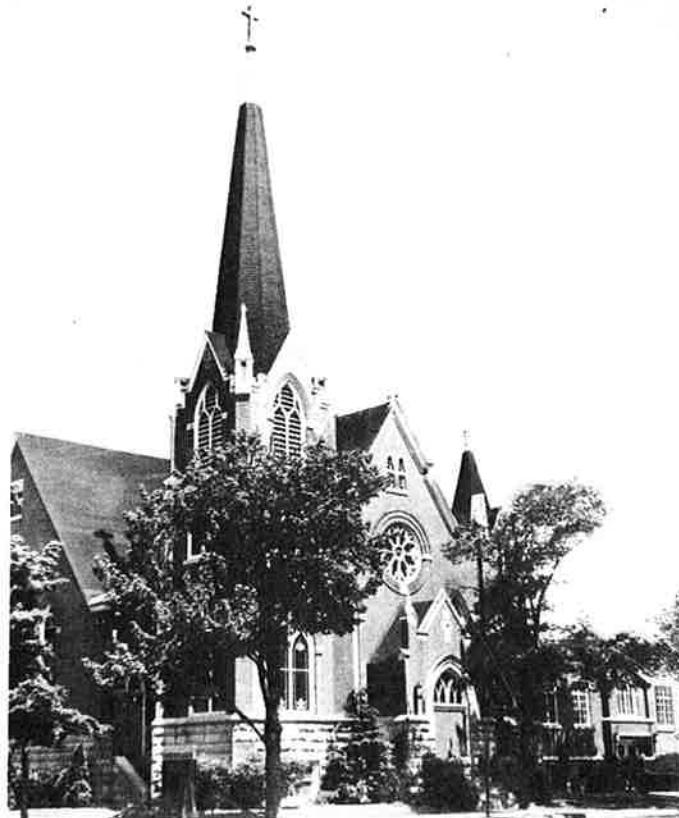


CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY



SAMUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

MUSKEGON, MICHIGAN

HISTORICAL SKETCH

EARLY HISTORY 1875-1914

"If God is with us, who is against us?" Romans 8:31 may well have been the inspiration that prompted the Swedish Christians to strive for a church in which to worship God. Limited finances and a disastrous fire, which razed their first edifice did not deter them in their efforts.

There were no records or documents at the beginning of the Samuel Lutheran Church. The first recorded meetings are found, beginning with November 26, 1879.

Rev. Peter Erickson was sent by the Illinois Conference in 1870 to see if a need existed in Muskegon to organize a congregation. This was begun by holding a service in the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Miller, who lived on Houston Avenue, a half block west of the present church. Rev. Erickson continued to hold occasional services until 1873, when the Rev. N. A. Youngberg came to continue these services.

The first confirmation was held in the home of Erik Ström, who lived in the third house west of Eighth Street on Houston Avenue on the same side of the street where the church is now standing.

In the summer of 1875, the parish called a student minister from Rock Island, Illinois — Mr. A. Sundberg, to hold services during that season.

On September 29, 1875, the seventeenth Sunday after Trinity, immediately after the service held in a small centrally located public schoolhouse, the Samuel Lutheran Church was organized. The adoption of the Constitution was postponed until later. The following 31 adults and 24 children became charter members:

Mr. and Mrs. John Miller and six children	Mr. and Mrs. John G. Krans and one child
Mr. and Mrs. John Israelson and two children	Mr. and Mrs. Erik Ström
Mr. and Mrs. Erik Johnson and two children	Mr. and Mrs. John Blid (Bleed)
Mr. and Mrs. John Johnson and two children	Mr. and Mrs. Anders Lindquist
Mr. and Mrs. Anders M. Petersén and one child	Mr. and Mrs. Anders Lundberg
Mr. and Mrs. Johan Rodén and four children	Mr. and Mrs. Nils Lövblad
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Swenson and one child	Mr. and Mrs. Peter Sköld
	Mr. and Mrs. Peter Wilson
	Mrs. Anna Donelson and five children

The schoolhouse burned down in 1876, but the parish was able to rent a former Universalist Church on Third Street and Clay Avenue, where they met until the congregation was able to build their own church on the corner of Grand Avenue and Hugart Street (Eighth Street). The congregation had no funds for pews, so they sat on planks nailed to wooden blocks.

