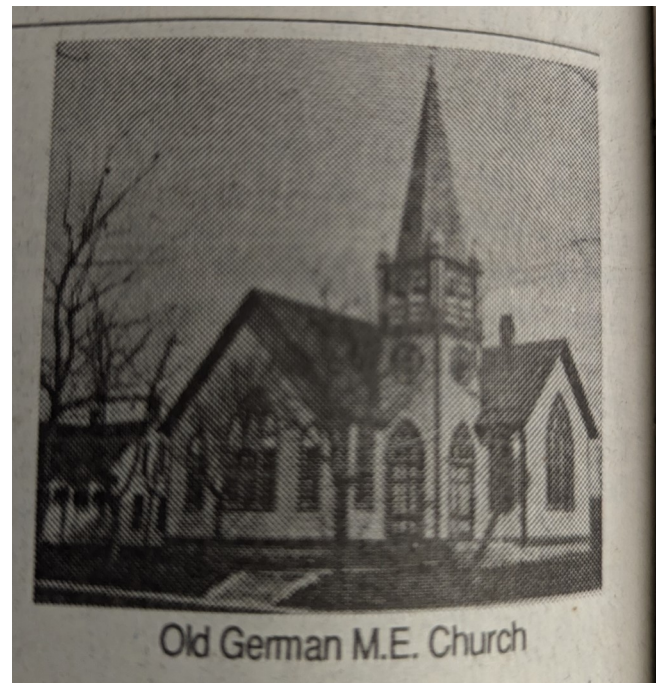


**150TH ANNIVERSARY**  
**SPRINGFIELD**  
**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**1874-2024**



**FAITH IN ACTION,**  
**EMPOWERING GENERATIONS**



Matthew 5:16—*In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*

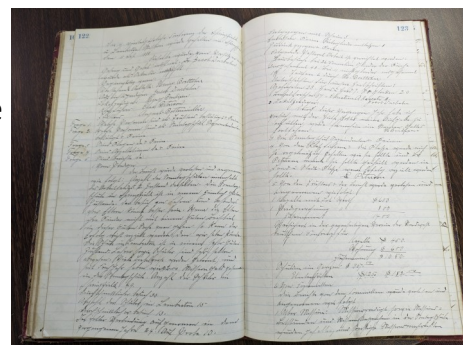


# Early Church History

by Cheryl Diede and Jeff Krueger (Springfield Advance-Press)

The Springfield United Methodist Church, formerly known as the Community Methodist Church of Springfield, was formed in 1918 by the merger of two churches -- the English Methodist Episcopal Church and the German Methodist Episcopal Church.

As early as 1870, the part of Brown County in which Springfield is located was included in the Lamberton Circuit of the English Episcopal Methodist Church. The first church was built in 1888 on Cass Avenue (site of Public Library and Muske Law Office today). Sometime later, a parsonage was acquired just south of the church. From 1874 to 1918, twenty-five ministers served the English Methodist Episcopal Church.



As early as 1873, the German Methodist Episcopal Church was carrying on its work under the name of the Mountain Lake Mission that included the part of Brown County where Springfield is located. The first mention of ownership of a church building was in 1886. This building, valued at \$575, was located in the 100 block of North Marshall Avenue, a block south of the present Methodist Church building. In 1891, the church and parsonage were sold and three lots on the 300 block of North Marshall were purchased. A new church and parsonage were

erected at 315 and 321 North Marshall Avenue, respectively. (At present, both the former church and parsonage serve as private residences.)

By the year 1918, the use of the German language was no longer feasible for the German Methodist Episcopal Church. A merger of the German and English Churches took place in 1918. The Rev. H.J. Hoffert, who had been pastor of the German Church since 1916, became pastor of the combined congregation. The building at 315 North Marshall that had been occupied by the German Church served the combined congregation which was legally known as the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Springfield.

In June 1928, the church board decided to take immediate steps to build a new church at 205 North Marshall Avenue, on property that had been purchased from Henry Bendixen for \$7,000. The new church building was dedicated on Palm Sunday, March 24, 1929. The entire cost of construction was \$40,475. This Gothic-style structure still serves as Springfield United Methodist Church's house of worship.

# History Dates

1918 - Merger of The English Methodist Episcopal Church & The German Methodist Episcopal Church to form The First Methodist Episcopal Church of Springfield

Oct. 1928 - Cornerstone Laying for the new church at 205 No. Marshall Ave

March 1929 - Dedication of new church building, Palm Sunday, March 24

1941 - Sold parsonage at intersection of Hwy 14 and O'Connell Avenue and purchased house at 412 North Cass which served as the parsonage until 1973

1947 - Church name changed to Community Methodist Church (thru 1968)

1949 - First Chow Mein Supper held (still an annual event)

April 1968 - Merger of the Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren to become the United Methodist denomination

June 1968 - Bought Hoyt property across the street at 204 No. Marshall Ave. for Study Center (additional Sunday School and meeting rooms)

Jan 1969 - Voted to change the incorporated name of the church from Community Methodist Church to United Methodist Church because of the 1968 merger of EUB and Methodists into the United Methodist denomination

June 1973 - Ground breaking ceremony for new parsonage at 515 North Jackson Ave. Pastor John Mueller purchased the home from the church during his pastorate of 1979-1986

July 1973 - Congregation voted on sale of parsonage at 412 No. Cass Ave (was the parsonage from 1941 to 1973)

June 1974 - Sale of Study Center to Jack Baynes Family

1974 - 100th Anniversary Celebration of Springfield UMC

1986 - Purchased home on 217 So. Hoyt Ave. to be used as parsonage

Dec. 1986 - First Springfield Area Nativity Pageant held



Nov. 1987 - First Turkey Dinner Held (still an annual event)

1990 - An addition was added to the west side of the church building. The addition included an elevator, church office, pastor's study, and larger narthex area

1993 - Vonnie Pautzke organized a group of men in the congregation to present a re-enactment of the Last Supper. The drama was presented on Maundy Thursday for a number of years.

