be our pastor. He continued to serve us until January 1897. During his time Teacher Doepping left in the fall of 1895. We then called Mr. Wilhelm Radke to be our teacher from Dec. 1895 to the fall of 1896. Mr. Wilhelm G. Freytag was then called to be the teacher, who served us until June 1903. We next called Mr. G.P. Leifeld.

After Pastor Vockrodt left we called another seminary student, Candidate Martin T. Allwardt to be the pastor. On June 7, 1897 he was ordained at our church. He served us for the next 4 years, but resigned because of health problems in April 1901. He then left the active ministry and became a regular member of our congregation. He held several offices within the congregation and even taught the first English language Sunday School class around the time of World War I. In July 1899 he married Louise Bieritz, a member of our congregation, while he was still our pastor. After he retired, they became farmers in the area. They later moved to Woodville, Ohio and continued farming there.

By April 1902 we had called Rev. William Steinmeyer to be our pastor. Many changes took place during the time that he was here. In the spring of 1903 the roof on the church building and teachers house was in need of repair, so it was decided to put on a new roof.

In May 1903 a discussion was first held regarding the Lodge Issue. This was an issue that had affected many other churches, but so far had not been a concern of our congregation. It revolved around church members being members of private and secret societies, and the beliefs of those societies conflicting with the beliefs of the Lutheran faith. In June it was resolved that members of our congregation could not belong to a secret society, whatever name they may carry, and that anyone doing so would forfeit every right to be a member of the congregation. The resolution passed, but with the stipulation that it be tabled until December. It appears that it was never brought up again. By December there were far more pressing items to discuss.

The very next item on the agenda in June was whether to build a new church building. It was resolved that a new building would be constructed. By September the size and location had been determined. The church would be 36 feet x 60 feet in size, and located on the property purchased in 1870, north of the parsonage in what was then the vegetable garden. The building committee would be Fred Bretthauer, Fred Neüsiis, August Henne, August Bretthauer, John Wampach, Fred Hardekopf, William Leifheit and Pastor Steinmeyer.

The new church was completed at a cost of \$7,623.65, and dedicated on Sunday, September 18, 1904. Pastor H.P. Dannecker of Fort Wayne, Indiana preached the main service in the morning, in German, and Pastor M. Doerman of South Chicago, Illinois preached an afternoon service, in English. As best as can be determined, only the benches for the choir and the organ were items used from the old church building, neither of which still exist today. The church also now had a bell, purchased from the Henry Stuckstede Bell Foundry Company in St. Louis, Missouri. The statue of Christ on the Altar was purchased by the Ladies Aid Society in 1905. Horse stalls were also constructed south of the parsonage. Each member would have their own stall.

Shortly after the church building was finished, Teacher Leifeld left. Prof. C.F. Theiss then accepted our call. He remained until July 1906. At this point it was determined not to call another teacher and we asked Pastor Steinmeyer to take over the school. Reluctantly, he agreed to do so. Prof. Theiss would ultimately be the last school teacher to be called by the congregation. After this, the pastor would serve as both preacher and teacher.

During 1906 it was also agreed that a new school house should be built. Further, it was determined that the old church building would be torn down and that the wood from it be used to build the new school house. The school would be 24 x 32 feet in size with a 12 x 14 foot Confirmation room. It would be built North of the new church, but far enough to the East that the view of the church would not be obstructed. The building committee consisted of August Nolte, Herman Bieritz, George Monkemeier, Fred Hardekopf and August Merkel.

In 1907 a Newman Bros. reed organ was purchased for use in the school. Because of the added burden of teaching, and citing other health issues, Pastor Steinmeyer asked to accept a call to South Chicago, Illinois. A call was then placed to Rev. Charles John Lange, and he accepted.

Throughout the 1800's German was the only language used in the congregation. The congregation realized that many new members were having trouble with the German by the early 1900's though. English then began being used more and more, but German was still the primary language. During Pastor Lange's time here, English would be used more and more.

In the fall of 1910 it was agreed that the congregation should become incorporated according to Illinois state law. Pastor Lange and the trustees were to look into what was required. On December 31, 1910 a Certificate of Incorporation was officially filed in Kendall County by George A. Reingardt, acting as Secretary of the church. Despite the fact that the church had been using the name Immanuel now for some time, the certificate lists the official name as being Evangelical Lutheran Emanuel Church.

By 1914 the parsonage was beginning to show its age. It had been there long before we had purchased the property in 1870 and although we had added onto it and made improvements to it over the years, it was again in need of more repairs. The decision was then made to build a new parsonage. It was also decided that the current parsonage should be sold at auction and moved. The building committee consisted of Fred Bretthauer, George Moenkemeier, John Wampach, William Bretthauer, Fred Hardekopf, Henry Bieritz and August Merkel. The new parsonage was built by August Christian Merkel and dedicated on November 22, 1914 for \$3,180.97. On November 24 the old parsonage was sold at auction for \$144.50.

The Fiftieth Jubilee of the congregation was celebrated with a special service on September 17, 1916. The speakers that day were Professor H. Doermann of St. Paul, Minnesota and former pastor, Rev. William Steinmeyer. For this anniversary it was also agreed by vote of the congregation that a history of the congregation be written. Although many of the members of the congregation were new and some of the original records of the church were not available, Pastor Lange did his best to write the first history of the church. It was published in both German and English, and contained photos which we would now not have otherwise.

In 1918 a building was put up at the cemetery to store necessary equipment. A new reed organ was also purchased for use in the church.

In January 1919 Pastor Lange then accepted a call to Lincoln, Illinois. By February, Rev. Friedrich August Seifert had accepted our call, but it wasn't until April that he was able to move here. Pastor Seifert was here but only about a year and a half and then asked to be released due to health reasons. His time here wasn't without making an impact however. The German language would no longer be used in the school, and only English would be taught after this.