The yearning for their own pastor was strong. A meeting was held by Pastor O. C. Chilleen, and it

was decided to call Pastor M. P. Odén for every other Sunday. He left Muskegon in January, 1881.

In 1881, it was decided to invite Mr. J. A. Stamline, a student at the Augustana Theological Seminary to take charge of the congregation and to teach parochial school.



PASTOR M. P. ODÉN
1880-1881



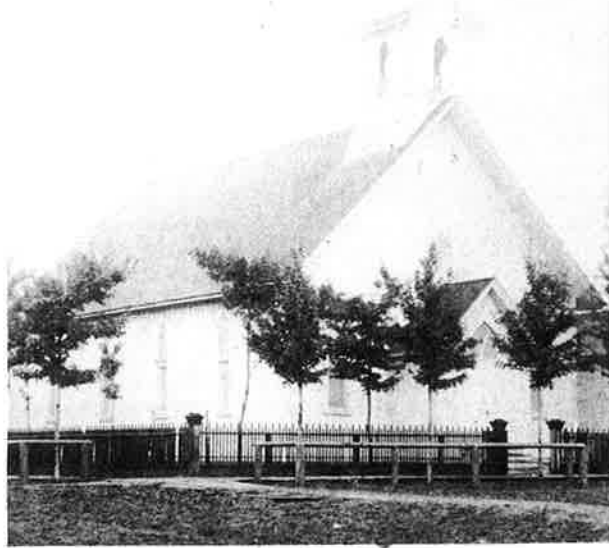
REV. A. P. LINDSTROM
1882-1886

The church burned down to the ground on Sunday evening, September 4, 1881, resulting in the loss of a new, unpaid-for organ, valued at \$145. The church building was valued at \$1,300, but was only insured for \$1,000.

A lot was purchased at Houston Avenue and Eighth Street. The house on the lot was moved towards the alley. This house was repaired and used as a parsonage. The new church that was built was similar to the first church, except that it was larger. The first service was held on the Sunday before Christmas, 1881. The cost was \$4,000, and all but \$1,200 of this was paid when the church was ready.



The dedication service was conducted by Pastor O. C. Chilleen, assisted by Student Stamline and Deacon Olson. The people that attended thought that it was not very impressive. It was a rather peculiar dedication — one pastor, one student pastor and one layman, a tailor, at the altar. However, they were very happy to have their own church.



In 1893, a lot was bought for \$1,000 on which the second parsonage was built, mostly by members. Pastor C. A. Carlsted was the first to occupy the new parsonage.



Pastor J. T. O. Olander came to the parish July 9, 1903 at a salary of \$700 and two offerings. He was the first pastor to be installed by a Conference President.

The first class of children confirmed was on March 25, 1883. Each child was presented with a Bible. Rev. A. P. Lindstrom was the pastor.

At the yearly meeting on January 1, 1884, the name of Swedish Evangelical Samuel Lutheran Parish, Muskegon, Michigan was adopted as the official name, and a new constitution was adopted.

Rev. A. J. Östergren was called to become the pastor on January 12, 1886. At that time, there were 188 members. Summer school was taught in Swedish.



PASTOR J. T. O. OLANDER
1903-1916



REV. A. J. ÖSTERGREN
1886-1894



PASTOR C. A. CARLSTED
1894-1903

During some years, meetings were held in the Bethesda Hall, which the congregation had purchased for \$400. \$230 of this was contributed by the Bethesda Society.

1893 was a very hard year to struggle to keep the congregation together.

