

St. Paul's Church

(EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED)

Laramie, Wyoming



1887 - Sixty Years of Service - 1947

June 1, 1947



TO COMMEMORATE
SIXTY YEARS OF SERVICE OF

St. Paul's Church

Laramie, Wyoming



ANNIVERSARY PRAYER

O God, we pray for Thy Church, which is set today amid the perplexities of a changing order, and face to face with a great task. We remember with love the nurture she gave to our spiritual life in its infancy, the tasks she set for our growing strength and the steadfast power for good she has exerted. When we compare her with all human institutions we rejoice, for there is none like her. But when we judge her by the mind of the Master, we bow in contrition. O God, baptize her afresh in the life-giving spirit of Jesus. Put upon her lips the ancient gospel of her Lord. Fill her with the prophet's scorn of tyranny, and with a Christ-like tenderness for the heavy-laden and down trodden. Bid her cease from seeking her own life lest she lose it. Make her valiant to give up her life to humanity, that like her crucified Lord she may mount by the path of the Cross to her higher glory; in Jesus name. Amen.

From *Prayers of the Social Awakening* by Walter Rauschenbusch. The Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.



WHAT IT MEANS TO BELONG TO THE CHURCH

The blessed privileges you will enjoy by living according to your Christian Faith are:

Strength to live a noble life,
Comfort in the day of trouble
Peace in the hour of death, and
A sure hope of a joyful resurrection
into eternal life.

DEDICATION

An anniversary observance is an opportunity to look back in order that we may go forward with renewed faith and courage. As we look back today, we have much reason to rejoice and be thankful, for we see the many blessings that have come into our life. But humbly we acknowledge that we have not reached this milestone alone. St. Paul's Church, as we know it today, is the result of the labors of many consecrated souls and above all, the result of the working of the Spirit of God in the lives of men. Many men have labored "but God gave the increase."

But while we take pride in the accomplishments of the past we dare not be content to say, "Look what we have done." We must look ahead to realize that much still remains to be done. We have not arrived at a goal, we have merely reached another milestone in the task of building God's Kingdom.

Therefore our dedication of this book is threefold. First, to those of yesterday, fathers and mother of faith who organized this church and preserved it thru many a difficult time.

Second, to those of the present who are carrying on the work of the church and perpetuating its Christian influence.

Third, to those of the future, our children, and the strangers who shall come into our fold, in whose hands lie the responsibility for continuing the work thus far accomplished.

The Pastor and His Family



REV. AND MRS. ERNST PRESS AND PRISCILLA



THE PASTORS OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH

JOHANN FRANK.....	January to August, 1887
CHRISTIAN THOMPSEN.....	October, 1887 - June, 1894
JULIUS GOMPPENBERG.....	July, 1894 - November, 1895
WALTHER EICKMANN.....	June, 1896 - November, 1898
EDWARD F. PINKERT.....	November, 1899 - May, 1902
ADOLPH WALTON.....	October, 1902 - January, 1908
O. G. WICHMAN.....	April, 1908 - September, 1918
B. H. LEESMAN.....	January, 1919 - February, 1919
WILLIAM SCHMIDT.....	March, 1919 - April, 1920
O. F. GEISLER.....	May, 1920 - March, 1925
O. E. PINKERT.....	June, 1925 - September, 1926
AUGUST DOELLEFELD.....	January, 1927 - November, 1932
ROBERT J. YOUNG.....	August, 1933 - April, 1942
ERNST PRESS.....	September, 1942

A History of St. Paul's Church

On May 2, 1886, a group of men of German descent gathered for a meeting to discuss the possibility of organizing a German church in Laramie. A Reverend Rosenstengel was present at the meeting to help in organizing the proposed German Church. The men adopted a resolution to organize a congregation to be called the "Deutsche Evangelische Lutherische St. Paulus Gemeinde." Rev. Rosenstengel was asked to see if he could secure a pastor for the new congregation. The next meeting of the group was held in December of the same year, when over thirty men were present. Rev. Johann Frank had been suggested as minister for the congregation and the group voted to extend him a call.

