ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN MANCHESTER

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH

1894-1994

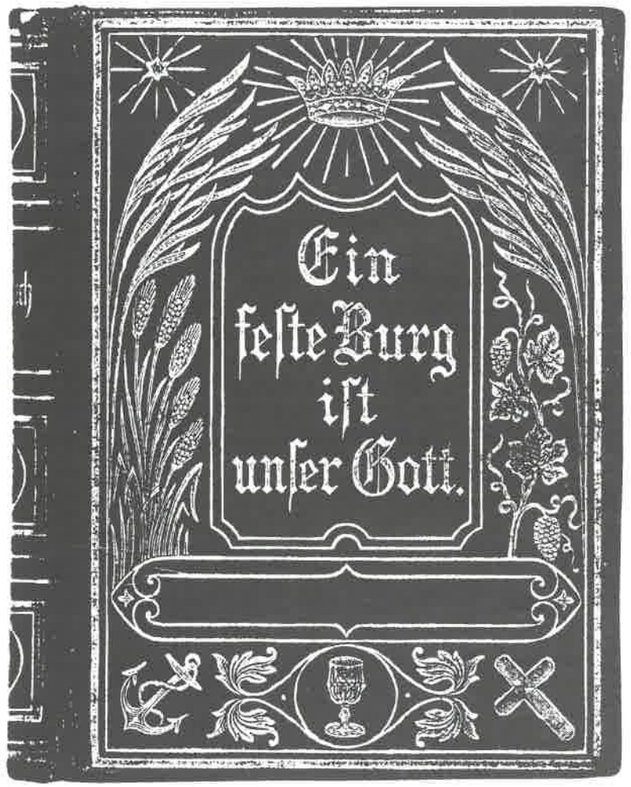
ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN MANCHESTER

BY

KIM-ERIC WILLIAMS

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH

1894-1994



Cover of an original hymnbook used at Concordia by Anna Winzler.
The Churchbook, "Kirchenbuch" of the General Council, copyright, 1906.
"A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface

Chapter One - Establishment of the Town

Chapter Two - Lutheran Origins

Chapter Three - Concordia is Born

Chapter Four - The Great War Years

Chapter Five - The Emergence of English

Chapter Six - A Modern Congregation

Chapter Seven - The New Church

Chapter Eight - Years of Adjustment

Chapter Nine - Years of Consolidation

Chapter Ten - The Present

Chapter Eleven - The Future

Bibliography

Series Pastorum

Centennial Hymn

Preface

One hundred years is not a long time in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ. Yet it is a long time for a family and for this particular family of God it marks an era of faithful witness and change from a small immigrant congregation to a metropolitan multi-ethnic parish that has a distinct profile in its community and as a member of the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

There are a number of heroes in this story whose names do not appear in this short re-telling of the "Concordia family history". They are the faithful worshippers who listened eagerly to the Word of God Sunday by Sunday and who yearned to commune with their Crucified and Risen Lord at his Table of Grace. In deeds of generosity and witness, they lived their faith and passed it on to this generation. There were innumberable members of the Church Council, Sunday School teachers, choir members, committee volunteers, and sacrificial stewards who prayed and worked so that this parish might thrive as a place of refreshment for the human spirit. Some of these saints are still among us, each with their story of faith to tell. Others have moved away to the far corners of this nation and some have joined the eternal anthem of the blessed in the Church Triumphant. Any true telling of the history of this parish must begin with a word of thanksgiving for them and their faithfulness.

This story is incomplete. There is more to be learned from our past then I have been able to investigate and discern. But the main facts are here and I believe that they are correct. Hopefully this small effort will ignite a sense of joy and pride in being a part of what God has done among us during the congregation's first one hundred years.

My thanks to Barbara Baker, Linda Hughes, Alfred Lange, Sr., and William F. "Bill" Gess for their comments, corrections, time, and enthusiasm for this project.

May the Concordia of tomorrow show the same unity of faith, love, and service that has marked our first one hundred years of witness.

Kim-Eric Williams,
Pastor
St. Barnabas, Apostle, 1994

ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN MANCHESTER

Chapter 1
Establishment of the Town

In the year of Our Lord, 1636, the Rev. Thomas Hooker, a Puritan minister from the Massachusetts Bay colony established the settlement of Hartford. He came to a lush and rich river valley that was only sparsely populated by native Americans. His aim was to establish a 'theocracy', a land where God would rule and all the inhabitants would be strict Christians following a moral discipline inspired by the 16th Century reforms of John Calvin. The colony would be organized like the mother country of England, but without the established Church of England. Instead, each parish would be centered on a Meeting House that would offer only Puritan worship - a lengthy sermon, readings from the Bible, prayers, and perhaps some sung psalms. Each parish would be supported by taxation and would have charge of the Protestant parochial school system and the maintenance of the roads. It was assumed that anyone moving to the colony of Connecticut would want to live in such an ideal society - and everyone was responsible for the taxes that supported the local Congregational Church. The Congregational Church was the established church in Connecticut until 1818 and, while other denominations could be organized, their members were not excused from paying for the support of the local Meeting House. It is no wonder that the traditional white New England meeting house still dominates most rural and suburban areas of the state. And although the Puritan parishes are no more, in their place the town governments have preserved a style of government that is fiercely independent and participatory.

By 1694 English settlers had moved across to the east side of the Great River and established East Hartford. In 1772 Orford Parish was established further east to shorten the distance that residents had to travel to the mandatory Sunday meetings. By 1779 what we know today as "Center Congregational Church" was functioning as the "Church of Christ in Orford." Today's Center Street was the main thoroughfare from west to east following the "Great Trail" of the Podunk Indians. It was an agricultural area until 1783 when William and Elisha Pitkin were given a state monopoly on glass making. The ruins of their factory are still to be seen at Parker and Porter Streets. The Pitkins monopoly was partial payment for gunpowder made during the Revolutionary War and sold to the state on credit. However, when the 25 year limit expired and with no local sand available, the industry dissolved. By 1808 the first post office was opened at Manchester Green, at that time still called "Orford Parish". It was not until 1823 that the name of Manchester was officially adopted by the town. It was an apt choice, for the town, like its English namesake, would become a center of manufacturing. At the time of its name change, Manchester counted a population of 1400. In 1860 it numbered 3294, in 1880 6462, and in 1900, 10,601.

The increase was a direct result of the mills and factories that were established on the small brooks of the town. The famous Cheney brothers (eight of them) were all involved with the silk mills that made Manchester world famous. The first of these was the Mt. Nebo Silk Manufacturing Company. It was built just west of the family homestead beside the Hop Brook in 1838. In 1847 Frank Cheney received a patent for a machine that doubled, twisted, and wound the silk thread. He also developed a process to utilize waste from the cocoons. In addition to thread, silk ribbon and broad goods for dresses was produced. The further invention of the Great Reel, to prevent snarling, and governmental tariff protection encouraged growth. By 1872 the Cheney Brothers had built new mills north of Hartford Road. Velvet



An immigrant Zipser family



Evangelical Church in Maldur, Slovakia



Zipser immigrants

looms were imported from Germany, modified, and made to produce velvet and plush. In 1860 some 600 workers were employed by the Cheneys. By 1920 (the peak year for the mills) there were 4,670.

The Cheneys were above-average mill owners. While being fiercely opposed to unions, they did pay slightly above the average wage. There was to be no tenement district. Sturdy single and double homes were constructed within walking distance of the mills. A water company was established, schools, and a library founded, and electricity connected. Cheney Hall was built in 1867 and dedicated by Horace Greeley as a venue for theatrical presentations and community events. While the Cheneys were not strong churchgoers, they did recognize the value of religious institutions and supported the founding of many new congregations for their workers. South Methodist Church had been established as early as 1790 and was the direct beneficiary of the Cheney's largesse. St. James Roman Catholic (1874), St. Mary's Episcopal (1883), Emanuel Lutheran (1881), Zion Lutheran (1884), and Concordia Lutheran (1894) all received free land for their church buildings. In fact, the Cheneys even went to Europe and directly solicited workers with the promise that the Northern Irish could worship according to their Anglican tradition and the Lutherans in their native Swedish or German. Already functioning north of the mill district were St. Bridget's Roman Catholic (1858), Second Congregational (1851), and North Methodist (1851).

Chapter 2
Lutheran Origins

The arrival of the industrial age in Connecticut created a serious labor shortage. In the 1850's the "Saxony Mill" in Rockville was already employing the famed Saxon weavers in its woolen mill. Word spread quickly in Europe about the new opportunities and by 1856 "The Lutheran Society" was formed in Rockville for German Lutheran immigrants. The first Lutheran congregation in the state was probably First Lutheran in Rockville, officially organized in 1866 after functioning since 1864. At about the same time, German Lutherans organized congregations in Meriden (St. John's, Missouri Synod) and Trinity, New Haven (ULCA). Swedish Lutherans organized Zion in Portland in 1874 and Danish Lutherans founded Our Savior's in Hartford in 1883.

