1908

One Hundred Years in St. Paul's 1890~1990

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BUILDING

1990

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This book is dedicated to the work of the historical committee, and specifically to its chair in 1990, Ruth Metzler, and to its chief historian throughout the years, Emma Rice. These and other members of St. Paul's have known and preserved the record so that others may know the constancy of purpose... of this holy place.

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FOREWARD

St. Paul's United Church of Christ has stood at the corner of Sixth and Garfield for one hundred years. While other churches in Laramie have changed locations, and built modern buildings, and while other churches have stood idle during difficult times, St. Paul's Church has stood with its spire pointed toward the sky and its sanctuary kept intact as a place of beauty and peace.

Perhaps the most indicative story of St. Paul's is marked by the artful glass windows, depicting various Gospel narratives in the life of Christ. These windows were put in place in 1922, and tell, with both the art of portraiture and the use of carefully constructed glass, stories of our centeredness in Jesus Christ--the Good Samaritan, the Road to Emmaus, the Good Shepherd, and Jesus Knocking at the Door. And yet, the neighborhood around these images changed, including the fact that for many years the junior high school was located one short block away. However, since 1922, the windows have remained exactly as they were designed, without harm caused by neglect or vandalism or Wyoming storms.

It is the preservation of this Christ-centered place that we celebrate in the year 1990. For, the congregation of St. Paul's, even during the difficult years of the depression, always found people who knew in their hearts that this was a place of God, and kept it just that way.

In the following pages you will read the narratives of older members of the church, a compilation of their "living history." But, the motivation to preserve this sanctuary has been the specific duty of the Board of Trustees and the concern of all the members of St. Paul's.

So, in the year 1990, one hundred years after the cornerstone was laid on July 13, 1890, we offer this booklet as an attempt to say "Thank you to our forebears in the faith." and "Thank God for the church which has stood the test of time.

Holy Lord,
You call us out of our private lives
to offer our best in Your service.
May the gracefulness of this building
give us a purposeful lesson ...
in the use of our resources, and our time.
May the beauty of this building
lift our spirits.
And, may the peace of this building...
lead us on...to Christ.
For in Him we find the rock...
of our salvation. Amen.

Rev. Sally Palmer, for St. Paul's.

WYOMING PROCLAIMED A STATE

Acting Governor Meldrum
Issues an Official Proclamation of Statehood.

The following proclamation relating to Wyoming's admission has been issued by Acting Governor Meldrum.

WHEREAS, The people of the territory of Wyoming did, on the 30th day of September, A.D. 1889, by a convention of delegates called and assembled for that purpose, form for themselves a Constitution, which Constitution was ratified and adopted by the people of said territory at the election held therefor on the first Tuesday in November, A.D. 1889; and

WHEREAS, By an act of the Congress of the United States approved by the President on the 10th day of July, A.D. 1890, the said territory was duly admitted into the Union as the State of Wyoming, and the said Constitution was duly accepted, ratified and confirmed by Congress;

Now therefore I, John W. Meldrum, acting Governor of Wyoming, do hereby proclaim that the State of Wyoming has been duly admitted and declared to be a State of the United States of America, on an equal footing with the original States in all respects whatever: and I do hereby call especial attention to the several provisions of Article XXI of the Constitution of the said State regulating and providing for the change and transition from the territorial system to a permanent State Government.

In performing this duty I extend to the people of the State my most earnest congratulations, and express to them my entire confidence, in their readiness and ability to cheerfully meet and sustain the obligations and responsibilities incident to their entrance into the Union of States.

In testimony wherof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the great Seal of the State of Wyoming to be hereto affixed at Cheyenne, the Capital, this eleventh day of July, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and ninety, and of the independence of the United States of America the one hundred and fifteenth.

JOHN W. MELDRUM,
Acting Governor.

THE LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE, JULY 13, 1890

On July 13, 1890, the cornerstone of St. Paul's Church was laid. The contents which were put in place included the Lutheran Observer, the Evangelist, the Hausfreund, the Sentinel and Times, the minutes of the Synod, the Lutheran Catechism, the Laramie Daily Boomerang, the Rules governing the Synod, and the history of the congregation.

THE LARAMIE BOOMERANG DESCRIBED THE EVENT THIS WAY:
"LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE OF THE FIRST GERMAN CHURCH IN WYOMING WILL TAKE PLACE IN THIS CITY ON THE CORNER OF SIXTH AND GARFIELD STREETS ON SUNDAY, JULY 13TH, AT 3 P.M. IT WILL BE A RARE TREAT TO ALL. EVERYONE IS CORDIALLY INVITED. THERE WILL BE SHORT BUT CHOICE ADDRESSES, AND EXCELLENT MUSIC BY THE LARAMIE BRASS BAND AND THE LARAMIE MAENNERCHOR.

PROGRAM:

MUSIC.
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY REV. THOMSEN OF GERMAN CHURCH
PRAYER BY REV. ROWE, CHRISTIAN CHURCH.
MUSIC.
ADDRESSES BY REV. WRISTON OF METHODIST CHURCH
REV. LOVE OF EPISCOPAL CHURCH
REV. BARR OF PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MUSIC.
ADDRESS EX-GOVERNOR HOYT L.L.D.
MUSIC.
LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE AND GERMAN ADDRESSES
BY REV. LEVERINGHAUS D.D., CHICAGO

MUSIC.
PRAYER REV. KNAPP, BAPTIST CHURCH

A COLLECTION WILL BE TAKEN TOWARD THE BUILDING FUND."

THE REDEDICATION OF THE BUILDING OF ST. PAUL'S, JULY 15, 1990

On July 13, 1990, the cornerstone will be opened and the historical contents displayed. Then, on July 15th, the following order of worship will be used to rededicate the building to the glory of God:

ORDER OF WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, JULY 15, 1990

MUSIC: PRELUDE
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS — by Rev. Palmer
CALL TO WORSHIP — by the congregation
OPENING PRAYER — by Ben Arthur, Moderator
MUSIC: "Praise Ye the Lord" — by the Gem City Gents, SPEBSQSA
ADDRESS: "The Foundation of Our Faith" by Kathy Karpan, Secretary of State
*MUSIC: The congregation sings "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

THE REDEDICATION OF THE BUILDING

A Reading of the Word: Isaiah 40: 28-31
Matthew 16: 13-18
A Homily: "The Communion of Saints" by Rev. Palmer
The Act of Commitment — by us all
MUSIC: "Faith of Our Fathers" — by the Gem City Gents, SPEBSQSA
THE OFFERING
A PRAYER OF DEDICATION — by Ben Arthur, Moderator
MUSIC: A RECESSIONAL HYMN "God of Our Fathers"

AS THE CONGREGATION MOVES TO WORSHIP OUTSIDE
THE INTRODUCTORY WORD: by Rev. Palmer
MUSIC: "O God Our Help in Ages Past" by the Gem City Gents SPEBSQSA
THE LORD'S PRAYER (In English and German)
THE BENEDICTION: May the peace of God, the power of the Spirit, and the comfort of Jesus Christ... be the cornerstone of our faith, now and always. Amen.