1998 - Stained glass window installed in narthex - a gift from Percy and Marge Hier in memory of Percy's parents & grandparents

1998 - Current Parsonage located on 414 So. Hoyt Ave. was purchased

1999 - 125th Anniversary Celebration of Springfield UMC

2003 - Springfield UMC became part of a three-point charge made up of Springfield, New Avon, and Morgan United Methodist Churches. Pastor Elaine Foote-Blum served as pastor.

2003- The church was named one of the benefactors of the estate of Bessie Church. This allowed the church to support various mission and ministry causes and other endeavors.

2010 - The church kitchen got a facelift

2017 - Christina Schwarzrock Van Batavia started a youth group in Springfield. It grew from two to forty-five students in a short time and continued until 2019

2018 - Springfield UMC became part of a two-point charge of Springfield and Sanborn United Methodist Churches. Pastor Rick Frederickson served as pastor

2021 - Partners with Christ was organized. The group assumed many of the projects and mission causes of the former United Methodist Women including the annual Turkey Dinner and Chow Mein Supper

2023 - Springfield UMC is part of a two-point charge of Springfield and Faith United Methodist Church in Sleepy Eye. Pastor Michael Baker serves both churches

# RECORD OF PASTORS.

NAMES	WHEN APPOINTED	WHEN REMOVED	REMARKS
H. J. Sappert.		Sept. 1924	
J. F. Van Camp.	Sept. 1924	Sept. 1926	
E. H. Kuehner.	Sept. 1926	Sept. 1932.	
W. F. Haesner	Sept. 1932	June - 1937	Retired at this time
John F. Graham	June 1937	Sept '43	U.S. Navy Chaplaincy
John Wm Rossiter	Nov 1943	June 1946	
Donald H. Walker	June 1946	June 1949	
Arthur H. Halter	June 1949	June 1952	retired at this time
W. R. Bell	Sept. 1, 1952	June 1956	
Bilbert H. Rogers	June 27, 1956	June 1968	retired
Marlowe S. Potter	June, 1968	June 1973	to Caledonia, Minn.
D. Price Lackey	June 30, 1973	June 1976	to St. Paul, Minn.
Paul W. Eaton	June 1976.	6-17-79	Retired
John E. Mueller	June 1979	June 1986	
Carl Douglas	June 1986	June 1991	to Elmore, MN
Robert Hunter	July 1991	June 1998	to Litchfield, Minn.
Arthur, Keith	June 1998	June 2003.	to Wells, MN
Elaine Footh-Burn	June 2003	July 2010	to Emily Lake, Minn.
David M Price	July 2010	June 2016	retired
Joshua P. Doughty	July 2016	June 2018	to Norway, Minn.
Rick Fredrickson	July 2018	June 2023	Marshall MN moved to Winona MN
Michael D Baker	July 2023		

"It is our purpose to encourage spiritual growth — through ministries of worship, prayer, service, education and caring fellowship — with the aim of making disciples of Jesus."

--Springfield UMC Mission Statement

# Our Stories and Memories

Thank you so much for helping us celebrate 150 years of ministry in Springfield!

One of the positive changes in our society over recent years is a revival of the lost art of storytelling. Stories are important because they connect us together and help us form bonds with each other. We share our experiences, and those stories become part of the fabric of our lives. They give us joy and wisdom and encouragement when we tell and retell our stories. Stories not only help us to share and remember our experiences, but they often contain powerful lessons that can be taught and deposited and passed down to younger generations.

Stories also put us on equal footing. There is no need for a degree or even expertise to tell a story. The only requirement for a story is having something to share. That is what this booklet is meant to do: to share and remember our stories, so that our experiences and the lessons we learned are not lost. We celebrate again when we read these stories and we remember the people and the events that have shaped us and our church family.



Whenever I mention history, it seems to me that people either freeze up or head in the opposite direction, because history has gotten a bad reputation. The focus all too often has been on names and dates and details, but ask someone to share a story, and their eyes light up and their body relaxes. They get to be the expert for a moment because it is their story and their history they get to tell.

People volunteered to tell their stories in this booklet and I thank them for it. Their generosity and courage are a blessing to us, because we do not want these stories or their spirit to fade away. 150 years of ministry is an achievement, and we should be proud of it, but we should not flip through these pages and celebrate what has already been done. We should celebrate the saints and their lives, and we should hope... we should strive for the next generation of ministry here. The stories and the saints cannot fade away; our heritage cannot be lost when people are being transformed by Jesus Christ through our church and the gathering of believers in it.

Few things will form a stronger bond than life experiences that are shared together. Remember that epic celebration? What about that colossal fail? How about the times you lent a helping hand or maybe the times you needed a hand yourself? History can and should be lived and not just read. God willing, there will be many more generations of ministry and love and fellowship to look forward to in this place God has planted us.

In Christ, Pastor Michael Baker



## In Memoriam:

### Ed and Vonnie Pautzke



This anniversary booklet would not be complete without including a tribute to Ed and Vonnie Pautzke. Ed was a life-long member of this church, and Vonnie joined after their marriage. Their lives were lived in service to God and spreading the Word in any way they could. Indeed, they were examples of "Faith in Action, Empowering Generations."