In the 1880's, German Lutheran immigrants held services once a month in Cheney Hall in Manchester. Pastor N. Soergel from Rockville led them beginning in 1884. By 1890 Zion Lutheran Church was formally organized (February 9) with Pastor Otto Hanser of Rockville as the first called pastor. Services were to be held in the Swedish Lutheran Church (Emanuel). In 1891, Pastor Hanser was succeeded by Pastor John Horst, a recent graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. At the time, Zion like many congregations, was not a part of any national organization. The primary difficulty was in finding a pastor who had legitimate theological credentials. European Lutherans had no idea about denominational differences and only gradually caught onto the controversies that were dividing Lutheran church bodies. Pastor Horst was a dynamic and conservative Lutheran who led the small congregation in obtaining land from the Cheneys and laying the cornerstone for the building at Cooper and High Streets. He inserted the letters U.A.C. in the name of the church to indicate that it was a congregation that insisted on the "Unaltered Augsburg Confession." In March of 1893, only four months before the dedication of Zion, a serious division took lace in the congregation.

Pastor Horst refused church membership and voting rights to any man who belonged to any secret organization or fraternal order. As a result, a number of families withdrew and formed Concordia Lutheran Church with the assistance of Pastor Jaeger of Hartford. This was in some ways an unfortunate turn of events. It divided the German Lutherans into two small competing congregations and caused an aura of mistrust between them. On the other hand, the more liberal position of the Ministerium of New York was more congenial to the social and community involvements that were seen as normal for the people who formed Concordia. The choice of the name was ironic - the Latin for "harmony" - but perhaps it reflected for a wish for a type of harmony that was of a more open persuasion. In any event, it was also the name of the primary book of 16th century Lutheran confessional writings, the "Liber Concordia." Those who formed the new congregation wanted to make clear their Lutheran identity, but insisted that their unity of hearts and minds need not be confined by the seemingly capricious rules of the Missouri Synod.

Actually, the situation in Manchester was similar to that in many industrial communities in Connecticut. The German immigration often split between congregations that favored a more ecumenical and less moralistic approach and those that kept to strict rules of behavior. Thus in Rockville, First Lutheran was a part of the Ministerium of New York and Trinity Church (now ELCA) was a Missouri Synod congregation. In New Britain, St. John's was a part of the Ministerium of New York and St. Matthew's was Missouri Synod. In Hartford, Christ Church was Missouri and Grace Church (formed from a merger of Holy Trinity and St. Paul's) represented the more liberal Lutherans. The same pattern was repeated in Meriden and Southington.

Chapter 3
Concordia Is Born

A year after their withdrawal from Zion, representatives of twenty-four families officially organized the "German Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Congregation." The date was March 5, 1894. The charter members were:

Alfred Kirschsieper
Fred Montie
Fred Kashbohm
Henry Schuetz, Jr.
Thomas Hahn
Carl Schuetz
Martin Koppisch
William Priess
Fritz Hoepfner
John Lautenbach
John Zerver
Fred Bieber
William Kashbohm
Carl F. Schuetz
Fred Zerver
B.C. Apel
William Schmidke
Conrad Wehr
Charles Staye
Otto Mannel
Henry Custer
Louis Schmidt
Emil Kohls
Theodore Hoeffner

At the organizational meeting the first Church Board was elected: President: Fred Montie, Secretary: Emil Kohls, Treasurer: Fred Bieber. The Trustees were: John Lautenbach and John Zerver. The elders (deacons) were: Fritz Hoepfner and William Priess. Pastor Hugo Erdmann of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Hartford (Ministerium of New York, General



Original building — dedicated March 25, 1900

Council) was called as the first pastor. The first worship service was held on Wednesday, March 7, 1894 (week of Lent 4: Laetare) at St. Mary's Episcopal Church with Pastor Jaeger officiating. Services were held twice a month. An Altar Bible and communion vessels were donated by the newly formed Ladies Aid. A German language school for youth was begun in the home of Fritz Hoepfner. The pastor would take the trolley car to the last stop on Burnside Avenue and would be met by a member in a horse and buggy so that he could hold services in Manchester. The congregation continued to share a pastor with Holy Trinity Church until 1906, with occasional help from First Church in Rockville.

In 1896 Pastor Paul Lemke succeeded Pastor Erdmann and served for the next two years. During this time the congregation grew to 32 voting members (only confirmed men were counted) and incorporation papers were filed with the state in December, 1897. A Building Fund was established and the Cheney Brothers donated a plot of land (85' x 150') on the corner of Winter and Garden Streets.

In 1898 Pastor Lothar Brunke was called as the third pastor. The congregation had 81 communing members. When the Building Fund reached $1500, work on the church building commenced. The plans were drawn by a Hartford architect by the name of Erickson. It was to be a simple frame structure with a steeple over the front entrance, Gothic style windows, and an undercroft that included a small stage, kitchen, and hall for fellowship events and education. It would seat 160 and have a small balcony at the rear of the nave. Two local German contractors, Gustave Schreiber and Emil Hohenthal, were responsible for building the structure. The cornerstone was laid on August 13, 1899. It is still to be seen in our present structure in the educational wing near the southern doors. The church itself was dedicated on the Festival of the Annunciation, March 25, 1900. Behind the dark wooden altar was a dark wood rerodos that included a central statue of Christ. This white plaster sculpture was a reproduction of the famed altar statue over the altar of the Lutheran Cathedral of Our Lady in Copenhagen, Denmark. It is based on Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." It was an especially appropriate statue for a church of recent immigrants since it proclaimed a word of comfort, hope, refreshment, and welcome. Interestingly enough, the eyes of the Christ are looking downwards so that it is only after looking up from kneeling to receive the Eucharist that the worshipper met the gaze of the Risen Christ. When Bertil Thorvaldsen unveiled the original marble statue in Copenhagen's newly rebuilt Cathedral, it became a sensation and was copied all over the world. It became a special emblem of Lutheranism with its doctrinal assertion of the Real Presence of Christ. This statue now graces the entrance hall to the office wing of the 1961 structure.

In 1902 Zion Church officially joined the Missouri Synod and, in 1906, Concordia joined the Ministerium of New York upon the recommendation of Pastor Hartwig of First, Rockville. Now that both Concordia and Holy Trinity in Hartford were growing, it was time to separate the two congregations. Thus in 1906 Pastor G.A. (undoubtedly Gustave Adolf) von Nicelli became Concordia's first resident pastor. During his two year ministry, the debt on the building was eliminated.

Pastor Gustave Gille became the 5th shepherd of Concordia in 1908. The congregation experienced slow and steady growth.

Pastor Otto Rapport was called as the 6th pastor in 1909. In 1910 a large parsonage was constructed next to the church on Garden Street. There were now 108 voting members in the

congregation. The Ladies Aid had 100 members. The Youth Group had 50 participants. The Reformation Organization listed 25 members and the Sunday School had 90 children and nine teachers. In addition, a Saturday German language school enrolled 30 children.

The 1910 census shows that 5,000 of the 13,641 inhabitants of Manchester were of foreign birth. Gone forever was the small Yankee agricultural village. Manchester was now a multi-cultural industrial town that had a distinctive profile. The breakdown of the 1910 census shows these countries of birth:

Ireland	2,111
Germany	614
Sweden	599
Poland	361
Italy	293
England	209
Austria	203

The 614 Germans and the 203 from the Austro-Hungarian Empire were the primary constituency for the mission of Concordia and Zion.

A word needs to be said about the German-speaking people who immigrated from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These are the so-called 'Zipser' Germans. They lived in the southern foothills of the Carpathian Mountains in what is today the Republic of Slovakia. They coexisted with the dominant Roman Catholic Church for centuries and, like the Slovak Lutherans, were extremely loyal to the Lutheran Reformation. They had contacts with Hungarians, and Poles, in addition to other Germans. Their German was enriched by loan words from both Hungarian and Polish, and their surnames have a distinct Slavic form: Turek, Mrozak, Zwick, Demko, Sibrinsz, Noske, Wittkofske, Stavnitsky, and Winzler. Approximately two-thirds of the members of the congregation had Zipser origins. They also brought the baking traditions of Eastern Europe and their excellent pastries are still eagerly sought by visitors to Concordia's coffee hours. Other Zipser settlers helped found St. Paul's Church in Torrington and the Missouri Synod congregation in rural New Hartford. A still-existing Zipser Social Club testifies to the strength of this ethnic group.

Chapter 4
The Great War Years

The string of many short pastorates was finally broken with the call of Pastor Hermann Stippich as the seventh pastor of the congregation in 1914. He was born in Kassel, Germany and educated at the Kropp Seminary in Schleswig-Holstein. He was a talented musician and married the daughter of the rector of the seminary. He immigrated first to Saskatchewan, Canada and then served St. Matthew's (now Avon) in Collinsville, Connecticut. From Collinsville he was called to Manchester. He remained in Manchester for ten years. His son, Gunther J. Stippich, was for many years the only member of the congregation to be ordained. He graduated from Wagner College in Staten Island in 1936 and received his B.D. from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1939. Gunther Stippich first served St. Matthew's in New York City, then Emanuel in Brooklyn, New York and then the famous old St. Michael's in Germantown/Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His last pastorate was at St. John's,



Pastor Hugo Erdmann and Confirmation Class of 1896



Interior of original building, 25th Anniversary, June 2, 1918

Reading, Pennsylvania. He received an S.T.M. degree and is now living in retirement in Wernersville, Pennsylvania. He continued to preach in the German language during his entire ministry and was noted for his musical ability. His was indeed a distinguished ministry in the Church.