Rev. John Christian Langholz was the next pastor to accept our call, beginning his work in January 1921. As with Pastor Seifert, he too taught the school along with his other duties. It was in 1921 that he also organized the first Luther League of the congregation. This was an organization aimed at the youth of the congregation. Youth at that time was defined differently than it is today however, and it was not uncommon for its members to be anywhere from their teens to the mid 30's. Both men and women were encouraged to participate.

Like his predecessor, Pastor Langholz didn't stay long, and by September 1922 he resigned. Rev. Eugene Ahl then accepted our call and began his work in April 1923. At the September 2 congregational meeting a question regarding the school was discussed but no action was taken. Although it is unknown exactly what this question was, in all likelihood it revolved around the hiring of a teacher. Like several of the previous pastors, it is also believed that Pastor Ahl wasn't too favorable in teaching the school. And so it is that with no action being taken, after 56 years the Immanuel parochial school came to an end.

In January 1928 Pastor Ahl's wife passed away and by Feb. 1929 he decided it was time to move on and accepted a call to Warren, Illinois. In a rather unique decision, the congregation now called a former pastor back again. This was Pastor Fred Siefert, who was now serving in Midlothian, Illinois.

October 29, 1929 would be remembered by those who experienced it to be one of the worst days of their lives. The stock market crash on that day would send the country into the worst depression it had ever had, ultimately affecting all of western civilization. The depression affected our congregation as well. Perhaps it is best described in the words from our 100th anniversary in 1966. "The years in this time encompassed the great financial panic in 1929 and the resulting depression that followed, years when the price of corn dropped to 15 cents a bushel, hogs were four cents a pound, and so on. Being primarily a congregation with rural membership, the cost of maintaining the church properties and paying the pastor was indeed a problem, though Immanuel's was certainly not alone in trying to cope with conditions. The pastor's salary was \$1200.00 annually plus proceeds from the land, but for some time he agreed to serve for even less than this."

Despite the hardships felt by many, God was with us and the congregation moved onward. In 1930 the Joint Synod of Ohio merged with the Iowa and Buffalo synods to create the American Lutheran Church. After some discussion, we joined the ALC. In 1931 a new Hinners reed organ was purchased and electricity came to the church, allowing lights to be used for the first time. The envelope system for collecting contributions was also first used in 1931. Now that cars were being used to bring people to church, the horse sheds were no longer used and in 1936 they were torn down. In 1938 we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the congregation. In 1939 the exterior of the church buildings were painted by Mr. Gerrit Halbesma. In 1943 the front porch of the parsonage was enclosed.

Pastor Siefert retired from the ministry in 1944 after serving 5 different congregations over 38 years. We then placed a call to Rev. Albert John Gess who was at the time serving in Somonauk, Illinois. Pastor Gess started many new things at the church. One of those was a church bulletin, then referred to as a weekly church paper. The first bulletin was put into use on September 3, 1944 and did away with lengthy announcements in church.

On December 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor was attacked. This brought the United States head on into World War II, and a number of Immanuel's members soon found themselves being called to serve in one of the nation's armed forces. By God's grace, all but one returned safely. On January 23, 1945 God called home Private Calvin Richard Marklein while serving on active duty. His body was laid to rest in Luxemburg and a memorial marker was later placed in our cemetery.

The members of Immanuel had wished for some time to place a basement under the church building. Pastor Siefert however had indicated that the ground under the building was too hard to do that and even claimed to have used a pick one day to try and break up some of the dirt without any luck. After his retirement, Pastor Gess thought it would be very possible and on November 5, 1944 the congregation decided to go forward with the plan. Almost immediately, the church was raised up and the men of the congregation began digging using picks and shovels. Thanks to the idea of Mrs. Isabelle Walker, the women had coffee available during breaks and something to eat at lunch. It soon became apparent that the furnace had dried out the dirt around it to be extremely hard. They then called in a man from Oswego who had an air hammer and progress was greatly sped up, and the job completed in no time at all. The church was then lowered back down and the basement was finished off and furnished.

Although Pastor Langholz had started a Luther League in 1921, by the mid 1930's interest had faded and eventually it no longer existed. By April 1945 new interest was apparent and so on April 23, 1945 a meeting was held in the school house to see just how many were interested. Three weeks later, on May 14, fourteen people attended the first meeting of the Luther League and they became the charter members. For many years to come the Luther League decorated the church at Christmas and provided social activities for both themselves and the congregation. They would also help beautify the church grounds with several landscaping projects.

Under Pastor Gess's leadership, the congregation prospered greatly. A new office of the congregation for Chairman was created in 1944. Shortly afterward this person would be referred to as President. This person would be responsible for running the congregational meetings instead of the pastor, who had done the same job since the church started. August Corniels was then elected as the first person to this position. The church council as we know it today also began in 1947. Up until this time congregational meetings were held whenever something needed to be discussed, and in many years were held at least once a month. There is record of a church council existing as far back as the 1800's, but usually they only met as a committee to look into decisions made by the congregation as a whole and no minutes of those meetings were ever kept. This would now change and the council would meet monthly, and the congregation would meet only 4 times per year to make major decisions, though special meetings could be called at any time. The council would otherwise handle the day to day operations of the church. The first official meeting and minutes of the new Church Council was held on January 7, 1947.

On September 23, 1945 a special congregational meeting was held to discuss selling the school house since it was no longer needed now that all the activities once held in it could be held in the new basement. It was decided that the school house would be sold, and it was soon moved to Oswego and converted into a residence.

On November 10, 1946 Pastor Gess helped form the Brotherhood, and the first meeting was held that day. This was an organization aimed at serving the men of the congregation, and 35 men attended that first meeting. Also in 1946 we began using communion cards which helped to better track who attended communion.

