

United in Faith Lutheran Church



On Easter Sunday, April 12, 1998, eight churches merged to form United in Faith Lutheran Church (1998, ELCA). They included:

- [Gladstone Park](#) (1936, ULCA);
- [Holy Communion](#) (1966, LCA);
- [Medill Avenue](#) (1927, NLCA);
- [Nebo](#) (1901, Augustana);
- [Our Lord's American](#) (1934, ALC);
- [Our Saviour's English](#) (1909, United Norwegian);
- [Peace](#) (1923, ULCA); and
- [St. Andrew](#) (1924, ELCA)
- [FONCs \(Friends of the New Church\)](#)

[TOP](#)



UNITED IN FAITH

1998



2003

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These are pictures of the altars of the eight churches and of United in Faith's.

Top row: Medill; Our Saviour's; Peace; and St Andrew.

Center: United in Faith.

Bottom row: Medill; Gladstone Park; Our Lord's; and Holy Communion.

Pictures of the church buildings and brief histories of the eight congregations follow.

[TOP](#)

Gladstone Park Lutheran Church



Gladstone Park Lutheran Church was organized on April 13, 1936 as a member of the United Lutheran Church in America. In February 1939, after the original portable schoolhouse building was destroyed by fire, a local funeral parlor at 5810 W. Higgins, now the Parish Hall, was used as the worship facility. A new building was quickly constructed, with dedication held on April 16, 1939. From 1939 to 1960 the congregation was located at 5928 W. Foster at Mason, and after 1960 it was located at 6200 W. Foster.

THROUGH THE YEARS WITH GLADSTONE PARK LUTHERAN CHURCH 1936-1996

1927---Gladstone Park Church was a thought, a dream, a what if...for in this year, the United Lutheran Church canvassed our area and saw a need for us to be.

1936---Because all good things take time, it was not until early 1936 that a field missionary, The Rev. Paul J. Gerberding, was sent out to establish our first church. With money borrowed from The Board of American Missions, two portable school buildings were purchased from the Board of Education at a cost of \$2,638.97, including the lot, located at the corner of Foster and

Mason Avenues. The first service, held January 19, 1936, a very cold, 8 below zero day, drew a full house. Offering totaled \$123.33. Easter Sunday, April 13 was indeed special in our newly organized church. In June, the "Ladies' Guild" was formed with 11 charter members. September brought our first wedding and a choir was organized. Surely, we were off to a good start.

1937---Under the continuing leadership of Pastor Gerberding, we elected a church council and welcomed four new members.

1938---The Rev. H. G. Twietmeyer was called as our first regular pastor and preached his first sermon in June.

1939---February 20 was a date to remember as a fire tore through the interior of our church building. All that remained was an exterior shell and ashes. Because of the fire, our worship services were held in some rather unusual places. Lenten Services took place in Amos Buchert's basement. Sunday services were held in a local funeral chapel located at 5810 West Higgins Road. Although, insurance covered \$1,292 of the renovation, we raised an additional \$600 to rebuild the interior. Our church building was rededicated on April 16.

1940---It was determined that the fire in 1939 started in the motor of the old church organ. On March 31, a new electric Hammond organ was purchased for \$1,620.

1941---Pastor Twietmeyer accepted a call to serve at Grace Luther^{an} Church in Chicago. Following a formal call, we welcomed The Rev. Erwin A. Wendt, a Texan, on August 1. We continued to grow and built an annex.

1942---Pastor Wendt continued as pastor.

1943---Pastor Wendt was called to serve at Trinity Church in Des Plaines and The Rev. George L. Carver from Camden, N.J., replaced him at Gladstone in May.

1944/1945---A Teen Canteen was formed. Our congregation leased a building at 5810 West Higgins to be used as Parish Hall, the church office, Teen Canteen and often Sunday School. It was equipped with ping pong and pool tables and a juke box.

1946/1947---Pastor George Housewright joined us in September, following the departure of Pastor Garver. To house Pastor House wright, we purchased a parsonage in December for \$10,500.

1948---Lots were purchased, for \$24,000, at Foster and Melvina Avenues for a proposed new church.

1949---Mission Board approved plans for our NEW CHURCH. We were on our way!

1950---Pastor Ralph Ryberg came to us from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Maywood. He replaced Pastor Housewright who was called to a Nebraska congregation in June. A fire extinguisher was purchased. We welcomed many new members.

1951---Big changes...two "ladies" (Eleanor Thompson and Evelyn Wolf) elected to church council. In May, we expanded to two services. Luther League is going strong with more than 20 members including Jeanne Thompson, Carol Thompson, Barbara Thompson, Marie Gehman, Helene Gehman, Jackie Bodammer, Kenneth Pearson, Beatrice Walters, Dave Zuckerman, Virginia Sorensen, Jim Sahlin, Paul Sahlin, Merton Drake and Katherine Buending among others.

1952/1953---Pastor L. Jack Ehlers, from Oxford Junction, IA., joins us, replacing Pastor Ryberg who was called by a church in Fort Wayne, IN.

1954---A milestone year as we became self-supporting.

1955---Our "little church" received a new roof and a face lift. "New" used pews from St. Andrew's at Linden and Addison were installed. The parsonage got a new roof and a garage. With Pastor Ehler's support and encouragement, the congregation, in October, began fundraising for a new church building.

1956/1957---We observed our 20th Anniversary. We acquired new members and continued to grow. We held annual picnics in June and had a very active senior choir. By this time, we were also sponsoring two Girl Scout troops and a Brownie troop, one of which was led by Lorryne Raiman.

1958---We broke ground for our new church building on May 18. Total cost of the building program was 87,000. The low figure was possible because architect Harold R. Lutz, a member of Edgebrook Lutheran Church, donated his services as general contractor. On December 14, the first worship service was held in our new building.

1959---New church building was dedicated on January 18 with Dr. A. Howard Weeg, the Bishop, as guest speaker.

1963---At the urging of the Synod, Pastor Ehlers agreed to accept a call to Detroit, MI., after 10 years of faithful service.

1964---Pastor John McCarthy was welcomed in January. In December, the My Day Fund was inaugurated at the suggestion of Adolph Brunner. Its original purpose was to help pay off the church mortgage with prepayments. We also enjoyed our first "FAMILY" Christmas program by gathering around a large Christmas tree in Fellowship Hall to sing carols and enjoy refreshments. Pastor McCarthy's rendition of "O Holy Night"

was awe-inspiring. "Youth Sundays" were instituted where the worship service was totally staged by our church teenagers.

1965---In June, Karen Skogman and Linda Raiman attended the National Luther League convention in Miami, Florida, with funds raised through car washes, breakfasts and Youth Sunday offerings.

1967---Pastor McCarthy departed in April. The church began sponsoring a Boy Scout troop. The Rev. Richard Bonner was installed as our new pastor in November.

1968--In June, we consolidated all of our existing mortgages into one for \$20,000. The parsonage got a new garage.

1970---The first issue of our church newsletter, Happy Rock, was inaugurated. Nancy Nast was the editor. An organ fund was started.

1971---Six men and three women were elected to the church council. Mrs. Harold Upstrom started a children's choir.

1972---Barbara Upstrom became the church organist. Our first Fun Fair was held in July.

1973---The congregation elected to issue notes to repair and remodel the parsonage kitchen.

1974---An extra \$500 payment on the mortgage was made from the My Day Fund. The Annual Meeting brought a vote to pay off the mortgage by 1976, in time for our 40th Anniversary.

1975---The first "Souper Sunday" was held. Monies collected were donated to The World Hunger Appeal.

1976---To celebrate reaching our goal to pay off the mortgage, a special mortgage burning ceremony was held. April through June we held special services with former pastors and guest speakers to commemorate the 40th Anniversary. To cap off our anniversary year, a dinner dance was held at Heck's Hall.

1977---Norwood Park Church gave us an organ. Pastor Bonner accepted a call to South Beloit, IL., after more than nine years with us. In August, our church held its first ordination of a pastor and the installation of The Rev. Lindsey W. Hulbert. The senior choir was restarted.

1978---We acquired new hymnals. 1979---A calm and uneventful year.

1980---There was a small fire in the parsonage living room. Repairs were completed in May.

1981---Members voted, at the Annual Meeting, to amend the council service period from three to one year terms. A new piano was donated In Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Sorenson.

1982---Ceiling fans were installed.

1983---The parsonage received new windows and new exterior siding.

1984---Pastor Hulbert accepted a call to Lanark, IL. Pastor Freedlund served as interim pastor.

1985---We issued a call to Pastor Susan Gerow. Donations were requested for a new church roof. Three new committees were instituted---Mutual Ministry. Music and Worship.