Following the service of worship, we will place the following items in a time capsule, to be opened in the year 2090: a pictorial directory of St. Paul's, the Laramie Boomerang, a piece of the Berlin Wall, a copy of the Wyoming Centennial Stamp, historical books about St. Paul's, one hundred copper pennies, and notes which we have written to those who bear the future of the next hundred years.

St. Paul's Church celebrated its one-hundredth anniversary as a congregation in 1986, and is the oldest church in the city of Laramie still using the original building. It was awarded a place on the National Historic Register for this reason and also because it is the first German church in the state of Wyoming. The present building was constructed in 1890. In 1885 the population of the city of Laramie was comprised of many ethnic groups from Sweden, Denmark, France, England, etc. All these groups had churches of their own except the Germans. So, a committee of German Lutherans met with the Rev. F.M. Andresen, from the Lutheran Board of Home Missions to discuss the possibility of organizing a German congregation in Laramie. On May 2, 1886, a congregation was organized with the Rev. Rosenstengel assisting. The name chosen for the church was ST. PAULUS DEUTSCHE EVANGELISCHE LUTHERISCHE GEMEINDE. The new congregation affiliated with the Lutheran General Synod of Chicago, and Trustees were elected.

From our study of the records of Trinity Lutheran Church, Laramie, it seems evident that this German congregation first worshipped in the Lutheran Church, which was then located at Fourth and Pine. On November 21, 1886, the Rev. Johann Frank of the Plattsmouth, Nebraska Prebyterian Church took charge of the new German Lutheran Church in Laramie. On December 3, 1886, Rev. Frank baptized his first baby in Laramie. He baptized eight more on December 25th, 1886. Then, he performed his first wedding for the congregation on March 30, 1887, and his first funeral was held on January 2, 1887. In August 1887, Rev. Frank resigned, but he had laid a good foundation for the new St. Paul's.

In May, 1888, the Frauen Verein (Ladies Society), predecessor of the Women's Guild and the present Women's Fellowship, was formed.

1922

On July 5, 1888, the congregation was incorporated under the laws of the Territory of Wyoming to establish a German church and school. At that time, there were six Trustees. St. Paul's congregation was holding services in the Presbyterian Church, in 1888, and that building was then located on Fremont Street between Second and Third (the exact location was the North-West corner).

THE ACTUAL BUILDING OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH BEGINS WITH A DECISION MADE IN DECEMBER, 1889; THEN THE CONGREGATION MET AND DECIDED TO PURCHASE A LOT. A building committee was elected and, in May, 1890, a decision was made to authorize the construction of a church building not to exceed $3,400 in costs on a lot at Sixth and Garfield. George Berner was hired as the contractor, and this lot was located across the street, East, from Dr. Finfrock's house.

ON JULY 13, 1890, JUST THREE DAYS AFTER WYOMING BECAME A STATE, THE CORNERSTONE WAS LAID FOR THE FIRST GERMAN CHURCH IN WYOMING. By December, 1890, the building was ready for occupany. On January 18, 1891, the church building was dedicated before a congregation of 150 people, with six ministers participating. A reed organ had been purchased for $80. At the time of this elaborate service of dedication, the city of Laramie had seven church buildings.

Throughout its early years, St. Paul's had a number of pastors who only served a brief period of time. But, in 1909, Rev. O.G. Wichmann came and minstered for ten years. He was a widower with six teen-age children and occupied the parsonage which was built at the cost of about $1800. According to one of Rev. Wichmann's children, Hildegard, the parsonage had only a partial bathroom, an indoor lavatory with a washbowl and no tub. In 1907, at the time of its construction, the parsonage, located at 610 Garfield, had no basement. The congregation used small buildings in the alley as their outside lavatory. Rev. Wichmann's salary was $50 a month and he taught German at the University of Wyoming in order to supplement this amount.

