

Church/Organization: St. John's Lutheran Church
800 RIDGE ROAD EAST
Rochester, NY 14621

<http://www.stjohnsrochester.org/>

Years of Operation 1873 – present

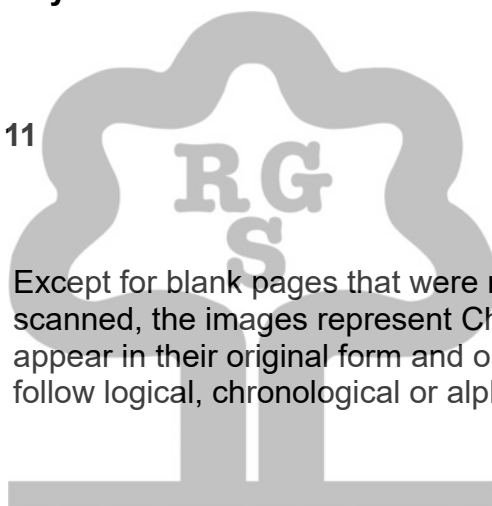
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90 Years
1963

90th Anniversary

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Rochester, New York



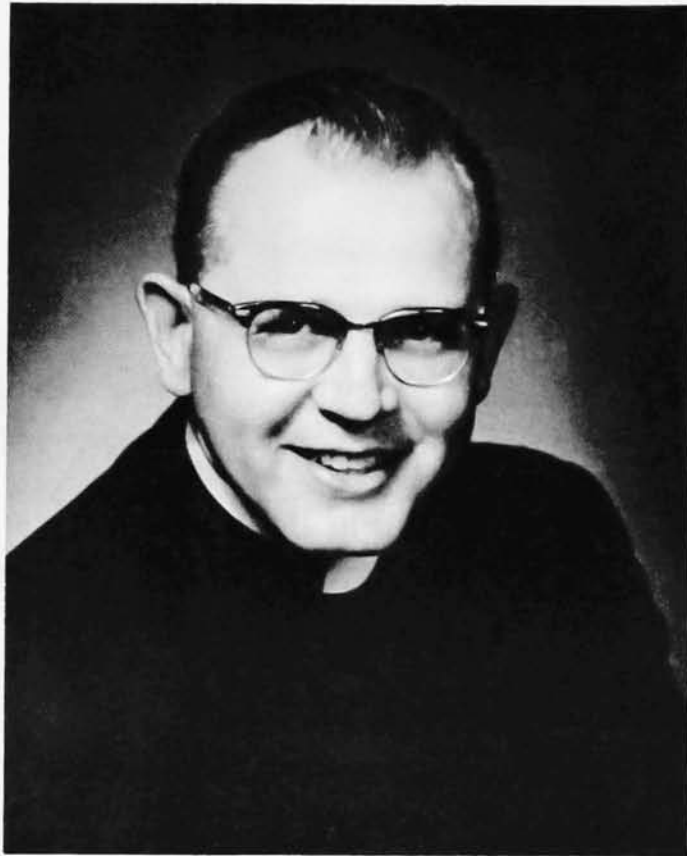
*Serving Christ by
Nine Decades of Faith*

1873 — 1963



St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Rochester, New York



REVEREND GEORGE F. HAAG

Pastor

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

1963

**90th ANNIVERSARY
COMMENTARY FROM THE PASTOR**

People ask, why have special anniversary observances. And there is a very good answer. At the decade interval, important changes have developed in all congregations. Furthermore, we are provided with a built in opportunity to not only look back, but to look forward. It is a time-faith event.

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, pointed out the emptiness of time alone in his parable of the talents. The rich man's servants were judged, and rewarded, on the basis of how they used their time and talents. Status quo was banished. Weak effort weakly blessed. But that servant who took seriously the advancing of his master's kingdom, went to the head of the line to receive his just due.

* * *

So it is with Christians. So it is with the Christian Church. We praise God for the past "90 Decades of Faith". We pray God to show us even more fervent service.

HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S

Zion Lutheran Church was organized in 1831 and being the only Lutheran Church in Rochester, all Lutherans of our city naturally were members of Zion.

Due to the many German Lutherans coming to Rochester from Germany, the membership of Zion's grew rapidly. The German Lutherans in the nothern section of Rochester wanted their own church. First of all, it was quite a walk to Zions and secondly, the New York Central tracks were on street level and many a Sunday morning, the people got to church late, due to waiting for a long freight to pass or being held up by a stalled freight train.