Invitations were printed and sent to people inviting them to participate in the cornerstone laying ceremony for a new church on August 6, 1905. According to the *Muskegon Chronicle*, an impressive ceremony was conducted with 1500 people present, including dignitaries and nine Swedish Lutheran pastors. In addition to guests seated on the platform, others were seated on piles of building materials or in carriages. Mayor Fleming gave the address emphasizing the adjustment the members would have to make to become an English-speaking congregation, necessary in the next two decades. He also said the Swedish people were to be commended on their sobriety, faithful discharge of duty, and example of good Christian living. Swedish hymns were sung by both the choir and guests. Words of consecration were pronounced by Pastor Linder, as he gave three sharp blows on the granite block, as it was set in place. When completed, the church cost \$19,000, with wiring, heating and furnishings costing an additional \$16,000. The opening of the new

church began with a prayer meeting in the Bethesda Hall, followed by a march from there to the new church led by Pastor Olander, deacons and trustees, Builder Olson, the Building Committee and the congregation. The dedication of the new church, although it was not completed, was held on June 24, 1906. Conference President F. A. Linder was in charge and was assisted by district pastors, Muskegon pastors and city dignitaries.

On July 22, 1910, a Hillgren, Lane and Company Pipe Organ was dedicated. A sum, amounting to \$1,387.50, half of the actual cost of the organ was given by Andrew Carnegie, one of the country's great philanthropists. The other half was raised by the people in the church in subscriptions all the way from \$1.00 up and through donations from citizens outside the church and local business institutions. Among the gifts from outside the church were \$225.23 from Thomas Hume, \$50.00 from James Balbirnie and \$25.00 from the son of Charles Hackley. When the organ was dedicated, the church was unable to hold the audience. Seats were packed to the doors; chairs were placed in the vestibule, and other persons, unable to get seats, stood outside on the steps. Mr. F. J. Johnson of Calumet, Michigan, former organist of Pastor Olander, when he served in that city, was brought to "manipulate" the organ. The new organ had more than a thousand pipes and many accessories. In 1914, Mr. Johnson was secured as Samuel's

organist and choir director. As he had taught at the Luther Academy in Wahoo, Nebraska and at Upsala College in the East, Samuel's members called him Professor Johnson.

Pastor Olander often took walks in the evening with William Brinnen. On one occasion, they got on the subject of automobiles and how the sale of them was growing more and more each year. They also discussed how large cities were buying up property for parking lots to get people to come to the shopping centers. William Brinnen remarked that it would not be many years before churches would have parking lots for their members. He informed Pastor Olander that he owned the lot back of the church on Eighth Street with 66 feet of it facing Muskegon Avenue. He said that lots were selling at \$750 to \$1,000, but if the Pastor could get his congregation to buy the lot for the future, Mr. Brinnen would sell them the lot for \$300. Several meetings were held by the congregation in this connection, and eventually, the majority voted to buy the lot. As years went by, the ground got harder and harder, and cars could park on it. In 1951, the entire lot was paved, and later, still more land was purchased for parking space, so that today, the church owns about two-thirds of the block facing Muskegon Avenue.

In 1913, the church purchased new pews from the American Seating Company in Grand Rapids, Michigan and paid for them in full the following year.

GROWTH and DEVELOPMENT 1914-1961

Under the guidance of Pastor Julius E. Lorimer, three missionary societies were organized: the Women's Missionary Society, which met in the afternoons; Mary Martha, which met in the evenings and the Junior Mission Band, an organization for children. It was also while he was the pastor that the Lutheran Brotherhood was organized and the name of the youth group, Gustaf Adolf Society was changed to The Luther League.



PASTOR J. E. LORIMER
1917-1924



DR. GUSTAF FLETWOOD
1924-1931

In 1916, a duplex envelope system was introduced, which was in use for many years, for the payment by members for church expenses and benevolences.

In 1917, women were given the right to vote at church meetings.

In 1920, the annual convention of the Illinois Conference was held in Samuel, and this was a big event.

A common communion cup had been used at Holy Communion services. This was replaced in 1921 with the introduction of individual communion glasses.

Dr. Gustaf Fletwood was sent to Muskegon by the Conference President as a temporary pastor to take care of the vacancy left by Pastor Lorimer in 1924. However, a unanimous call was extended to him, and he remained as a pastor of Samuel for six years.

The person who served the church the longest as pastor was Dr. Herbert Swanson, who came to Muskegon in 1931. He remained with the church for thirty years. It was during this period that English completely replaced the use of Swedish at church services and in church organizations, though an early Sunday morning Swedish service was still being conducted as late as the 1950's.