We remember Ed for his generosity in giving aid and support to people in dire circumstances; how his idea of a live nativity pageant turned into a community effort and continues to this day almost 40 years later; as a certified lay speaker ready and willing to provide pulpit supply on short notice; as our media center guru; and his willingness to serve as a Sunday School teacher, sing in the choir, and serve on many church and community committees.

We're grateful for Vonnie's musical talents as our Jr. and Sr. choir director for almost 50 years; her leadership in United Methodist Women and its Circles; St. John's Home Auxiliary; as our church kitchen lady (her mastery at mixing the Chow Mein gravy!); an encourager during hard and difficult situations; coordinator and director of the Last Supper drama; and her community involvement as well. She, along with Ed, had fun being part of a clown ministry.

Ed and Vonnie's legacy lives on in our congregation now, and will continue into the future.

## Our Nativity Scene

Feb - 4, 2011

The figures of the Nativity scene were a gift from Mrs. Wayne (Jesse) Patten. Her brother, George Specht, was in Europe during World War II. After the war he married an Italian girl, Flaminia?, & they lived in Italy from then on. Their daughter is still living there.

George sent these figures to his sister Jesse in 1946, 47, or 48.

She displayed them on her dining room buffet for several years.

But as her family grew with more & more grand-children, she was afraid one might get tipped or broken, so she gave them to the church.

Harold Davis or his father Wesley Davis built a fitting large wooden manger with a glass front for protection.

For many years the manger scene was put-up outside in front of the church at Christmas time by Ken & Mary Haker & Bud & Rene Patten. Then it was lovingly packed away for another year.



## Joyce Schwarzrock

September of 1987 was when I started working as the office administrator for Springfield UMC. Our pastor at the time was Rev. Cal Daniels. I clearly remember his words at my interview: “Anything you hear or see in the office is confidential. Breaking confidentiality will immediately get you fired.” Who could forget that, right?

It was in April 1999 when the church office was broken into, and the thieves found and took our little box safe from where it had been tucked away in a filing cabinet. That little safe contained the one and only membership book, so of course I was more than upset. About a week or so later, the pried-open safe was found in the Sleepy Eye Creek east of town, with the membership book wet, badly soiled and some pages loose on the creek bank. After drying out each individual page to assess the damage, the book was taken to a restorer so that as much data as possible could be retrieved and entered in a new book. It was a daunting task, but I didn’t rest easy until it was done.



Now, 37 years later, I reflect on the changes from the mimeograph machine and stencils to computers and instant access to information at my fingertips. Rev. Bob Hunter was our pastor and the brave man to introduce me to a computer, and horror of horrors that it was the DOS system I was supposed to learn! Fortunately we didn’t proceed with my learning at break-neck speed and soon Windows was born. That, I could relate to, and as I recall, I taught Bob a tidbit or two about Windows!

Following Bob was Art Keith, then Elaine Foote-Blum, David Price, Josh Doughty, Rick Frederickson, and now Michael Baker. All of our pastors came to Springfield UMC with gifts and graces unique to them. I’ve been the lucky one to work with them, as they have all made an impact on my life. All the lively discussions about almost anything, sharing times of sadness and times of joy, sharing thoughts on ministry or ways to approach a difficult situation have made my job so rewarding, interesting and fun.

I look forward to more years in the office, and yes, even to figuring out the mystery of working with our website! I’ll appreciate all the patience and some prayers on that one!

## Shirley Brand

Shirley remembers having two “cheerleaders” in the congregation when she played the organ for church during high school. Mrs. June Lartz and Mrs. Alice Wood would leave notes for her in the offering plate telling her what a good job she was doing. The ushers would take the notes to Shirley after the service was over. Shirley went off to college, got married, and moved out of the area. When the family moved back to Springfield, Shirley became the organist and was faithful to that calling for almost 50 years.



# The Old Communion Set

I'm not sure of the year that the Communion Set was purchased — (but I was born in 1910) — and I remembered it's use as a child. My parents were chosen to take care of it. We lived right across the street — so it was convenient for them. I remember my sister Harriet and I both loved to wipe the glasses — for they were just like tiny goblets! My mother always brought everything home to care for it — as there was, of course, no hot water in the church.

The old Methodist Episcopal church — had a center chancel — with pulpit and rounded rail. In front of the pulpit was a black walnut table. (I believe it is the one in the present church parlor) Flower arrangements etc could be put on it. On Communion Sunday it was covered with a square linen cloth — the trays with the wine and a silver (or chrome) plate covered with a doily — for the bread. The minister served both the bread & wine — and my father followed with the tray to pick up the glasses. The choir loft was on the East side of the chancel — and my father had extra glasses & bread <sup>more</sup> in case there was a big crowd. There was a pitcher — with a long and very narrow curved spout — used to fill the tiny glasses. My mother always scolded about it — for it was



impossible to clean properly (she thought)

The service was <sup>still</sup> used I know, when Rev. Knehaus was here - for then he relieved my father of the duty of collecting the glasses and Elmer Dicks was asked to do it. (I remember - because my father was rather "hurt" at the change.)

Rev. Knehaus was here when we built our present church - and perhaps that is when the new service was purchased.