There was an old custom of ringing the church bell on Saturday evenings at 6:00 pm, and this was once again started in January 1948. By 1948 it was also apparent that the church windows were in great need of repair. The wind, rain and other elements of the weather had taken their toll on them. As much as everyone liked the stained glass windows, it was apparent that repairing them would cost more than replacing them. The T.C. Esser Company from Milwaukee, Wisconsin was then hired to replace the windows. The windows themselves were designed by Leo Cartwright, a very well-known and respected artist who had designed many church windows and now worked for Mr. Theodore Clemens Esser. All of the stained glass windows throughout the church were replaced during the fall of 1948 at a cost of \$6,900.00. To help protect the windows in the future, storm windows were placed on each window on the outside of the church, even though this also made them less attractive from the outside. This has certainly worked for we still have them to this day.

A new pipe organ was also installed in 1948 that had the latest Wangerin electric action. The pipes were placed in a balcony chamber prepared specifically for the proper housing of the pipes, chests and other mechanical parts. The organ was dedicated in a special service and program on July 25, 1948 at 2:30 pm, and dedicated to the glory of God, honoring all those who served in World War II. The guest organist was W. J. Brockman. The cost of the organ was \$5,000.00.

In 1948, one of our young ladies, Miss Effie Corniels, was also blessed to enter the mission field and began serving in India for 5 years. In April a meeting was held to discuss changing the name of the church. On September 20, 1948 an official Change of Name was filed in Kendall County by Henry E. Bieritz, acting as Secretary of the church, to change the name of the church to Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church. It is by this name that we continue to be known as today.

At the end of the worship service Pastor Gess would move to the back of the church to shake everyone's hand as they left. He would move into the Sacristy as the acolyte would put out the candles on the Altar. He would then have to go down the new stairway, through the basement and come back up the new stairway at the rear of the church. He didn't like doing this so he asked that a door be placed alongside the pulpit so that he could then walk out of the Sacristy and down the side aisle. In 1948 the congregation approved the door be added. A hearing aid system was installed in 1949. It was also in 1949 that Pastor Gess accepted a call to Wilton, Wisconsin. For the next 3 months we were then served by students from Wartburg. On October 9, Rev. Ludwig "Louis" Ezra Heuer was installed as our pastor. During his time here, the congregation continued to make numerous improvements.

An adult Sunday School class was begun in 1949, with Pastor Heuer teaching it. In 1953 Herman Bieritz would take over the class and continue teaching it until 1993, a total of 40 years. A new coat and hat rack was installed in the entryway of the church in 1950 by the Brotherhood. In July 1950 the practice of turning around and kneeling during the Confession was brought to an end, and the congregation was encouraged to just humbly bow their heads. A Communion rail was also installed and used for the first time on September 24.

In 1951 the Women of the Church began collecting Thank Offering boxes. In the spring of 1952 the church was reshingled by Glossop & Bieritz for \$1,350.00, and a new chimney was also installed for \$500.00. A new Royal Elite Typewriter and steel stand were purchased for the church office by the Brotherhood in May. In August a beautiful sign identifying the church as Immanuel Ev. Lutheran Church was added to the front of the church, directly above the front doors.

On September 19, 1954 the congregation celebrated the 50th anniversary of the church building. The Luther League had special plates made up for the occasion, with a picture of the church on them. The plates sold for \$2.50 and the profit from them would be used to buy a piano for the sanctuary.

Modifications to the sanctuary continued, and in 1956 it was decided to purchase new pews from the Manitowoc Church Furniture Co. in Waukesha, Wisconsin. The new ones would be lighter in color, and anyone who wished to do so could purchase a pew for \$135.00. The total cost of the new pews would come to \$4,530.00. The new pews would be dedicated on January 13, 1957.

On June 9, 1957, Alvin Miller, the grandson of former Pastor Ahl, was ordained at our church. On September 20, the 40th anniversary of Pastor Heuer's ordination was also celebrated. He would ultimately celebrate 60 years during his lifetime, though he would retire from active ministry while serving us after 44 years of it in 1961.

In 1959 the coal furnace was converted to oil in both the church and the parsonage. In 1960 the common cup method of Communion was change to using individual cups. The Altar Guild would then wash the cups after each Communion service. The American Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church joined to form The American Lutheran Church. Soon after, we too joined the TALC as it was known by. Pastor Heuer then retired from the ministry and left our congregation at the end of January 1961 after serving us for 12 years. Chaplain Clarence Leray Bruninga from Elgin would then serve us as an interim pastor until we could again call a new pastor.

Rev. Norbert Henry Hellrud accepted our call and was installed as our pastor on July 2, 1961. He had served in the U.S. Army for 12 years, much of it in Germany. While serving in Sendai, Japan he felt the call to enter the ministry and had just graduated from the Seminary in Columbus, Ohio.

Mrs. JoAnn Hellrud, Pastor Hellrud's wife, was instrumental in getting the Junior Lutherans started. These were youth between the ages of 5 years old and 6th grade. They held meetings, had their own officers, and did numerous projects. They were sponsored by the Immanuel Lutheran Church Women and each year provided them with a program. Because of declining membership, they disbanded in 1968.

Due to the increasing size of the Sunday School, noise between classes started to become a problem. In 1962, folding partitions were added in the basement at a cost of \$1,659.31 to create separate rooms. The parsonage basement was also utilized for a couple of classes as well. Also in 1962, Reuben Bieritz made a cross to place Easter lilies on. This cross is still used to this day. New hymnals and service books were also purchased in 1962, and the Luther League purchased a metal swing set for the kids to play on in the summer months as part of a larger project to improve the church grounds. The swing set was taken down in the early 1970's due to its deteriorating condition.

In January 1964 Pastor Hellrud accepted a call to St. Stephens Church in Chicago. Retired pastor, Rev. Otto Henry Behrens from Earlville now filled in as an interim pastor until Pastor Marvin Ernest Schroeder was installed on April 19. In September the Warner Stallman Head of Christ portrait was hung on the wall by the organ.

In January 1965 the Cemetery Committee was formed with Reuben Bieritz, Arnie Bretthauer and Elmer Merkel serving as its first trustees.