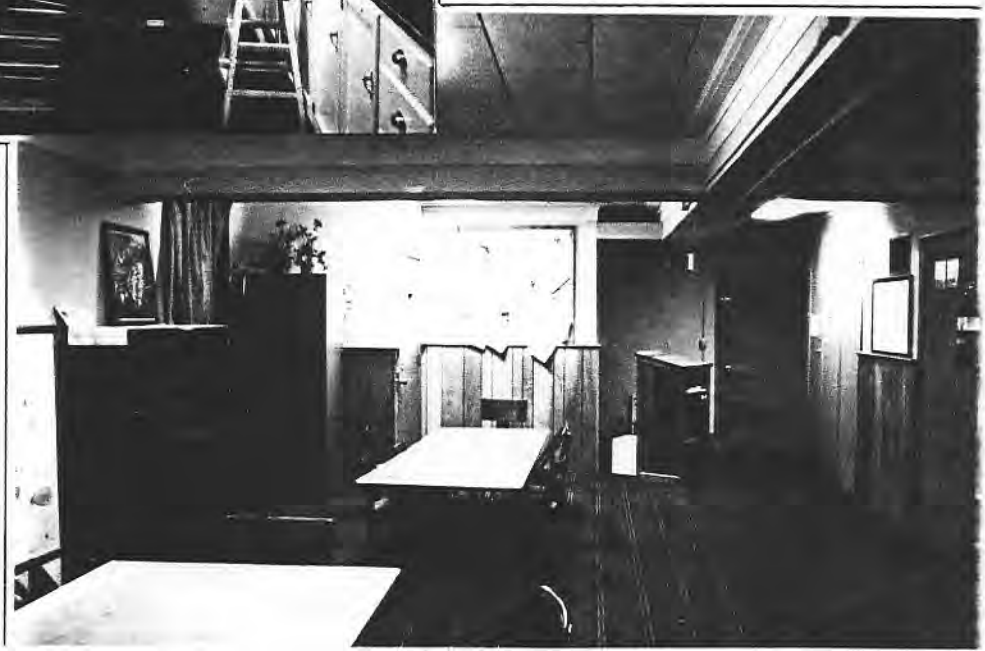
1937

THEN, IN 1922, UNDER THE MINISTRY OF REV. O.F. GEISLER, SEVERAL IMPORTANT RENOVATIONS WERE MADE AT THE CHURCH. Spiegelberg Lumber Company was given the contract of $6,500 to construct an addition to the original building on the East side, which contained a pastor's study and a kitchen, and restrooms in the basement of the church. A garage was also built. The renovations included placing a coal furnace in the basement, instead of the wood stove which had been used in the sanctuary; installing a pulpit and baptismal font in the front of the sanctuary, and, on a gradual basis, exchanging the plain windows for colored art glass. New electric lights were installed and the woodwork was stained and varnished.

It was also under the ministry of Rev. O.F. Geisler that the language of the liturgy was changed from German to English; that took place for the first time in a Lenten service, February 15, 1923. It was <u>not</u> until 1932 that the language question was settled completely and the services have been in English ever since. The church constitution was rewritten in English under the direction of Rev. A. Doellefeld.

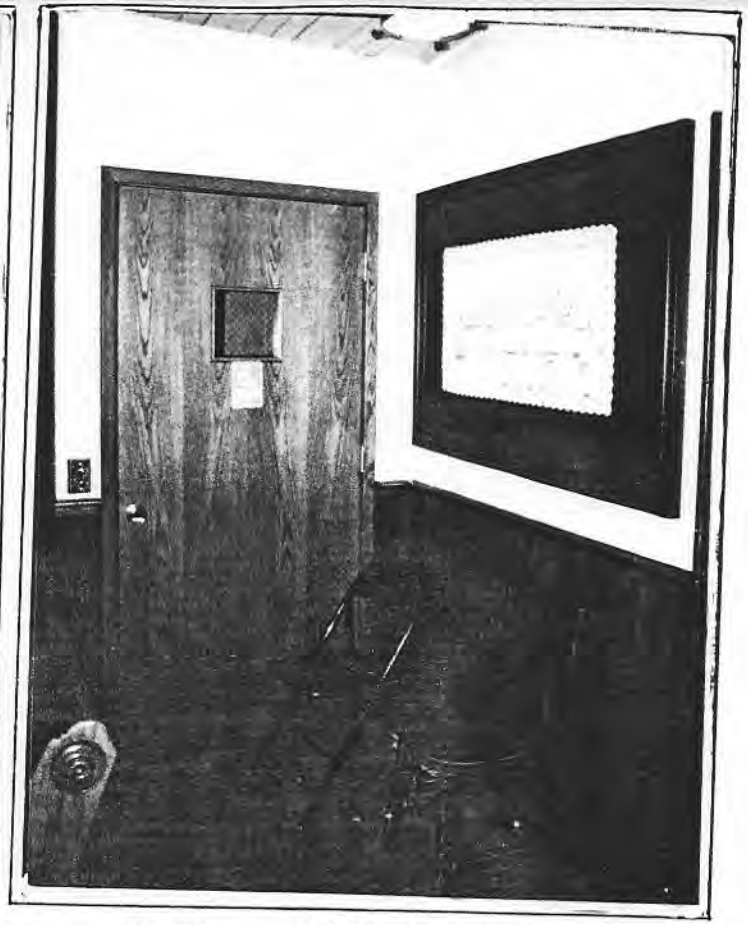
Over the years, SEVERAL OTHER RENOVATIONS HAVE TAKEN PLACE: including the excavating of the basement for the parsonage, the converting of the furnace from coal to gas, the addition of new light fixtures, the construction of a new kitchen, and the refinishing of the church basement. Many memorials have contributed to the beautifying of the church, including various organs, a twenty-one bell carillon attached to the present organ, other stained glass windows, and the many items which grace the altar. It was not until 1983 that the congregation added a plexiglass covering to protect the stained-glass windows, which were valued, at that time, at a cost of $50,000.

Kitchen
1990



Fellowship Hall
1990

Pastor's Study 1990



Handicapped Elevator 1990

OVER THE HUNDRED YEARS, THERE HAVE BEEN CHANGES IN THE NAME OF ST. PAUL'S AS WELL. The first Germans who founded the church chose the name "DEUTSCHE EVANGELISCHE LUTHERISCHE ST. PAULUS GEMEINDE." The Evangelical Synod supplied ministers because the Lutherans were no longer able to do so. So, in 1934, when the Evangelical Synod united with the German Reformed Church, St. Paul's became: ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH. Then, on June 25, 1957, when the Evangelical and Reformed Church merged with the Congregation and Christian Churches, this congregation changed its name once more and was designated: ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

OVER THE HUNDRED YEARS OF OUR HISTORY, THERE HAVE BEEN VARIOUS CELEBRATIONS WHICH MARK THE SIGNFICANCE OF OUR CONGREGATION: The Golden Jubilee of St. Paul's was celebrated on August 15, 1937, with Rev. Robert Young presiding. A fifty-year booklet was published, which is the most complete history of the early church. Then, on June 1, 1947, there was a sixtieth anniversary celebration, with Rev. Press presiding. The Sixty-fifth celebration was held on February 1, 1951, with Rev. McCormick presiding. Then, on January 12, 1962, under the direction of Rev. Robert Knapp, there was a celebration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the church, and that included special worship services, a dinner program, and a display of old photographs. Then, on November 26, 1976, the Eightieth Anniversary of the church was observed with a carry-in dinner, messages from former pastors, the reocgnition of the oldest confirmand, and a speech by the presiding minister, Rev. Armin Munz. Finally, on May 1, 1977, the Nintieth Anniversary of the building was observed with an all-day remembrance, confirmation, and communion services. This celebration was under the direction of Rev. Mary Grubbs Greene, the first woman pastor to serve in Laramie.