Geraldine Bockman Ritzenthaler



**Our Organists, Pianists, and Choir Directors** – Geraldine Ritzenthaler, Bev Wood, Dagney Hinton, Vonnie Pautzke, Shirley Brand, John DeZeeuw, Nancy Hand, Jan Wilson, Julie Malmgren, Marlys Garness, Milly Mueller, Marlys Vanderwerf, Jane Tews, Cheryl Diede, Amy Lee, Joyce Schwarzrock

## **Duane & Barb Tomschin**

Duane recalled the church's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration when visiting pastors served Communion during one of the services. "When it was my turn [to receive the elements], Pastor John called me by name. I'll never forget that." He remembers the meaningful Last Supper drama presented on Maundy Thursdays for several years. Duane got a bit emotional when he talked about a particular Good Friday service. Pastor Art Keith used a block of wood and a spike to illustrate his sermon. "Everyone came forward and pounded the spike into the block of wood, symbolizing our sins pounded on the cross." He still remembers the sound of the hammer striking the nail. Sometime after that Duane was giving the Richert kids a ride home when he told them about the spike and block of wood. "They understood the message of that," he said.

Barb spoke highly of the Sunday School teachers. "My best teachers were Norm and Audrey Little in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. They were also MYF youth group leaders. There were about 20-30 kids, and sometimes we got to meet out at their farm." Sunday School Christmas programs were part of the Christmas Eve service. "Every kid had a piece, and it HAD to be memorized and recited in front of everybody." Bags of Christmas candy and an apple or orange were given out to the kids by Mr. and Mrs. Claus. (Their identity is still a closely guarded secret.)

Vonnie Pautzke was the Junior Choir director. She contacted the kids to see if they wanted to come to choir. "We wore white robes with red bows when we sang." Geraldine Ritzenthaler was the Senior Choir director. When students reached 9<sup>th</sup> grade, they were allowed to sing in Senior Choir. "Then we could go in the choir loft." Rev. Rogers and his wife spent Sunday afternoons visiting church members in their homes. Rev. Potter confirmed Barb in 1969. "He was good with kids because they had kids of their own... The class sat together {at worship} in the first row to take sermon notes."

## **The Study Center**

Barb's mom, Rose Lee, and her aunt, Fern Meine, were Sunday School superintendents. In 1968, they were involved in the purchase of the Study Center (formerly Hoyt Funeral Home across the street from the church) to fulfill the need for additional meeting space and Sunday School rooms because there were so many kids. Of course there was cleaning to be done before the place could be used, and you can only imagine their surprise to find a bat in a kitchen cupboard!

## **Gwen Sander Valentien**

SUMC is very special to us. I grew up going to Sunday school and was confirmed there. Terry and I were married there on October 5, 1991.

## Dave and Julie Lyle

Rev. Lackey married Dave and Julie in 1974. During Rev. Lackey's time in Springfield, a tape ministry got its start. The worship service was recorded on cassette tape, and a tape recorder with the cassette was rotated among our homebound members. That is until, as Dave says, "Ed Pautzke got us going with media. He knew everything," Dave said. Now Dave is highly involved with the media team.

"We love the candlelight services. And the church suppers are great to get together for bonding with the church family," says Julie. Dave talked about Melvin and Elsie Schwartz and Les and Marion Vanderwerf raising the chickens for the Chow Mein Supper. "Chickens were cut up and frozen in milk cartons" until time to start the supper preparations.

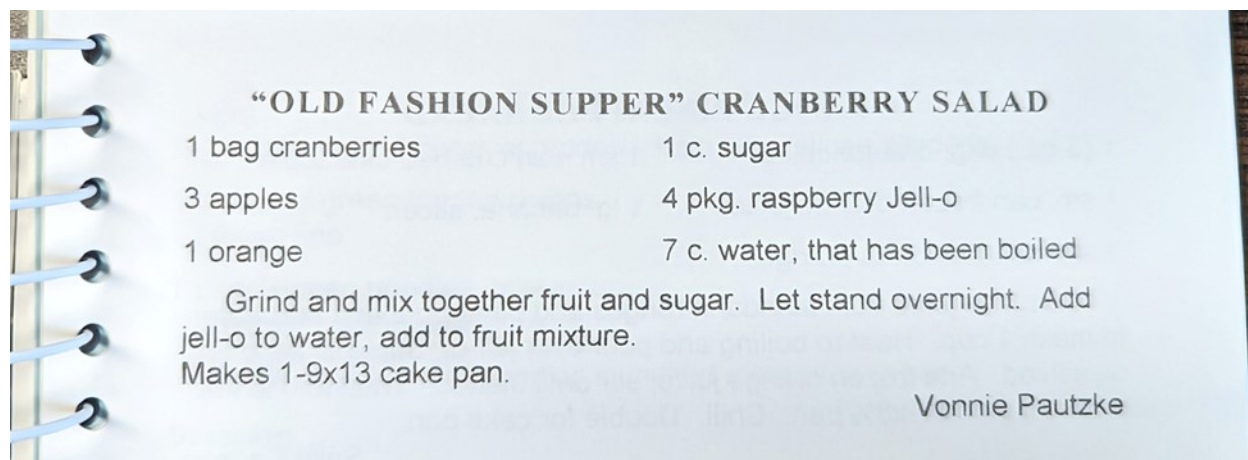
Some of life's experiences aren't always pleasant. Dave recalled going into the bell tower to paint the louvers, only to find that someone hadn't put the protective screens back in place. Consequently, the bell tower was full of evidence that birds had taken up residency! Dave didn't say whether or not he got that painting done.

Dave and Julie helped with youth group, and Julie taught Sunday school for several years. Kenneth Tews was one of Julie's teachers.