Pastor Hermann Stippich introduced the "Common Service Book" as the Sunday Liturgy. This was the hymnal approved by the Ministerium of New York and its General Council in 1888. In its German and English versions, this remained the worship resource for the congregation from 1915 until 1959. The dues system of raising funds was replaced by the duplex envelope system, one part of the offering to be used for local expenses and the other part to be sent to the Synod for its mission work. Also in 1917, a two-manual Pipe Organ (valued at $1200), was dedicated. Concordia had already begun developing its reputation as a 'Singing Church.' Pastor Stippich was a promoter of good church music. He encouraged Frederic Werner to be a musician and Fred's distinguished service as organist encouraged a tradition of excellence that has persisted to the present. This same year brought Concordia into membership in the United Lutheran Church in America. The ULCA was a merger of the General Council, General Synod, and the United Synod of the South and was the largest Lutheran denomination in the country.

On June 2, 1918 the Silver Anniversary of the congregation's separation from Zion Church was celebrated with the dedication of a bell for the steeple. It was a gift that "was to be heard, not seen". The 3 p.m. festival service on this first Sunday after Trinity featured the church orchestra and a sermon by The Rev. Dr. G. C. Berkemeier of Mt. Vernon, New York. That evening at 7:45 a Vesper Service was held with the sermon by Pastor Seidenstuecker of St. Paul's Church, Torrington, Connecticut. Pastor Stippich challenged the congregation to look, "Gratefully backward! Courageously forward! With Faith upward". There was much to be grateful for: the congregation has grown by 400% since its organization and numbered 108 voting members (men).

The anti-German hysteria of the First World War was especially difficult for the parishioners of Zion and Concordia. The German language was dropped from the high school and no German music was to be played. A frightening incident occurred when a gang of ruffians took the pastor bodily out of the parsonage and made him kneel and kiss the American flag. When the armistice was announced, all the church bells in the town were rung to celebrate the defeat of the "Huns." It is hard to imagine how the members of Concordia felt as they rang the bell that had just been placed in the steeple to mark the Silver Anniversary of the congregation's separation from Zion. Pastor Stippich was called to Immanuel, Seymour, Connecticut (now Oxford). With the difficulties of the Depression, he returned to Northern Germany, taking a parish in Hamburg where his uncle was Landesbischof. Gunther remained in the States. Walter, who had been born in Manchester, was killed fighting with the defending forces during the Normandy invasion.

Chapter 5
The Emergence of English

A new era began with the call of Pastor Herman O. Weber in 1924 from St. John's Lutheran in Union City, New Jersey. He was born in Posen, Germany, April 9, 1870. The pressure to use English was intense as the political situation proclaimed an end to "hyphenated Americans." In

1926 the first English language confirmation instruction was offered as an alternative to German. In the same year it was necessary to publish the congregation's constitution in both German and English. By 1930 regular English worship was also provided. In 1928 the plain glass windows were replaced by stained glass in the greenish style of the day. The fourteen windows were given as memorials. Pastor Weber's death while in office will probably remain a subject for debate. As members waited in the nave for Lenten Vespers to begin, they began to suspect trouble. Upon investigation they found the pastor (in the garage) dead from carbon monoxide poisoning. Was it an accident? He was apparently known for being absentminded. Were there other family circumstances that could have caused him to be despondent? The truth of the situation will never be known. But it is certain that he was a popular shepherd and that the congregation was deeply shocked by his sudden and untimely death. His wife is especially remembered for her work with the Sunday School and youth of the church.

In 1933 Pastor Karl Richter became the ninth pastor of Concordia and stayed the longest of any pastor during the first century of the congregation. He was presumably the first American-born pastor. He grew up in Ionia, Michigan. Ordained in 1904, he served St. Luke's, New Rochelle and in Buffalo, New York. He served for seventeen years and retired due to ill health in 1950. In 1937 a new Kilgren Pipe Organ was dedicated and it was said that 700 people were present for the dedication. Obviously someone had a lively imagination since the church had seating for only 160! Perhaps it just seemed like seven hundred.

In 1939 the 45th Anniversary of the congregation was celebrated with a 10:00 a.m. service in English with the sermon by the second called pastor, Paul Lemke, and an 11:15 a.m. German service led by Pastor Richter. An afternoon service at 3:30 p.m. featured a sermon by Dr. Paul Kirsch, Assistant Secretary, Board of American Missions of the ULCA, followed by a State Youth and Sunday School Rally. The Rally was led by Dr. C.H.B. Lewis, Associate Secretary, parish and Church School Board, ULCA. Thus two national officials came to Manchester on the same day. A 5:30 p.m. organ recital provided by Fred Werner, Concordia's organist, was followed by a dinner served to 200 guests. The festive day concluded with a Vesper Service at 7:00 p.m. with a sermon by Dr. Lewis. This day was noted as the "biggest and busiest day in Concordia's history."

Pastor Lemke's closing words on that occasion were memorable: "We are living in difficult times. Forty-five years ago, the Spirit of God prevailed over all the land. Now there are thousands of indifferent people, enemies of the Church of Christ, atheists working to drive Christ out of the hearts of people. Some Christians have fear. Have no doubts, no despair, regarding the future, because the living Almighty God lives through the Spirit in His Church. Remember His promise, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against her."

In 1939 a Building Fund was established for projected repairs as the mortgage on the parsonage was paid in full. In 1940 an oil burner and a new floor were placed in the church basement. Finally in 1942, in the midst of another anti-German World War, the word "German" was dropped from the name of the congregation. Lest there be any doubt about their loyalty, an American flag was placed in the chancel and as the war progressed, five gold stars were displayed for the five Concordia sons who died in the Second World War: Walter Adamy, Vincent Diana, Michael Haberern, Henry Bensche, and John E. Winzler.

In 1943 a new roof was put on the church and a new exit was placed off the chancel to comply with fire regulations. In 1945 the congregation honored Fred Werner for 25 years of service as organist. An unusual part of the Concordia story is that another organist, David Almond



Ladies Aid at the Parsonage, Garden St. with Pastor Stippich



Pastor G. A. Von Nicelli



Pastor Hermann Stippich

(1963-1990), also served more than 25 years. It is a testimonial to the good working conditions and deep love of music in the congregation when organists wish to remain with low salaries and serve for such significant tenures.

The 50th Anniversary of the congregation was celebrated on October 8, 1944. The Confession was led by Pastor K. O. Klette of Rockville and the sermon was given by Pastor George Hagedorn of Meriden. The festive celebration of 1939 was not repeated, but a simpler anniversary seemed appropriate as the Second World War neared its conclusion.

Only in 1945 did women receive the right to vote at congregational meetings. Women gradually assumed more and more leadership roles in the congregation. By the Centennial year, Linda Cherry had been elected "Co-President" of the Council and women made up a majority of the members. In 1947 repairs were made to the church foundation.

Chapter 6
A Modern Congregation

The modern era began in 1950 with the call of Pastor Erich O. Brandt from Emanuel Church in Webster, New York. Pastor Brandt was born in Preston, Ontario, but grew up in Albany and Pittsford, New York as the son of a pastor. He graduated from Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio and from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia in 1939. When he arrived, there were no committees and practically no meetings. In addition, the congregation had become divided because of the autocratic manner of Pastor Richter. Pastor Brandt, as the 10th shepherd of Concordia, went to work healing the congregation and bringing the structure into the modern age. An Altar Guild was started with the help of the Ladies Aid. A Luther League was started and flourished. A summer Vacation Bible School was held with Emanuel Lutheran for the first time in 1951. A married couples group, the "We Two Group", was started. In 1952 for the first time, Concordia paid 100% of its benevolence commitment to the Synod and ULCA. In the same year on February 22nd "Concordia Chimes", Volume I, No. 1, was issued. It was typed by the pastor and published five times a year. Pastor Brandt had a strong interest in education and chaired the synod's Christian Education Committee. He encouraged Sunday School teachers to deepen their skills especially by attending the Silver Bay Summer School at Lake George, New York. Concordia was the first congregation in New England to host a team of Caravaners to work with the Luther League to improve its work.

In 1953 the congregation purchased a new eight room parsonage for $29,000 at 54 Parker Street, across from the Pitkin farm in the eastern part of town. The old parsonage at 21 Garden Street was converted into a Parish House. It had eleven rooms which were made into 9 classrooms, a church office, and a nursery. The renovation was completed for $30,000 by church member, Fred Knofla and dedicated on September 27, 1953. By 1954 the Parish House facilities had made possible a 50% increase in the Sunday School. One Luther Leaguer, Martha Diana, had become State Luther League President. She later married Pastor William DeHeyman and served with him in various parishes in Pennsylvania. Ernest Ralph Walek, another active youth, graduated from UConn in 1958 and from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 1961. He was the second member of the congregation to graduate from seminary and be ordained. He served as Assistant Pastor at Atonement in Wyomissing, Pennsylvania and resigned after a short ministry. Youth regularly

attended the National Youth Conventions in Miami, Ohio, and Kansas City. Clearly, the Holy Spirit was stirring the work of the church at Concordia.

A 1954 Parish Education Survey conducted by Pastor Lawrence Reese of the ULCA National Office pointed out the lack of adult education, but complimented the congregation on its Parish House and staff. He said "I wish we had 1000 like them in our Church."

The 60th Anniversary of the congregation was celebrated with a banquet on Saturday, October 23rd at South Methodist Church with the speaker being The Rev. Dr. Conrad Reisch, former president of the New England Conference of the ULCA and pastor of St. Paul's, Bridgeport. On Sunday, the President, The Rev. Dr. Frederick R. Knubel (Bishop) of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, was the guest preacher.

In 1955 a successful Confirmation Reunion was held preceded by an Every Member Visitation that involved a large group of volunteer visitors.

