

Blessings Remembered

God's Word, along with various images, will be presented on this devotional website page, along with occasional historical emphasis. "Blessings Remembered" will hopefully prompt not only memories of past Prince of Peace blessings, but of the many personal blessings from God in your lives. May you always trust in God's promised blessings, past, present, future and for all eternity.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8 ESV)

+ + +

... In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you. (Exodus 20:24b ESV)

In **September 1924**, a number of Lutheran families of Slovak descent, living in and near Fort Dodge, first organized themselves into a congregation. They chose the name "*The Slovak Evangelical Lutheran St. Peter and Paul Church.*"



GEORGE HRONEC

Pastor of the Slovak Ev. Lutheran
St. Peter and Paul Church 1924-1927

Immediately after organization, the congregation called their first Pastor, the Rev. George Hronec.

Rev. Hronec was a ministerial candidate from Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, and was ordained and installed September 16, 1924. The new congregation numbered 140 souls, 75 communicants, and 20 voting members.

A primary concern, in those formative days, was having an adequate place in which to worship. The Lord blessed the congregation with a plot of ground that was secured at 13th Avenue South and Twenty Sixth Street in the southeastern section of Fort Dodge. On this site, with much of the work being done by Pastor Hronec and other faithful members of the congregation, a brick church was constructed.



(A very early photo of the first church building: courtesy of Sue Macek)

This building was dedicated to the glory of God on **May 16, 1926**. The Rev. J. S. Ontko of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Rev. John Bertram, then of Fort Dodge, Iowa, delivered the dedication sermons.



(Enlargement of the stone plaque above the entrance doors)

Sadly, the blessed and joyous hearts of the congregation were soon to become heavy and distressed. The nearby Gypsum mines, in which most of the men were employed, installed new machinery that resulted in the laying off of hundreds of employees. Most of the families of the church were forced to leave Fort Dodge to seek employment elsewhere. Nevertheless, as difficult as those days were, by faith built firmly upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, the few remaining members steadfastly held to the blessings of God's Word and Sacraments,.

On November 20, 1927, eighteen months after the dedication of their new house of worship, Pastor Hronec preached his farewell sermon to the small congregation. He had accepted a call to the state of Ohio.

During the next two years, the few who remained were blessed through the faithful service of the Rev. John Bertram of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Fort Dodge, who conducted English services every other Sunday evening. Through his unselfish service, Pastor Bertram endeared himself to those whom he served. During those trying days, the congregation saw the number of families **decrease to five and then to one.**

Over time, a few families returned to Fort Dodge and the congregation. In February 1929, the church property was deeded to the Church Extension Board of what was then the Iowa District of the Missouri Synod. In September 1929, the Mission Board of the Iowa District placed E.M. Passow, a theological student, to serve this new mission congregation. With deep gratitude, the congregation was blessed in receiving the District's financial assistance until early 1943.

In their first meeting in September 1929, the former "*Slovak Evangelical Lutheran St. Peter and Paul Church*" was reorganized as an English congregation and adopted the name "*Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church*". A new constitution was approved, adopted, and signed by six voting members.

At the time of reorganization, the records revealed 40 souls and 17 communicant members. The congregation was further blessed in the following month, October 1929, when a Sunday School was organized with an enrollment of 21.

When E. M. Passow returned to Concordia Seminary - St. Louis to complete his studies, the Mission Board placed theological student Arthur Ansorge to serve Trinity, beginning in July 1930. During his year with Trinity, Arthur Ansorge was instrumental in organizing an active Ladies' Aid, yet another of God's blessings to the small congregation.

In the summer of 1931, together with the Mission Board of the Iowa District, the congregation was blessed to call theological candidate E. M. Passow as the first Pastor of the reorganized congregation. He was ordained into the ministry and installed as Pastor of *Trinity Lutheran Church* on August 9, 1931, by the Rev. John Bertram.

+ + +

Pleasant as memories of our past can be, such memories primarily serve to reinforce the truth that God's blessings to us never stop. For Jesus' sake, He desires, and truly promises, to bestow His blessings today. What's more, He holds abundant blessings for our future and for all eternity with Him. Remembering His blessings, we confidently trust that there was, and still remains, a reason that Prince of Peace and its blessed people exist presently this side of Heaven. God's promised blessings reach far beyond the walls of a church building. God desires that His blessings reach far beyond the people of the congregation who gather to worship our loving and merciful God. Working through His people, God also blesses those among whom we live and work, that they might also know, hold, remember and trust His wonderful blessings to all people in our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Remember your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old." (Psalm 25:6 ESV)

The words "blessed" and "blessing" were purposely used throughout this remembrance of a congregation in this local community that has received **99 years of blessings from the Lord**. For, God certainly remembers His people. By faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, He bestows His gloriously abundant blessings; graciously and freely, now and always.

(Text: Rev. Bill VanNostrand. Photos and information sources - courtesy of Sue Macek)