"Mom and I cut cakes for Chow Mein Supper and pies for Turkey Supper. We always enjoyed our times together. Poppyseed cake was in great demand and pecan pie was a special request," Julie said.

## The Old Fashion Supper

The Old Fashion Supper was a big event, although very little can be found about it. Of course all the food for a large menu was made "from scratch." Swedish meatballs, glorified rice, German potato salad, fried potatoes, cranberry salad and homemade pickles have been mentioned as favorites. Poppyseed cake was a big hit for dessert then, and continued to be for the Chow Mein suppers. Dorothy Simon, Elsie Schwartz, Ruth Maras, and Rose Lee were famous for their poppyseed cakes. Each had their own recipe with a slight difference from the others, and they were all delicious! There are three poppyseed cake recipes in the church's 1999 cookbook.







## Connie Pautzke May

I was baptized, confirmed and married in the United Methodist Church. I remember going to Sunday school and memorizing many Bible verses. Being in the Jr. and Sr. choir was always fun. We practiced most Wednesday nights and there was always something to laugh about, because we had a good group of people. My Mom couldn't always keep us in line, but she tried her best to put up with us.

I remember helping out with all of the different events and church suppers that were put on too.

## Lucy Potter

Dennis and I were married in December 1973. I started teaching Sunday School in the fall of 1974. Marion Vanderwerf and Orene Odom were the Sunday School superintendents. They asked me if I would be willing to help Marge Renner teach the pre-school class. I didn't realize by saying yes how much my spiritual life would change. After a few years I was the teacher and I had amazing youth helpers.

Being a Sunday School teacher means you have the opportunity to serve on the Education Committee, help with Rally Day, help with Bible School, help plan the Christmas program, work with the MYF, and many other activities the youth of the church were involved with.



I have many memories over the 45 years I taught. One Sunday I got a phone call from a mom of one of my students. She was questioning why we were talking about blood and bodies in Sunday School. I explained I was a communion steward and I took my class down to the basement to watch me prepare the communion elements for church. If our pastor was available on that Sunday I would also ask him/her to join us. It taught me to make sure I explain things thoroughly.

I knew Vonnie Pautzke loved to make buns. (She saved some of the chicken fat from cooking the chow mein chickens.) Our Sunday School lesson was about the Parable of the five loaves and the two fish. I asked Vonnie if she would share her talent of making buns with my class, and she said yes. We not only helped make the buns, we also enjoyed eating them after church with homemade jam.

Christmas was my favorite time for teaching Sunday School. So many activities — decorating the tree, Christmas program, Christmas carols, treats from secret Santa, nativity scene, giving and receiving gifts. I still hang the ornaments I got from my students on our tree today.

It takes the whole church to complete a Sunday School program. It takes the children, the congregation, the parents, the teachers and the pastor.

## Vicki Gould Kanne

I have many wonderful memories of the Springfield United Methodist Church. We gathered for Sunday School in the SW corner of the basement and sat on the little wooden benches. We started class by singing many songs. I remember singing *Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam*, *The B-I-B-L-E*, *Jesus Loves the Little Children* and *Jesus Loves Me*. On the stage there were dividers for three Sunday school rooms. My mom would tie a dime into the corner of my handkerchief so I wouldn't lose it before the offering was taken. We were given a Bible when we were in the third grade. Mine is still in use and inscribed by Reverend Gilbert Rogers, Sept. 11, 1966. In the summer we had a week of Bible school. We would study scripture, do craft activities and play games like Duck-Duck-Gray-Duck on the front lawn of the church. I had many great Sunday school teachers over the years, including Dorothy Simon and Orene Odom and Marianne LeFebre and Sally Carlson. My classmates, who were the same age, were David Simon, Debbie Carlson, Susan Wood, Larry LeFebre, Mark Gaffney, Mary Gentz, and Karen Dalstrom. When we were older we had classes at the Study Center across the street... the old Hoyt Funeral Home. The garage off of the kitchen was our classroom. We got to paint the walls very 70's themed.

Wednesday evening at the church was Junior Choir practice. I was torn about attending choir because I wanted to stay home and watch *Lost in Space* on CBS. Our wonderful Junior Choir director was Vonnie Pautzke. We worked on two part music. I remember sitting next to Connie Pautzke. I was amazed at what a good alto she was. We had short white choir robes with big red bows. The staircase from the basement to the old choir loft (where the altar is now) was very steep and scary!

The Christmas pageants stand out in my mind. We would process from the back of the church singing *Joy to the World*. The children all had a line or two of memory work to recite. We would have actors for the manger scene. When I was in Kindergarten I got to dress up as an angel and stand in the Sr. Choir loft to preside over the Christmas story. I remember wearing a white gown with golden foil wings. We all got a bag of peanuts and hard candy and an apple after the service. The Senior Choir was directed by the very talented Mrs. Geraldine Ritzenthaler.

When we got older we were released on Wednesday from public school for an hour of religion during the day. This was for confirmation class when Reverend Marlowe Potter was our pastor.

The MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship) was a fun social group for the older kids. We would have our Halloween party at church, and we also had a Progressive Supper where each course of the meal was served at a different home location. Barbecue sandwiches at Little's farm stands out in my mind. The youth also helped serve and bus tables at the annual Chow Mein Supper. We would wear our fancy chiffon aprons to serve the delicious bowls of Chow Mein, and the many different kinds of cake, cut in rectangles and arranged on platters. My mom was always in charge of making the egg coffee for church events.

I am grateful to have had the Springfield United Methodist Church provide a solid foundation for my lifetime of spiritual growth.