Pastor Robert Boettger was Concordia's guest missioner in June, 1956 for a five-night preaching and evangelism mission. As a result of this program, the baptized role of members climbed to 658 (an increase of 49) and the confirmed roll to 511 (an increase of 39).

In 1956 the Latvian Lutheran congregation began to use the Concordia facilities on Sunday afternoons and the long history of mutual support between the two congregations developed from that sharing of facilities.

By 1957, double services were necessary because of an increase in attendance of about 28 per week. A Home Department was organized to minister to the shut-in elderly members.

Acting on a tip brought home by the pastor's daughter, Barbara, the congregation learned of the intended sale of the 5.5 acre Pitkin farm. The site was purchased quickly after a standing unanimous vote of the congregation on June 24, 1957 following the recommendation of the Future Needs Committee. It had been a real farm with cows grazing on the property when the Parker Street parsonage was purchased. Mr. Pitkin preferred to sell it to the church so that the property would not be divided. On July 13, 1958 an outdoor dedicatory service was held at the Pitkin property thanking God for his providence and looking hopefully to the future. The purchase price had been $45,000.

Another Preaching Mission in June, 1957 saw, 'Son of the Congregation', Pastor Gunther J. Stippich, lead a week of sermons that increased the membership of the congregation. The summer Vacation Bible School with Emanuel that year reached an enrollment of 70 with 19 teachers.

The first enlargement of the staff occurred in 1958 when Mrs. Elsie Werner became the Parish Secretary, a position she fulfilled with distinction and very little salary until 1988!

On Easter Sunday, April 6, 1958, the new red "Service Book and Hymnal" was dedicated and used for the first time. New for the first time both Emanuel and Concordia used the same worship resource and would be in the same denomination with the 1962 merger that formed the Lutheran Church in America.



Pastor Herman Weber



Young Peoples' Society
at Cheney Hall, 1927



Choir Concert, May 20, 1940

Pastor Brandt, having healed and built up the congregation and led it to the brink of a building campaign, felt that his work was accomplished and resigned in 1959 to accept a call to the large St. John's Church in New Britain as Associate Pastor specializing in Parish Education. Pastor Brandt is remembered as a teacher, a kind and gentle man whose humor was infectious. He had brought Concordia to new life and made it a vital part of the ministry of the synod and the whole church. In addition to serving on the Synod's Parish Education Committee, he also served on the Board of the Lutheran Home in Southbury.

Chapter 7
The New Church

In 1959, the eleventh shepherd to serve Concordia, Pastor Kaiser, was called from St. Michael's, Camillus, New York. He was a powerhouse of energy and enthusiasm. A native of New Haven, he had graduated from Wagner College on Staten Island, New York and the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He was uniquely gifted as a fund raiser, visitor, and liturgical theologian.

Soon after his arrival, the Fastnacht tradition began as Concordians of all ages gathered for a pre-Lenten dinner and entertainment. Later beer was served from kegs, an "Oompah" band played, and various members showed their talents in a play or talent show. It became an annual event with wide community participation and has persisted for thirty-five years.

In 1959 Concordia counted 455 communicants and a Sunday School enrollment of 193. The land was available and the congregation was ready to meet the challenge of a new structure. The old building had served Concordia well, but was clearly inadequate for the size and vision that the congregation held. There was very little space in the fellowship hall, no off-street parking, no administrative or study space. The Sunday School was cramped into every available part of the church and parish house. In addition, the building was located in the shadow of Emanuel Lutheran Church. With Emanuel's new parish house recently completed and its spire being the highest steeple in the town, Concordia was in a clearly inferior position. The merger of 1962 would unite the national church bodies of Concordia and Emanuel (ULCA and Augustana) so that two churches of the same denomination would be beside each other.

The town had also changed remarkably since the end of the Second World War. The silk industry had expired and the mills closed. The major employers were the "Aircraft" - Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford that built jet engines - and the insurance companies in Hartford. Since Manchester is only ten miles east of Hartford, it became a suburb. It was an automobile age with the development of the Manchester Parkade, the first mall in the area, and decent roads that allowed people to shop at G. Fox and Sage Allen in downtown Hartford. This meant major changes for the neighborhood of the old church building. People no longer worked in the silk mills, walked to church, and shopped on Main Street. People moved out of town and lived in Vernon, South Windsor, Coventry, and Bolton.

Manchester also shared in the industrial and suburban boom of the fifties. In 1920 the population was 18,370; in 1950 it was 34,114; in 1960 it was 42,102. Concordia owned land in the eastern end of Manchester where growth was expected and the only way forward was with a Building Campaign. Thus, just nine months after he arrived, 'Pastor Paul', was in the midst of a "Venture in Faith" campaign for a new church home for Concordia. Local architect Arnold

Lawrence sketched a large project that would safely accommodate the growing church and allow it to quadruple in size. Its estimated cost was to be $420,000. The sale of the old church and Parish House was expected to net $45,000, leaving $375,000 to be raised and financed. A Manchester contractor, Squillacote Builders, Inc., was awarded the contract on November 17, 1960. The groundbreaking was held on Thanksgiving Day, November 24th.

The new building was to seat 352 in the nave and 38 in the choir balcony. The two-story educational wing provided 10 classrooms plus a Superintendent's Office on the lower level, and on the second floor a large social hall where dinners for 300 could be served. An institutional kitchen and a stage were also on the upper level. The large acreage provided for ample off-street parking, room for recreation, and even space for a contemplated new parsonage on the Parker Street side.

The congregation rose to the challenge. It was, as Pastor Paul said, "the miracle of Manchester." Less funds were realized from the sale of the old church and parish house than were anticipated, yet the congregation was pleased to sell them to the Latvian Lutheran congregation. Despite escalating costs, the project was not diminished or built in stages. It was built at once and was ready for dedication on October 8, 1961. A festive procession on Pitkin Street, bringing in the communion vessels and Bible, provided drama for the move of the people from one house of worship to another. The sermon was given by the President of the Synod of New York and New England, The Rev. Dr. Alfred Beck.

On the day of dedication, the parking lot was not complete, nor were the faceted glass windows in place. Pale temporary glass filled the windows until the contemplated ones of today were donated. The extensive plan for an outdoor worship garden and landscaping was saved as a future project.

Obvious to everyone was the churchly character of the building with its tall modernistic spire and Luther emblem in mosaic tile over the front door. A large impressive altar of Italian dark red marble placed against a chancel wall of off-white marble called the worshippers to the presence of God. An Oberrammergau crucifix and six tall candles proclaimed the presence of the Loving God who gave his Son so that the world might live and believe. A new 20 rank Austin pipe organ was still under construction and would be ready for dedication on December 17th. A temporary, used reed organ, purchased for the occasion, led the singing augmented by trumpets in the balcony. If any day was the greatest day in Concordia's history, it was this day of dedication. As Pastor Brandt remarked, "It was the most thrilling service I have attended. God has been at work among Concordia's people in a wonderful way."

It was a revelation when the new organ revealed the exquisite accoustics of the building. Organist Ivan Beckwith had championed the purchase of an authentic instrument. The specifications for the organ, (Opus 2373) constructed by the Austin Organ Company of Hartford were:

<u>Pedal</u>
Principal 16'
Viola 16'
Gedeckt 16'
Octave 8'
Rohr Flote 8'
swell
Fifteenth 4'

<u>Swell</u>
Rohr Flote 8'
Viola 8'
Voix Celeste 8'
Principal 4'
Koppel Flote 4'
Block Flote 2'



Pastor Karl Richter and Confirmation Class of 1943



Pastor Erich O. Brandt



The second Parsonage
54 Parker St.

Pedal		Swell
Rausch Quint II		Qunit 1 1/3'
Trompette 16'		Plein Jen III
Krumm Horn 4'		Trompette 8'
Great		Hautbois 4'
	Great	
Principal 8'		Dolce 8'
Octave 4'		Dolce Celeste 8'
Fifteenth 2		Spitz Flote 4''
Fourniture III		Krumm Horn 8'
Boudon 8'		

Pastor Paul was a talented liturgist and wanted only the best for worship. He introduced the red "Service Book and Hymnal" and increased the frequency of celebrating the complete Communion Liturgy. he introduced the historic vestments of alb, chasuble, and stole as one of the first New England Lutheran churches to restore the ancient ecumenical usage of the church. The male only acolyte corps was organized as the "Knights of St. John". In the new building a baptistry was provided off the narthex to remind people of their Baptism as they came in the major entrance. The old white marble baptismal font was the only worship item brought from the old church building and continues to witness to the continuity of the church's mandate to make disciples of all peoples.

The move to the new building was also important in that it removed once and for all the old ethnic identity of the congregation. It was no longer the "German Church", but it was Concordia Lutheran Church with a ministry to all the people of Manchester. Indeed the congregation continued to grow. In 1961 the parish listed 790 baptized and 522 communing members. By 1966 when Pastor Paul resigned there were 1127 baptized and 550 communicants. In 1960 "The Fishermen" came into existence. Named for Peter, James, and Andrew they were a group that each month contacted perspective and lapsed members. A month after the new building was erected, Barbara Baker became the first Parish Worker and continues in that position today (1994). At first she was paid only enough to be insured, but gradually she received a token salary that never took account of her full-time duties. Barbara was born and brought up in Belleville, New Jersey. She came to Hartford to work first for the Institute of Living and then for Pratt and Whitney. She graduated from UConn in 1957 with a degree in psychology and began to attend church with her former work associate Elsie Jubinville. She had little church background, but was attracted by the music and chanting at Concordia. After a series of classes with the Pastor she joined the congregation.