In 1966 new kitchen cabinets were built and installed by LeRoy Collman, and a drinking fountain installed in the basement. That year was also the 100th anniversary of the congregation, and a large celebration was held over an entire weekend, with 4 worship service being held between Friday night and Sunday afternoon. Pastors Hellrud, Langholz and Heuer returned to preach at these services, as did the son of Rev. Lange, Rev. Charles Herman Lange, who had also been born and Baptized at our church. In December, the Luther League started the first intercongregational Christmas Card exchange. This allowed members of the congregation to send other members a Christmas card without having to mail it to them. This practice is still done to this day.

For Easter in 1969 the Brotherhood was planning to serve breakfast after the worship service. A sunrise service had been planned just for this purpose. The Brotherhood ended up backing out of the plan, so the church council took over serving the breakfast. To this day the church council still serves breakfast each year after the sunrise service on Easter morning. The menu has remained mostly the same over the years, scrambled eggs, ham and bread, with homemade jelly by members of the congregation. In more recent years the homemade jelly is now store bought and the bread is homemade muffins. For many years the bread that was served was toast, which had to be toasted fresh that morning. A number of toasters would be lined up in the kitchen for this purpose. Shortly before the end of the service the toasting would begin. Ultimately, the main fuse in the church would become blown and all electricity in the church would go out. This became quite the tradition actually, becoming almost expected each year, and usually occurred while the organ was playing one of the final songs of the service (although it is a pipe organ that forces air through the organ pipes, it uses an electric pump to generate the compressed air). To help prevent this from happening, electrical cords would be run between the parsonage and the church to provide additional electrical circuits, but sometimes it would still happen.

On July 2, 1972 a member of our congregation, Don E. Merkel, was ordained into the ministry at our church. He then served in North Dakota and Iowa City, Iowa. His ministry was cut short when he passed away on August 15, 1982.

In 1973 the Couples Club was organized to accommodate any married couple, or any dating couple who wanted to attend. By the 1980's attendance was way down, but they continued on by helping the Luther League sing Christmas Carols to the shut-ins every year in December. And while we are on the subject of shut-ins, in 1974 a cassette player was purchased to tape sermons that would be taken each week to the shut-ins of the congregation and all others who were otherwise unable to attend worship services. A new DuKane sound system was installed in 1975 which made taping the services much easier. In 1977 the tape recorder had become so well used that a new one was purchased.

The Christmas season of 1973 also saw the last of the real Christmas trees being used at the church. In most years, a large evergreen tree was donated by a member of the congregation, then cut down and brought to the church by members of the congregation and decorated by the Sunday School Trustees. The 1973 tree was donated by Walter and Elorn Bieritz, and had been growing in their front yard for many years. Although supported by a large, heavy metal base, the tree still managed to fall over into the organ console and had to be up righted again. Real evergreen trees also created problems because after having been in the church for nearly a month, they dried out and the pine needles from them were a nightmare to clean up after removing the tree down through the center isle of the church. Safety concerns also mounted with using real trees in publicly accessible buildings and their ability to catch fire easily. For 1974 it was decided that Immanuel would purchase an artificial tree, and so the last of a tradition spanning more than 100 years of using a real tree came to an end.

Immanuel had its own softball team for many years, made up of the members of the congregation, and competed in the Kendall County Church League. In 1975 Immanuel won that league and was presented with a traveling trophy. This of course gave the church a bit of notoriety throughout the county. For the 1978 homecoming parade, Gerhardt Bieritz built a model replica of the church building. This too has been used numerous times to help advertise the church in various parades in Yorkville.

1979 saw the green hymnals being used for the first time. Rather than painting the outside of the church yet again, the congregation made a rather expensive move to have the church covered in vinyl siding. It was completed at the cost of \$9,700.00, but would never need painting again.

On June 28, 1981 Pastor Schroeder celebrated his 40th Anniversary of Ordination. It would also be his last official Sunday as a full time minister as well. After this, he retired from active ministry. During the month of July he filled in as an interim pastor while he moved out of the parsonage. Of all the pastors we have had to date, he served us the longest, 17 years in all.

While looking for a new pastor, several supply pastors filled in to serve us. These included Pastor Gustofson of Lilly Lake, Illinois, Pastor Brooks from Freeport, Illinois, Pastor Liefeld from Spring Valley, Illinois, and Pastor William Ufkes of Mendota, Illinois. All were retirees except Pastor Brooks. On October 18, 1981, Rev. Harold W. Grafe, from Marion, Indiana was installed to be our pastor by Bishop Ehme Osterbur, the Bishop of the Illinois District of The American Lutheran Church.

On January 17, 1982, Pastor Grafe walked from the parsonage to the church and turned up the heat for the Sunday morning activities. After realizing that the church wasn't getting any warmer, he discovered that the heating system had overheated, cracked the boiler, and was continuing to heat up even more. After contacting the president of the congregation and the trustees, he was able to shut off the oil fed furnace. Had he not discovered it when he did, it could have resulted in a major loss for the congregation. Another clear sign that God was indeed with us that day. Worship service that morning was held in the basement, but the following 2 Sundays it was held in the community room of the Yorkville National Bank building in downtown Yorkville. The old boiler was removed by members of the congregation and a new liquid propane (LP) fired boiler was installed, which had separate thermostats for upstairs and downstairs, for a cost of \$9,247.00. Congregation members Verne and Scott Riemenschneider donated the electrical work for the installation.

In the spring, new tri-fold bulletins were used for the first time, and the church women organized a prayer chain calling list for the first time. Ceiling fans were also installed in the church during 1982. In January 1983 the first newsletter, called the Immanuel Son Times, was printed. Although it no longer has that name, we still have a monthly newsletter. The first pictorial directory of the congregation was put together in 1984. Alice L. Merkel had served as the church secretary for 24 years, for 3 different pastors, and retired from that position in May 1985. In 1986 a heater was placed just inside the front entryway to prevent water and ice from causing the steps from becoming slippery in the winter. In 1987 pew cushions were added.

By 1987 the church roof was more than 30 years old and getting to be in need of repair. It was decided that it would be best to completely remove all shingles and put an entirely new roof on. The original wooden shingles were also still present and therefore removed. The work was completed by August of that same year.