1986---We issued promissory notes and received contributions of more than \$8,000 for a new church roof. To celebrate our 50th Anniversary, special services were held during the month of April. The April 13 service featured guest pastors including Ehlers, Bonner and Gerow. The service and banquet were taped for posterity. The April 20th service honored the family and the 27th "Festival Eucharist" was led by Bishop Paul Erickson. An ethnic pot luck followed the service. The Senior Club is going strong. The Men's Club hosted a Rally Day Picnic in September. Pledge returns were double those of 1985. New Advent paraments were donated. All members began receiving "The Lutheran."

1987---New red and white paraments were donated. A three-year call was issued to Pastor Susan Gerow. "Hymn of the Month" was started. A new furnace and zoned heating systems were installed at a cost of \$10,500. The old red hymnals were offered to members and donated to a mission. We shared Lenten services and pastors with Peace Lutheran Church. Peace and Our Savior's Lutheran churches joined us for Thanksgiving services.

1988---The Lutheran Church of America, American Lutheran Church, Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches merged to become the new Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. Pastor Carl Freedlund became vice pastor following the departure to The Rev. Susan Gerow to Wheaton, IL. A call was issued to The Rev. Nancy Nelson.

1989---The Rev. Nancy Nelson joined us in April for Holy Week, following the Girth of a baby boy. Weekly Communion and greeters/hosts Were instituted. Parsonage was sold with proceeds invested. Third Sunday of the month designated "Food Sunday." With a permanent pastor at our helm, we feel that we're moving forward again.

1990---Thirty-three pledges were returned to give us total income of \$25,000 with proposed budget of \$40,000. Lenten services held in morning. Pastor Ken

Olsen and Pastor Ruben Duran, from the Synod staff, joined us for worship. We have many faithful groups serving our church including church council, WELCA, Senior Fun Club and Altar Guild. Pastor Nelson continues her expansion efforts, encouraging us in new ways of worship and community growth.

1991---In January we welcomed three Teaching Parish students, Jeff St. Clair, David Fritz and Michael Lungstrom. Our church hosted an area-wide World Day of Prayer service. In April, a 55th Anniversary dinner was held in Fellowship Hall. We agreed to share our building with a Korean Congregation. In June, we said a temporary goodbye to our Teaching Parish students and thanked them for bringing us a fresh approach to learning, growing and risk-taking. Our new recycling program netted 100 pounds of cans in just three months, with money going to local hunger projects.

1992---We received seven new members. The Korean Congregation treated us to a luncheon of authentic Korean delicacies. Our first group of Teaching Parish students completed their internships here at GPLC and moved on. We continued with the Teaching Parish program by welcoming three new students Marcy Ludvigsen, Craig Schroeder and Tamara Alles. Judy Day was hired as church secretary. We opened our church to the community with two AA groups and the Austin-Foster Garden Club meeting in our Fellowship Hall. Fifteen students enrolled in Sunday School. Our "Cans To Food" project amassed over 500 pounds of aluminum during the year. We joined the Northwest Lutheran Parish, a group of 10 area churches dedicated to a mission to: strengthen our congregations, serve our communities, and support our pastors. We are quickly moving forward as a congregation.

1993---We welcomed 10 adult new members and five children. Our investments were switched to a new financial advisor. A choir was formed under the direction of the Silvesters and is adding joyous music to our services. WELCA tried a craft fair instead of a bazaar this year. NWLP is developing a mission statement, a realignment plan and is providing an insert for each issue of Happy Rock to better communicate its news. Pastor Nelson celebrated her sixth year with us, leading us on a road to many exciting future opportunities and challenges.

1994---Sunday School enrollment is 11 students, five of which are in confirmation classes. Church council held its first overnight Leadership Retreat. Lent was moved to the evening hours and preceded by soup suppers. After much discussion and prayerful study, our congregation voted to become a "Reconciled In Christ" congregation.

We said goodbye to Pastor Nelson (and Jim and Sam) and welcomed Pastor Jim Galezewski (and Sharman and Ruth) as our interim pastor. Our first special event in a long time, a Veteran's bay USO dinner, with decorations, great food, 40s music and servers in costumes, was a tremendous success with over 90 people,

attending. We began our sharing relationship with Our Lord's Lutheran Church by uniting in an Advent hymn sing.

1995--- Pastor Jim continues to guide us. Our annual budget surpassed \$50,000 although pledges are down. We dissolved our partnership with the Korean Congregation. Soup suppers continued as a Lenten tradition and culminated in a Seder dinner on Maundy Thursday in partnership with Our Lord's. Three youths, Rebecca Rangel, Ralene Rosa and Jennifer Waller, were confirmed in June. Our September Rally Day outdoor service continues to be a highlight of our church calendar of events. It was a year of many building improvements. We purchased a new, more readable outdoor sign; built a wheelchair ramp for better handicapped accessibility; installed outdoor lighting; painted, installed a new floor and better lighting in Fellowship Hall. "Luigi's Restaurant" served up spaghetti and trimmings for this year's special event.

1996---We anticipate the future. New Bishop Ken Olsen met with the councils of Our Lord's and Gladstone Lutheran churches to discuss new opportunities and challenges. We hope the growing relationship between our two churches will serve as an example in the redefining of the Lutheran Church as a Christian community on Chicago's Northwest-Side.

Happy 60th Anniversary!

In 1998 Gladstone Park merged with Holy Communion (1966, LCA), Medill Avenue (1927, NLCA), Nebo (1901, Augustana), Our Lord's American (1934, ALC), Our Saviour's English (1909, United Norwegian), Peace (1923, ULCA), and St. Andrew (1924, ULCA) to form United in Faith Lutheran Church.

Pastors

Paul J. Gerberding.....	1936-1938
Herman G. Twietmeyer.....	1938-1941
Erwin A. Wendt.....	1941-1943
George L. Carver.....	1943-1946
Pastor George Housewright	1947-1950
Pastor Ralph Ryberg	1950-1952
Pastor L. Jack Ehlers	1952-1963
Pastor John McCarthy	1964-1967
The Rev. Richard Bonner	1967-1977
Rev. Lindsey W. Hulbert	1977-1984
Pastor Freedlund	1984-1985
Pastor Susan Gerow	1985-1988
Pastor Carl Freedlund	1988-1988
Rev. Nancy Nelson	1988-1994
Pastor Jim Galezewski	1994-1998

Original records

Original record books are located at United in Faith Lutheran Church, 6525 W. Irving Park Road, 60634-2416. The ELCA Archives has congregational histories and other materials relating to Gladstone Park.

Sources

Gladstone Park Lutheran Church, *Tenth Anniversary*, 1946

Gladstone Park Lutheran Church, *60th Anniversary*, 1996 by Lorryne Raiman
& Pat Mittelstaedt

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Holy Communion Lutheran Church



First Gethsemane was formed by the merger of Old Gethsemane (5/15/1870) and Lebanon (1904) in 1921 at which time the church located to 4844 W Oakdale.

Holy Communion Lutheran Church was organized by a merger of First Gethsemane (1870, Augustana Synod) and Belmont Park (1918, ULCA) in 1966 and was located at 3010 N. Lavergne Ave.

After the merger of First Gethsemane and Belmont Park, the Belmont Park church building was sold and its parsonage was kept as a ministry center. The new church was located in the First Gethsemane buildings at 4844 W Oakdale. Later those buildings were sold and the former Belmont Park parsonage at 3010 N Lavergne was renovated and served as the location of Holy Communion.

In 1998 Holy Communion merged with Gladstone Park (1936, ULCA), Medill Avenue (1927, NLCA), Nebo (1901, Augustana), Our Lord's American (1934, ALC), Our Saviour's English (1909, United Norwegian), Peace (1923, ULCA), and St. Andrew (1924, ULCA) to form United in Faith Lutheran Church.

100th Year Celebration

Of what possible use is the past? This is the question one might ask when considering the history of Holy Communion Lutheran Church and its predecessor congregations. The past is gone forever - one cannot live in the past, one should look forward rather than backward. Then in what way can the past aid us?

In reading the story of the unfolding of each congregation, certain words spring to mind which can be guideposts to those living in the "now" and as we look to the future. And this is the real service of the past: to show us what has been accomplished by those who have gone before us and to provide us with inspiration and guidance so that we can more effectively continue God's work in our time.