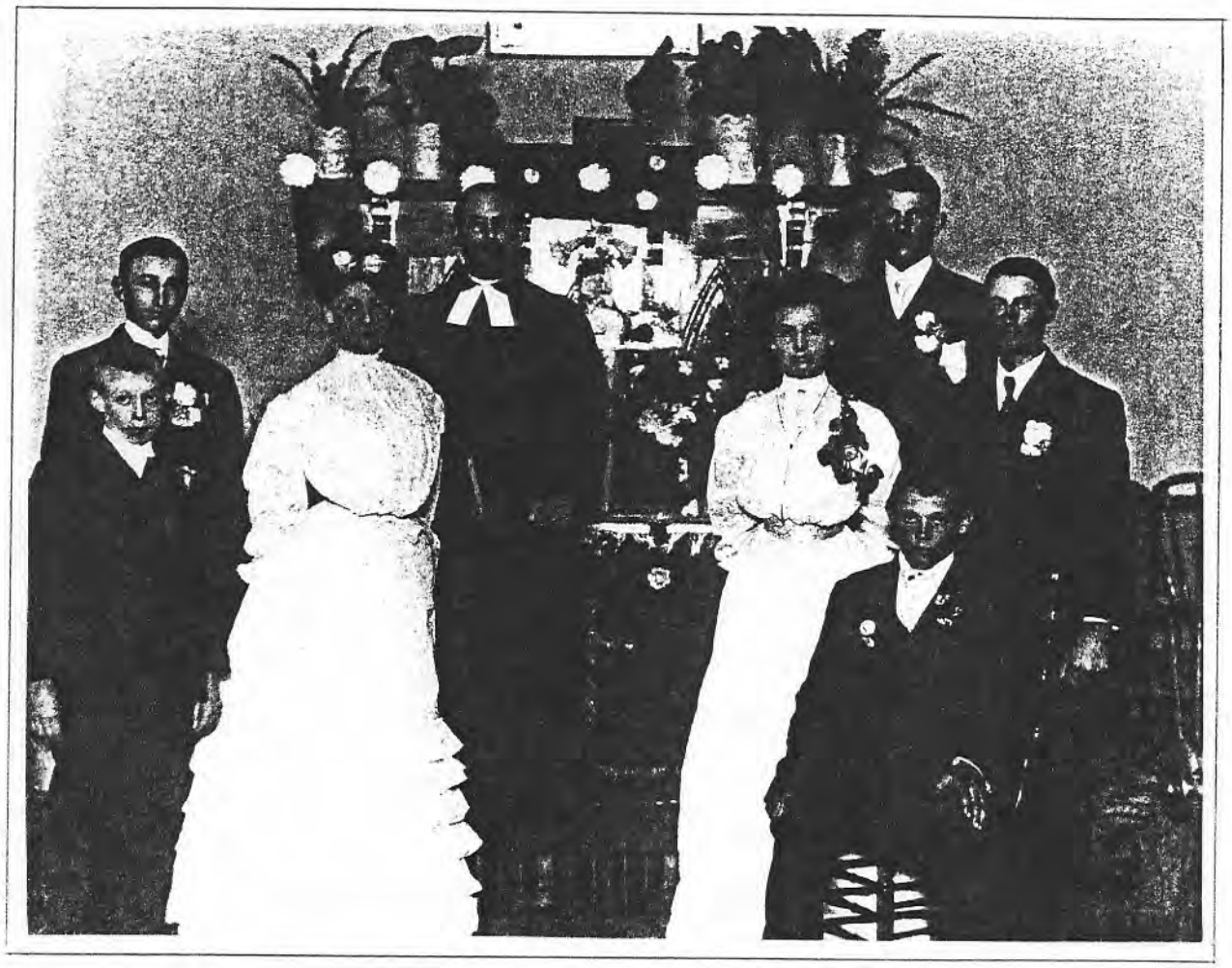
For those who study St. Paul's history, it is important to note that in 1963 thieves broke into the building and stole the church safe. Because they could find no money, they decided to burn the papers which were in "safe keeping." Since these early records were destroyed during the theft, it has been difficult to recollect the pieces of our past. And so, it wasn't until the 1980's that we dsicovered St. Paul's Church was actually founded on May 2, 1886 instead of 1887. Our hundredth year celebration started in January, 1986, and we held a rededication of the church building on June 28, 1986. The celebration included a display of memorabilia, a confirmand banquet and reunion, and a service of worship led by the Rev. Richard T. Day, Chaplain U.S.N., and grandson of Rev. Wichmann.

Throughout the hundred years the congregation has served the church and the community in many important ways. The stability of our life as a congregation has been provided by the deacons, who are in charge of the spiritual life of the church, and the trustees, who have kept excellent care of our finances and buildings. Another consistently stable group is Women's Fellowship, which has served the church in many ways. Throughout the years, they have earned their monies by holding potato pancake suppers, rummage sales, bake sales, bazaars, and luncheons. Another important group has been those who provided for the Christian Education of children and adults, which included classes, special programs, a children's choir, and youth groups. Throughout the hundred years, St. Paul's has taken a leading role in reaching out beyond the four walls of the church to serve in this community and in God's world. Individual members have provided for ministry to transients and needy families and the Board for Christian Service has led different projects, which include refugee sponsorship, a hunger walk, and ministry through the ecumenical organizations of Wyoming.

The information provided by this summary is only in addition to all the difficult gathering of facts which took place to prepare our hundredth anniversary booklet, in 1986. There is also a hundred-year record book, with a list of births, baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and funerals, as well as a list of the ministers who served St. Paul's. As we look to the 21st Century, we are grateful to all who preserved our past.

Sanctuary 1990

Personal Narratives of Those Who Remember
...throughout the years



1903

Otto Piper — *Anna Schirmer* — *Rev. Adolph Walton* — *Ida Koppe* — *Paul Piper* — *William Piper*

William Schirmer — *Reinhold Stabach*

One of the critical questions asked is: "Who made the original altar?" As this early photo demonstrates, the earliest altar was much smaller than the one installed in 1922. Then, the pulpit was in the center of the altar, now the cross stands at the center, and the image of Christ. We are thankful to those who remembered, and helped us understand.

Albert Melcher was born in 1900 and he can remember attending Sunday school at St. Paul's as a child, even on very cold days when there was no overpass from the West Side. He had to wait for the busy Laramie tracks to be clear of freight trains before his family could go to church.