Any history of Concordia would be incomplete without some mention of Lena Schubert. She was the sexton for the new building and was responsible for coordinating the Altar Guild for over thirty years. She always had a ready smile and hug for everyone and her ministry of welcome made Concordia known for its hospitality. Indeed, the new facility was the finest in the town and the congregation generously shared it with other churches and non-profit groups. Lena was always on hand to see that nothing was lost and had a knack for labeling anything that stood still. Her handwritten signs with creative spelling became legendary. She was the first woman elected to the Church Council with the unenviable task of bringing a woman's viewpoint to 14 men and the pastor. The large sterling chalice used every Sunday was given

in her memory. It is an exact replica of a medieval chalice used in the Lutheran Church of Iceland.

In 1962 the Lutheran Church in America was founded with our parent body, the ULCA providing more than 2 million of the 3 million members in what was also the largest Lutheran denomination in North America. The Service Book and Hymnal had provided a common worship resource for the uniting bodies and in New England, the formation of the New England Synod with headquarters in Boston, gave us a strong regional jurisdiction composed of 141 churches. We continued to relate to church headquarters in New York and to the seminary in Philadelphia, but changed allegiances from Wagner College in Staten Island to Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey. We gained Camp Calumet from the Augustana Church's New England Conference and now had a home for the aged in Middletown as well as Southbury. It was an easy merger, welcomed by everyone, and strengthened our mission in many ways.

On May 3, 1964 the congregation voted to purchase a large parsonage (37 Pitkin Street) diagonally across from the church. Since Pastor Paul had five children and the price was so low, the house was purchased. It had 5 bedrooms and servants' quarters on the third floor; it was truly palatial. On October 10-11 the congregation marked its 70th Anniversary. There was a roast beef dinner with entertainment on Saturday night that was attended by 425 people. The Sunday afternoon service featured a sermon by the Rev. Dr. O. Karl Olander, President (Bishop) of the New England Synod, LCA. The theme for the celebration was, "From Thy Hand".

On November 6, 1963 David Almond, the son of a former South Methodist Church minister, became the organist/choirmaster. David was attracted to the Lutheran church because of its musical traditions and was a perfectionist. Only excellence was good enough for the worship of God as he continually pointed out that the texts must convey the faith. He brought higher standards than had ever been attempted and built a tradition of choral excellence that was the envy of most churches in the state. An "Abendmusik" series featured the very best in the choral repertoire. One of the largest attendances in the history of the parish was seen for the presentation of the "St. John Passion" by J.S. Bach - a joint performance of Concordia and St. Mary's Episcopal Church on March 24, 1978.

Having exhausted himself with the building and the program, Pastor Paul resigned in 1966. He now resides in Hamden and serves as a supply preacher in various Lutheran parishes while working full time for the Human Services Department of the City of New Haven. He had single-handedly transformed the congregation at great personal cost to himself and his family. His enthusiasm for the Gospel and its power to change people remains as a legacy in the congregation. It is no wonder that the Social Hall of the building is known as "Kaiser Hall."

Chapter 8
Years of Adjustment

The twelfth pastor to serve Concordia was Joseph E. Bourret who was called from Christ the King in Windsor after having served Gethsemane, Manchester, New Hampshire. He began his ministry here in 1966. Pastor Bourret was the first pastor of non-German background to serve Concordia. He was of French and Swedish parentage from Cranston, Rhode Island. He graduated from Bethany College in Lindsborg, KS and from Augustana Theological Seminary



Pastor Paul Kaiser and
acolyte Tim Badger



Plan of the new church



Groundbreaking for new church
Thanksgiving Day, 1960



The Altar

(now LSTC) in Rock Island, Illinois. He was a fine preacher, thinker, and stewardship promoter. He also loved the worship of the church and built on the churchly traditions that Pastor Kaiser had introduced. Lay deacons were introduced at Concordia on Pentecost, 1970 when Mark Winzler assisted Pastor Bourret. At first they read a lesson and helped with the distribution of Communion. When the LBW was introduced, they received additional parts of the liturgy. Following LCA recommendations, First Communion was separated from Confirmation and Communion was now offered at 5th grade or earlier at parental request. His financial expertise was needed since the congregation paid off its mortgage in 12 years - a remarkable feat. The Lutheran Laymen's League assisted the congregation in paying off its building debt from 1969-1972. The burning of the mortgage took place on June 18, 1972 and the ashes were placed in the reliquary of the marble altar. At the same time, the program needed strengthening. The first Assistant Pastor, Louis E. Bauer, Jr., was called in 1967. He was a graduate of Valparaiso University in Indiana and Yale Divinity School. A native of Ohio, he was ordained at Concordia on September 10, 1967. This was the first ordination ever witnessed here. The Rev. Dr. Henry Horn of University Lutheran Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts officiated on behalf of President Olander of the New England Synod, LCA. Pastor Bauer was an intellectual, a political liberal, and was very popular with the youth. The Concordia Public Affairs Series attracted large numbers of people as the racial, social, and drug problems of the town were openly discussed. After three and one-half years he resigned to become pastor of St. Paul's in Gloucester, Massachusetts. He later served an internship at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C., a congregation in Knoxville, Tennessee and presently serves the "town and gown" parish of Holy Trinity in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

While some thought had been given to a parochial school, it was decided to put off the project. A cooperative babysitting arrangement was founded in 1968. Eventually this became the Concordia Nursery School.

In 1969 Concordia celebrated its 75th Anniversary. A campaign to pay off the debt was launched and a number of events were celebrated under the theme "Fulfilled with thy hand". A Confirmation Reunion was held on May 4th with the sermon by former pastor Erich O. Brandt. A renewal of Marriage Vows was observed on June 14th. An ecumenical service was held on August 3rd with the President of the New England Synod, LCA, The Rev. Dr. O. Karl Olander sharing the service with the Most Rev. Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston. It was a sensation in Manchester. Every seat was taken since it was soon after Vatican II and Cardinal Cushing was known all over the world. He had officiated at the funeral of John Fitzgerald Kennedy and was known for his support for ecumenical dialogue. Oddly enough both Dr. Olander and Cardinal Cushing were tall and white-haired. In their cassocks, they looked like brothers, as indeed in the one faith they were. The year culminated with a banquet in Kaiser Hall on October 11th that featured surprise entertainment and a Festive Service on Sunday afternoon, October 12th at which Pastor Guenther Stippich of Reading, Pennsylvania preached.

Pastor Bourret felt that the parsonage on Pitkin Street was too large and that too much repair was going to be needed to make it liveable. He suggested that the house be sold, part of the proceeds going to help pay off the building debt and the rest being put into a housing allowance. At that time it was being recognized that pastors needed to have some equity before retirement and more and more congregations were "going out of the parsonage business." This proposal was accepted and Pastor Bourret built his own home at 23 Fleming Road where he has resided since 1972. Pastor Bourret resigned in 1972 and with his deep resonant voice worked as a commercial radio announcer on WTIC. He then served interim

pastorates at S. John's, New Britain, Zion, Portland, and Bethesda, New Haven, and finally retired in 1994.