Old Gethsemane Church, which was organized 100 years ago this year on May 15, 1870, was the third oldest congregation in Chicago of the Augustana Synod and the Mother Church of the Western Chicago District of the Illinois Conference. Her roots go deep which speaks of the COMMITMENT of the men and women who served her. Pastors and people gave of themselves even during such tragedies as the loss of a new building during the 1871 Chicago fire. But they did rebuild and by the 25th anniversary of organization had a total of 650 baptized members.

By 1917 the congregation was facing problems similar to many churches today: urban development threatened their property and members were moving to the outskirts of the city. In 1921 a move brought the congregation to our present location and a merger with Lebanon Church.

From Lebanon Church we learn the meaning of PERSEVERANCE. In 1900 a small group of faithful, devoted women began meeting together for worship in their various homes. They hoped that one day a congregation would be formed, and three years later 20 adults met for that purpose. In 1904 the name "The Evangelical Lutheran Lebanon Church" was adopted and property was purchased with funds from the women's group. Two years later a building fund was begun with a \$100 contribution by the Dorcas Society, and a church dedication was held in 1907. By the time of the merger with Old Gethsemane, Lebanon had grown into an active, busy congregation due in large part to the conviction of a few farsighted women.

COURAGE and DEDICATION seem apt words to describe a group of people willing to spring roots during wartime. But in 1914, Belmont Park Lutheran Church, the only predecessor congregation to have its original roots in our immediate neighborhood, saw the need in a growing community for a Sunday School and Church. The official organization was three years later, the same year the United States entered World War I. There were 54 names on the roll. In 1924 such growth had taken place that when a new bell was dedicated, a very long pull rope was used in order to accommodate the 256 Sunday School pupils whose offerings had made the bell possible. Throughout the years the records show that Belmont Park served the neighborhood well by providing scouting as well as active women's, Men's, Luther League and choir groups.

First Gethsemene came into existence at the merger of Lebanon and Old Gethsemane in 1921. In 1923 the present building was erected. Since that time four men have entered the ministry and a pipe organ was

installed in 1932. In 1945 the final payments were made on a building which has given SERVICE to the congregation through worship and fellowship and to the neighborhood through scouting, vacation church school and other community endeavors.

In 1965 the merger which brought us all together took place. Pastor Arnold Tiemeyer served as the first pastor. During these years we have entered into the intern program, donated duplicate equipment to other churches, sold the west facility, and entered into a Six-Point Parish Program.

The first five years of our existence has been a time of learning to live together as a family of God. The road to unity has not been easy. At times we seem to live in our individual pasts rather than working in the present, and then a special emphasis will find us working together as we plan and hope for the future.

Our past is rich - from each of the groups making up Holy Communion - but a rich past should only lead to a richer future. With such a diverse and vital heritage of Christian witness, we should be able to move forward shoulder to shoulder, then arm in arm, and finally hand in hand for our church and for The Christ it stands for.

By The Rev. Carl L. Johnson Pastor, Holy Communion Lutheran Church

Rev Arnold P Tiemeyer..... 1965-1968

Rev Carl L Johnson1969-1975

Rev Arthur M Bowman III.....1976-1979

Rev Marvin A Tack1980-1990

During this time Holy Communion entered into a yoked ministry with St Andrew's.

Rev Bruce Symonds-Heany1988-1992

Rev Robert Goldstein?-1998

Original records

Original record books are located at United in Faith Lutheran Church, 6525 W. Irving Park Road, 60634-2416. The ELCA Archives has congregation histories and other material relating to Holy Communion and its predecessor churches.

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Medill Avenue Lutheran Church



Medill Avenue Lutheran Church was organized by the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, and was located at 4917 W. Medill Ave. It merged in 1998 with Gladstone Park, Holy Communion, Nebo, Our Lord's American, Our Saviour's English, Peace and St. Andrew to form United In Faith.

Rev. Harold Ellingsen..... 1928-1930
Rev. Mars Dale 1930-1936
Rev. Boral Biorn 1936-1942
Rev. Ariel Mollrem 1942-1948
Rev. Herman Larsen 1948-1954
Rev. Omar Otterness 1954-1959
Rev. Willard Lund 1959-
Rev. Harold Brown 1962-1964 – Assistant pastor
Rev. Gerald Aamot 1965-1969 – Assistant pastor

History of Our Church

1915 Lots were purchased at 4835 West Medill Avenue and a portable building erected, called "Our Saviour's Annex," for Sunday School and church services.



OUR SAVIOUR'S CHURCH ANNEX

1927 Medill Avenue Lutheran Church was organized with fourteen charter members on June 23 and incorporated August 13.

1928 Rev. Harold Ellingsen became the first pastor of the congregation.

1929 Present property purchased. A portable building was obtained from Edison Park Lutheran Church and used for church services.

1930 Rev. Mars Dale became the second pastor of the congregation, supported in part by the Home Mission Board of our synod. Average attendance, 29.

1934 First Fall Festival Banquet.

1936 Rev. Boral Biorn became the third pastor of the congregation.

1938 Mortgage on property was paid off.

1939 Total receipts for the year were \$4114.43.



THE OLD CHURCH AND PARISH HOUSE

1940 Congregation became self-supporting.

1941 Building fund drive launched.

1942 Rev. Ariel Molldrem became the fourth pastor of the congregation. Building committee elected. Decision made to build new church and an architect was engaged.

1944 Groundbreaking day was July 9 and the cornerstone was laid October 29.

1945 Church dedicated on September 9 by Dr. Martin Anderson, President of the Eastern District of our Synod.

1948 Rev. Herman Larsen became fifth pastor of our congregation.

1949 Ruth Halliday became parish worker.

1950 Parsonage at 5140 West Wrightwood Avenue purchased.

1953 Parsonage sold, present parsonage purchased.

1954 Rev. Omar Otterness became sixth pastor of congregation.

1956 Arne Jeggim became first intern. Building committee elected Clifford Linker chairman. Expansion of facilities to be considered.



THE ORIGINAL CHURCH

1957 Richard Bersie became second intern.

1958 Property at 4929 W. Medill Ave. purchased. Duane Sorum, third intern.

1959 Rev. Willard Lund became seventh pastor. Rhuben Aga, fourth intern. 1960 Harold Brown became fifth intern. Property at 4910 West Medill Avenue purchased. John Gartley, member of Medill since childhood, ordained into the ministry.

1961 Eugene Hanson became sixth intern. Bethel Series of Bible study started. 1962 Rev. Harold Brown called as Assistant Pastor. Robert Kridler became lay assistant at Zion Church in Staten Island.

1963 New constitution adopted.

1964 Rev. Harold Brown resigned to take a call at Faith Lutheran Church.

1965 Rev. Gerald Aamot called as Assistant Pastor and Director of Music. Decision made to build addition. Groundbreaking began in July. 1966 New addition completed. Dedication September 18.

Original records

Original record books are located at United in Faith Lutheran Church, 6525 W. Irving Park Road, 60634-2416.

[TOP](#)

Nebo Evangelical Lutheran Church



NEBO CHURCH AND PARSONAGE, CHICAGO. CONGREGATION ORGANIZED 1901

Nebo Lutheran Church was organized on August 18, 1901 as a member of the Augustana Synod in the Portage Park district of Chicago.

In the late 1880s, 80 acres were purchased along the south side of Irving Park Boulevard and a mile west of 48th Ave. (now Cicero Ave.) by a syndicate with the purpose of establishing a Lutheran college and community. Martin Luther College was established, but soon closed in the depression of the 1890s. Rev. S.A. Sandahl, however, continued to pursue the objective by moving his family to the area and holding worship services. Through his work, a congregation was organized on August 18, 1901 and the name "Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Nebo Church" was chosen.

A church, dedicated on April 20, 1902, was constructed on land donated by the syndicate on the southwest corner of Menard Avenue and Dakin Street, at 3914 N. Menard. A larger church building was constructed, being dedicated Feb. 14, 1915. The Educational and Recreational Building was dedicated on Feb. 21, 1937.

Nebo changed its name to Nebo Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1923 and adopted English as the official language in 1927.

In 1998 Nebo merged with Gladstone Park (1936, ULCA), Holy Communion (1966, LCA), Medill Avenue (1927, NLCA), Our Lord's American (1934, ALC), Our Saviour's English (1909, United Norwegian), Peace (1923, ULCA), and St. Andrew (1924, ULCA) to form United in Faith Lutheran Church.

Pastors

S.A. Sandahl.....	1901-1910
M.C. Ranseen.....	1910-1920
Linus A. Herman.....	1921-1927
O.B. Hanson.....	1928-1945
Carl P. Everett.....	1946-1960
Anton Lundeen (asst.)	1957-1962
G. Erik Hagg	1960-1969
Max H. Wolf	1960-

Original records

Original record books are located at United in Faith Lutheran Church, 6525 W. Irving Park Road, 60634-2416. Early record books have been microfilmed, as *Augustana #A15* and are available at the ELCA Archives and at the [Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center](#) at Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill. The microfilm includes church minutes from 1901 to 1933 and membership records from 1901 to 1930. The ELCA Archives does have congregational histories, church publications and other materials relating to Nebo.