Zions bought the vacant Methodist frame chapel on Buchan Park in 1872 and the first services were held there. The large plot of land corner of Joseph Street and Buchan Park was purchased by Zions and Mr. John Wagner, a well to do member of Zions.

St. John's was organized in August, 1873 with 69 members. A large brick church was built on this property. Work went on rapidly and the enthusiasm was great and during the first few years St. John's had a membership of about 500 families. A Parochial School was started. The new church was dedicated June 27th, 1875 and Reverend E. Heydler (Assistant Pastor of Zions) was the first pastor. After a rosy beginning, depression times came, a friction was in evidence and debts piled up. Many were out of work and could not pay their pledges. They became discouraged and in 1877 Reverend Heydler resigned and with his followers, organized and built Concordia Church on Helena Street.

Reverend J. Muehlhauser became the second pastor in 1878. Conditions were not too good and unbeknown to the church board and congregation, Reverend Muehlhauser joined the Missouri Church. He was asked to resign, which he did, but again he took his followers with him and organized and built St. Matthews Church around the corner on Morris Street. This was in 1884.

Reverend J. Richtsteiner became the third pastor of St. John's. He began his work in 1884, but a large debt was facing the congregation. John Wagner of Zions again came to the rescue and helped financially. Reverend Richsteiner resigned in 1887 to become director of Wagner College.

Reverend J. Nicum D.D. of Syracuse was called as the fourth pastor in 1887. Under his leadership, St. John's really began to prosper. All bills were gradually paid, membership began to grow and St. John's was recognized as a leading church of the New York Ministerium.

The 15th anniversary was celebrated in 1888. In 1891 the towers were built, clock and bells installed, and a large gas reflector added.

In 1898 the 25th anniversary was celebrated and the interior of the church redecorated. In 1902 St. John's issued her first regular monthly church paper, the "St. Johannes Bote". The Parochial School was discontinued in 1903. A new Stearns organ was installed, also a new altar in 1904. New lighting system added and envelope system introduced. All these additions were dedicated at a special service and celebration. School rooms were overhauled and all work done by members of the Bible Class.

Dr. Nicum died November 1, 1909, after having served as pastor for 22 years. Until Spring of 1910 Reverend E. Quade and Reverend E. Kraeling supplied. Reverend A. Blum of Lancaster was called as St. John's 5th pastor.

St. John's received \$6,000 in Dr. Nicum's will in form of the Morris Street Parsonage. Church basement was renovated in 1911. In 1912, regular English evening services were introduced.

The 40th anniversary was celebrated in 1913 and the church renovated. In 1914 regular English morning services introduced, and the German Services changed to 9:30 A.M. In 1918 the dedication of all new stained glass church windows given by organizations and individuals took place. For years the Sunday School through special drives had taken care of all the benevolent obligations. This was finally taken over by the congregation through the Duplex Envelope System. St. John's has at all times met her Synodical apportionments 100 per cent.

In 1923 Mrs. J. Nicum presented the church with a beautiful pulpit and lectern in memory of Dr. Nicum. These gifts as well as memorial gifts by individuals of chimes, organ stops and a renovated church were dedicated at a special service March 18th. The 50th anniversary was celebrated in October of 1923.

In 1924 the older men's organization (Kraukenverein) and the Young Mens Society consolidated into a Brotherhood. In 1925 title of church property was cleared through the good will of Zions and its pastor. In August of this year a new parsonage was built on Alcazar at a cost of \$18,000. In 1928 new church doors and organ stops, memorial gifts were dedicated. In 1929 the church basement was renovated and kitchen remodeled. In 1930 Reverend Blum became ill and was given a leave of absence. Reverend C. Reichert took charge until October 1st and Reverend Lampe supplied until January 1st. Pastor Blum passed away July 1st after having served 20 years.

Reverend Paul Schmeider of Philadelphia was called as the sixth pastor of St. John's January 1, 1931. Under his pastorage many things were added to beautify the services. The church received a new tile roof, the Choirs were vested and confirmant reunions were started. An Endowment Fund was introduced and Luther League started. In 1932 (July 1) the church was struck by lightning during a tornado. The damage was covered by insurance. A fund raising drive, helped by the diamond chart, was very successful and the interior of our church was redecored. The Rededication Services followed.