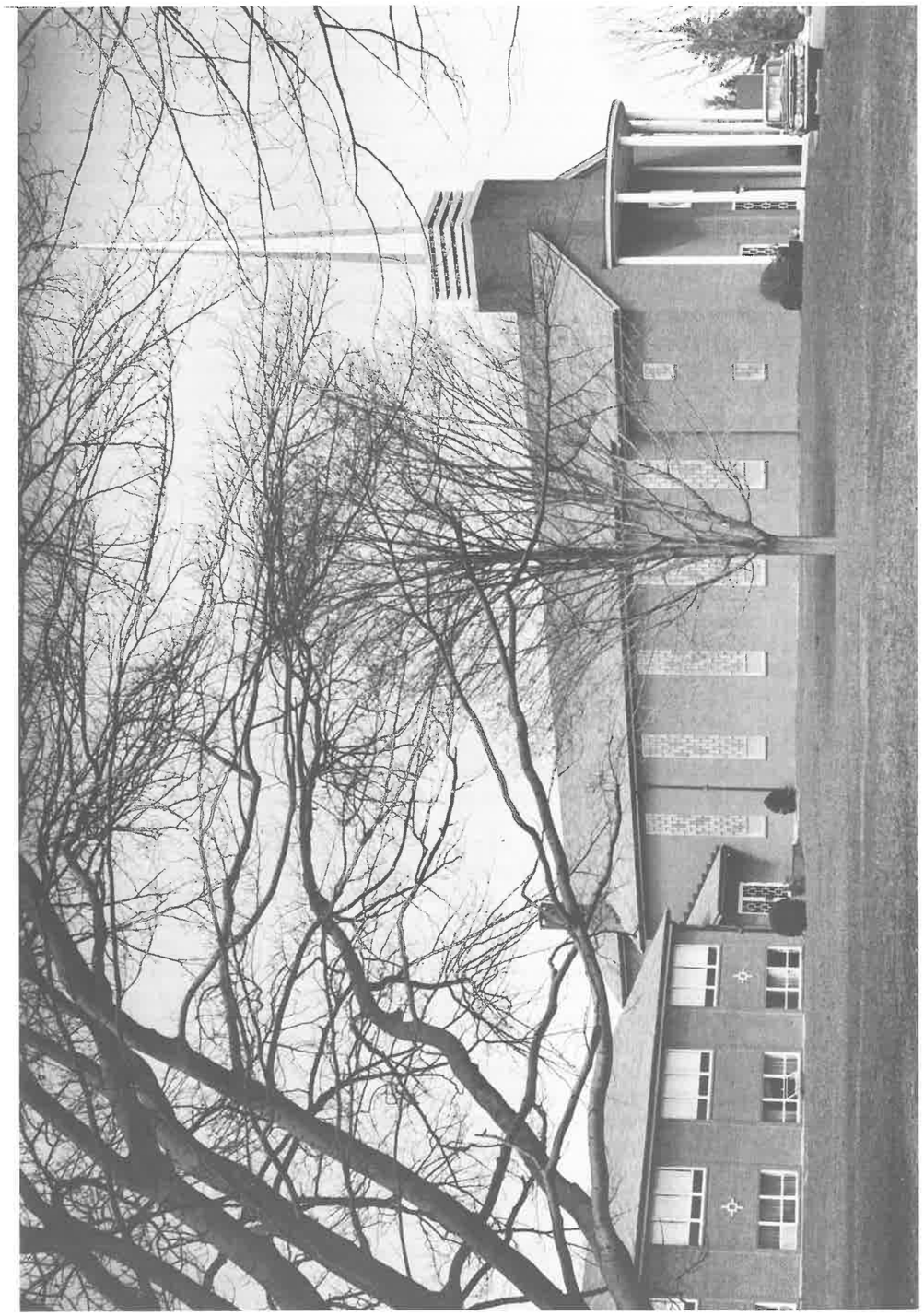
Chapter 9
Years of Consolidation

The 13th pastor of Concordia was Burton D. Strand - called from St. Mark's in Woonsocket, Rhode Island and installed on May 20, 1973. Pastor Strand was a native of Jamestown, New York and had graduated from Augustana College and Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois. The Strands bought a home in Redwood Farms and resided at 141 Ralph Road. After Pastor Bauer left it was necessary to look for a second pastor since the membership stood at 858 baptized and 435 communing. This search was complete when David W. Rinas accepted the call to become "Co-Pastor." He was installed on November 3, 1974. Pastor David was known for his geniality and his work with youth. His marriage at the church will long be remembered. He was the only pastor to be married at Concordia. He resigned on August 14, 1977 to take the Christas Victor/Kingshill parish on St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands. He later returned to Connecticut and served Trinity, Shelton and now is pastor at Prince of Peace in Augusta, Maine.

His place was taken by Pastor David B. Stacy who was ordained and installed as "Associate Pastor" at Concordia on September 25, 1977. This was the second ordination that took place at Concordia. Pastor Stacy was known for his work in social ministry and helped the congregation minister to several families of Indo-Chinese refugees. He was a native of Ohio and a graduate of Wittenberg University and Hamma School of Theology in Springfield, Ohio (Hamma is now a part of Trinity Seminary in Columbus).

Pastor Stacy lived at 238 Parker Street. The congregation was not able to keep up with the spiraling costs of supporting two pastors, and Pastor Stacy resigned on December 13, 1981 having accepted a call to Gloria Dei in Providence, Rhode Island.

The thirteen years of Pastor Strand's ministry were years of consolidation. The large membership gains during the time of Pastor Kaiser were partly based on his charismatic personality and the excitement of the new church. When the bills became due with Pastor Bourret, some of these members fell away. Pastor Strand was able to retain the churchly traditions that he had inherited and build upon them. The Eucharist was now served at both services on Sundays. The music and education programs were strengthened, especially when the educational hour (the so-called Christian Growth Hour) was placed between the services. The Lutheran Book of Worship was introduced in 1978. The familiar 'Green Book' was used with almost all of its possibilities. The ecumenical version of the Lord's Prayer was used for public worship and a large corps of deacons served as "Assisting Ministers." The Worship and Music Committee took over responsibility for picking the hymns and enlarged the congregation's repertoire significantly. Pastor Strand saw the need for a lounge and had the parlor furnished as the "Church Room." Finally the church had a place for group meetings and for fellowship before and after the services. The Church Room even became a place for luncheons to be served after funerals and began to see service as the busiest room in the building with meetings almost every night. It has only rarely been used as a "Cry Room" despite the window into the chancel.



1961 — Concordia Lutheran Church

A major project that had been anticipated since the day of dedication was the provision of new windows for the chancel and nave. Beginning in 1973, the Willet Company of Philadelphia was engaged to install a series of faceted glass windows. These are not stained glass, but rather consist of large chunks of glass that are placed in an epoxy resin to form a mosaic-like pattern. It is a form of glass that especially suits modern church architecture. The first windows to be installed were over the chancel and, with their dominant blues and shimmering faceted surfaces, they transformed the entire altar area. In short order all of the other windows were donated, providing the church with one of the outstanding collections of faceted glass anywhere in New England. The nave windows are notable for their presentation of the figures in black epoxy rather than glass, giving the figures, such as Mary, Jesus on the Cross, and the angels of the Resurrection in non-racial outlines. In testimony to the strengths of the congregation, one window is dedicated to Church Music (including Pope Gregory the Great, J.S. Bach, and Henrich Schuetz) and one to Matthew 25, the parable of the sheep and the goats with its admonition to be active in social ministry for the needy, homeless and hungry. Hidden in the Reformation window is Martin Luther's pet dog, Toepel. The chancel windows with the Good Shepherd on the left and the Risen Christ at Pentecost on the right . Here Christ directs the Apostolic Band to preach the Gospel to every nation.

In 1981 members of the congregation with Pastor Strand's help built their own harpischord.

In 1983 Pastor Arnold T. Wangerin, Jr. became Assistant Pastor with a ministry especially to the elderly. Pastor Wangerin had been a Missouri Synod pastor in churches in Wisconsin, Colorado, Missouri, and recently in Bristol, Connecticut. During the controversies that divided the Missouri Synod, he sided with the moderates and led St. Andrew's Church, Bristol, Connecticut, out of the Missouri Synod and into the newly formed AELC. After retiring, he moved to West Hartford and was looking for a part-time position which was just what Concordia could afford. His ministry has been effective and is greatly appreciated by the older members of the parish.

Concordia had always been active with other Protestant churches in the community, first with the Manchester Council of Churches and then with the Manchester Area Conference of Churches (MACC). MACC is a coalition of the mainline Protestant churches and the four Roman Catholic churches in town. It was launched with a banquet at Concordia on January 20, 1973. Working together, the churches discovered a major problem with homelessness and hunger. At first the town denied that such a problem existed. After all, this was not Hartford, but a suburb! The churches began a homeless shelter by each congregation using its space for a month until the community recognized the true dimensions of the dilemma. The Samaritan Shelter, now run by MACC in its own renovated location on Main Street, is a testimony to the concern of Christians for the needy. Many from Concordia served on the committees that brought it about, including Walter Johnson who chaired the committee and Alfred Eggen as a consulting architect.

In 1986 after completing the second longest pastorate in the first hundred years, Pastor Strand accepted a call to Cape Cod as pastor of St. Peter's Church in Harwich. He is remembered fondly for his sermons with movie illustrations, his love for antique cars, the Boston Red Sox, and the work of the synod and national church. During his ministry, the work of the wider church was put at the top of the congregation's budget and the church always paid 100% of its assigned apportionment. Concordia responded positively to both the Strength for Mission (SFM) drive of the LCA, giving one of the largest gifts in the synod, and to the SMILES and HEART campaigns to assist the work of the New England Synod and its homes in Southbury

and Middletown. A spirit of generosity had been encouraged and was bearing fruit for the Gospel.

Chapter 10
The Present

On January 25, 1987, Pastor Kim-Eric Williams began his ministry in Manchester as Concordia's fourteenth shepherd. Pastor Williams had grown up in West Chester, Pennsylvania and Attleboro, Massachusetts and had graduated from Muhlenberg College In Allentown, Pennsylvania and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He had recently completed a D.Min. in Ecumenism with the Graduate Theological Foundation at Notre Dame, Indiana. He came from St. Mark's in Bridgeport, Connecticut. He had served as a priest in the Church of Sweden, been a pastor in New Jersey, and a missionary in Trinidad and the southern Caribbean for the LCA. Upon his arrival it was discovered that the Housing Fund had not been growing with real estate prices and that additional funds were necessary to respond to the high costs of housing. A series of debentures were sold to the congregation for an amount necessary for the purpose and to insure the growth of the Fund. With this matter settled, Pastor Williams moved into a home at 434 Foster Street in South Windsor.

In June of 1987 the tradition of celebrating the 3rd Sunday in June as Concordia's Name Day was begun. This was the first Sunday of the summer schedule, Father's Day, and a day near the commemoration of the Presentation of the Augsburg Confession. It was thus a perfect time to read part of the Formula of Concord and recognize a "Concordian of the Year" for exceptional service. Those so recognized include:

1987	Frederick W. Badger
1988	Helen Wittkofske
1989	Ernest J. Scott
1990	Alfred C. Lange and Lena M. Schubert
1991	Elsie R. Werner
1992	Edward Kehl
1993	Daniel and Arlene Salzgeber
1994	Mark L. Winzler

In September of 1987 a new venture in music education was launched: the Ecumenical Choir School. The ECS would replace the usual Junior Choir with a curriculum from the Royal School of Church Music in England. It was to be a first class educational experience that would appeal to many parents who wanted professional and personalized vocal lessons for their children. The youth would also be recognized for their attainments by a series of ribbons and badges. Spirituality and the faith expressed through music was also to be stressed.