Sources

Nebo Lutheran Church, *Anniversary Volume*, Chicago, Ill.: Harold O. Windahl, 1926.

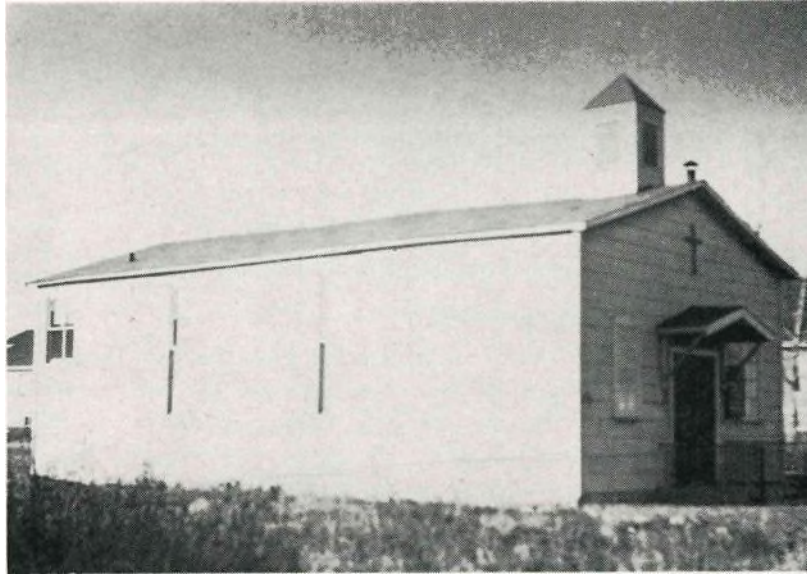
Nebo Evangelical Lutheran Church, *Fiftieth Anniversary, 1901-1951*, 1951

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Our Lord's American Lutheran Church



Our Lord's American Lutheran Church was organized in 1934 by the old American Lutheran Church. It was located at 6221 W. Gunnison Ave. in Chicago. In 1998 it merged with Gladstone Park, Holy Communion, Medill Avenue, Nebo, Our Saviour's English, Nebo, Peace and St. Andrew to form United In Faith.



Our old church at 4860 N. Merrimac Avenue, where services were conducted from 1939 to Thanksgiving Day, November 22, 1945. The present pastor served Grace Ev. Lutheran Church, Westchester, Ill., as also Our Lord's from January, 1941, up to June II, 1944, at which time he became the full-time pastor of Our Lord's.

Under the able assistance of the building committee, consisting of C. Grunenwald, Henry Wiemhoff and J. I. Johnson, plans for the new location and building were begun in 1943. Our new church was constructed under great difficulties due to the war, shortages of both help and materials. But the Lord answered our prayers for guidance and help in a most wonderful manner. To Him be thanks for everything.

Original records

Original record books are located at United in Faith Lutheran Church, 6525 W. Irving Park Road, 60634-2416.

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Our Saviour's English Lutheran Church



Our Saviour's English Lutheran Church was organized in 1909 by the United Norwegian Lutheran Church, and was located at 4159 N. Laramie Ave., at Berteau Ave. In 1998 it merged with Gladstone Park, Holy Communion, Medill Avenue, Nebo, Our Lord's American, Nebo, Peace and St. Andrew to form United In Faith.

History of Our Savior's English Lutheran Church

His FIRST work in the history of Our Saviour's English Lutheran Church dates back to a bright, cold December day in the year of 1908, when Rev. Thor Sigmond began a canvass of a part of the community. In going from house to house he was soon impressed with the fact that this was a community of Lutheran people as well as others who seemed to be interested in a Lutheran Church.

An appeal to the people for financial, moral and spiritual aid was made, and the people responded in an encouraging manner. Mr. John Gardner kindly opened the doors of one of his houses on Hutchinson Street and on January 17, 1909, the Sunday School began its activity at three o'clock in the afternoon. At this service twenty-one children and thirty adults were present.

The Sunday School continued to grow. Soon seventy were enrolled and the house became crowded. It then moved into the home of H. O. Wagner on 47th Avenue and later to a tent located at the South East corner of Laramie and Berteau Avenues. Services continued in this place until the fall when Mr. Wagner again opened his home for its use. The first Superintendent was G. Counter, later succeeded by Geo. C. Nelson about August 1, 1909.

In the meantime, Rev. Thor Sigmond had aroused enough interest among the people of the community to organize a congregation. The result was that many (70) confirmed persons signed their names with the intention of becoming members of the proposed English Lutheran Church.

Mr. A. W. Dickenson presented the proposed congregation with two lots 79 x 125 ft. located at Berteau Avenue and 52nd Street.

On March 25, 1909, a Ladies Aid was organized with the following officers: Mrs. Wm. O'Morrow, President; Mrs. H. O. Wagner, Vice-President; Mrs. G. Counter, Secretary; and Mrs. Chas. Nilson, Treasurer.

On the first day of July, 1909, the congregation was organized. Only a small company met of those giving their names as intending to become members, of whom may be mentioned C. Michaelson and wife, C. Michaelson, Jr. and wife, Mr. Wm. Gohde and wife, Mr. Andrew Swenson and wife, etc.

The following trustees were elected: Mr. Andrew Swenson, Mr. Wm. O'Morrow and Mr. Thorwald Nelson. A building committee was elected and consisted of Rev. Thor Sigmond, Chas. Nelson, Thor-wald Nelson, Wm. Gohde, H. O. Wagner, C. S. Michaelson and Wm. O'Morrow. Mr. C. S. Michaelson, Jr., drew the plans for the church. The building, a basement of brick 45x75 was begun. Mr. Thorwald Nelson superintended the work, and the labor on the foundation was furnished by A. K. Sorenson. During the building, services and Sunday School was held in the tent and later in the home of H. O. Wagner.

On August 29, 1909, at three o'clock in the afternoon the corner stone was laid by Rev. N. J. Ellestad, assisted by the following Pastors: Rev. C. K. Solberg, who delivered the main

address, Rev. C. N. Heiman, Rev. L. O. Fossum, Rev. J. M. Brankamp, Rev. R. O. Sigmond and the Pastor Rev. Thor Sigmond. A choir of fifty voices from the different congregations in the city sang two anthems. An orchestra played several selections, Miss Gertrude Heiman sang a solo, and the Pastor read a brief history of the church.

This mission was the first undertaking by the Board of English Home Missions.

On December 19, 1909 at 2:30 o'clock P. M. the congregation met in the basement, then finished, for a consecration service. The following Pastors took part in this service: Reverends Jens Roseland, G. T. Rygh, C. E. Tiller, R. O. Sigmond and the Pastor. At this meeting a large painting (Christ's Invitation) by Mrs. Thor Sigmond, was unveiled. The same is now over the altar of our Sunday School auditorium.

Under the aggressive leadership of Rev. and Mrs. Thor Sigmond the young congregation now moved forward spiritually and with increasing strides. Prayer meetings were conducted in the homes of members every other Sunday at 4:00 P. M. A young ladies society is first mentioned February 22, 1911 and again in April of the same year we meet them under the title of Dorcas Guild, when they presented the congregation with an altar and railing. Those were the days of bare necessities and extreme simplicity, when each new piece of furniture was greeted with sincere joy and appreciation. A year later the Brotherhood sponsored a Washington program, featuring Rev. Dornblasser of Grace English Lutheran Church as chief speaker. The choir for a time was led by Mrs. Sigmond, succeeded by Mr. Nordseth, and later by C. E. Michaelson, Jr.

The 22nd of June, 1913, Rev. Sigmond resigned and preached his farewell sermon September 7th the same year.

On September 8th, 1913, Rev. H. N. Thompson became the pastor' and served the congregation up to the 15th of May, 1914. Under this brief pastorate, which was marked with much good fellowship and inspiration some efforts were made to raise funds for a new building. The growing Sunday School needed more modern facilities and equipment. It was with many regrets we bade Rev. Thompson farewell.