On November 15, 1939, a three-manual Kimball Organ was dedicated, consisting of twenty sets of pipes and a twenty-five note Deagan A Chimes. The purchase and installation came to \$9,800.00. \$8,300.00 of this was given by Mr. Charles E. Johnson. The console was placed downstairs for the first time, and the walls in the northeast corner of the nave of the church were moved out for a choir loft. Dr. Samuel R. Burkholder of Chicago, Illinois played the dedicatory recital.

In 1940, a new parsonage was built, replacing the old one at the same location, at a cost of \$14,400.00.



DR. HERBERT
SWANSON
1931-1961

As the result of a survey taken in North Muskegon, the Illinois Conference purchased a home at 1318 Mills Avenue on May 23, 1947 for temporary use as a new mission church. Forty-three individuals expressed an interest in such a church. During the existence of this mission, the Common Service in the old hymnal was used, and at different times, two full-time seminary interns were in charge of the mission. The interns provided some much-needed part-time pastoral help for Samuel. The mission closed in 1948.



Some of the foundation stones of the old parsonage were used in the fireplace chimney and in a fireplace in the basement recreation room. The house was completed on New Year's Eve, at which time the members helped to move in the pastor's furnishings, while others washed windows, and a draperyman hung new drapes. On New Year's Day, January 1, 1941, an open-house was held for the congregation.

World War II found 144 members of Samuel serving in the military services.

Boy Scout Troup, Number 5 was organized in Samuel on October 31, 1943. Several of the scouts earned the Lutheran Pro Deo Et Patria Award from the church.

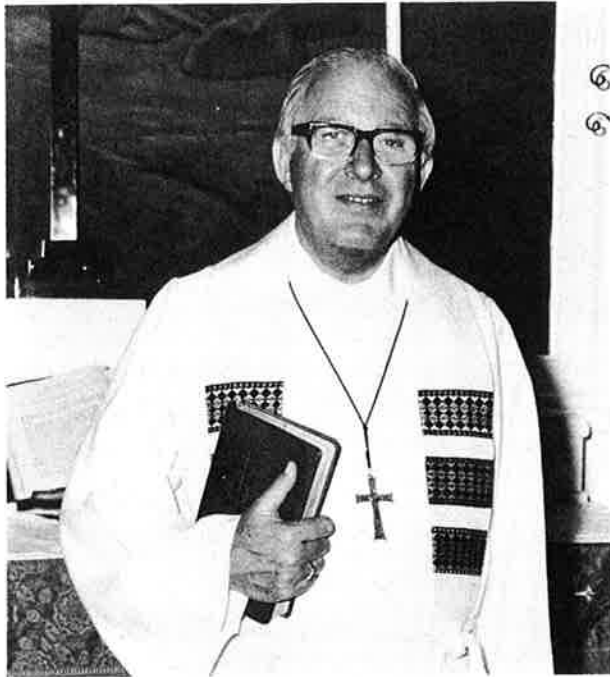
Samuel got its first full-time seminary intern in 1955.

On July 25, 1954, Samuel broke ground for a parish house addition and an addition for office space. The corner-stone was laid on October 10, 1954, and the dedication took place on May 1, 1955. The cost was \$125,000. The parish house consisted of two floors. The ground floor contained additional Sunday School rooms, while the main floor consisted of a lounge, kitchen and meeting room. Above the entrance, there was placed a beautiful stained glass window, depicting the four Evangelists. A two-room office was added to the west of the church, on the opposite side of the parish hall.



SAMUEL OF TODAY 1961-1975

Dr. Herbert Swanson resigned in 1961 at the age of 72 to accept a call to Bethesda, Iowa, where he was reared. The Rev. Russell W. Johnson was called from Kansas City and began his ministry at Samuel in October of 1961. He is currently the pastor of the church.



REV. RUSSELL W. JOHNSON
1961-

In 1962, the lot separating two sections of the parking area was purchased for \$7,000. Also, the Rev. Richard Chilkott of Grand Rapids was called for one year as the first Assistant Pastor. After a year and six months he moved to Adrian, Michigan.