Rev. Frank arrived in January, 1887, and at the worship service of January 16, 1887, he publicly installed the first board of trustees for the congregation, marking the official organization of the church. The first officers were George Berner, president, Charles Hegewald, treasurer, Charles Troederup, secretary, and A. Wachter, William Wurl and Charles Langhoff, trustees. The congregation was affiliated with the Lutheran General Synod of Chicago. After seven months of labor, Rev. Frank resigned. At that time the congregation had thirty-five male members. Two months later, Rev. Christian Thompson began his work in Laramie and remained for almost seven years. Under his direction the congregation was incorporated under the laws of the Territory of Wyoming on March 5, 1888. In May of that year, the Frauenverein, the predecessor of our Women's Guild, was organized.

Up until this time, the congregation had been meeting in the old Presbyterian Church building on Fremont Street, near Third Street. (The building still stands today). Now Rev. Thompson began to agitate for a church building of their own for the congregation. In December of 1889, the congregation met and decided to purchase a lot, and a building committee consisting of Charles Hegewald, August Trabing, John Vorpahl and Rev. Thompson was authorized to draw up plans and to submit them together with an estimate of the cost, to the congregational meeting the following May. In May, the congregation accepted the plans submitted, and authorized the building of a church not to exceed \$3400.00 in cost. George Berner was given the contract to erect the building. By December, 1890, the building was ready for occupancy and the building was dedicated on January 18, 1891. The congregation had also purchased a reed organ and it arrived in time for the service of dedication.

In July of 1894, Rev. Thompson was succeeded by Rev. Goppenberg, who served the church for a little over a year and was succeeded by Rev. Walther Eickmann, who had just graduated from the Seminary. During his pastorate he had the distinction of confirming the largest class in the history of the congregation. The class of 1897 numbered eighteen members. In 1898, Rev. Eickmann took a leave of absence from the church in order to make a trip to Europe. Though he intended to return to Laramie, he never did; but on his return to America accepted a call to a church in New York.

The congregation was without a pastor for over a year and the result was that interest waned rapidly and it seemed as if the church would have to

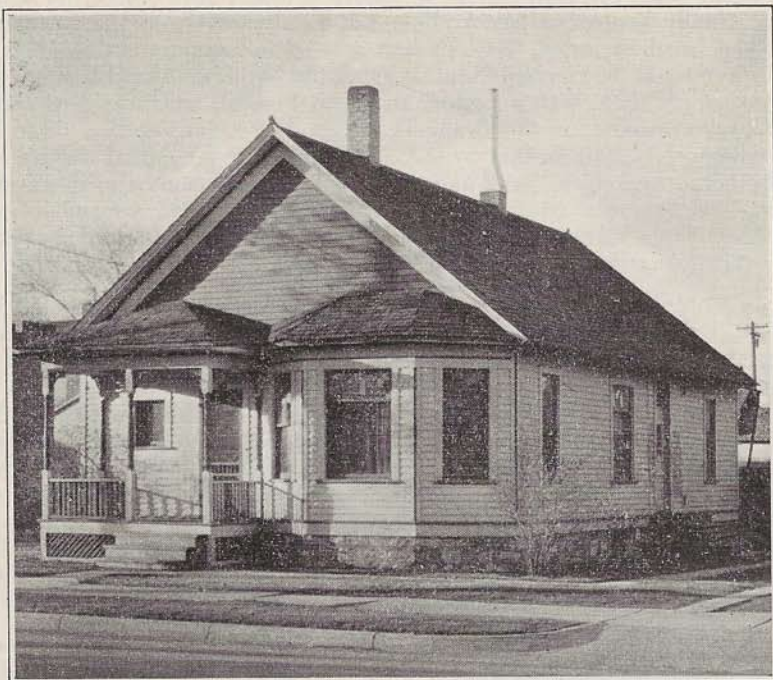
be closed. After several attempts to secure a pastor had failed, the congregation finally secured a pastor, Rev. Ed. F. Pinkert from the Evangelical Synod of North America. Rev. Pinkert arrived in Laramie late in 1899 and began to rebuild the congregation. Because the Lutheran Synod had not been able to supply them with a pastor, and Rev. Pinkert, who was now serving them, was a member of the Evangelical Synod, the congregation decided to apply for membership in that Synod. The debt of five hundred dollars owed the Lutheran Synod was paid, and the congregation became a member of the Evangelical Synod of North America. At that time it had a membership of fifty-five. From that time on, the congregation has been supplied by pastors from the Evangelical Church.