As one of his last official acts, Bishop Hal Wimmer of the New England Synod, asked Concordia to host two ordinations on behalf of the Synod. On October 3, 1987 Imogene A. Stulken was ordained as Chaplain for the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, and James M. Stein (brother of member Rick Stein) was ordained as Assistant Pastor for St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Norwich. The choice of Concordia for this event was a testimony to its tradition of fine music and liturgy in a worshipful atmosphere.



Cardinal Cushing and Bishop Olander
August 3, 1969



Pastors Joseph Bourret
and
Louis Bauer



The pipe organ



The third Parsonage
27 Pitkin St.

In 1988 another Lutheran merger brought our LCA into the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a denomination of over 5 million members with a new headquarters in Chicago. The New England Synod gained some additional congregations from the old ALC and the ex-Missouri AELC to list 189 congregations. We retained our connection to Upsala College and the social ministry institutions in New England. We gained a relationship with the seminary in Gettysburg as well as Philadelphia. The new ELCA approved constitution for congregations was accepted by Concordia on September 18, 1988.

On Reformation Sunday, October 30th, a free-standing altar was given to the congregation to enable the pastors to face the congregation during the Eucharist. Concordia was fortunate to have the expert cabinetry of Barbara Reifschneider within the congregation and she provided a beautiful altar that perfectly matched the woodwork.

Also in 1988, on Thanksgiving Eve, the congregation recognized David Almond for 25 years of service as Minister of Music. At the end of June of the same year, Elsie Werner had retired as Parish Secretary and had been replaced by Nancy Gutreich.

The building was beginning to show signs of wear and the roof on the nave and office wing was replaced during the summer. The next year the roof on the Parish Education wing was replaced.

At the suggestion of Pastor Williams, Art Hube designed a logo for the church. It shows a central cross that is superimposed on three hearts. Thus the Cross brings us together in a unity of love - Concordia literally means "with one heart." This unique logo also resembles the Luther emblem and thus ties us to our confessional heritage in a visual way. The logo appears on the church sign, on the stationery, and now on the Centennial banner.

After a workshop led by Pastor Herb Myer of Venice, Florida, a series of Koinonia groups were formed for fellowship and study in members homes in 1989. At first there were five groups, but after a year they had consolidated into three.

As Chair of the Ecumenical Worship Committee of MACC, Pastor Williams designed a unique Good Friday observance, the "Way of the Cross." This has been immensely popular and regularly gathers 400-500 people for a unique ecumenical experience. The worshippers gather at ten "stations" beginning and ending at Center Congregational Church and follow a large life-size cross and torches to re-live Jesus' Via Dolorosia on the streets of Manchester. In January of 1989 Concordia and St. Bartholomew's Roman Catholic Church sponsored a Joint Service of the Word to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This relationship grew and now encompasses both a service during the Week of Prayer as well as shared Lenten Vespers and an Advent Crafts Workshop. Epiphany and Ascension Day have been celebrated together with St. Mary's Episcopal Church since 1992.

With two anonymous donations, two special funds were established. One was designated for assistance to anyone from the congregation studying for a church vocation, and the other for any mission project that was acceptable to the Church Council. From this latter "Mission Priorities Fund", assistance was given to the new mission congregation in Tolland (Peace) and to Christ Lutheran in the Frog Hollow section of Hartford. In June of 1989 Rebecca Bourret, daughter of Pastor Joseph Bourret, was ordained by Bishop Isaksen at the Synod Assembly at St. Joseph's Cathedral in Hartford. She was called as Assistant Pastor at Gloria Dei Church in



Pastor Paul Kaiser and Confirmation Class of 1964



Pastor Burton D. Strand



Pastor Kim-Eric Williams

Forestville, Connecticut. She was now the third member of Concordia to be ordained after studying at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

In August of 1990 David Almond resigned as Minister of Music to accept a position at the Unitarian Church in West Hartford. In December, Allan Conway, an ELCA Associate in Ministry and organist at Bethany Church in Cromwell, became the new organist and choir director. Allan is a native of New Hampshire who was graduated from the Hartt School of Music and is now living in Manchester where his wife Linda is a music instructor in the elementary school system.

For the first time in 1992, two Annual Meetings were held. The traditional January meeting dealt with finances and the May meeting with committee reports and election to the Church Council.

On January 3, 1993 a fourth person from Concordia entered the ministry. He is Timothy J. Stevens who had graduated from LSTC in 1992 and was called to St. John's, Cullom, Illinois. Tim was ordained at Concordia in a festive service presided over by Bishop Isaksen with Pastor Wangerin as the preacher.

On January 24, 1993 Bishop Arthur Walmsley of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut preached at Concordia and led the Adult Forum; Pastor Williams had done the same the week before at Christ Cathedral in Hartford.

A Mission Statement was developed by the Council and adopted by the congregation to give guidance for future planning. It states: "In response to the Resurrection of Christ and God's gift of the Spirit in Baptism, Concordia Lutheran Church strives to be a living priesthood of believers which provides...

a place
for worship and spiritual nourishment through the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the Sacraments...

a focus
for service, education, and outreach to the local and global community...

opportunities
for fellowship and involvement in mutual joys and concerns, witnessing to one another and to all others".

Pastor Williams has a deep interest in Ecumenism and served as Bishop Isaksen's representative on the Board of the Christian Conference of Connecticut and as the Chair of the Department of Ecumenical Affairs of the synod. Other members of Concordia also gave notable service to the synod. Mark Winzler was Chair of the Music and Worship Committee, Karl Reifschneider was Chair of the Mission Division of the synod, Christine Reifschneider was president of the New England Synod Lutheran Youth Organization, and Al Eggen was the Project Manager for the building of the new synod headquarters in Worcester, Massachusetts. Karl Reifschneider also assisted the Seafarers' Ministry Project and was a Synod delegate to the ELCA Church wide Assembly in Kansas City in August, 1993.

At the Synod Assembly in 1992, Concordia was accepted into the "Growing Congregations" project of the New England Synod. The Evangelism and Publicity Committees were revived. Greeters were trained and assigned for the services.

A Womens' Spirituality Group lead by Patricia Herdic was formed and a Womens' Breakfast provides a once-a-month opportunity for sharing and faith growth. A mens' breakfast for fellowship and spiritual growth also began meeting once a month in a local restaurant.

A ramp was placed by the southern front entrance to enable wheelchair access to the nave and Church Room. A handicapped restroom was created off the Church Room. Improvements to the facilities included a new telephone system, new office equipment with a state of the art computer, a laser jet printer and a professional sound system for the nave with hand sets for the hearing impaired. All of these were generously given as memorials by members of the congregation.

On the Saturday after Easter, April 17, 1993, Saturday worship was offered for the first time at 5:00 pm. The Holy Communion was based on the Hymnal Supplement, 1991 of GIA and was done with piano to a more relaxed style than was usual for Sunday mornings. Both the sermon and the intercessions were done without notes. This style and time proved of benefit to many as an alternate worship possibility. In April of 1994 provision for anointing with oil and the laying-on-of-hands for healing was incorporated into the Saturday worship once a month. Pastor Williams had also encouraged more participation in the Sunday worship with singing by the Sunday Church School children and more activities for parents and children. With his love for the liturgy, he extended the principles of the LBW so that the deacons took on the responsibility of writing the Sunday prayers and introduced alternate Eucharistic Prayers. At this time the Eucharist began to be offered at funerals so that the Communion of Saints took on graphic meaning.

In the Spring of 1993 plans began for the Centennial. It was to be a year's worth of celebrations from July 1993 to June 1994. Planned events included:

July 10	Opening Carnival and Raising of Banner on front portico
25	Sermon by Pastor Louis E. Bauer
August 25	Liturgy conducted by the recently ordained members of Concordia: Presiding: Pastor Rebecca Bourret, Preaching: Pastor Tim Stevens
September 18	Presentation for Children - Judy Buch, Puppeteer
19	Celebration of the Ministry of Pastor Erich O. Brandt
October 3	Service Book and Hymnal Sunday
October 17	Pilgrimage from the old to the new building. Paul Kaiser preaching. Congregation walking from the old structure after the Peace and concluding the service on Pitkin Street
November 14	Sermon by Pastor David B. Stacy
24	Joint Thanksgiving Eve Service with Emanuel Lutheran, sermon by Interim Pastor and retired Bishop Hal Wimmer
December 19	German language Christmas Service conducted by Pastor Wangerin



Shopping for "Seasonal Sharing" — Ed Kehl and assistants



Archbishop Cronin and Bishop Isaksen, January 23, 1994

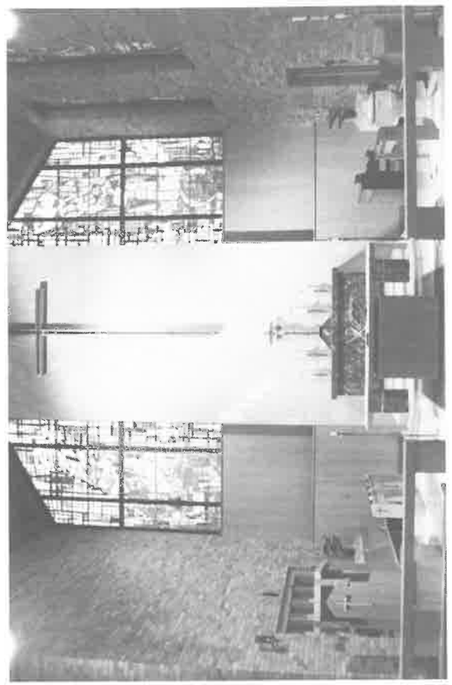
December 19	Live Nativity on Parker Street property with snow, special spotlights, and music. A gift to the town of Manchester.
26	Sermon by Pastor David W. Rinas
January 23	Ecumenical Service remembering our Common Baptism. Presider: Bishop Isaksen. Sermon: Archbishop Daniel A. Cronin of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hartford
February 6	Ecumenical Choir Concert - seven MACC churches take part
12	Centennial Fastnacht - "Concordia, The Next Generation"
20	Common Service Book Sunday
March 13	Anniversary Sunday, sermon by the Rev. Dr. Lowell G. Almen, Secretary of the ELCA from Chicago, Illinois. Choral brass piece by David Almond. Anniversary Hymn translated by Pastor Williams and set to music by Allan Conway.
April 10	Sermon by Pastor Joseph E. Bourret
30	Intergenerational Prom sponsored by Youth Group
May 21	Confirmation Reunion sponsored by Concordia Church Women
22	Pentecost Sermon by Pastor Burton D. Strand
June 18	Final Banquet at Vito's in Bolton. Showing of videotape of the year's activities
19	Concordia's Name Day - Sermon: Bishop Robert L. Isaksen. Festal conclusion to Centennial. Lowering of Banner.