## Deb Carlson Beyer

- I was baptized at SUMC on Sunday, January 26, 1958 on my mother's birthday.
- I remember being in the basement for Sunday School sitting on tiny benches by the piano singing: Jesus Loves the Little Children, Jesus Loves Me This I Know and This Little Light of Mine as well as passing the collection plate for Sunday School.
- I remember the yearly Christmas re-enactment of Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus, the wisemen and shepherds.
- I remember MaryAnn LeFebvre singing "Silent Night" in German (her native tongue) during one of the women's Christmas programs.
- I remember the bazaars in church basement, in the fall I believe, where the ladies made and sold items like bakery goods, beaded tree ornaments, etc.
- I remember confirmation classes - called "Released Time" from school on Tuesday morning and we met in the basement of the Study Center.
- I remember how much fun Vacation Bible School was. It lasted from 8:30 to about 2:00. We ate there and played and did crafts and played outside. It was always held the week after school got out.
- I remember having Saturday night church services in the Study Center (maybe for one summer only).
- I remember being taught how to be an acolyte and we wore short white robes.
- I remember being in Jr. Choir and Vonnie was our director and the Sr. choir sang in the choir loft.
- I remember Boyd Newton, the janitor, yelling at us kids to get inside (for choir) PDQ ☹.
- I remember waitressing for the Old Fashion Supper. I remember the meatballs and glorified rice.
- I remember beautiful Rene Potter being the Chow Mein Supper hostess in a kimono that she brought back from her trip to Japan.
- I remember my confirmation class and the celebration of being confirmed. The professional pictures afterwards followed by a celebration at home in honor of me.
- I remember being in a women's Christmas program and I was St. Lucia. I had a crown of real dripping candles on my head!
- I remember World Day of Prayer at our church on several occasions.
- I remember confirmation kids passing out in front back in the 60's when they had to recite things from memorization!
- I remember teaching Sunday School while I was in high school.
- My mom started the church library and I was her typist when we got the books catalogued and ready to put on the shelves. It was A LOT of work but fun to help her.
- I remember when my husband was in the Last Supper drama. It was wonderful and so meaningful.
- I remember Barb and Duane Tomschin giving each Sunday School child a Christmas Treat Bag.
- I remember, vividly, when I started a small fire on the stove in the furnace room, getting ready for the Turkey Supper!!! I had set the potato drill on top of the electric range not remembering I had turned the stove on to make sure the burners all worked. They did!!!
- I remember going to MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship) on Sunday nights.
- I remember waitressing at the Father-Son Banquet a few times and I believe Karl Kassulke, a Vikings player, gave the presentation once.
- I remember the Mother-Daughter Banquets and going to them every year.



## **Rev. Art Keith (1998-2003)**

It is with thankfulness that I can figuratively wind back the clock to our time in Springfield and find so many positive memories of significance. Probably many others of more private or idiosyncratic nature.

We arrived in Springfield in 1998. This was only months after the Comfrey tornado that devastated much of Comfrey and created an immediate need for alternate housing. Springfield UMC did not, at the time, have a parsonage but had provided housing via annual housing allowances. With my family's arrival, there was a need for a parsonage. The immediate problem was that suitable available housing was scarce and high priced in Springfield because of the tornado. Nonetheless, a very fine home on Hoyt Avenue was found and purchased as a parsonage. However, to be suitably habitable for our family and future families, the basement had to be finished. That meant creating two bedrooms with large exit windows, a full bath and a family room. As a family, we deeply appreciated the commitment of the congregation to do a first-class job of the whole project, and to get it done as quickly as possible. As to other touches, a whole swarm of people helped with repainting the rooms upstairs. In my mind's eye, I can remember several members on their stepladders, dutifully stretching out their paint brushes around door trims and ceiling wall transitions. It was all a sign of the caring our family came to expect from the congregation during our stay.

1998 also came with a different surprise, planning for the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the congregation scheduled for the next year. My memory is a little fuzzy as what role I had in all that, but I remember us inviting Bishop John Hopkins and quite a number of predecessor pastors to the main event. I remember the ladies of the church quilting the history of the church's clergy, whose names were all stitched in the many panels.

As pastor, it was fun to see the level of vitality in the congregation. One area that meant a lot to me was the great participation I got in support of the confirmation program. While the program I put together didn't stay the same through 5 years, it did retain one key component. The students were each matched with adult mentors who willingly embraced the opportunity of giving personal support to the particular student they would most closely partner with. I don't know how many mentors that ended up being, but I was impressed by that level of service, commitment and support being given. Both of our daughters benefited directly by having terrific mentors. I might add that while confirmation content is inherently important, my experience taught me that faith is nurtured in the power of the Holy Spirit, and through relationships in which ideas and questions can be safely tested and explored. That is why I was so eager to recruit mentors for the students. I was hoping to see faith engaged at a little deeper level than just learning (and maybe forgetting) important stuff. Trying to help faith grow in the heart was the goal.

One fun memory caught me by surprise. Some of the men of the church asked for a Lenten Bible study one year. And more surprisingly, as Lent was coming to an end, they asked me if we could keep the study going, which we did and did and did until it was just what the every week breakfast study at Ruby's did. It touched a spiritual and social need and felt very rewarding. My initial proposal

was to take some key Greek word concepts and spread them out one per week, such as the word “agape” (love). Based on a resource I had, I then prepared a basic definition of the word, and then listed many of the important Bible references in which each word/concept was found. We would then read the relevant scriptures in our Bibles and then discuss the meaning in greater depth based on the readings. Upon Lent concluding that year, I then prepared a number of other such lessons. But eventually the leadership of the study and the resources used were more actively determined by the whole group, while I took a lesser role. With food, fellowship and faith practices, the study stayed pretty strong.