In 1902, Rev. Pinkert resigned and was succeeded by Rev. Adolph Walton. In the few months in which the church had been vacant, the interest of the people had lapsed and Rev. Walton had to work hard for the first two years of his pastorate to get the congregation on its feet again. For a few years the congregation received some mission support from the Synod. During Rev. Walton's pastorate, the congregation voted to build a parsonage which cost \$1800.00. The parsonage erected then is still used as the home of the pastor today. Rev. Walton together with Rev. Schmidt of Denver had a part in organizing the Colorado District of the Evangelical Synod, which today has become the Rocky Mountain Synod. During his pastorate, a choir was organized and a young people's league flourished. In 1908 Rev. Walton resigned in order to engage in mission work in Oklahoma.

He was succeeded by Rev. O. G. Wichman, who has the distinction of having had the longest pastorate to date at St. Paul's Church. He served the congregation for ten years, helping it thru the difficult war years when the German church and the German pastor were constantly being suspected of spying activities and disloyalty to the nation. During his pastorate, the church took a more active part in the work of the Synod, and managed to give greater support to the missionary activities of the denomination. In 1918, Rev. Wichman resigned to assume the pastorate of St. Paul's Church in Denver.

Following Rev. Wichman's pastorate, the congregation was served briefly by Rev. Leesman and then Rev. Schmidt. However, both of these men had to leave soon after their arrival in Laramie because the altitude did not agree with them. In May, 1920, Rev. O. F. Geisler became the pastor of the congregation. Under Rev. Geisler's direction, the church made many improvements in its property. The lovely pulpit and altar which are still in the church were bought during his ministry. The addition to the building in which the pastor's study is now located was also made in 1922. A furnace was put into the church, a garage was built next to the parsonage, and the interior of the church was repainted. Several of our art glass windows were put in at that time. All of this helped make the church sanctuary the worshipful one it is today. Under Rev. Geisler's pastorate, the English language was introduced. In 1925 Rev. Geisler resigned to accept a call to St. Paul's Church, Denver, Colorado.

He was succeeded by Rev. O. E. Pinkert, the son of Rev. Ed. Pinkert, who had served the congregation in 1899. He served the congregation for about two years, in which time there was much dissension about the language question.



THE PARSONAGE

In 1927, Rev. August Doellefeld became the pastor of the congregation. In 1932, the language question was finally settled and the services of the congregation from then on were held entirely in the English language. Rev. Doellefeld served the congregation during the early days of the depression and the financial troubles of the congregation seemed insurmountable. The congregation applied for and received some help from the Board of National Missions in 1934. Since then until this year, the Board of National Missions has helped with a total of over \$10,000.00. Rev. Doellefeld resigned in 1932.

For about a year the church was again without a pastor, but was served occasionally by pastors from neighboring churches. In August, 1933, Rev. R. J. Young, recently graduated from Eden Seminary, became the pastor of the congregation. Under his leadership, the congregation began the long process of liquidating the debt which had been incurred some fifteen years before. Before the congregation's fiftieth anniversary, the debt had been paid off. The congregation began to make some improvements in the property and interest and attendance at the church began to grow. In 1937, the congregation celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in special services in August of that year. An anniversary booklet was printed containing a complete history of the church up to that time. (The editor of this booklet is greatly indebted to the fiftieth anniversary booklet editor, Rev. Young, for the historical items related thus far).

In 1938, the congregation took another step forward. At the insistence of the pastor, the weekly envelope system was adopted on a sort of trial basis. But the results after the first year of use were so good, that the congregation has continued the practice ever since; and because of the income thus derived by direct giving, has been able to dispense with all the other money raising activities which once were necessary to make ends meet. In the same year the congregation received, as a gift from Miss Anna Spiegelberg, the Hammond organ which today helps beautify the services. In 1940, the congregation undertook an extensive remodeling program, and for the sum of about \$4200.00 built a fine new basement under the church. Almost half the money for this project had been raised before the work was begun. In 1942, after almost nine years of service in Laramie, Rev. Young tendered his resignation to the congregation.