In May, 1914, Student Edw. Ellefson was sent by the United Church Home Mission Board to serve the congregation until a permanent pastor could be secured. In June, the same year, the church extended a call to him to become their acting pastor. He was still a student at the United Church Seminary. The church agreed to make temporary provision for the congregation for one year. During this interval, aid was generously given by Student Habel, Reverends Bach, J. H. Holman, C. K. Solberg, A. M. Hansen, A. Oefstedahl and J. A. M. Hinderlie. Rev. Ellefson graduated in the spring of 1915 and was installed by Pastor C. E. Tiller, June 20, 1915. Under his zealous leadership every organization went enthusiastically to work, and the church made considerable progress. The choir was successively led by Miss Doris Nelson, Thorwald Swanson, and Miss Maybelle Nelson, who also was the organist, a position she held through Rev. Ellefson, Dr. Gerberding's and Rev. Gjelseth's pastorates.

Rev. Ellefson never spared himself, but spent all his strength with great enthusiasm in the service of his Master. His days in the active ministry were few, but the work done will be cherished and a blessing to his many friends.

After one year's active ministry he was compelled, because of ill-health, to resign. He liked to live and continue to work for the Lord and made a very brave fight for the regaining of health and strength, and for that reason went with his family to Oklahoma. The Lord's ways are not our ways and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and on the 11th of June, 1917, He saw it best to call His servant home. We believe firmly that the Lord received him with the message, "Well done, good and faithful servant! Thou hast been faithful in the little, I will put thee over much. Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

Dr. G. A. Gerberding, M. A. of Maywood Seminary, formerly Pastor of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Fargo, Dakota and author of "The Way of Salvation, in, The Lutheran Church" then volunteered his services. This was a rare treat. This was an able man of God. Many were the inspiring and soul searching sermons that touched our hearts. Those Sundays, with this quiet, unassuming Pastor and our God, are cherished memories of the past. Few however, know and realize the sacrifices of Dr. Gerberding. I have stood with him, after his long trip from Maywood, on a cold wintry day, and marveled at his endurance. Dr. G. A. Gerberding served the congregation up to March 18, 1917, when C. Havig Gjølseth took charge and was installed by Rev. C. E. Tiller of Bethel Lutheran Church.

Now began a period of genuine progress, both spiritually and physically. Need for more room became apparent. Plans for a new church were considered and adopted. The present walls and foundation were to be used in the new structure. A drive for funds was made and netted about \$5,500.00. The money was used in making what was deemed permanent improvements in the first step toward the completed whole. Monday, October 11, 1920, saw the beginning of alterations and repairs. While rebuilding, the congregation was granted the use of a portable church located at the corner of Belle Plaine and LeClaire Avenues, belonging to the Portage Park Methodist Church.

Tuesday evening, November 23, 1920 a working party of about twenty-five men and women came, with all necessary cleaning equipment and about midnight a tired but happy group partook of well-earned refreshments. Thursday, Thanksgiving Day, November 25th, the first services were held in what appeared as an entirely new church. The formal dedication took place Sunday, November 28, 1920.

During Pastor Gjølseth's time was begun what has since become a fixed institution in our midst, namely the Bible Conference. It was at the close of one of these when as lightning out of a clear sky came the reading of our pastor's resignation. This was Sunday, January 30, 1921. He left to take a professorship in Oslo, Norway.

Our present pastor, Rev. Jesse E. Thorson was installed August 14, 1921 by Rev. S. O. Rondestvedt of Westby, Wisconsin. Under his able and aggressive leadership, the church has made wonderful strides. It soon passed from the mission stage, becoming self-supporting January 1, 1924. All its indebtedness was cancelled. Spiritual and physical growth appeared on every

hand. The membership increased and the attendance at morning services taxed all available room. More and more the need for a new Church became apparent. Soon our "building talk" became action. The old plans were consulted, Churches built and under construction were visited. The plans were finally completed and with very impressive services the Congregation on Sunday, October 19th, 1924 bade farewell to its old home, the home of many dear memories. That same day with the turning of the first spade of earth the work of building anew begun. Enthusiasm prevailed, help was extended. The Portage Park Commissioners granted us full use of the Portage Park Field house for our Sunday School and Sunday Services. The old Church was torn down. Excavation for the new building immediately followed and the foundation was laid. The Corner Stone was laid on Sunday, December 21st, 1924. A very cold and stormy day could not dampen the spirits of the many who gathered that Sunday afternoon. The first step was taken and our prayers were, "More love to Thee O Christ, more love to Thee."

The architect for the new Church building was Mr. Henry C. Eckland of Moline, Illinois. Mr. B. Brynildssen, who later became a member of the congregation was the general contractor. It was through his untiring efforts and his keen interest that our Church edifice stands today a thing of beauty and inspiration. The Church Building Committee comprised the following men: Mr. Peter Johnson, Chairman, A. Abrahamsen, Andrew S. Erickson, Algot Berg, and George C. Nelson. The Church Council at the time of the erection of the Church was composed of the following: Deacons, George C. Nelson, L. C. Hansen, T. H. Thompson, Rolf Olsen, and Richard Nehls. Trustees: A. Abrahamsen, Andrew S. Erickson, Walter Hanseik, T. Lilleberg and Algot Berg. The building of a new Church was one of confidence, trust and faith in God. He had in so many ways blessed Our Saviour's Church, and in that sustaining faith, God would not forsake us. The work moved forward. Often the way seemed blocked and impenetrable. During these times the inspiring and encouraging cheer of Mr. Peter Johnson dispelled the gloom. Thus, by faith and prayer and encouragement one obstacle after another was removed and success crowned our efforts. The various organizations of the Church labored untiringly and to their faithful and devoted labors much credit is due.

The New Church was dedicated October 18th, 1925, with a most impressive ceremony. As the processional moved on out of the Parish House around to the front of the Church and up to the altar, Rev. Conrad Engelstad sang, "Open the gates of the temple." After the opening prayer the introductory address was given by Rev. S. O. Rondestvedt of Westby, Wis. Other Pastors who took part in the service were Rev. J. Nordby, Pres. of the Eastern District, Rev. J. A. M. Hinderlie, Rev. A. M. Rusten, Rev. S. Tollefson, Rev. M. E. Fretheim and Rev. K. Figenbaum. The sermon and dedication were by Dr. J. A. Aasgaard, the general president of our Church. The Choir sang several anthems. A reception for members and friends was held immediately following the service. The Evening service was a musical program by the Choir, their orchestra, and soloists of the Congregation.

The congregation was happily installed in its own new home and immediately launched forward into a program of progress and hope. The Church was not complete, most of the furniture and equipment for the new building was still wanting. The various organizations and many individuals again responded and it was not long before our Church had many beautiful things to enhance its worship.

The next day of praise and thanksgiving was recorded when after great enthusiasm and effort we were able to install the Chancel furniture and our beautiful Pipe Organ. There were dedicated on Sunday, December 22nd, 1929. This was indeed a Christmas gift. How truly could we now -all exclaim, "How amiable are Thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Psalm 84:1-2.

Very little mention has been made of the organizations of our Church and the significant part they have had in its spiritual, material and forward progress. The Church was begun through the organization of a Sunday School which has grown from that first meeting in the house on Hutchinson Street to a well-organized institution. It is ably directed by its spiritually minded and zealous laborers. Mr. George C. Nelson began his work in this organization and has been with it for almost twenty-five years and is still its active superintendent. Only three others have been superintendents, Mr. Counter, Mr. L. C. Hansen and Mr. Arthur Christoffersen. The Sunday School has been a blessed institution in our congregation. It has led us into the homes of our community and drawn many people into our membership. It has trained many young hearts in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The Ladies Aid was organized the first year of our history and has indeed been a tower of strength and an inspiration to our congregation. They have never lacked faith and have labored faithfully without becoming weary in well doing.

The choir likewise is among our oldest organizations and has faithfully served our congregation in making our worship festive and beautiful. As far as records can be discerned there never was a time when the choir did not function. We thank all the faithful men and women who have tuned our lips to sing His praises. In later years, a Junior Choir has also been a fixed institution in our midst.

The Dorcas Guild was first organized in 1910 and is still one of the active, energetic forces in our Church. It too, has labored untiringly and assisted in carrying on the work of the kingdom of God.

The men of the Church have been organized since 1912. From just a few, The Men's Brotherhood has grown and developed until it is now a major factor in our Church life. A Church is strong when its man-power is organized for service in the kingdom of God. We pray that our men may ever lead us on to greater and better things.

Amongst the young people of the Church there has always been a blessed activity. The Senior Luther League was organized in 1910 and without interruption has carried on its program. A Junior League was formed in 1923 bridging a gap in that period just after confirmation. The first of our girls Clubs was organized in 1927 and a boy's club was organized in 1933. A boy Scout troop and a Cub Scout troop are now in the process of organization. The spirit and the objective for all these youth organizations lie in that beautiful admonition, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Our Church has been a Church of young people. They

have always been a large part of our attendance on Sunday morning and we hope that God will bless and guide them all into blessed and useful lives.