After many discussions and meetings during 1987, it was decided that the congregation would join the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which would start on January 1, 1988. On January 3, 1988 some of Immanuel's members attended a Cluster Worship at First Lutheran in Plano to celebrate the new ELCA.

In August 1990 Pastor Grafe accepted a call to Campbell Hill, Illinois. His farewell sermon was on September 9. Pastor Vernon Tweedt would now fill in as an interim pastor until a new pastor could be called.

Immanuel decided to move into a new age in October 1990. Until now, all bulletins and newsletters had been typed up using a typewriter. The congregation now agreed to purchase its first computer. The June 2, 1991 bulletin was the first one printed using the new computer.

Throughout all of 1991 the congregation celebrated its 125th anniversary with many activities. September 22 was designated to be the official anniversary day, and former Pastor Norbert Hellrud conducted the anniversary service. Shortly after the service, a congregational picture was taken outside in front of the church building. During the afternoon, after a celebration dinner was held, a time capsule was buried just north of the front entrance of the church, which would be opened in 50 years which contained many memories of the church over the years, as contributed by members of the congregation. The year ended with a New Year's Eve Watch Party after a candlelight service. This would be Pastor Tweedt's last service with us as an interim pastor.

The following Sunday would then see our newly called pastor, Rev. John M. Leaf lead us in worship, and he was officially installed as our pastor on January 19, 1992. In May a new tile floor was laid in the basement. The Couples Club had fallen apart and so in June an attempt to revive it was begun. It was unfortunately fairly short lived though.

In October an Aid Association for Lutherans (AAL) Branch (#5886) was started at Immanuel. Through their matching funds program, many people and projects received additional funding. One of the biggest projects was a benefit dinner in 1997 for member David Ketchum who was in need of medical care. What was initially thought would be just a small event, rapidly exploded in the days leading up to it, and more than 200 people attended, raising thousands of dollars from donations and the matching funds.

By 1993 it was realized that more and more members of the congregation were getting to the age where making the church building handicap accessible would become a necessity. Some could no longer go down the stairs to the basement, and others were even having trouble walking up the steps at the front of the church just to attend worship services. A Handicap Accessibility Committee was therefore formed, comprising of Vera Long, Art Riemenschneider, Ken Walker, Dick Nenne, Rob Ambrose and Annette Reihle to look into what could be done.

Also in 1993 it was decided that 5th grade students could begin receiving communion provided that they had their parents' consent, and had received proper instruction. A flagpole was also installed at the cemetery.

In 1994 Immanuel saw 2 worship services being held on a regular basis on Sunday mornings. The 10:30 service would remain the same, but an early service starting at 8:00 would be added. Sunday School would also remain the same, starting at 9:30. In November, our organist of 23 years, Sadie Devick resigned. She had done such a wonderful job that it was sad to see she would not be playing any longer. In September the Handicap Accessibility Committee gave a report suggesting that an architect be hired to draw up plans. It was unanimously approved.

Pastor Leaf celebrated the 25th anniversary of his ordination in 1995. That year also saw new communion trays being used which utilized disposable cups that the Altar Guild didn't have to wash after every service. White grape juice was also added to the center cups in 1997 for those not wanting wine. New offering plates also started being used in November 1995.

Fifteen new tables were donated to the church as a memorial to replace the older and heavier wooden tables in 1997. By 1998 the congregation moved even more into a new age. The internet was rapidly becoming the new thing. In March 1998 Immanuel saw its first website, created by Fred Kreppert. It was a very basic, yet free service being offered to all churches. In May 1998 a new women's circle was added. Until now the Ruth and Naomi Circles had become very popular and allowed the women of the congregation to meet for fellowship, Bible reading and fun. Each met at different times so that women had the opportunity to attend at least one of them. The new circle would be called Servant Hearts.

At the April 1998 congregational meeting the Handicap Accessibility Committee gave their proposal for adding an addition to the church building, comprising of new office space, bathrooms, an elevator between the entryway level and the sanctuary level, fellowship hall, kitchen and meeting room, along with remodeling the entire front entryway into the church. The vote passed 87 to 7. In December, 3 bids for the project had been received. By a vote of 49-0 we would accept the \$593,000.00 bid from Spalding-Bradley to build the addition.

On March 14, 1999 a Ground Breaking ceremony was held, with Rev. Arthur Bergren from the ELCA Synod office giving the sermon. Bill Meyers, the architect, and Rich Spaulding, the general contractor, were also present. A potluck dinner was served after the ceremony. Work was begun soon after, but it was realized that some additional permits were needed. The delay would cause some of the subcontractors to no longer be available and so their work needed to be rebid. This would now raise the cost to \$650,000.00. Work then continued until it was discovered that some of the electrical work wasn't being done properly. The electrician, and ultimately the carpenter as well, were fired and new ones hired. On April 21, 2002 a Dedication ceremony was held. Bishop Gary Wollersheim of the Northern Illinois Synod was present and provided the sermon message.

June 11, 2000 saw another child of our congregation being ordained into the ministry. This time it was Steven Gjerde who would receive the honors as he was ordained at our church.

As if the attack on Pearl Harbor wasn't bad enough in 1941, an even more horrific and brutal attack on the United States occurred on September 11, 2001 in an act of war, during an otherwise time of peace. Four planes were hijacked by terrorists and used as living missiles to attack the World Trade Center towers, the Pentagon and an attempt on the White House which failed. Serving as a flight attendant on Flight 11, the first plane to be hijacked and hit the first of the World Trade Center towers, was a former member of our congregation, Jeffrey Dwayne Collman. Other members of his family were still active members of Immanuel. On October 1, while the new addition was still well under construction, a memorial service was held at Immanuel, led by Pastor Leaf. The service was packed to absolute capacity, leaving standing room only in the church, with flight attendants, airline personnel, friends and family coming to attend the service from all parts of the United States, not to mention that it was attended by some of our own members as well.