Another significant series of memories revolved around the very positive Springfield Ministerial relationships. Never before nor after have I experienced such a readiness of the local clergy to work and pray and plan together. After the tragedy of 9/11, while I was attending a conference committee in the Cities, I quickly returned to Springfield to help put together a community prayer service at the high school. While that should not be surprising, the fact that clergy with very different traditions came so seamlessly together to help the community pray and grieve and find support after such an event does not happen everywhere. But the mutual respect and trust of the Springfield clergy made this possible.

There were two other notable memories that were driven by the Ministerial Association on behalf of the whole community. One was the study, Lifekeys, which followed a plan to help participants better explore, understand and claim their own spiritual gifts. While I had a lead role in the event, the teaching leadership was broadly shared, and had the same goal of helping all of our participants more fully and faithfully live out our Christian discipleship. The second initiative came later and was aimed at outreach for high school youth. Eventually, we had access to before school meetings at the Garage, for a time of Christian witness and youth fellowship and food, appropriately given the name, Jumpstart. The clergy would generally take turns being present at each of these weekly gatherings.



## *Chow Mein Supper, 2001*

Per the 52nd Annual Chow Mein supper notes, the weather was “lousy.” It was the day before the Chow Mein supper when the cooks were assembling the roasters and tables were being set. Everything was ready to go, including a snow storm! Marion Vanderwerf and Sharon Lang both lived in the country, and decided that if they could make it into town the next morning, we would proceed with the supper. They showed up at Joyce Schwarzrock’s door at 8 a.m. “We’re here!” Everything in town was closed down by early afternoon, except the United Methodist Church. Some supper workers were not able to get in, and some who got to town had trouble getting home or stayed in town. A total of 329 meals were served either at the church, taken out, or delivered. John Maras had sold lots of advance tickets, which helped the profit to reach about \$1,900!

## **Rev. Marlowe and Jean Potter (1968-1973)**

We would so much like to join you in your observance of 150 years in the Springfield community and history. However, Marlowe (93) and I (Jean—91) do not drive. In our little era (1968-1973) we were a busy household with four children — David, Carol, John, and Mary Beth. Now David is retired from consulate service {in many places around the world}; Dr. Carol, a pediatric gastroenterologist, will retire this year; John retired from IT at Rochester Mayo; and Mary Beth is a physical therapist in Sioux Falls, SD.

The Potters deeply enjoyed their years at Springfield, occupying the Study Center and planning a new parsonage (lots of building committee meetings and viewings of houses. Marlowe presided over groundbreaking ceremony the last Sunday we were there), embracing school and community activities along with shepherding the United Methodist congregation. The first Sunday there we thought we had overslept when we heard church bells ringing but it was St. Paul's Lutheran.... There was a cordial pastors group when we were there. Can't remember all the names but Father Bernie and Father Curt Schreiner, Pastor Paulus Pilgrim from St. Paul's, Pastor Raymond was another Lutheran and also the pastor from Missouri Synod.... One year a high school private party caused a suspension of high school activities. The churches organized a program musical involving youth and even presented it on Mankato TV channel. ... We all appreciated the music. Kids would stop at Aunt Jesse's after choir for a dilly bar with her grandkids. Carol remembered the great pipe organ and the choir director.... Marlys Vanderwerf was a good secretary!

Our prayer is for many more years of proclamation of Jesus' presence in love by the Springfield UMC. May your celebrations this year be filled with joy and hope. Blessings to you all!

## **Rev. Bob Hunter (1991-1998)**

Two unusual events came to mind as Bob thought about his years at SUMC. "The year that we did the Last Supper play — because of a power outage at the brick manufacturing place, we had to do it with just candles." That created a realistic atmosphere!

Bob also recalled a memorable wedding he officiated at the Sod House on the Prairie located in the country west of Springfield. "A supper was served, and then I married the couple and they spent the night there."



150 years of Professions of Faith and Baptisms

150 years of worship and praise, celebrations, and sharing grief

150 years of growing in love of God and neighbor

150 years of reaching new people for Christ and healing a broken world.

## John Folsom

### Confirmation Class of 1973

I am not sure Pastor Potter was prepared for our group of misfits. He was such a nice man, patient, caring and most of all devout. Our class of young Methodists was mostly interested in what was behind the altar and under the organ which made for an interesting test of wills.

Rev. Potter stood his ground and got us to participate. Our attention spans then were the same as any 14-year-old today, but this was not his first rodeo and he handled us with just the right amount of disappointment and positive reinforcement. Potter's message was clear and consistent: Jesus will walk with you throughout your life. Believe in this and you will never walk alone. That message is a powerful one that I will always remember.

## Doug Meine

Walter Meine and Fern Kirschstein were married at Springfield United Methodist Church on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1951. Fern was "given away" by her father Alfred Kirschstein. Fern and Walter went on to have four boys, all of whom were baptized and went through confirmation at SUMC. Douglas was born in 1953, Tony in 1955, Ronald in 1957 and John in 1964.

Doug remembers singing in church choir in the 'choir loft' at the front of the church in his later teen years. Vonnie Pautzke was the choir director, and her husband Eddie was also in the choir.

His grandparents, Alfred Kirschstein and Gertie Kirschstein, had funeral services in 1998 at SUMC. His father, Walter Meine, also had his funeral service there in 2016. "Because of COVID, we had a family gathering for my mother's funeral service at the funeral home (versus the church) in February 2022. The SUMC minister held the service."