REV. RICHARD
CHILKOTT
1962- 1964

The merger of the Augustana Lutheran, United Lutheran, American Evangelical Lutheran and Suomi Synod Lutheran churches required Samuel to adopt a new constitution in 1963. This constitution replaced the Board of Administration composed of twelve Deacons and twelve Trustees with a Church Council

of twenty-four Deacons. The Council serves as a clearing house for the work of seven Standing Committees, each having approximately three members of the Council and three members of the congregation elected by the Council.

On November 6, 1963, a mortgage burning service was held to celebrate clearance of debt on the Parish Hall. Dr. Frank P. Madsen, President of the Michigan Synod, spoke.

In 1964, the launching of the Michigan Synod Development Fund for Lutheran Social Services, Camp Michi-Lu-Ca and the new Seminary in Chicago required about \$20,000 from Samuel. It was decided to raise \$20,000 more for our own church renovation. This was fortunate because on August 21 of that year a large portion of the ceiling plaster fell while the church was empty. Services were held in the Parish Hall for three months during repairs. The Rev. Jack Lacey, newly ordained, became Assistant Pastor on September 4.



REV. JACK LACEY
1964-1967

1965 saw the completion of the sanctuary renovation with new pews and carpeting costing \$13,000. A carillon of 25 electronic bells was installed in the tower for \$1,500 realized by memorial gifts.

About this time the deterioration of the inner city, which had been taking place for over a decade, began to cause a serious crime problem in the church neighborhood. The Muskegon Area Development Council (Chamber of Commerce) and Samuel Church led in forming the Nelson Neighborhood Association.

The Rev. Jack Lacey resigned as Assistant Pastor in 1967 to go to Hillsdale, Michigan. Samuel resumed using seminary interns as assistants to the pastor.

Mr. E. T. Anderson bequeathed \$18,000 to the congregation to establish a scholarship fund for members of the congregation studying for the ministry. This has assisted the following: Rev. Thomas Reinertson, Rev. Richard Mannel, Rev. Arlo Peterson and Mr. Edward Wilson, presently in seminary.

In 1970, mainly due to increase in drug usage, conditions in the neighborhood became critical. Therefore, in 1971 the parsonage was sold and a pastoral housing allowance substituted. Nevertheless, the congregation with great courage and devotion continued to witness and work in the neighborhood. Samuel organized the downtown churches in 1972 for a house to house neighborhood visitation under the

Key 73 national evangelism program. Perhaps the most significant demonstration of the faith of the Samuel people occurred on June 4, 1973 when the congregation voted to accept the recommendations of a special study committee, including one to remain in the neighborhood for at least ten years. Other recommendations accepted involved about \$50,000 in upgrading the church property in preparation for observance of the Centennial.

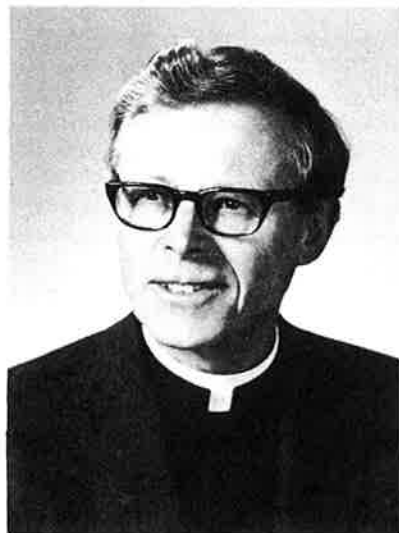
Thus, the spirit of today's Samuel congregation has remained the same as that of its founders who stood in the ashes of their first church and resolved to rebuild. In faith in God we face the future, knowing that He is with us. One of our Centennial Year speakers expressed our purpose to "continue to share each other's joys and sorrows; not to remain static, but to press on — growing in depth as God's people."

IN HIS SERVICE

We thank God for all the members of our congregation who devote their lives to His service in many vocations. Obviously it is impossible to mention everyone. However, because they form a well-defined group and one commonly recognized as special to the Church, we list those who are in full-time Christian work.

Mrs. Monna Grenell Sakura is a medical missionary in Africa. Mr. Edward Wilson is a theological student expecting to be ordained next spring.