Rev. Ernst Press began his ministry in Laramie on September 1, 1942. By the following Spring, the congregation had paid the last note on the debt incurred in the basement improvement, and the event was celebrated with a note burning party. The congregation now undertook the task of reaching self support. Each year the congregation asked for less support from the Board of National Missions until finally, in the sixtieth anniversary year, the congregation could again stand completely on its own feet. The congregation also undertook a campaign to increase its membership. In the fall of 1945, a preaching mission was held at the church. All during 1946, the emphasis was on evangelism. The result was that a total of fifty-one new members were received in that year. At the time of this writing, the membership of the congregation is one hundred and eighty-three but the goal for the anniversary year is to reach 200.

During the past ten years, a number of articles were added to our sanctuary as aids to the service. A bronze altar cross was presented to the church by Mr. and Mrs. William Heineman. The Candelabra and a life time supply of candles were presented by the children of Mrs. Louisa Wurl. A lectern and Bible were presented by Mr. and Mrs. Max Weick. The Women's Guild bought a complete set of altar paraments in all of the liturgical colors. Mr. Gus Vorpahl presented a missal stand, the Warnecke children some bronze vases, and the practice of sending memorial flowers to grace the altar was begun. Mr. Otto Wurl presented a candle lighter and snuffer, and the young people have undertaken to serve as acolytes each Sunday. Mrs. Clara Montgomery presented a new set of fair linen for the communion service. A pulpit Bible was presented by Mr. Walter Wahl and his sons. The last art glass window for the church was given by Mr. William Wahl and his children. The Women's Guild bought a projector and screen and these have been in almost constant use in the Sunday School and other meetings of the church.

Two years ago, the church replaced the old floors in the parsonage with hardwood floors, and the Women's Guild placed new inlaid linoleum in the parsonage kitchen and bathroom. This project was paid for by a special improvement fund drive. In preparation for the anniversary year, the exterior of the church and a portion of the interior were painted. The paper in the sanctuary was cleaned and all the woodwork washed. The pastor's study was redecorated. The remainder of the church property is to be painted this summer.



THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Here are some interesting facts found in our church record books. The first baptism recorded was on December 3, 1886, for Mina Katharina, daughter of Mr. Christ and Mrs. Ann Christensen. A total of 522 baptisms were recorded in the first sixty years of St. Paul's Church.

The first confirmation service was on May 22, 1887 and had the following members: Luise Langhoff, Clara Francis Ringert, Katharina Ringert, Paul Karl Lehmann, Bernard Ernst Lehmann, Frederick Wilhelm Ringert, Gustav Vorpahl and Karl Wilhelm Niethe. In the sixty years a total of 283 young people were confirmed.

The first wedding was recorded on March 30, 1887, when Wilhelm Bachman and Johanne Wilhemine Raduchel were united in marriage. Two hundred and seventy-five weddings have been performed by ministers of the church in the sixty years of its history.

The first funeral recorded was that of a little child, Emma Olschlager, who was buried on January 4, 1887. Two hundred and eighty-six funerals are recorded in the record books for the sixty years.

So now the congregation stands at the beginning of the sixtieth year of service for God, and we look ahead to many more years of service. God has guided St. Paul's Church and its leaders for over two generations. May He keep us growing as we face the future and the tasks that lie ahead.



THE CONGREGATION ON MARCH 30TH



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

THE STORY OF OUR ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES

The Sunday School has been actively carrying on the work of Christian Education from the very beginning of the church. Today it numbers seventy-five members and there are eight classes taught by the following teachers, Mrs. Henrietta McCormick, nursery class, Mrs. Dixie Melcher, beginners class, Miss Bertha Phillips and Mrs. Eleanor Boyd, primary classes, Mrs. Doris Meltzler and Mrs. Robna Pregal, junior classes, Mrs. Ellen Spiegelberg, intermediate class and Mrs. Emma Rice, senior class. Miss Orva Mae Hoefs is our secretary.