Our Saviour's Church has always been interested in the various charitable institutions in our city. The founder of the Edison Park Children's Home was a charter member of our Church, Mrs. Sophia Michelson, now gone home to her eternal reward. Mr. Peter Johnson, was one of the founders and at the time of his death was superintendent of the Home Finding Society. The Portage Park Branch of the Home Finding Society is one of the permanent organizations in our midst and through it our Church lends a hand to help the little children who need someone to care for them.

Perhaps many names should have been mentioned in this brief account of our labors in the Lord. Space does not permit but as we think back over the years that are gone, many faithful laborers in God's Vineyard come to our mind. They have not been forgotten. Our Church stands as a monument to their labors. And God never forgets His own. Many of them have their names recorded in the book of life. We greet those still active in the service. We greet those who have moved to other places of activity. Memory is beautiful of those who have gone home to our Heavenly Father.

Our Saviour's English Lutheran Church was the first Church of any kind in the Portage Park district of Chicago.

The Church Records show that there have been during these twenty-five years 456 infants and 48 adult baptisms; 625 regular confirmands and 48 adult confirmands; 301 weddings; 185 funerals. There are 719 communicant members at this writing.

It has been interesting to record the activities and records of the past. It has been a pleasant task. But before us all is still that enchanting road that lies ahead. What shall the future be? The blessings of God we have enjoyed surely should lead us all on to a bright and happy future. May our God grant us His grace that it might be so.

Compiled by GEORGE C. NELSON AND REV. JESSE E. THORSON



Rev. Thor Sigmond



Rev. Jesse E. Thorson



George C. Nelson

Original records

Original record books are located at United in Faith Lutheran Church, 6525 W. Irving Park Road, 60634-2416.

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Evangelical Lutheran Church of Peace



The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Peace traces its history to another congregation, called the Evangelisch Lutherische Separierte Gemeinde, organized in 1870. When that congregation, located at Wood and Iowa Streets, decided to disband in 1922, some members decided to carry on in the Portage Park-Norwood Park area of Chicago. Led by Pastor Otto Doering of the Wartburg Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America, the congregation met for worship originally at a schoolhouse at Montrose and Melvina Avenues, at 5944 W. Cullom. In 1923 the congregation purchased lots on the northwest corner of Mason and Cullom Avenues. The parish house (pictured below), completed in 1923, served as a worship home until the permanent worship facility (pictured at top) was completed in December 1928.

In 1998 Peace merged with Gladstone Park (1936, ULCA), Holy Communion (1966, LCA), Medill Avenue (1927, NLCA), Nebo (1901, Augustana), Our Lord's American (1934, ALC), Our Saviour's English (1909, United Norwegian), and St. Andrew (1924, ULCA) to form United in Faith Lutheran Church.

A BRIEF HISTORY
of
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF PEACE

Fifty years ago, a small group of sincere Christian people, seven families formerly connected with a small congregation known as Evangelical Lutheran Friedens Congregation, Church of Peace, located at Wood and Iowa streets, decided to carry on the work of the Lord, in a new field, after that congregation had decided to disband. Under the leadership of Pastor Otto Doering, then Missionary Superintendent of the Wartburg Synod, United Lutheran Church in America, various sections of the City were canvassed, until a decision was made to locate in the Portage Park-Norwood Park section of Chicago.

With the loyal help and generous support of these forward-looking Christian friends, a Sunday School soon was organized and preaching services were held in a little Township School House at Montrose and Melvina Avenues. The first service was attended by 28 men, women and children. The community evinced a genuine interest in this work of the Church, and attendance increased at the services so that a temporary organization of a Congregation was effected early in the year of 1923. On March 15, 1923, the Congregation authorized the purchase of building lots on the N. W. corner of Mason and Cullom Avenues, at the price of \$3000.00. The Church Council was also instructed to proceed with the steps necessary to be taken toward the permanent organization of an Evangelical Lutheran Church and its incorporation according to the State laws. At this meeting, it was also decided to let contracts for the erection of a Parish House at an approximated cost of \$25,000, of which amount \$10,000 was to be secured by a mortgage, \$3,000 by a Loan from the Mission and Church-Extension Board of the United Lutheran Church, and \$12,000 by subscription from members and friends. A groundbreaking service was conducted on Mother's Day, cornerstone-laying services were held on Children's Day, and the Parish House was completed and dedicated to the honor, glory, and service of our God, on the third Sunday in Advent, 1923. The Rev. Professor Dr. E. Krauss of the Chicago Lutheran Seminary delivered the Dedication Sermon. At this service the Congregation was formally organized, choosing for its name, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Peace".

In 1928 the Church became self-sustaining and called for its first regular Pastor, the founder of the Congregation. The Congregation gained in strength, and soon had outgrown the accommodations of the Parish House. The building of a church-edifice was considered necessary; the creation of a building-fund was authorized. A campaign was conducted in the Fall of 1927. The Pastor was assisted in this campaign by the Rev. David A. Davy, the Church-Council, and a Committee of 50 members. With the loyal cooperation of the entire Congregation and many friends, the sum of \$31,000 was secured; in addition, a building loan of \$45,000 was granted, after the building-plans prepared by E. E. Roberts and Elmer C. Roberts, church architects, had been approved. Contract for the building of the Church was awarded to the Mutual Construction Company of Chicago in May, 1928. Ground was broken on Mother's Day, May 13, 1928. The Cornerstone was laid on Children's Day, July 1st, 1928. The Church received its roof in the second week of September, and the building was completed early in

December. The Dedication Services were held on the Third Sunday in Advent, December 16, 1928. The Dedication Sermon was preached by the Rev. Wm. Schueltzke of Springfield, Illinois. At a Fellowship Service in the afternoon, the Rev. Simon Peter Long, DD. of Wicker Park Lutheran Church delivered the address. Prof. Luther T. Spayde presided at our three-manual Kilgen Pipe Organ and also directed the Choir. The total cost of the Church building with its furnishings and equipment was \$96,000.

The year 1948 A.D. marked the passing of a quarter of a century of work of our Congregation, having had its ups and downs, especially in the lean year of the Depression in the Thirties of this century, after which the Congregation again pursued an upward trend, by God's aid. Upon the occasion of the 25th Anniversary, in 1948, the Congregation re-dedicated themselves to the service of God, and at this time, our beloved Pastor Doering was still with us. He served as Pastor of our Church for 40 years, after which he retired. Pastor Harry W. Ecklund was called and served until Dec., 1968, at which time he accepted another post outside the Parish Ministry. Pastor Kornel J. Tessenyi came to us in March of 1969, and is serving us now, sharing with us the gratitude to God for all the evidences of His Grace and Love during the past 50 years of this Congregation. Together we are, at the present time, maintaining the Spiritual and physical edifice of our Church with the same vision of Faith which moved the hearts of that small group of dedicated Christians so long ago, and we now give into the care of the loving hand of Almighty God the future of our Congregation for all the years to come.

Original records

Original record books are located at United in Faith Lutheran Church, 6525 W. Irving Park Road, 60634-2416. The ELCA Archives has congregation histories and other material relating to Peace.

Pastors

Otto Doering.....	1923-1963
Harry W. Ecklund	1963-1968
Kornel J. Tessenyi	1969-

Sources

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Peace, "Rededication, 1923-1973," 1973.

Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Peace, 1948.

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St. Andrew's English Evangelical Lutheran Church



St. Andrew's English Evangelical Lutheran Church was located on the southwest corner of Melrose and Paulina Streets, and was a member of the Northern Illinois Synod of the General Synod.

Work began in the spring of 1900 to organize Lutherans in the Cuyler and Gross Park neighborhoods of Chicago by Rev. C.G. Stacy. Work in Gross Park began in June with a Sunday School, while services and other functions were held at Cuyler. The Cuyler English Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized in September 1900, after which Rev. Stacy concentrated his efforts on that congregation.

Rev. R.L. Patterson took charge of the Gross Park mission until he was replaced by Rev. S.M. Lutz on May 10, 1901. Rev. Lutz helped to organize the mission as St. Andrew's English Evangelical Lutheran Church and was installed as the pastor on Nov. 24, 1901.

The congregation constructed a small chapel at Melrose and Paulina Streets. In 1911, as both mission congregations were struggling, discussions began on the merger of Cuyler and St. Andrew's. St. Andrew's disposed of its property in January 1912, but negotiations

were prolonged until the first of September, 1912, when the two congregations united to form the English Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Ascension.