In 1933 a Women's Missionary Society was organized. An addition built to the school house for Primary and Beginners Department of the Sunday School. The rotating Church Council system was started. In November of 1933 St. John's celebrated her 60th anniversary. In 1942 a church debt of \$2,035 was eliminated. The 70th anniversary was celebrated in 1943. Pastor Schmeider resigned, after serving us 14 years, to take over his fathers church in Philadelphia (September 1944).

Reverend Roeder (retired) and Reverend Goetz of the Inner Mission Society supplied during the interim.

Reverend John Kirsch was called as St. John's 7th pastor and began his pastorage September 1, 1945. Due to the deterioration of the neighborhood and the lack of parking, a meeting was called regards relocation of St. John's (1946). About 85% of the membership voted to relocate. The Building Campaign started January 1947. The Smith-Kirby Firm made a complete canvass of St. John's members and received pledges of nearly \$43,000 over a 3 year period.

In 1948 St. John's celebrated her 75th anniversary. In 1949 the Engelhardt farm on Ridge Road East, consisting of about 5 acres of land was purchased as a new site for St. John's. In 1950 the roof of our church on Joseph Avenue was badly damaged by a windstorm. A new constitution was adopted. After a 1 year voluntary building fund drive in 1954, it was decided to begin another big drive in 1953.

The 80th anniversary was celebrated in 1953 and Mr. Kelley of the Wells Organization was instrumental in bringing about a very successful canvass, with pledges of nearly \$75,000. St. John's Church on Joseph Avenue was sold to Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in 1954 for \$50,000.00. Ground breaking services were held at the new site on Sunday, October 24 and excavating began October 25th. The construction work was delayed due to a strike of the carpenters. Cornerstone laying services May 12, 1955. A "B" Canvass was made and an additional \$13,500 was pledged. Last services at the Joseph Avenue church were November 27, 1955.

The new church was dedicated December 4, 1955. Many memorials have been received, additions made during the next few years. 1956, new church bus purchased through loan of Brotherhood. Reverend Kirsch resigned, after 12 years pastorage, to take over a former church of his in Oswego, (August, 1957). For nearly a year, Reverend Trost, Reverend Green-taner, Reverend Smihula and various laymen supplied. The Engelhardt-Kort home and land was purchased October 15, 1957 for \$22,000 and is to be used as a Youth Center and Boy Scout home. In January, 1958 the German Services were eliminated, the last being January 26, 1958. Men of the church painted the rooms of the Educational building as well as the kitchen, social hall and adjoining rooms.

Reverend Haag of Schenectady was called as St. John's 8th pastor and began his work September 1, 1958. The new Hymnals were introduced. In 1959, the tower audio system was dedicated. \$1,000 gift received from Miss Adele Pestke. In 1960 the new church carpet was laid. \$1,000 gift received from William Albrecht. 1961 new acoustic ceilings were put up in social hall and Pastor's study. 1962 new acoustic ceilings in kitchen and Fireside Room. Miss Clara Krause bequeathed gift in her will to the church, to be used toward new church sign. Estate of William Albrecht left the church \$1,000 toward interior painting. Altar stalls added, through gift in memory of Mrs. Jagnow.

Charles Kosbab,
Historian and Archivist

90th ANNIVERSARY OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Purpose . . .

The purpose of the 90th birthday of our congregation is to thank our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for the blessings which he has bestowed upon our congregation. Our celebration should not be cloaked in somberness. Rather, we should look back over the years with joy, reflection, and gratitude. We should likewise look forward to the future with keen anticipation, faith and the knowledge that as we plan today they will reap tomorrow. The present is but a transitory stage. As members of an ever-living congregation we must realize our shortcomings and make every effort to secure the future.



"SERVING CHRIST BY NINE DECADES OF FAITH"

The Ninetieth Anniversary of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is only a division in eternity, a day of remembrance of past hopes, deeds and disappointments; a day of new beginnings. We thank thee Lord for the love that unites us; for the peace accorded us this day, and for the hope with which we expect the morrow.

We have built here a temple of God, and it is the desire on the Ninetieth Anniversary to appeal to our members to continue to show evidence of serving Him by helping preserve this house of worship in good repair; to beautify it, and ever strive for further growth.

Our first step is to establish a Future Development Fund for the purpose of completing some of our planned projects such as the sealing and pointing up the exterior of our church which is needed now, interior painting, masonry repairs, wood paneling our chancel, all of which are a part of our Future Development.