In September 2003 Pastor Leaf retired from the active ministry. Pastor Joanne D. Adrian served us as an interim pastor until a new pastor could be called. She would be the first female pastor to serve Immanuel on a regular basis. Allowing women to become pastors is one of the advantages that sets the ELCA apart from some of the other synods who do not allow women to become pastors. At the October 2005 congregational meeting, Assistant to the Bishop, Rev. Janet Hunt was present for the vote of a new pastor. Candidate Dorothy Wilcox was also present and gave devotions and a brief talk about herself and why we should have her as our new pastor. A vote was then taken and passed to accept her as our new full time pastor. Rev. Hunt then pointed out that she would be ordained on October 30 at St. John Lutheran Church in Joliet and she began serving our congregation in November. Pastor Dorothy would be the first female called pastor of Immanuel.

Francis Bretthauer spent many hours each year making quilts and donating them to Lutheran World Relief, Lutherdale Bible Camp and others, where they would then be auctioned off. She had been doing this for quite a few years and had become very good at it, often times making 50+ quilts a year. Some of her quilts would bring in some pretty good money at the auctions. In 2006 our church secretary, Cindy Sansale, was also interested in quilting, and so along with Pastor Dorothy they put together a group to make Advent banners. Francis soon joined the group and it quickly expanded to about 5-6 people, who then continued making quilts. The group has become known as Busy Hands, and they have also done knitting and crocheting. Besides quilts they have made lap robes used by people in wheel chairs to keep warm and prayer shawls. One does not need to be a member of Immanuel to participate, and a few friends have helped out already. They currently have approximately 10 people who meet regularly. In 2015, 100 quilts were made which were donated to Lutheran World Relief.

In 2006 it was also decided that we would purchase 50 of the new red hymnals. In 2008 the sanctuary was painted and the walls repaired. The total cost would be \$32,400.00, but could be reduced by \$2,700.00 if the congregation removed the pews themselves. It was decided that the congregation could remove the pews. The ceiling fans were repaired and made working again at about the same time.

Since Pastor Dorothy was not living in the parsonage and it otherwise sat vacant, in 2007 the parsonage was rented out. This also helped to provide additional income to the church.

A special congregational meeting was held on May 6, 2007 to discuss the intern program. Pastor Dorothy had suggested this idea earlier in the year but because of time constraints we were not able to properly consider it. At this point however, one student was still available. The intern would be a staff member, putting in roughly 50 hours a week, and preach one Sunday a month. Because they are still a seminary student with one year left after their internship and therefore not yet ordained, they cannot conduct Communion. The intern would otherwise perform many tasks that a pastor would perform in order to learn what they do, and work with all of the organizations and committees. After a lengthy discussion, a vote was taken on whether to accept an intern, which came out to 47 votes to accept and 28 not to accept. Vicar Jade Yi was then installed on July 8, 2007. In October it was learned that Vicar Jade would be leaving the intern program, and our congregation. She gave no explanation for doing so.

In December 2010 Pastor Dorothy left as our pastor. Rev. Joseph Chu would now serve as an interim pastor. He would travel from Hoffman Estates to perform his duties. Pastor Chu was interested in what we did as outreach, and realizing it was something that we struggled with, he set out to help us do better with it. Right away he set out to do better with visitation, and getting members of the congregation to assist with this. He helped to reorganize an outreach committee. He created caring visits that would be held on two days a month to visit with those who were unable to attend worship. With a suggestion from Fred Kreppert regarding an e-mail prayer list he had created in 2001 with his Sunday School class, Pastor Chu converted the phone prayer chain to that of an e-mail prayer list. E-mails would reach people faster, and the prayer request wouldn't get changed around and reworded like it sometimes did when people would pass a message down the phone list.

After the new addition was added on, the parking lot was completely changed around as well. No longer could people park in the grass on the north side of the church as they had done for many years. That parking area was now covered by the fellowship hall. A new parking area was formed north of the fellowship hall, but up until 2011 it was still gravel, and often caused problems walking on, formed puddles when it rained, and was very difficult to clear the snow in the winter. This all changed in 2011 when it finally became paved with blacktop. Handicap spots were also marked at the front entrance of the church.

Immanuel would say farewell to Pastor Chu in July 2012 when they called Rev. Michael J. Neel to be our next pastor. He would start in August. Under Pastor Neel's leadership the congregation has continued to grow and prosper. In 2013 Immanuel began yet a new outreach program by helping to serve Hessed House in Aurora after Gena Gerdin brought the need to Pastor Neel's attention. Hessed House is the second largest homeless shelter in Illinois, and provides clothing to those in need throughout the Kendall and Kane county area. Two evenings a month we provide four volunteers to help run the facility.

Gena and Pastor Neel have also worked together to implement the ELCA program of God's Work Our Hands, an outreach for helping others in the community on one Sunday a year. Immanuel began participating in this program in 2015 by packing meals for Feed My Starving Children. Plans are already in the works for doing the same thing again in 2016. The official God's Work Our Hands Sunday is September 11, so Immanuel will be participating on September 10. Anyone interested is welcome to join us in the fun of the event.

Immanuel continues to support the Kendall County Food Pantry as well. Anyone can take an "Inasmuch" pack and fill it with food and necessities and return it to the church for giving to the food pantry.

Perhaps one of the biggest outreach programs in the history of Immanuel was voted on at the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 31, 2016. In 2014, the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA began conversation with Immanuel about the need for a ministry to help serve the people of northern Yorkville and Oswego. Pastor Michael Neel and a visioning team began work to explore the possibility of a new outreach ministry. Rather than duplicating what we already have, the outreach would attempt to reach those people who do not wish to attend a formal church setting such as we have here at the church. This would not be a separate church, but a ministry of Immanuel. After several town hall meetings to discuss how it would work and answer any questions, the congregation was ready to make this historic vote. On that day in January, the congregation voted by paper ballot. The votes are now in, and tallied. Only a majority vote would be needed to accept the new outreach ministry. The outcome would be 39 in favor and 16 against, allowing it to pass. We would not be repeating history, but adding to it.