Original Charter Membership

We, the undersigned, hereby subscribe our names as CHARTER MEMBERS of a Lutheran Church to be organized in our community all of the services of which are to be conducted in the AMERICAN language, the same to be connected with the Illinois Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America and promise, unless unavoidably hindered, to be present at the Service of Organization.

T. B. Hersch Mrs. T. B. Hersch Alice A. Hersch Paul T. Hersch Mrs. Ella Casati Mrs. H. Oberwetter Mrs. M. Pullins Mrs. Jos. J. Pleyer Joseph Pleyer Wilfred D. Bailey Roy O. Bailey Steward E. Bailey Mrs. M. R. Brenton Mrs. D. E. Bailey Mrs. Jos. M. Prokes Mrs. F. C. Eckhardt Mrs. C. L. Cane Mr. C. L. Cane Mrs. M. Berggren D. E. Bailey George A. Barski Otto J. Piehl Mrs. Otto Piehl Adolph G. Madlener Mrs. Ella Madlener Miss Lenore La Roy Mrs. Fred Kuhlman Mrs. Henry Priebe Loretta Frenzel George J. Hoeft Mrs. G. Hoeft Alice I. M. Berggren Lillian Carlson Inga Moen Oscar Anderson Mrs. Anna Anderson M. C. Kane Mrs. M. C. Kane Fred C. Kuhlman Emil O. Reiser Mrs. A. Barski Mrs. P. H. Frenzel Jas. R. Lythans Mrs. M. Lythans Oscar Schwendeman Lillian Lythans Jas. Lythans M. R. Brenton Mrs. R. Cookson Mrs. B. Kammerlander Nida Richard Susie Richard Carter Hoffman Mrs. Emil Reiser Herman Sieloff Mrs. Clara Sieloff Mrs. Dela Descourouez Mr. Wm. Sawatski Mrs. Wm. Sawatski Mrs. Catherine Wolter Mrs. Hattie Hogan M. K. Hogan Robt. Cookson Mrs. A. Antoinette Anderson

History

In January 1924, The Rev. T. B. Hersch, D.D., a field missionary of the Illinois Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America, surveyed a neighborhood on the northwest side of the city of Chicago known as South Portage Park for the purpose of organizing a Lutheran Church in the community.

After considerable effort, enough families were solicited to warrant the beginning of services. The meeting of the first Sunday School was held in Gray Public School auditorium in February with three children present. Church services and Sunday School were held at the school for several months.

During this time three lots were purchased at the corner of Addison Street and Linder Avenue and construction was begun on a bungalow church for the congregation. The latter part of August saw the near-completion of the church and the congregation, anxious to move into their new home, began to hold services in the new building. It is reported that for the first service the congregation sat on makeshift seats formed by boxes with boards laid across them. At this time the charter membership list had grown to twelve and there were high hopes for a steady growth in the new church.

It was on September 17th that twenty-two women of the church met at the home of Mrs. Ella Casati for the purpose of organizing a women's auxiliary. Through their efforts altar vestments were procured and kitchen equipment and other necessities were purchased.

The name, "St. Andrew's" was suggested for the new congregation and plans were laid, for the organization and dedication of the bungalow church. These plans were brought to completion on October 5, 1924 at a morning service and the charter membership list was officially closed. The thirty-seven who had signed the membership list were officially received into membership. It

should be noted however, that what appears to be the original charter membership list has some sixty-five signatures on it. That afternoon dedication services were held. The Rev. J. E. Whitteker, D.D., president of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension of the United Lutheran Church in America preached at this service.

At the sixth annual convention of the Illinois Synod held in May of 1925 at Sterling, Illinois, Saint Andrew's was officially received into the United Lutheran Church in America. At this point in history the membership had increased to eighty-four and prospects for future growth were excellent.

The Rev. Theodore F. Weiskotten of Muscatine, Iowa preached a trial sermon in May of 1925 and was called as pastor in June. Pastor Weiskotten came to Saint Andrew's on July 1, 1925. As first pastor, he came to the congregation with a wealth of experience and wisdom.

The Rev. Theodore F. Weiskotten was a graduate of Thiel College, Greenville, Pa., and of Mt. Airy Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa. He was ordained by the Pittsburgh Synod of The General Council in 1900. During the years of his ministerial office he served five parishes previous to Saint Andrew's. His first pastorate was served in the Mahony Parish, Ohio, where he built the parsonage and remodeled the churches. In 1904 he was called by The Mission Board as a home missionary. Serving the Syracuse-Benton Mission in Indiana; the Cedarburg, Wisconsin; the Pueblo, Colorado; and the Muscatine, Iowa, missions. The first cement block church built in the United States was erected by him in Syracuse, Indiana in 1905. In 1910 the beautiful limestone church in Cedarburg, Wisconsin was built. While serving the Pueblo, Colorado mission during the World War a destructive fire destroyed the church. In faith and zeal the congregation rose from the state of discouragement and rebuilt the church free of debt. In 1918 he was called to the Muscatine, Iowa mission. Here, after seven and one-half years of labor, he brought the congregation from the point of disbanding to a growing congregation of faith and courage; resulting in the erection in 1923 of their new church.

The depression and difficulties within the congregation caused much delay in progress at Saint Andrew's. Unpaid bills, mortgage payments and street and alley assessments caused a terrible financial burden for the congregation. The bungalow church had cost some \$10,500 and the lots, costing some \$3,000, had been paid for with a loan of \$1,500 from synod. In the thirties, due to the financial condition of the country, the loan from synod was entirely forgotten; synod at the same time never attempted collection of the loan. It is told how many times an offering was counted and then the pennies, nickels and dimes were divided up—a part going to the pastor for salary and a part to make a token payment on a long overdue bill. At the time of Pastor Weiskotten's death in 1942 the congregation still owed him some \$1,000 in back salary.

Nevertheless, Saint Andrew's pushed forward and through the persistent efforts of pastor and people some progress was made. In 1934 the membership listed in the Anniversary Book numbered 176 persons. In 1937 the church was remodeled, pews were finally installed, a new carpet was laid and a new lighting system replaced the old. The congregation became self-supporting on January 1, 1938. Previous to that time the Illinois Synod had paid a part of the Pastor's salary each year.

The Rev. Theodore Weiskotten entered life eternal on February 6, 1942, having served the congregation for almost 17 years. The Rev. Glenn G. Gilbert was called as pastor and began his work on April 26, 1942.

Rev. Gilbert attended the public school of Chicago and received his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Northwestern University. He studied at the Chicago Lutheran Seminary at Maywood, Illinois; receiving his Bachelor of Divinity degree from this institution. His first parish was a two-church charge at Rock City, Illinois. His second charge in the ministry was Saint Andrew's.

During Pastor Gilbert's pastorage of one year and nine months, a new spirit of growth and progress took place. From a communing membership of 136 in 1941 the growth reached a total of 209 in 1944.

Beginning in 1943 the apportioned benevolence was met in full each year. The growing benevolence spirit in the congregation was further evidenced by the organization of two missionary societies. A successful campaign was begun to pay off the \$8,000 mortgage indebtedness on the church property as well as certain other back obligations.

Pastor Gilbert resigned his pastorage on January 31, 1944 to accept a call as assistant pastor at Holy Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church of Chicago. At the present time, he is pastor of Faith Ev. Lutheran Church of Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

The Rev. William H. Schneider, at the time a student at our seminary in Maywood, supplied the pulpit from February 2nd to May 24th. It was on this date that he became the called pastor for he was ordained into the gospel ministry. In the late spring of 1945 Pastor Schneider received a two month leave of absence and the Rev. Clarence Payne supplied the pulpit and served the congregation. In the meantime, money, had been raised for the payment of the first mortgage of \$5,500 and a mortgage burning ceremony was held on November 30, 1944. After a year and three months as pastor, the Rev. Schneider resigned on October 7, 1945. At the present time, he is pastor of Saint Chad's Episcopal Church of Love's Park, Rockford, Illinois.

The Rev. Ivan Ross became pastor on November 11, 1945. He had served as a chaplain in the Army during World War II and previous to that had served in Kentucky. Shortly after his arrival the final payment on a second mortgage of \$3,500 was made on February 13, 1946. The congregation then became free of all debt for the first time in her history.

A fire of unknown origin broke out on January 30, 1947 just a short time after the church had been completely redecorated. Although the combined damage by smoke and firemen presented a most desolate picture throughout the building, there was little structural damage. Fortunately, the entire loss was covered by insurance. The old coal bin, where the fire had started was removed and the kitchen considerably enlarged and improved. During the period of repair and remodeling Sunday School and Church services were held at the fieldhouse in Chopin Park. A rededication service was held on March 9th and the congregation was once again worshipping in her church.