His father arrived in Laramie as a German immigrant in 1882, so the family naturally attended St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church. His father always spoke German, although his mother spoke English, so he spoke English. Eventually, even St. Paul's switched to English in worship services because of anti-German bigotry during World War I, and in recognition of the fact that German was not being spoken anyway.

When Albert was confirmed in 1915 on Pentecost, 50 days after Easter, he had to know the catechism in German and from memory. He was quizzed on the catechism in German and had to answer in German. At the time of his confirmation, Albert worked as a call boy for the U.P. twelve hours a day and seven days a week. From call boy, he became an assistant yard master and then a machinist in the Laramie locomotive shops for over 40 years. After he married, Albert switched to the (Swedish) Trinity Lutheran Church on the West side in the early 1930's since his wife belonged to it, and St. Paul's was without a minister, and it was closer to his home. But, Albert has always maintained ties to St. Paul's.

Albert remembers St. Paul's Church before the back addition was added behind the altar in 1922, and he remembers when the choir used to sing from the balcony. It was probably the choir or the family members who started the tradition of carving initials into the balcony railing. Somehow, the church even managed to have German pancake suppers before the addition was added on, and in those days all the potatoes were shredded by hand, not with a blender. At one time, Albert remembers that the church had a semi-circular pulpit, and he can recall at least three different altars. At one time, the church had sandstone steps, which had to be replaced because of wear. He does not remember the use of chairs before pews, but he does recall the use of frosted glass where the stained glass windows are today.

The bricks for the church were probably obtained from the brick yard (where the Westside Co-op is today) and not from the prison. Although the basement was small, it was used for confirmation class, and it always had at least wood floors, during Melcher's time. He can remember two organs. One was operated by a foot-pump and the other was operated by a hand-wound device.

Albert Melcher
164 No. Pine
745-3218

Congregation
1947

A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE REAL BUILDING OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, LARAMIE

AS TOLD BY GEORGE SPIEGELBERG

The Sanctuary:

The sanctuary of St. Paul's Church is centered on the altar, and during the course of one-hundred years, there have been three different altars at the front of the church. The first altar was straight, with a pine floor, and that floor was painted by Carl Swenson. The second altar was constructed during the time that the basement was created. And, that altar had a curved altar rail so that persons could come forward in order to receive communion, and the sacraments of the church. Finally, about 1922, the present altar was put in place. That altar, complete with the cross at the top, the centerpiece of the Last Supper, and the focus on Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, was put in place after it arrived from a firm in Kansas City. The altar arrived in five large pieces and was carefully installed by Will, Walter and George Spiegelberg.

Another significant feature of the sanctuary of St. Paul's are the stained-glass windows. The type of portraiture depicted in the four images of Jesus was appropriate for the time. The first window sashes were created by Frank Spiegelberg and were made of wood. Then, the stained glass windows were added, one by one. It is difficult to say, at this late date, what the order was of the windows, but different groups and families in the church decided to donate the stained glass so that the original windows could be changed. The first step in this transition from plain glass to art glass was removing the window frames, then, for a while, wooden windows were in place, and during that time, the frames were either sent to the manufacturer of the stained glass windows, or else a copy of them was sent so that the measurements could be exact. Finally, one by one, the Spiegelberg brothers, George, Walt, and Will, installed the art windows and reinstalled the leaded window sashes.

And, another signifcant change in our one-hundred year-old building is the edifice itself. The first building, constructed carefully in 1890, ended at the East wall of the sanctuary, and there was no official basement to the church, just a place where people could come and worship. The cornerstone marks the East extension of the original wall. Also, in 1890, the building had both the bricks, as now exist, and a stone foundation, which presently remains underneath the concrete lower exterior of the foundation.

Also important to the concept of sanctuary was the synmbol which reached to the sky, the steeple. And, this symbol has required repairs and changed throughout the hundred years. At one time, Will held the ladder for George to climb to the top of the steeple so that the cross could be turned around to face its present direction. And, of course, due to the wear of Wyoming weather, the steeple needed to be repainted...at first by hand, and then with the help of a fireman's crew.

Finally, the entrance to the sanctuary has also been transformed over the one-hundred years. At first the steps to the church were wooden, and then, they were made into concrete. The Trustees of St. Paul's said, at that time, we could not afford concrete, so some of the willing Spiegelbergs simply made labor and materials available on their own.

The Additions to the Sanctuary:

Originally, in 1890, St. Paulus Kirche was the building of a sanctuary, and the congregation agreed that the cost should not exceed $3,400. So, only a sanctuary was constructed; that was all the church could afford. So that in time, as finances became available, the building was enlarged and necessary changes made.