This new ministry would be led by Pastor Kit Neel, the wife of Pastor Michael Neel. Having both our called pastor and his wife be an ordained pastor in itself is a first for Immanuel. No other spouse of a called pastor of Immanuel has ever been a pastor as well. To prepare for the start of this new ministry the Reverends Neel worked closely with the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA. The new ministry is called Dwell and invites people to step away from the busyness of life and dwell in community for a meal and conversation. The community gathers weekly on Monday evenings in a space located east of the intersection of 47 and 34 in Yorkville and plans to add additional gatherings in a space located north of the intersection of 34 and Orchard in Oswego. This allows Immanuel to reach back toward the northeast, where 150 years ago faithful people came southwest to start a congregation.

May it be with God's grace that this ministry be a huge success and continue to allow Immanuel to grow and become an even greater part of His plan. We have much work to do both within our own midst, and now with this new ministry as well. God has been with us and generous to us all these years. He has now given us something new to look forward to in the coming years. As our name Immanuel means "God with us", may He continue to be with us well into our future as He has now been for 150 years.

Pastors of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Yorkville, IL

Rev. Carl Richard Riedel	Nov. 1853 - Sept. 1856
Rev. Johann Andreas Friedrich Wilhelm Müller	Nov. 1856 - Aug. 1860
Rev. Herman Friederick Früchtenicht	Aug. 1860 - March 1861
Rev. George Michael Zucker	Dec. 1860 - Nov. 1864
Rev. Johannes Jacob Strieter	April 1865 - Sept. 1869
Rev. Carl Wuensch	Oct. 1869 - July 1870
Rev. Wilhelm Hallerberg	Aug. 1870 - Sept. 1873
Rev. Johann Heinrich Dörmann	Dec. 1873 - Nov. 1883
Rev. Frederick Emil Fickeissen	Dec. 1883 - June 1884
Rev. Wendelin Linsenmann	Dec. 1884 - April 1888
Rev. Adam Aaron Dapper	June 1888 - August 1890
Rev. August Vockrodt	May 1891 - Jan. 1897
Rev. Martin T. Allwardt	June 1897 - April 1901
Rev. William Steinmeyer	April 1902 - Oct. 1907
Rev. Charles John Lange	Nov. 1907 - Jan. 1919
Rev. Friedrich August Seifert	April 1919 - Nov. 1920
Rev. John Christian Langholz	Jan. 1921 - Sept. 1922
Rev. Eugene Ahl	April 1923 - Feb. 1929
Rev. Friedrich August Seifert	Feb. 1929 - Early Summer 1944
Rev. Albert John Gess	Aug. 1944 - June 1949
Rev. Ludwig "Louis" Ezra Heuer	Oct. 1949 - Jan. 1961
Chaplain Clarence Leray Bruninga (interim)	Jan. 1961 - July 1961
Rev. Norbert Henry Hellrud	July 1961 - Jan. 1964
Rev. Otto Henry Behrens (interim)	Jan. 1964 - April 1964
Rev. Marvin Ernest Schroeder	April 1964 - July 1981
Rev. Harold W. Grafe	Oct. 1981 - Aug. 1990
Rev. Vernon Tweedt (interim)	Sept. 1990 - Dec. 1991
Rev. John M. Leaf	Jan. 1992 - Sept. 2003
Rev. Joanne D. Adrian (interim)	Nov. 2003 - Oct. 2005
Rev. Dorothy Wilcox	Nov. 2005 - Dec. 2010
Rev. Joseph Chu (interim)	Jan. 2010 - July 2012
Rev. Michael J. Neel	Aug. 2012 - present



Rev. Carl Richard Riedel
Nov. 1853 - Sept. 1856



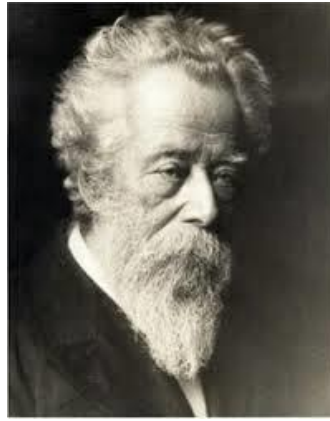
**Rev. Johann Andreas Friedrich
Wilhelm Müller**
Nov. 1856 - Aug. 1860



**Rev. Herman Friederick
Früchtenicht**
Aug. 1860 - March 1861



Rev. George Michael Zucker
Dec. 1860 - Nov. 1864



Rev. Johannes Jacob Strieter
April 1865 - Sept. 1869

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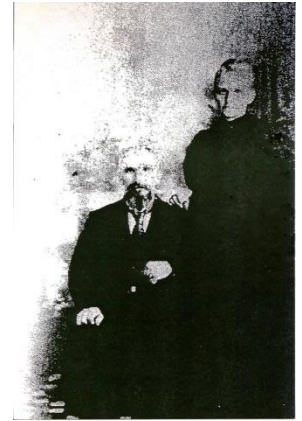
Rev. Carl Wuensch
Oct. 1869 - July 1870



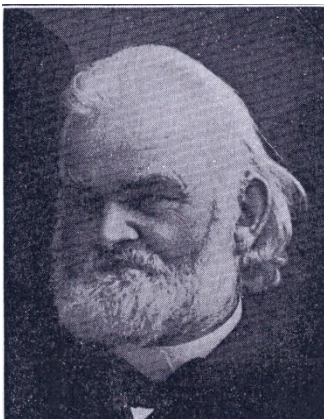
Rev. Wilhelm Hallerberg
Aug. 1870 - Sept. 1873



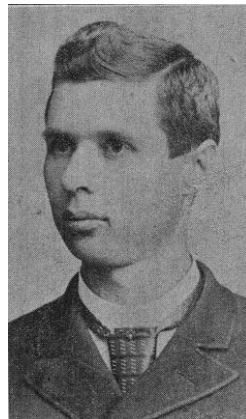
Rev. Johann Heinrich Dörmann
Dec. 1873 - Nov. 1883