The church council picture appears elsewhere in this booklet. It is the council's responsibility to carry on the business of the church between congregational meetings. It meets each month for a business meeting. The officers and members of the council are Mr. William Rice, president, Mr. William Metzler, Jr., secretary, Mr. Emil Hoefs, treasurer, Mr. Francis Weick, financial secretary and Mr. Fred Koch and Mr. Fred Wurl, council members.

St. Paul's Church has two youth groups. In the summer of 1942, a Girl's Guild was organized by the Women's Guild. The following year, the organization was expanded to include the boys and took the name "The Boy's and Girl's Guild." The Guild meets twice a month, on the second Friday

evening for a devotional meeting and some other time during the month for a recreational meeting. The officers of this high school group are Miss Beverley Phillips, president, Mr. Bernard Justesen, vice-president and Miss Martha Spiegelberg secretary. Mrs. Frank Spiegelberg is the counselor.

In the fall of 1946, an organization of Evangelical and Reformed University Students came into being at St. Paul's Church, and took the name "Youth Fellowship." It also included young people from the congregation who were working, but who were of college age. The Youth Fellowship meets each Sunday evening. The present officers are Mr. Paul Weierbach, president and Miss Shirley Schumacher, secretary. Rev. and Mrs. Press are counselors.



THE YOUTH GROUPS

The Women's Guild of St. Paul's Church now has forty members. A year after the congregation was organized the pastor also organized the Frauenverein (Women's Society). But during the years when the church was without a regular pastor, this organization ceased to function. In 1900, Rev. Pinkert organized a Ladies' Aid Society which has continued to exist under various names to the present day. At first, the meetings were held in German. When English came into use in the church, there were for a time two organizations, an English group and a German group. These two were later merged to form the Women's Union of St. Paul's Church. When our denomination merged with the Reformed Church, the women's group changed its name again to fit in with the national merged groups, and adopted the name "The Women's Guild of St. Paul's Church." For many years now, the guild has been carrying out the program of the national organization, and each year the members have assumed more of the responsibility for the monthly programs.

As is true in most churches, the Women's Guild, during all of its history, has been the most active organization in the church, and has done much to support the church financially. At the very beginning, the Ladies' Aid was responsible for the Sunday School and for collecting all of the monies for the church. Even today, the Women's Guild is responsible for financing many of the projects of the church. Over half of the cost of the recent painting of the church was paid for by the Women's Guild and all of the cost of cleaning the wall paper. The Guild meets each month on the first Tuesday. The present officers of the society are Mrs. Ida Hoefs, president, Mrs. Margeruite Patterson, vice-president, Mrs. Margaret Smith, secretary and Mrs. Emma Rice, treasurer.



THE WOMEN'S GUILD

The Church Directory

ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH

Sixth and Garfield Streets

LARAMIE, WYOMING

Ernst Press, Pastor

610 Garfield Street

Telephone 2836

THE CHURCH COUNCIL

William Rice	President
William Metzler, Jr.	Secretary
Emil Hoefs	Treasurer
Francis A. Weick	Financial Secretary
Fred Koch	
Fred Wurl	

THE WOMEN'S GUILD

Mrs. Ida Hoefs	President
Mrs. Margeruite Patterson	Vice-President
Mrs. Margaret Smith	Secretary
Mrs. Emma Rice	Treasurer

THE BOY'S AND GIRL'S GUILD

Miss Beverley Phillips	President
Mr. Bernard Justesen	Vice-President
Miss Martha Spiegelberg	Secretary-Treasurer
Mr. Ralph Honess	Corresponding Secretary
Mrs. Frank Spiegelberg	Counselor

THE YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Mr. Paul Weierbach	President
Miss Shirley Schumacher	Secretary
Rev. and Mrs. Press	Counselors

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Rev. Ernst Press	Superintendent
Mrs. Harold Melcher	Children's Division Superintendent
Miss Orva Mae Hoefs	Secretary
Miss Bertha Phillips	Treasurer

THE ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Mr. William Rice	Mrs. Louise Koch
Mrs. Dixie Melcher	Miss Shirley Schumacher
Rev. Ernst Press	

1887

1947



The Sixtieth Anniversary

is but a milestone in our way to greater things for the Kingdom of God. Let this be our motto for the years that lie ahead.

WE GO FORWARD IN THE NAME OF

Jesus Christ Our Lord

