

Pastor Sailer's Page

Faith Lutheran Church
Sioux Falls, SD

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85 and GOING STRONG!

It may have escaped your notice, but our congregation is now 85 years old...and, I think, going strong.

The first worship services held on the corner of 4th Street and Cliff Avenue in the then new Spanish style church building – Faith Lutheran Church Lutheran – happened in 1929. The building was dedicated “on a cold and blustery day in November of 1929.” Faith was a mission congregation of Zion Lutheran Church, with members with names such as *Zimmel* and *Basche* transferring from Zion to the new congregation near the Falls of the Sioux River. Reports are that the mission grew rapidly, in part, because of the Stock Market crash in 1929 and the beginning of the Great Depression. Many families from the rural areas came to Sioux Falls seeking employment. Rev. Gustav H. Steffen was the first pastor of Faith. He was also called to serve as a teacher in the Day School the congregation, established in 1931. Faith Lutheran School was open from 1931 to 1941, with as many as 72 students enrolled (1932).

Other historical highlights:

- The congregation grew rapidly. By 1938, Faith had 520 baptized members. Membership would settle in the 650 baptized range in the late 1960's into the very early 1990's. Our membership numbers 761 souls today.
- A building fund was started in 1963. The new church building was dedicated July 27, 1969, featuring three pods, the largest of which still serves as our nave. The current office and Welcome Center area had been a fellowship hall (east pod) in the '69 construction, with folding partitions enabling it to be used for Sunday School rooms. The north pod in the 1969 building provided space for a kitchen and more classrooms. This pod was demolished during the 2001 construction of our current Christian Life Center, kitchen, Shepherd's Room and classrooms. Our newest addition was completed and dedicated

in 2002. During this particular time of construction, we vacated the rest of the building, with worship services and Sunday School classes meeting at Sioux Falls Lutheran School, and with our church office moved to the back of the old Sunshine grocery store building at 10th and Wayland.

- Faith joined the Sioux Falls Lutheran School Association in 1977, and, in 2009, became a charter member of the Lutheran High School of Sioux Falls Association.
- We've had a Wurlitzer organ, a Seville organ, and now, an Allen digital organ, with Janiece Lawrence, one of our gifted musicians over the years, accompanying our singing on each of these instruments in her 50 years of service here.
- We've been blessed by congregational participation in Walther League, Ongoing Ambassadors for Christ, LLL, LWML (Goodwill Aid and the Ladies Auxiliary), Faith Adult Christians (FACs), Acts of Faith, Altar Guild, Seasoned Seniors, Sunday School, VBS, Sonshine Days, and Sunday Service².
- We've been blessed to begin new outreach ventures through our African Immigrant Ministry, beginning in 2005 with Lutherans from Ethiopia; we've extended our reach with short-term mission work in places like Hong Kong and Nicaragua. We've assisted Emily Goddard in her teaching ministry in South Africa.
- We've been blessed to have dedicated pastors, vicars, a DCE, office secretaries (Darlene – 40 years!), and janitors.
- We've been blessed to have outstanding participation by hundreds of laypeople *like you* in our mission of growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus ourselves and of sharing Him with those here, near and far.

To KNOW Christ, GROW in Him, and SHOW Him to the world is our mission statement. May God bless us in this wonderful work, as He has for 85 years. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY, FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH!**