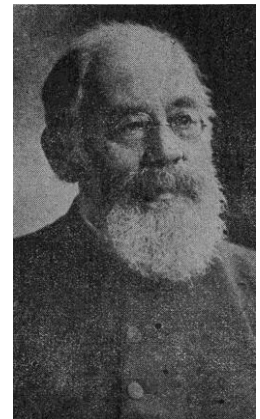
Rev. Frederick Emil Fickeissen
Dec. 1883 - June 1884



Rev. Wendelin Linsenmann
Dec. 1884 - April 1888



Rev. Adam Aaron Dapper
June 1888 - August 1890



Rev. August Vockrodt
May 1891 - Jan. 1897



Rev. Martin T. Allwardt
June 1897 - April 1901



Rev. William Steinmeyer
April 1902 - Oct. 1907



Rev. Charles John Lange
Nov. 1907 - Jan. 1919



Rev. Friedrich August Seifert
April 1919 - Nov. 1920



Rev. John Christian Langholz
Jan. 1921 - Sept. 1922



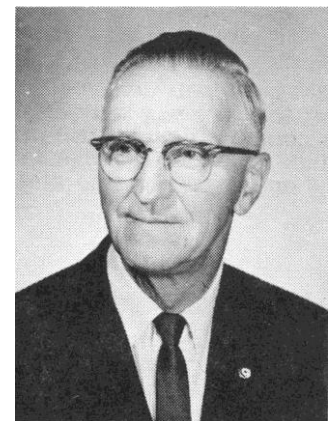
Rev. Eugene Ahl
April 1923 - Feb. 1929



Rev. Friedrich August Seifert
Feb. 1929 - Early Summer 1944



Rev. Albert John Gess
Summer 1944 - June 1949



Rev. Ludwig "Louis" Ezra Heuer
Oct. 1949 - Jan. 1961

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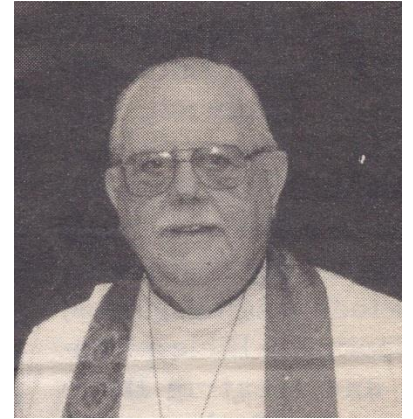
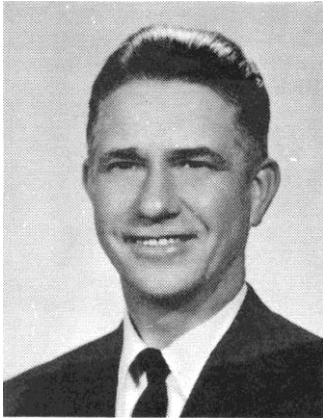


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Chaplain Clarence Leray Bruninga
(interim)
Jan. 1961 - July 1961

Rev. Norbert Henry Hellrud
July 1961 - Jan. 1964

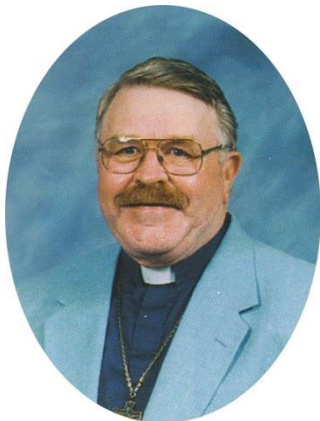
Rev. Otto Henry Behrens (interim)
Jan. 1964 - April 1964



Rev. Marvin Ernest Schroeder
April 1964 - July 1981

Rev. Harold W. Grafe
Oct. 1981 - Aug. 1990

Rev. Vernon Tweedt (interim)
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Rev. John M. Leaf
Jan. 1992 - Sept. 2003

Rev. Joanne D. Adrian (interim)
Nov. 2003 - Oct. 2005

Rev. Dorothy Wilcox
Nov. 2005 - Dec. 2010



Rev. Joseph Chu (interim)
Jan. 2010 - July 2012



Rev. Michael J. Neel
Aug. 2012 - present

Teachers of Immanuel Lutheran School, Yorkville, IL

Teacher	From	To
Mr. William Henry Bewie	Mid-Aug. 1867	March 7, 1870
Mr. Paul Kretschmär	1870	May 1872
Mr. W. Känder	June 1872	Spring 1877
Miss Minna Dörmann	Spring 1877	Summer 1877
Mr. Helmreich	Aug. 1877	Fall 1878
Pastor Dörmann & Miss Minna Dörmann	Nov. 1878	???
Mr. Grosse	???	March 1879
Minna Dörmann	April 1879	Summer 1879
Mr. Paul Fred William Otto	Aug. 1879	June 1881
Pastor Johann Heinrich Dörmann	Sept. 1881	Aug. 1882
Mr. Rudolph Kohler	Sept. 1, 1882	Sept. 16, 1882
Mr. Heinrich Goessner	Oct. 1882	June 1884
Pastor Wendelin Linsenmann	Nov. 1884	April 1888
Pastor Adam Aaron Dapper	June 1888	June 1889
Mr. Georg Friedrich "Fred" Doepping	June 1889	Aug. 1895
Mr. Wilhelm Radke	Dec. 1895	Fall 1896
Mr. Wilhelm G. Freytag	Fall 1896 or early 1897	June 1903
Mr. G. P. Leifeld	Oct. 2, 1903	Nov. 1904
Prof. C.F. Theiss	March 1905	July 1906
Pastor William Steinmeyer	Sept. 1906	Oct. 1907
Pastor Charles John Lange	Nov. 1907	Jan. 1919
Pastor Friedrich August Seifert	April 1919	Nov. 28, 1920
Pastor John Christian Langholz	Jan. 1921	Sept. 1922
Pastor Eugene Ahl	April 1923	Summer 1923