Your sacrificial gifts will help reach a goal of \$10,000 by Reformation Sunday.

May we strive for nine, ninety or more dollars per family on this Ninetieth Anniversary?

90 Years of Statistics

Since we are on the Ridge, 253 new members have been received, (not counting Confirmation Classes) to Christmas, 1962.

Due to the elimination of the German Services, 131 left St. John's.

In the 90 years of St. John's with 8 Pastors and supplies, 1873-1962.

Children Baptized	3803
Boys and Girls Confirmed	2220
Couples Married	1347
Buried	2342

St. John's Present Membership

645 Confirmed
 857 Baptized
 508 Communing

**Senior Members of St. John's . . .
 90 years and over**

MRS. A. GUSTKE
 MRS. R. GEARING
 MR. O. PESTKE
 MRS. E. BURBOTT
 MRS. A. ZOLLWEG

**SONS OF
 ST. JOHN'S IN LUTHERAN MINISTRY**

REVEREND W. JUNGE
 REVEREND W. PESTKE
 REVEREND E. QUADE
 REVEREND ARTHUR HAIMERL
 REVEREND JOHN BARRINGER

ST. JOHN'S ORGANIZATIONS

- ALTAR GUILD
- BROTHERHOOD
- CHAPEL CHOIR
- DORCAS SOCIETY
- FELLOWSHIP CLUB
- INTERMEDIATE LUTHER LEAGUE
- JUNIOR CHOIR
- LUTHERAN CHURCH WOMEN
- SENIOR CHOIR
- SENIOR LUTHER LEAGUE
- SUNDAY SCHOOL
- YOUNG ADULT GROUP
- BOY SCOUTS

St. John's is honored to have had the following persons participate in this 90th anniversary year observance

On September 15

Rev. George F. Haag, our Pastor

On September 22

Rev. Robert Conner, Director of St. John's Home for the Aged.

On September 29

Rev. Alfred Beck, D.D., President of the New York Synod, Lutheran Church in America.

On October 6

Rev. John Barringer, a ministerial son of St. John's, presently Assistant Pastor of Edgewood Lutheran Church Chicago, Illinois.

On October 13

Rev. Arthur Haimerl, a ministerial son of St. John's, presently Associate Pastor of Reformation Lutheran Church, Rochester, N. Y.

On October 20

Mr. Clarence L. Neun, a former member of St. John's presently of New York City and current President of the New York Synod Lutheran Church Men.

On October 24

Rev. John A. W. Kirsch, former Pastor of St. John's, presently Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Oswego, N. Y.

On October 27

Rev. Theodore L. Trost, an interim Pastor for St. John's, presently on the staff of Colgate Rochester Divinity School.



THE CHURCH COUNCIL . . . 1963

EDWARD BESCHER	ROBERT PETERS
WILLIAM BEUTHLING	CHARLES REISIG
EDWARD BURBOTT	WILLIAM SCHAAF
OTTO FAILNER	EDWARD SCHLEGEL
CARL GRAUPMAN	MILTON SHEEHAN
REV. GEORGE HAAG	DONALD SPENCER
MAYNARD KNAPP	ARTHUR TAILLIE
HERBERT LENNOX	ROBERT YOUNG

OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION . . . 1963

<i>President</i>	CARL GRAUPMAN
<i>Vice-President</i>	WILLIAM SCHAAF
<i>Rec. Secretary</i>	ROBERT YOUNG
<i>Treasurer</i>	VIOLA KRAUSE
<i>Financial Secretary</i>	JOHN ADMEK
<i>Envelope Secretary</i>	ROBERT PETERS

**THE 90th ANNIVERSARY
COMMITTEE**

Mrs. Milton Sheehan, *Chairman*

Rev. George F. Haag

Mr. Ronald Barres

Mr. Joseph Bulavinetz

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Bescher

Mr. Edward Burbott

Mr. Frank Haimerl

Mr. and Mrs. William Beuthling

Mr. Carl Graupman

Mr. Clarence Eggert

Mr. Richard Kerbs

Mrs. Nelson Gibbs

Mr. Charles Kosbab

Mr. Kenneth Kosbab

Mr. Charles Reisig

Miss Katherine Rodway

Mrs. William J. Schlageter

Mr. William G. Schlageter

Mr. Milton Sheehan

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Taillie

Mr. Wilbur Stein

Mr. Robert Wittman

Mrs. Irving Wolff