Following are "sons of Samuel" with dates of ordination.



REV. WESLEY A. SAMUELSON
JUNE 9, 1940



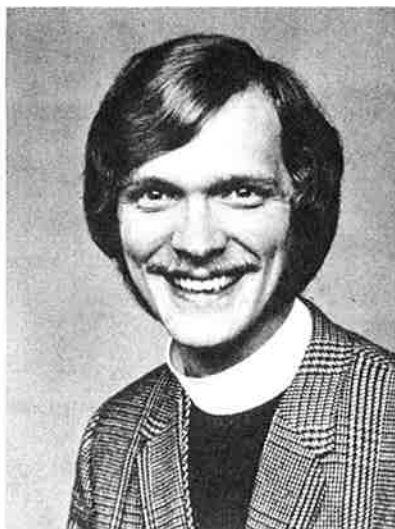
REV. FRANK A. JOHNSON
JUNE 14, 1942



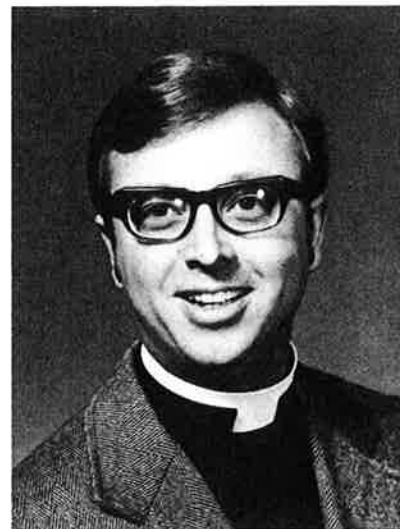
CAPTAIN EUGENE S. SWANSON
JUNE 10, 1945



DR. PAUL R. SWANSON
JUNE 19, 1955



REV. ARLO D. PETERSON
SEPT. 22, 1974



REV. THOMAS W. REINERTSON
MAY 19, 1975

GLANCING THRU THE MINUTES

1881 — Dr. M. P. Odén was called for a pay of \$350 for the first year, one offering in June and one in September. Each family was to pay \$10; \$5 for a young man and \$3 for a young lady.

April 5, 1881 — Incorporation of the parish in the State of Michigan.

1889 — The congregation had to pay 25¢ a member to the Synod.

1890's — Organ pumpers were selected at annual meetings, one for each month. Later one man was selected for the entire year. A total of \$15 was provided for the year, which was at first divided among 12 men and later given to the man who served for the entire year.

The organ was powered by water from Lake Michigan, which ran out from the church into the city sewer system. The water pump was located in the basement where the present organ motor is installed. As the organ played, the congregation would hear a funny sound as the water went up and down.

April 21, 1898 — Permission was given to the deacons to use the pulpit when they officiated at Sunday services, but they could not go inside the altar rail for the altar service.

1902 — At the annual meeting, plans were made for building a new church with the basement to have stone walls; seating capacity to be 500 to 550 and cost limited to \$8,000.

1905 — The old choir bought a grand piano for the church.

April 4, 1924 — Walter Anderson was appointed to see the proper party in regards to parking places for automobiles on Eighth Street. Mr. Seastrand was to find out if the Board could get \$350 from the Ladies Aid.

June 6, 1924 — \$5.50 was received from the Havovok Brothers towards the paving of Houston Avenue in front of the parsonage.

January 23, 1925 — Janitor Peterson was hired for \$600 a year.

A bill was presented by the Board of Charitable Institutions of the Illinois Conference stating that of an assessment of \$1500, only \$160 had been paid by Samuel.

February 6, 1925 — Mr. Van Andel, the organist, complained that it was very cold upstairs in the church.

March 6, 1925 — Mr. Seastrand reported the purchase of a book in which names of each member and the amount of money paid to the church would be recorded.

April 3, 1925 — A letter was sent to the Board of Charities telling them that Samuel had paid its share.

May 5, 1925 — The question of heating the gallery in church was taken up, and agreement was reached that 90 feet of radiator, costing \$64 be installed.

