St. John's Εν. Lutheran Church
Durand, WI

History



          St. John -- the Apostle and Evangelist-- for whom our congregation is named, had the happy distinction of going down in Church history as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." It is through John that our Savior's words are recorded. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."
          While St. John's Congregation here is by no means the largest or fastest growing, numerically, we hope and pray that by the Grace of God it will always be a family of God committed to the Lord Christ, in whom His Love is very evident. The countenances and other pictures and names on the following pages tell just a little of all of our lives' stories and the story of our Life together. Thankful for God's richly given blessings in the past and confident of His merciful providence ahead, we dedicate this book by dedicating ourselves to real growth under His Grace-full Word, in Faith and Hope and Love. We hope it will be helpful
          Although St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Durand did not originate until 1889, there were Lutherans in Durand dating back at least to 1861. These early Lutherans began relationships with congregations in surrounding communities that were later repeated by St. John's congregation. In 1861, Rev. Henry Grupe from Minnesota served both Durand and Albany.
          Under the leadership of Rev. W.J. Friedrick, who was installed in Durand in 1864, many small preaching stations were started in Pepin and Buffalo counties. It was also during this period that six of these congregations: Durand and Township of Albany in Pepin County, Townships of Canton and Modena in Buffalo County, and Eau Galle and Dowsville in Dunn County, united to call their first pastor for the combined parish.
          On August 7, 1870, a candidate from the seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, F.W. Pohlman, was installed. He lived in Durand and rode a fast horse many miles to preach in three different places each Sunday. After three years, for health reasons, Rev. Pohlman accepted a call to the south.
          Rev. H.F. Prohl was installed on July 27, 1873 and served the congregation until 1876 when he accepted a call to Baers Grass, Wisconsin
          Rev. J.C. Heyner from the seminary at Springfield. Illinois was installed in September, 1877. Due to declining membership at Durand. the Durand parsonage was sold and Rev. Heyner moved to Albany where he lived for several years in a house owned by Jacob Machmeier.
          The present congregation of St. John's Lutheran Church was formed on March 18, 1889 with Rev. Schaffnit serving. During the four years Rey. Schaffnit served in Pepin he opened preaching stations in Durand, Waverly, Nelson. and Wabasha. During this period St. John's services were held in the local Gerber’s Hall. Pastors serving in the early Days of the congregation were: H.Classen, W.Flachmeier, C.Baetke, J.Prue, A.R.Huth, J.L.Keitzinger, A.Haferman, and P.Schedler.
          On May 16, 1901, St. John's Lutheran Church Association of the City of Durand bought the lot where the church now stands. On November 15, 1901, the church was dedicated at the 10:00 service under the leadership of
Rev. Beitke from Pepin. The church building and lot cost approximately one thousand dollars and were dedicated free of debt.
          Rev. Paul Schedler was installed as pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Canton, on May 10. 1908. and in 1910 was vacancy pastor to the Durand congregation. He served St. John's until 1921 and was followed by his nephew, Rev. Walter Huebner. Rev. Huebner had the distinction of faithfully serving St. John's for 37 years.
          In 1933, a basement was put under the church, making it possible to install inside restrooms. The church was raised up and a horse pulling a scoop was used to excavate the ground for the basement.
          In order for St. John's to have services each Sunday, they placed a call to St. Louis Seminary for a vicar student in 1954 and got Mark Herbener who preached each off Sunday when Rev. Huebner was at two other Churches. He stayed at George Heike's.
          In 1955, the congregation bought additional land and extended the church and basement on both sides.
          Due to the declining health of Rev. Huebner, in August 1958, the parish reorganized. The Albany congregation disbanded with the majority of members transferring to Mondovi, the Modena congregation formed a parish with Gilmanton, while Durand and Canton formed a dual parish.
          It was also in 1958 that the parsonage was built next to the church.        Rev. Walter Huebner died at age 68 on November 16, 1958 at the Hospital in Mondovi after a year of illness. Funeral services were held at Trinity Lutheran Church at Mondovi,
          Following Pastor Huebner's death, Professor Eugene Linse from Concordia College in St. Paul held services in Durand. At this time the congregation voted to join the Missouri Synod.
          On May 3, 1959, Rev. Roger Bronsted became the pastor of the combined Durand-Canton parish and was the first pastor to occupy the new parsonage. He served until August, 1964 when he accepted a call to teach at Detroit, MI. During that summer and fall some of the members left the congregation to form Faith Lutheran Church, the A.L.C. church in Durand. It is now associated with ELCA.
          Rev. Paul Klemp was installed in August of 1965. After the resignation of Rev. Grose, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Plum City, Rev. Klemp served as vacancy pastor there. With the consent of the Durand and Canton congregations he accepted the call to Immanuel and on June 18, 1967 he was installed at Immanuel. Thus, Plum City became the third member of the parish. Rev. Klemp accepted a call to Sheburn, Minnesota in November 1969.
          Rev. Norman J. Ruthenbeck of Mondovi, served as vacancy pastor during the interim period. In 1970, St. John's, St. Paul's, and Immanuel Lutheran Churches placed a call to the seminary at St. Louis for a pastor and Rev. Donn Radde was assigned to the call. He was installed on August 2, 1970.   On November 15, 1970, during a regular congregational meeting, a motion was made and seconded and passed to delete the word "male" in our Constitution in an attempt to give women the right to vote.   On May 28, 1971 it was approved and became official by a change in Article "C" of the Constitution that women had a right to vote and were eligible to hold offices. Rev. Radde served until 1978 when he accepted a call to Central Wisconsin.
          In 1979, a call was sent out to Rev. Thomas Hoelter who accepted the call to serve the three congregations. He served until 1987 when he accepted a call to serve Rib Mountain Lutheran at Wausau, WI.
          St. John's and Immanuel Lutheran then placed a call to Rev. Mark Lewis at Atlantic, Iowa who was a pastor of S. John's Lutheran and Zion Lutheran in the same area. He accepted our call and served us from 1988 to 1995. He also preached at St. Paul's, Canton on Saturday nights with the approval of both St. John's and Immanuel Lutheran of Plum City. He accepted a call to Wausau, WI in 1995.

PASTORS FOR ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN
DURAND, WISCONSIN
1861  Rev. Henry Grupe
1864-1869  Rev. W.J. Friedrick
1870-1873  Rev. F.W. Pohlman
1873-1976  Rev. H.F. Prohl
1877-1901  Rev. J.C. Heyner
1889  Rev. Schffnit

          Several pastors who served the Durand Parish are listed below who came in the early days of the Durand Lutheran Group.
Rev. J. Classen
Rev. W. Flackmeier
Rev. C. Baetke Rev. J. Prue
Rev. A.R. Huth Rev. J.L. Keitzinger
Rev. A. Haferman

1910-1921  Rev. Paul Schedler
1921-1958  Rev. Walter Huebner
1959-1964  Rev. Roger Bronsted
1965-1969  Rev. Paul Klemp
1970-1978 Rev. Donn Radde
1979-1987 Rev. Thomas Hoelter
1988-1995  Rev. Mark Lewis
1995-Present        Rev. Daniel Pfaffe

          St. John's had several vacancy pastors over the years, some of which are listed below.
Rev. Hemer from Mondovi
ProL Eugene Linse  from St. Paul
Rev. Eden   from Eau Claire
Rev. Grose  from Plum City
Rev. Ruthenbeck  from Mondovi
Several Professors  from St. Paul