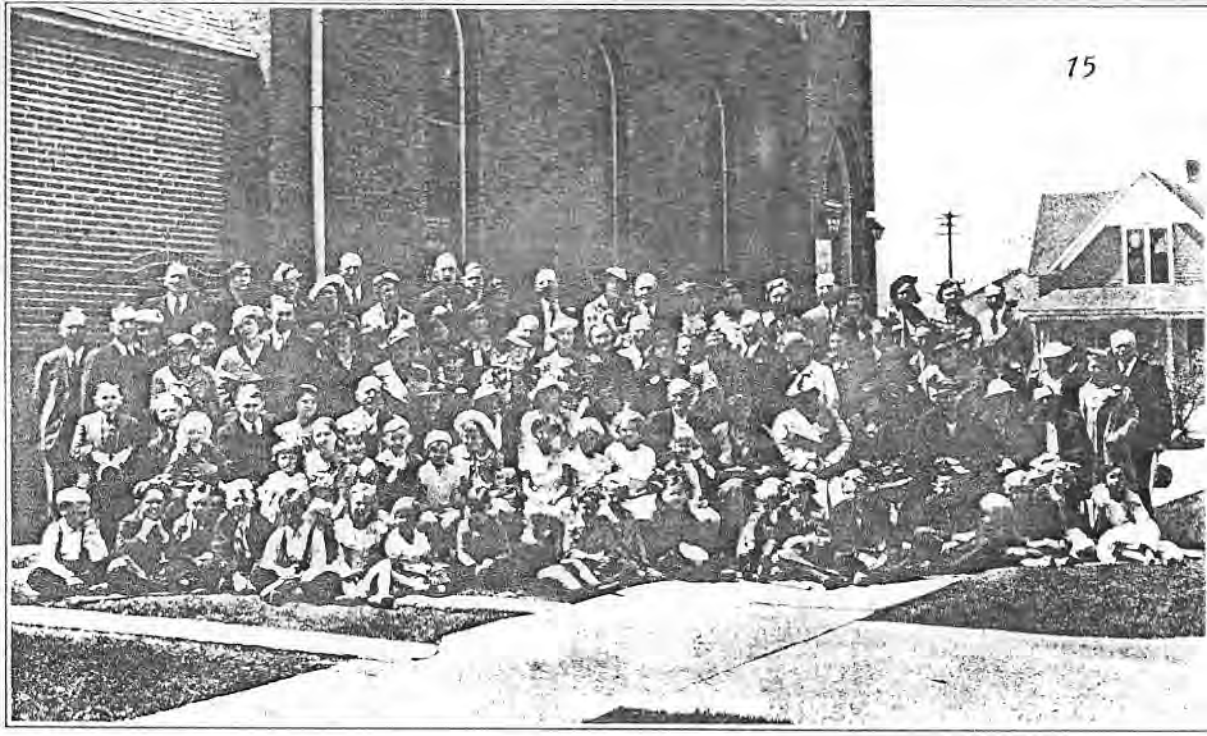
The most dramatic change was the construction of the basement. At first, there was only the original stone foundation, and then, it was decided to make a real, usable basement. So, the first step was providing support for the sanctuary, and a steel beam was installed to run the East-West length of the building. From that steel beam, which was constructed by Herman Burkhardt of Burkhardt Steel, there were three or four cross-beams. To install these beams, the crew had to chop holes in the stone foundation, and also, the crew had to lay some duct work. Finally, when the floor was constructed, that work was done by Harry Johnson. A concrete slab was poured, and "bull-dog anchors" were installed along with 2" by 3" wooden sleepers, and finally a level surface was built from concrete. The next step was topping the concrete with asphalt, because of the need to protect from moisture, and the next step was creating a 2" air space, so that the floor would remain dry. Finally, after the careful construction of all these protective layers, an intricate oak floor was installed. And, that oak floor, sanded and polished, is still underneath the present carpet in the basement of the church, what is now Fellowship Hall.

Another important part of this stage of improvement was creating more secure walls. The building had to be changed to make room for the educational and social functions of the church. At first, Mads Justesen put a tar coating on the existing foundation, then John Carlson plastered the walls, and let the plaster dry clear through. The final touch of the work on the basement walls was done by Hans Vogt and his son, Tom; they put on the wainscoating so the walls would look quite nice. Another aspect of this renovation was changing the windows. The original windows of the basement were made of wood, and then, the crew put in steel sashes, the ones which are presently in place, although they have been changed to glass. At that time, the furnace was in the West end of the building and Confirmation class met in the tiny coal and storage room. The coal room which now stands at the West side was added at a later date, as well as the "Historical Room." These were not part of the early reconstruction.

Finally, the church decided to take the important step of enlarging the building itself. That required cutting through the walls upstairs, in the sanctuary, and downstairs in the basement. Without the aid of blueprints, all these additions were done. The work was supervised by George Spiegelberg and some of it was completed by Axel Sandstrom (he was the specialist on the walls). It was in 1922, then, that the stove in the sanctuary was replaced by a coal furnace, that electric lights were installed, and that the woodwork was stained and varnished. These are some of the major changes that were done with hard work, and exceeding care.

Sanctuary

1947



Congregation

1937

Louise Messer
1619 Custer
745-3959

Louise was born at home to a family which had 4 girls and 4 boys. A nearby neighbor served as mid-wife. Her parents came from Switzerland, and she spoke German in school for the first few years. She lived next to what was the high school in a house located where the public library is today. The high school became the Laramie Plains Civic Center, and the house was moved to another location.

Louise remembers that, in the late 1800's, she had heard that the St. Paul's basement did have a dirt floor. At that time, public school was taught in St. Paul's while a new school building was under construction. For a while, she attended the Baptist Sunday school, but she left after learning about baptism through immersion -- and the danger of drowning! Louise attended St. Paul's Sunday school regularly on horse and buggy, and, in the winter, with horse and sleigh.

Her confirmation class was in German and English, with George Spiegelberg, Harold Melcher, and another lad. The boys teased Louise so much that she used to study in the bathroom! It took two years of study to become confirmed and her work included memorization in both English and German. After confirmation, the event was celebrated with a special dinner at home.

Louise sang in the choir and went to young people's meetings from 7:00 to 8:00 P.M. on Sundays. Sometimes, there were refreshments. She cannot remember sitting on the chairs for worship (instead of pews), and she remembers only one altar. The candle-lighters took their job very seriously and even practiced on Saturday. Louise can remember one time when she set the communion wine out overnight, and it turned moldy. Grape juice was adopted as an alternative because some were allergic to wine (including herself). German pancakes were made on a large homemade griddle (courtesy of the U.P.), and on portable gas stoves. The pancakes were accompanied by large sausages, wieners, and apple sauce.

There were a few break-ins at the church. A quilting project by Mrs. Sullenberger led to the production of an attractive quilt, which attracted a thief and led him to break a window, injuring himself, and leaving some blood on the quilt (which was easily removed). And, in 1963, a small safe was stolen, and later found hear the dump. Although no money was lost, some church papers were scattered to the winds.

According to Louise, the church has always had basement flooding problems, just like today. But, the biggest changes in the church over the years were the addition on the East side of the building, the new bathrooms, and the elevator. Of course, the parsonage has changed since it was built in 1907.

A Narrative of Eighty Years in St. Paul's
by Emma Wahl Rice

As I look back over the years, I realize I was born into St. Paul's Church. My family had moved to Laramie in 1907 so that my father could be employed by the Fischer family, which was very active in St. Paul's. Then, soon after my birth, in 1910, I was baptized in the church and my godmother, Dorothea Wichmann was the oldest daughter of the pastor at that time.

Some of my earliest memories of St. Paul's are the Sunday school classes, which were held in the basement of the church. However, my strongest memories are of confirmation, under the ministry of Rev. Geisler. Then, at about age fourteen, all of us confirmands went to class for two years and we had to outline the sermons each Sunday. The week before we were confirmed, we had to answer questions from the catechism in front of the entire congregation. The next Sunday following this public presentation, we were confirmed, and the next Sunday after that, we received our first communion. We probably met in the minister's study, on the East side of the church. Our particular class became very close friends.