Two Centennial Funds were established by the Council and congregation. The Thank Offering was to be divided in half for projects at home and for mission work. The Concordia projects were to be a Memorial Worship Garden to be placed on the front lawn, a new piano for the nave, and an architect's study for the renovation of the building. Projects outside the congregation included supporting: the Hispanic ministry at Christ Lutheran in Hartford, Time Out for Parents, a child abuse prevention effort using the church's facilities, and the new synod headquarters. In addition, a Building and Grounds Restoration Fund was created to begin gathering funds to repair the church parking lot, replace the leathers on the organ, and make Kaiser Hall and the educational wing barrier free.

In its Centennial year, Concordia counted 794 baptized and 414 communing members. The budget was $203,861.

Chapter 11
The Future

The first one hundred years of history for Concordia have witnessed an amazing steadfastness in faith and responsibility. The congregation began with very few assets and with poor immigrants who longed for a ministry of the Gospel. Through the years, the Word and Sacraments have centered this family of God in living out the implications of the Good News of Jesus Christ. The congregation has grown in numbers and in faithfulness. It is known throughout New England for its concern for others and its leadership in worship and music. God has kept his promise. He has been with this congregation and the Holy Spirit has poured out innumerable gifts for the people of God gathered at the altar of the Crucified.



Interior of present church



A growing congregation



Centennial Pilgrimage — October 17, 1993



Assistant Pastor Arnold T. Waugerin, The Rev. Dr. Lowell G. Almen, Secretary of the ELCA, Pastor Kim-Eric Williams Anniversary Sunday — (Lent 4) March 13, 1994

Now Manchester is again undergoing change. From a suburb it is turning into an integral part of the Hartford metro area. The Buckland Hills Mall has made Manchester the largest retail center in New England. The schools are becoming more multicultural and the town is no longer separated from the social ills and possibilities of the larger urban areas. Families and children face unprecedented risks and difficulties with both parents working and television becoming the prime carrier of values for youth. These changes are a call for ministry to reach out and become more representative of the town's population. The number of members of color needs to increase if we are to have a ministry to all people in our area. We have already begun to use music representative of Black and Hispanic cultures in our worship an d it has found a ready reception.

The "Vision Statement" adopted at the May Semi-Annual Meeting in the Centennial year points the way forward for our ministry: "God has called us together to be His servant in an increasingly indifferent and unloving world. In faithfulness to that call we commit ourselves to:

--continue to nurture our present ministries;

-- reach beyond these ministries to offer hospitality to populations in need of experiencing God's love, especially children, youth, and families;

-- subject all our goals and objectives to the discipline of God's word;

-- involve all our members in the decision-making and implementation of our shared call".

Concordia fully participated in the religious boom of the Fifties and was blessed to build just at the height of popular support for church activities. We now live in a culture that has become anti-religious and holds any affirmation of Christian faith at a distance. Mainline Protestants are aging as indeed our congregation shows. To move ahead with a forceful program of witness and evangelism given the unique possibilities of our mission is the promise that God holds out to us. With faith, the people of Concordia can assuredly go "On His Way Rejoicing."

Bibliography

Anonymous author, Concordia - "This is Your Life", handwritten manuscript acknowledging assistance of John Zwick, Andrew Winzler, and Eleanor Winzler, 1954.

Anonymous author, Untitled, typed manuscript describing early years, 1954.

Buckley, William E. A New England Pattern, The History of Manchester, Connecticut Chester, Connecticut: Pequot Press, 1973.

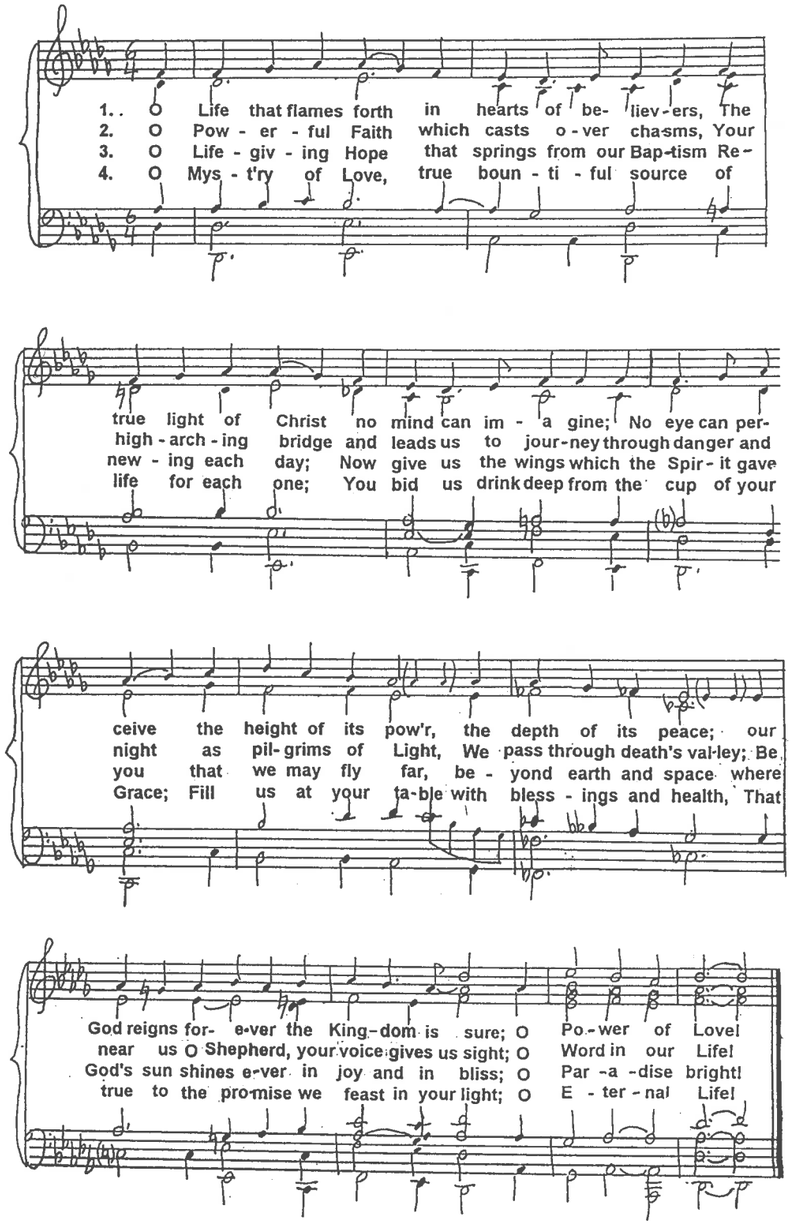
Ott, Richard A. A History of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, typed manuscript, 1992.

Various newspaper articles from the Manchester Evening Herald, parish records, and back copies of The Concordia Chimes found in the archives of Concordia Lutheran Church.

SERIES PASTORUM

1894-1896	The Rev. Hugo Erdmann
1896	The Rev. Hartwig
1896-1898	The Rev. Paul Lemke
1899-1906	The Rev. Lothar Bronke
1906-1908	The Rev. G. A. Von Nicelli
1908-1909	The Rev. Gustav Gille
1909-1914	The Rev. Otto Rappolt
1914-1924	The Rev. Hermann Stippich
1924-1933	The Rev. Herman Weber
1933-1950	The Rev. Karl Richter
1950-1958	The Rev. Erich O. Brandt
1959-1965	The Rev. Paul C. Kaiser
1966-1972	The Rev. Joseph E. Bourret
1967-1970	The Rev. Louis E. Bauer, Jr.
1973-1986	The Rev. Burton D. Strand
1974-1977	The Rev. David W. Rinas
1977-1981	The Rev. David B. Stacy
1983-present	The Rev.Arnold T. Wangerin
1986-present	The Rev. Kim-Eric Williams

O Life That Flames Forth



©Text: N.F.S. Grundtvig, 1783-1872; tr. The Rev. Dr. Kim-Eric Williams, b. 1943
©Tune: Allan B. Conway, b. 1957

CONCORDIA
11 11 10 5 11 5

ONE HUNDRED YEARS IN MANCHESTER

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH

1894-1994