June 5, 1925 — A motion was made and passed that the Board borrow \$90.50 from the Mission Fund to

make a payment on the note at the People's Savings Bank.

July 7, 1925 — A committee on marking Houston Avenue for parking cars reported that the church would have to mark it themselves.

August 7, 1925 — The board decided to mark Houston Avenue for parking cars — themselves.

September, 1925 — The fiftieth anniversary of the church was commemorated. Guest speakers were the former pastor, J. T. O. Olander and Dr. Peter Peterson, the Conference President.

1935 — The church building was redecorated and repaired at a cost of \$3,130.00.

1942 — Through the initiative of the Sunday School, fine upholstered chairs replaced the wooden chairs that so often broke or made noise.

February 5, 1943 — The question of delinquent members was discussed as to ways and means of encouraging these members to attend and to support the church.

March 26, 1943 — It was suggested and advised that children spend two years in confirmation classes.

October 27, 1943 — 40 of our church members signed up to help in the Religious Census of Greater Muskegon.

December 7, 1943 — It was suggested that Christmas Eve services in English begin at 11:00 p.m. and Swedish Services at 6:00 a.m. on Christmas Day.

1945 — Agreement was reached as to the purchase and installation of a shuffleboard court and a ping-pong table, to be placed in the church basement, especially for young people.

September 20, 1945 — Plans were made to observe the 70th anniversary of Samuel on October 21 with Rev. Wesley Samuelson and Rev. Frank Johnson as speakers.

Also — As October 21 was Brotherhood Sunday, the Brotherhood was allowed to hold their service at the morning schedule, and booklets entitled "We Welcome You" were allowed to be passed out to each returned service man.

Subject of a new organization for Young Married Couples in the church was discussed. No action was taken.

1946 and 1947 — Outside woodwork of the church was painted and the interior walls, including the basement; electric rewiring and new electric fixtures were installed throughout the church; and the balcony was improved at a cost of \$10,025.00.

1947 — Samuel joined First Lutheran and Our Savior's in sponsoring an half hour radio program on WMUS every Sunday. The cost was shared by all three churches.

1948 — A Young Married Couples group was formed with 70 present.

New pews were purchased and installed on the balcony for \$725.00.

1950 — A motion was made and carried for women

to be representatives on the church board.

1950 — The church celebrated its 75th anniversary.

November 19, 1951 — It was agreed that the church guest book should be checked each week, and that cards should be sent acknowledging the visit and to welcome them to come again.

February 15, 1952 — It was voted that a microphone be installed on the altar, and that a loud speaker be installed in the basement.

January 18, 1953 — A letter was read from the Conference President, Dr. Oscar Benson, saying that no layman should be allowed to distribute the elements of Communion.

November 23, 1953 — A building fund campaign was launched by the church in connection with a parish hall and an addition for office space.

December 18, 1953 — Discussion took place regarding the dropping of the early morning Swedish service. No action was taken.

April 15, 1955 — A motion was passed that no smoking be permitted inside of the church building.

April 4, 1956 — A discussion regarding ushers wandering around in the narthex of the church during the sermon took place. It was decided that they should stay in one place such as in the cloak room where they can hear the sermon over a loud speaker.

1962 — Lutheran Stewardship Services directed a two-year stewardship program.

1963 — A Memorial Fund was established.

October, 1963 — Convention of the Michigan Lutheran Church Women was held at Samuel.

1964 — Another motion was defeated to permit smoking in the parish hall.

1966 — The Lutheran magazine was sent to each home in the congregation.

1966 — A young married couples' group, the Koinoneans, was organized.

1968 — 22 young men of our congregation were in the armed services.

1971 — Hired a guard for the parking lot for night meetings.

1972 — Seminary Life Appeal conducted for new seminary in Chicago.

1973 — Began holding one service at 10:00 a.m. during the summer months.

1974 — Centennial Year Program started with monthly observances featuring guest preachers and musicians, mostly former members of the congregation.

1975 — The first week the new bus was delivered, 25 women used it to go to Cadillac for LCW District Meeting.

1975 — Stair elevator installed. Kitchen remodeling. House next to Parish Hall purchased.