And so, confirmation turned for me, and to the other five members of the class, into the Happy Thought Circle. We made and sold candy, especially divinity, fudge, pecan rolls, and penuche, under the sponsorship of Mrs. Buchholz in order to earn money to buy one of the stained glass windows, the one which is located in the vestibule of the church. Then, some of these same confirmands joined together with other young people to form a Youth Fellowship. This included high school students, as well as college students. Again, we made candy, and sometimes had to force the boys into beating the mixture, in order to earn enough money to purchase a second window, which was installed in 1931 and is called "The Youth Fellowship" window.

Sunday School *1937*

After those early active experiences in the church, I went to college. And, about 1927, I started to play the organ. At that time, the organists were just volunteers. I had taken piano lessons from my godmother, Dorothea, and I didn't really know much about the organ. So, I just played hymns, without any preludes or postludes. Later, I read in the history of our church that the first organists received a salary of $2 a week, sometimes $3 for their work. But, because we were still paying for the renovations of 1922, all of us who played the organ in the late 20's were volunteers. At one point in time, we needed at least five volunteers to cover all the Sundays. When I was organist, we had a reed organ and it was a laborious job just providing air pressure to make the music; to my recollection, young boys would inflate the bellows by turning a wheel by hand. Then, in later years, the organ was provided with foot pedals so that the organist herself would pump in order to make pressure. Finally, the church got an electric organ, a Hammond, and that was much easier on the organist!

Then, in 1931, I graduated from college and left Laramie in order to teach in rural schools. I was gone from my home town and my church until 1942. When I returned, I was married to Bill Rice, who also became an active member in St. Paul's.

I started teaching Sunday school almost as soon as I moved back to town. I remember that I was in charge of the Senior High class, which met in the balcony of the church, and Ellen Spiegelberg was in charge of the Junior High, which met in the pastor's study. We have never been over-blessed with teachers, but we had enough to cover all the ages of the children in our church. At that time, we had our opening worship in the sanctuary, then we'd go to our separate classes. Those who met downstairs were divided into different groups by a set of large red draperies which were installed to give some sense of privacy from other students. The toddlers were kept in the janitor's room (what used to be a small room on the North-East side of the basement), and they also were cared for in the kitchen.

The Wahl family has always been active in St. Paul's and so we have watched the development of the building over the years. My older brother, Fred, helped to scoop out the dirt underneath the parsonage in order to create a basement; this laborious work was done by hand in the 1930's. Then, my father built the cabinets in the kitchen and did other wood work in the church. My other brother, Walter, was on the Trustees. Because the church was the center of our family commitment, we decided to hold my mother's funeral in St. Paul's. This was not the common practice of the time, but my mother had made it clear, at the time she passed away, that she wanted to be buried "from her church."

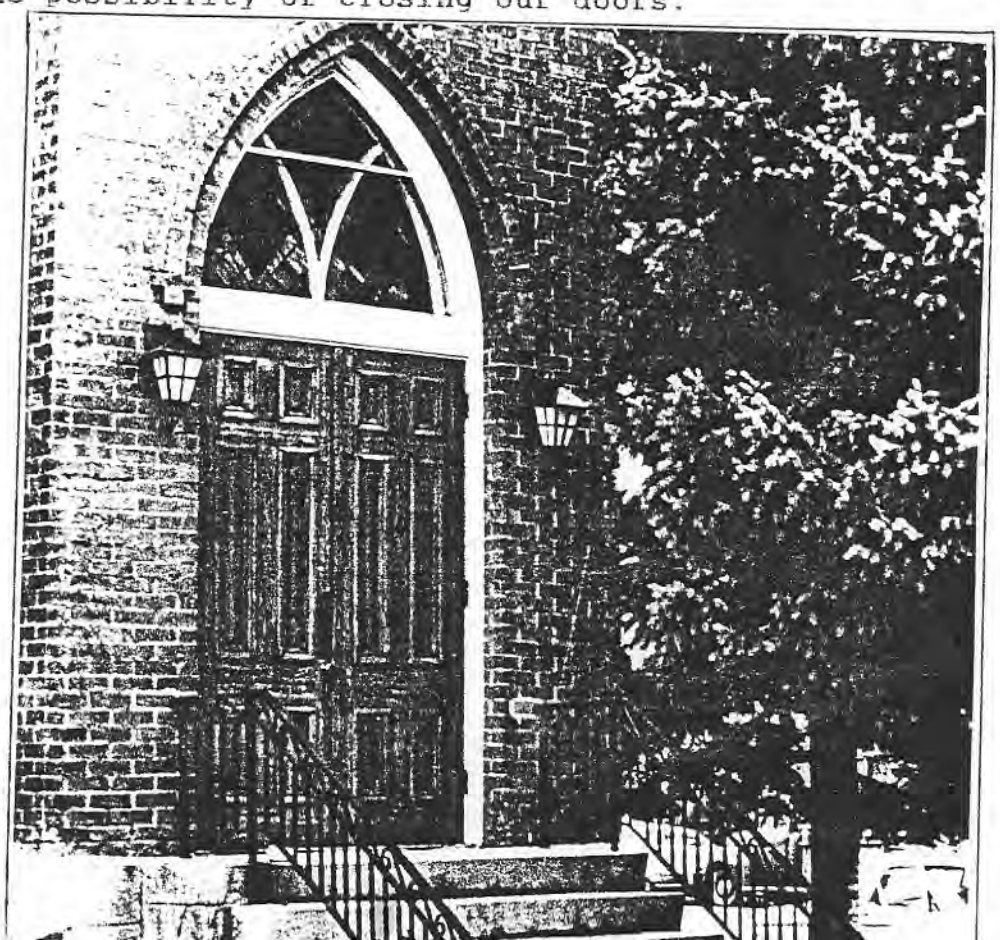
These are only some of my earliest recollections, and, I must say, that my own family has focused on providing emotional support for the ministers rather than the building itself, but our hearts are in St. Paul's. Throughout all the struggles and glories, throughout all the mountains and valleys, we are grateful that this church survives.