New progress can be noted at this time in the form of material improvements. They were: venetian blinds for the church, a Hammond organ, new Parish School hymnals for the Sunday School, and also many new Common Service Books; folding chairs, an altar cross, communion set, moving picture projector, a slide and film projector, and a microphone. A new constitution was adopted, a monthly magazine, THE VISITOR, and an annual directory made their appearance. The auxiliary organizations were strengthened and two new groups were formed—the Fourth Niter's for adults, and a Cub Pack. An anniversary fund was begun for some future building project. One hundred twenty-five names were added to the membership roll and by the end of 1948 the communing membership was 233.

Pastor Ross resigned on February 21, 1949, after three years and three months of service. He is at the present time pastor of a new United Lutheran mission in Niles, Michigan.

The Rev. George W. Wolf became the new pastor on May 1, 1949. Pastor Wolf was educated in the Chicago public school system. He graduated from Steinmetz High School and finished-his^o college work at...Carthage College; receiving the Bachelor of Arts degree. He attended the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary at Maywood and graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1944. Additional graduate work was done at Washington University, Saint Louis, Missouri and completion of requirements for the Master of Sacred Theology degree at the Maywood seminary. His first pastorate was at Mizpah Ev. Lutheran Church, Saint Louis, Missouri, where he served for two years and seven months. He resigned the pastorate and entered the business world for a period of two years and three months. It was from a position in the business world that Pastor Wolf returned to the ministry and accepted as his call the work at Saint Andrew's.

Plans for the 25th Anniversary had been underway previous to Pastor Wolf's arrival. It was under his leadership that in September of 1949 the church proper and the basement were completely redecorated and the exterior painted. The exterior painting was done by the men of the church. New gutters were installed and many necessary repairs made. Anniversary services were held on October 2, 5, and 7. The historical service on October 2nd had as its speaker the Rev. Dr. Harmon J. McGuire, president of the Illinois Synod. At the special service of thanksgiving on October 5th (the actual date of the organization of the, congregation). Pastor Wolf asked the congregation to pray the prayer each day: "Lord, give us our church." This was the prayer that was to result in the eventual erection of the new and beautiful Saint Andrew's Church. The anniversary banquet was held on October 7th with Pastors Gilbert and Ross present; the guest of honor being the Rev. T. B. Hersch. A confirmation reunion was held on October 9th. At the time of the 25th Anniversary there was a total of some \$4,500 in the Anniversary Fund and Pastor Wolf requested the congregation to turn this entire amount into a "Building Fund." This was done and by December 31, 1949 the sum of \$5,796.12 was in this fund.

During 1950 attendance at worship services increased steadily and on September 17th a second worship service was begun at 8:30 a. m. This was due to the fact that the seating capacity at the 11 o'clock service had been taxed to the utmost. Much work was done on the vacant property at this time to make it more attractive and a procedure was adopted for keeping the grass cut and bushes transplanted and trimmed. At the end of the year the sum of \$12,902.94 was in the Building Fund. All monies had been collected through the free-will giving of the congregation.

It was in 1951 that the Christian Higher Education goal of \$1,500, a special endeavor of the United Lutheran Church, was exceeded. The kitchen was remodeled, new cabinets and a sink installed, and an effort made to make it modern. A Chapel Choir was formed at this time under the direction of Mrs. George W. Wolf and a Junior Luther League was formed to supplement the work of the Senior Luther League. The Building Fund had reached the amazing figure of \$21,789 by the end of the year.

The year 1952 saw the congregation adopting a new constitution and contributing to a memorial dormitory room at the seminary. The congregation voted in June to conduct a Building Fund Appeal and a goal of \$50,000 was set. In October, the appeal began with the assistance of professional fund raisers. By the first report meeting some \$34,000 had been subscribed and it was known, although not publicized, that the goal would be achieved. The appeal ended on December 7th with the final report of a subscription to the new Saint Andrew's Church of \$104,000.00. This was reported to be the most successful appeal ever made for a church of this size. A keen loyalty to Christ, a deep desire for a new church and the prayer, "Lord, give us our church," were the contributing factors. At the close of the year \$3,500 had been paid out for appeal expenses and there still remained the sum of \$34,209 in the Building Fund. The congregation was finally on its way.

The congregation, on January 14, 1953, granted permission to form a Building Committee and seek the services of an architect. At a special congregational meeting on March 4th the firm of Marx and Lutz was engaged to design the new Saint Andrew's Church. It was in June that the congregation voted on plans for the new Church. Because of the crowded condition of the Church School it was decided in October to conduct the Nursery and Beginner's Departments during the 11 o'clock service. A commitment for a mortgage for the new church was received and read at the Thanksgiving Eve Service and on December 13th the congregation voted to assume the responsibility for mortgage of \$70,000. At the close of the year there was \$65,954 in the Building Fund, with many expenses for planning the new church already paid out.

In February of 1954 the congregation voted to enter a \$190,000 building program. The Groundbreaking Service for the new Saint Andrew's Church took place on March 21st with Dr. McGuire as the speaker. The Rev. Erwin Wendt, president of the Chicago Conference of the Illinois Synod. was the speaker at the cornerstone laying ceremony on June 13th. In the fall of the year the "Order of Saint Andrew" and the "Young Adult" groups were formed. The "Order of Saint Andrew" is a group of confirmed Young people up to age 21 who have dedicated themselves to serving their Lord and His altar. The Young Adults, are a group from age 18 to 25 who meet twice a month for Christian fellowship and discussion. It is a unique group in that it has no formal organization, no dues, no social life and has dedicated itself solely to knowing and expressing each one's beliefs.

An intelligent and well-planned program of parish education has been inaugurated and carried out at Saint Andrew's under the leadership of Pastor Wolf. All Sunday School classes are mixed classes of boys and girls. The Chapel Choir, through the efforts of Mrs. Robert Lane who followed Mrs. Wolf as director, and the present leader. Mrs. Mariorie Green, is one devoted solely to training our young people in worship and music of the church. There are now Junior

and Senior Confirmation Classes, thus forming a two-year period of instruction in Luther's Small Catechism. The Junior and Senior Luther Leagues follow up the work of the confirmation classes and attempt in every way to train the young people for leadership in Saint Andrew's Church.

The work of parish education is followed up with an excellent filmstrip library and a library of excellent Christian reading for young people. All young people are trained well in leading and planning worship services and also in presenting devotional material and topic discussions of a Christian nature. Much stress has been placed on youth work and some signs of our efforts are already seen among the youth who are beginning to take their rightful place in the congregation.

The completion of our new church ushers in a new era and a new challenge for Saint Andrew's. Perhaps for the remaining years of our history it will be well for us to pray: "Lord, keep us faithful to Thee."

Pastors include

- C.G. Stacy, mission organizer1900
- R.L. Patterson, mission organizer1900-1901
- S.M. Lutz.....May, 10, 1901-Nov. 1, 1903
- S.H. Yerian.....Nov. 1, 1903-April 1, 1908
- L.J. Motschman..... Aug. 1, 1908-June 1, 1912

The Rev. T. B. Hersch - 1924 –

Officially St Andrews Church

- Rev. Theodore F. Weiskotten July 1 1925- February 6, 1942
- Rev. Glenn G. Gilbert April 26, 1942-January 31, 1944
- Rev. William H. Schneider May 2,1944-October 7, 1945
- Pastor Ross November 11, 1945-February 21, 1949
- Rev. George W. Wolf..... May 1, 1949-1998

Original records

Ascension disbanded on March 22, 1998. The original record books for Ascension, as well as possibly those for St. Andrew's and Cuyler, are located at the ELCA Region 5 Archives in Dubuque, Iowa. Original record books for St Andrew's are located at United in Faith Lutheran Church, 6525 W. Irving Park Road, 60634-2416.

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FONCs – Friends of the New Church

There were about 16 different churches that were meeting to combine into one congregation. The meetings went on for quite some time. Each one had either low membership or had financial problems or both. When it came time for each church to vote to become part of the merger, only eight churches vote to do so. There were members from the churches that declined to participate in the merger that wanted to participate and be part of the merged church. So, those members created a group called the FONCs, Friends of the New Church. There were also people from outside of the churches that declined to participate in the merger that joined the group.

There were around 16 people in the FONCs. They were treated as if there were one of the churches that voted to be part of the merger. When the first council was formed of the new church, two members from each of the 8 congregations and from the FONCs made up the new, 18 member, congregational council.

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