THE DAY WE ALMOST CLOSED THE DOORS!
FOR PRESENTATION TO ST. PAUL'S ON APRIL 29, 1990
BY KENT MAHLMAN

It is indeed a pleasure to be at St. Paul's on this occasion. This church is a very special place to me. I first arrived here in the fall of 1948 as a young student at the university. It is a pleasure to see old friends present today who were also here on the day I first attended. I specifically remember Emma Rice, Eleanor Workman, Ruth Metzler, Margaret Borgeman, Louise Messer, Gus and Emma Erickson, and Mary Louise Wilkinson, who was probably at the organ on that day.

It was also at that time when I met my future sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Emma and George Spiegelberg, who were sponsors of an outstanding college youth group at St. Paul's. It was my good fortune to meet my wife, Jean, in this very building. We were married here on August 4, 1951. Our daughters, Gina and Judi, were both baptized and confirmed at St. Paul's. Jean served as the first female Consistory president and Gina was the first young girl to be an acolyte. We left Laramie in January, 1976, because I was transferred to Casper. Even though we have been away from Laramie, where we chose to live and raise our family, our fond feeling for St. Paul's has never diminished.

During the one-hundredth anniversary of St. Paul's, I off-handedly said to Rev. Sally: "It is possible that we might not have been here today, celebrating this event!" Of course, she wanted to know why. So, I was pressed into telling here the little-known story of how we were faced with the possibility of closing our doors.



It was during the early 1960's. We had experienced a change of pastor, a not uncommon occurrence in those days. Membership interest and articipation was lagging. We were unable to pay our bills on a monthly basis. Any solution we explored seemed only to suggest even worse results. The Conference Minister, Rev. Sid Buckum, then headquartered in Salt Lake City, visited often, it seemed. However, his main solution for us was to sell this wonderful structure and move our church to the "suburbs," wherever that might be. We were very reluctant to do that. At that time, and I suspect even to this very day, a high percentage of our members resided in this neighborhood and were able to walk to church. We did not feel we could abandon them in such an ill-advised move.

My memory fails me as to which of us were on the Consistory at that time, but I do know that the following men were some who were involved in this leadership decision. Bill Rice, Leroy Roman, William Guenther, George W. Spiegelberg, Bill Metzler, Gus Erickson, Frank Spiegelberg, along with myself, and all our wives, agonized over the decision we had to make. It is my recollection that Leroy Roman was president at the time and I was probably the treasurer. I know other members of the church were involved with us in working out this problem, but, at this time, I cannot recall other names. I apologize for any omissions.

AFTER MUCH ANGUISH AND SOUL-SEARCHING, WE CAME TO THE DECISION THAT CLOSING THE DOORS AND CEASING TO OPERATE ST. PAUL'S WAS NOT THE ANSWER. WE SAID, "LET'S GIVE IT ONE MORE TRY." We did and it worked! St. Paul's celebrated its 100th year in 1986 and will be here to celebrate its 200th, hopefully, in this very historic building. It is easy to imagine how valuable this magnificent building will be in the year 2086, with its beautiful altar and stained-glass windows!

St. Paul's is now a viable church organization. It appears to have its budget under control, and does not dissipate 110% of its funds just keeping the internal operation going, as do many churches these days, thus not having anything left for all-important "outreach." The reason we exist as a church is to help others, not just to maintain the organization. It seems, St. Paul's has found the way!

South Addition 1990

Meeting Room 1990

A SUMMARY OF ST. PAUL'S ACTIVITIES: 1986-1990

Our hundred-year history of the congregation was published in 1986, and much has happened in the life of St. Paul's since that time. The following only summarizes some of the highlights of our years together:

In June of 1986, we had our Hundredth Anniversary of the congregation, with a banquet at the First Methodist Church, a worship service led by Rev. Wichmann's grandson, Capt. Richard Day, and a centennial booklet. At that time, all the records of the spiritual life of the church were put in order, including weddings, funerals, baptisms, confirmations, and membership; this extensive research was done by Anne Maria Kaisler, Emma Wahl Rice, and Ruth Metzler. Also, in celebration of our hundred years, Women's Fellowship held a birthday part on May 14, 1986 and had a recitation of "Beyond the Sunset" and program on the long life of the Women's groups in St. Paul's.

As a step into the future, St. Paul's underwrote extensive renovations known as "The Comprehensive Building Plan." This major remodeling included three new office rooms on the South-East corner of the church, new restrooms in the basement, new fuel-efficient furnaces, beautifying of the vestibule, and an elevator for handicap accessibility. Individuals and families pledged to this $42,000 remodeling project and work was completed by the end of 1986.

Another major change in the last few years has been revising the constitution of St. Paul's. Now, the over-all direction of the church is managed by the Cabinet as it coordinates the hard-working members of each committee and each board.

Another major change in our parish life was the decision to lease our facilities to Harvest-Four Square Gospel Church. This congregation, under the direction of Rev. Drew Arnold, uses the building for meetings during the week and for Sunday evening worship.

Throughout the past four years, the Boards of Christian Education and Christian Service have been particularly active. The educators of St. Paul's have sponsored special programs at Christmas and Palm Sunday, ecumenical youth fellowships, and a cooperative vacation church school. The mission workers have been most ambitious in sponsoring Laramie's first local hunger walk, two Polish refugee families, an adopt-a-box book project for Sri Lanka, and other hope-filled endeavors.

Finally, the worship life of the congregation has been enriched by the adult choir and children's choir, under the direction of Ben Arthur, by the instituting of "Parish Family Sundays," by the donation of pew Bibles in memory of Robert Wilkinson, and by the generous gift of new U.C.C. hymnals in memory of William and Bertha Metzler. St. Paul's continued and still continues to be a Christian resource which reaches beyond itself to care for many beyond its four walls...in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Sunday School

Earth Day

1990

1990 Confirmands

Effie Bader

Christina Trowbridge

Brian Adkins

Shawn Palmer

Natasha Barker

Nathan Mecikalski

Rev. Sally Palmer

A PRAYER OF REDEDICATION
ONE-HUNDRED YEARS OF FAITH
ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Lord God,
May this church be the place
...where Christ is the center of our acts.
May this church be the place
...where Thy truth is spoken.
May this church be the place
...where Thy Love binds us together
throughout the disparate corners of our time.

Lord God,
We rededicate St. Paul's Church...
to the purpose of Thy use...
and our lives to the call of Thy service.

In Christ's Holy Name, we pray.
Amen.

St. Paul's Celebrates 100 Years

(7-1-90) (Boomerang Photo)