Confirmation class 1967: Back, starting from left: Rev. Gilbert Rogers, Laura Helleloid, Bill Potter, Doug Meine, Cheryl Marks, Debbie Besse; Front from left: Gary Pautzke, Gayle Block, Debra Moe, Sharon Karl, Kay Gentz, Julie Schwartz.



**Turkey Dinner** — another "lost power" story. At the height of the activity, the lights went out, so a search for candles ensued. A bunch of men headed outside to their vehicles and moved them to the east side of the building so their headlights shined into the fellowship hall. Kiera Lafferty got stuck in the elevator, but fortunately Jim Potter, our custodian, was with her to keep her calm and was able to holler out instructions on how to manually lower the elevator. It was quite a night! A squirrel had chewed through some wiring on the transformer in the alley behind the church.



## Louise Helleloid Anderson

My parents, Trygve and Doris Helleloid, were members of the Springfield United Methodist Church from the late 1940's to their deaths in 2011 and 2014. My siblings and I all grew up in the church. I was the youngest and graduated from H.S. in 1977.

One Sunday at church, I had a lesson in giving and giving generously. Decision Hills was a Methodist church camp in Spicer, MN from 1954-2013. One Sunday, there was a fundraising appeal for the camp. As high school students, two of us were asked to speak for the appeal. After the service, someone came up and handed me a check for Decision Hills. I glanced at the check and thought \$50. That was nice of them to give. Then, I glanced again. The check to Decision Hills was \$500! That person's generosity made a huge impression on me for giving and giving generously.

In my adult life, I have been a band director, elementary music teacher, and a church music director. The Springfield Methodist church gave me a safe place to start using my musical gifts. It also gave me role models for music. Here are examples of both:

- Playing a piano duet with my sister for special music.
- Singing with the junior choir and sometimes accompanying a song on piano or flute.
- Singing with the senior choir. Cathy LeFebre, Marty Little, Lonnie Brand, and I were the youth in the choir at the time (mid-1970's). Eddie Pautzke made choir fun.
- Vonnie Pautzke was always a kind, patient, and devoted choir director. (As an adult, I was always a little afraid of committing to be the church choir director because of Vonnie's example of 50+ years of commitment as the choir director.)
- At the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, one of the people that came back was Mary Denzine. She was a flute player and had arranged a flute part to go with the hymns. I was impressed.

Other memories include:

- Praying with Cathy LeFebre and Laura Peters at a prayer vigil.
- Eating Fritos and Hostess Snowballs from my packed lunch at Bible School.
- Listening to Pastor Potter's sermons. (His sermons were about 15 minutes long, had three points, and were good spiritually as well as good public speaking examples.)
- Listening to Pastor Lackey's paper bag sermons.
- My sister's wedding and my wedding.
- The support the congregation gave to my parents as they aged.

Congratulations on the church's 150 years and may there be many more to come.

## Glenn and Mary Ellison

I (Mary) grew up in the church. I was baptized by Rev. Bell and confirmed by Rev. Gilbert Rogers. Our son James was baptized on Palm Sunday 1988 by Rev. Cal Daniels.

The church has always been a warm, comforting and inviting place. As a child I attended Sunday School in the upstairs classrooms. I remember the elementary classes all gathering together in the east classroom where we would have a children's message, sing, take a collection and then would be dismissed to our individual classrooms. As I grew I attended classes in the basement classroom near the kitchen and eventually we held our classes in the Study Center across the street.

During Advent the church was always a magical place with the smell of pine and the beautifully decorated Christmas tree and sanctuary. On Christmas Eve, I remember filing in with our Sunday School class and were seated in the front pews with our teacher. Some students were chosen to portray the nativity. One year my sister Vicki was chosen to be the angel and stood in the front row of the choir loft overlooking the nativity scene. When it was time for our portion of the program our class would file to the front of the church and would each take a turn stepping to the microphone and reciting our piece from memory. I remember several times receiving small gifts from the church given to us by our teacher. One year it was a glow-in-the-dark cross which still hangs in our home today. Other years we received a small standing glow-in-the-dark Jesus and a gold colored metal praying hands book marker. In 1967 we received a paperback Bible called "Good News for Modern Man." I'm not sure if that was given at Christmas or not. This was in addition to the Bible we received in third grade. As I grew I helped with vacation Bible school and it seems like it was longer in duration than it is now – perhaps it was two weeks long. During our snack time we would have Kool-Aid and cookies and play games on the church lawn.

I also sang in the choir. Practice was on Wed evenings at 7:30 p.m. Junior Choir Director at that time was Vonnie Pautzke and Senior Choir Director was Geraldine Ritzenthaler. The choir loft was raised in the front of the church. We put our robes on in the basement and climbed the steep stairs from the basement to the loft. Of course, we were on our best behavior, at all times, since we were observed by the entire congregation.

On Thursday mornings we would be released from school to attend our confirmation classes at church. We would walk back and forth and were back in school at 9:30. Our classes were held around a long table in the back of the church.

For a portion of the summer, when we owned the Study Center, the church services were held there for a month when attendance was at its lowest. One year I was asked to play piano for the hymns. I wasn't very good at it but we made it through.

I attended UMYF (United Methodist Youth Fellowship). We met monthly for various activities. We waited tables for the church dinners that were served family style. We were asked to wear an apron of our own choosing. We enjoyed progressive dinners and went caroling at Christmas time. One event in particular that I remember was attending a movie put out by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association at the Redwood Falls Theater. At the end of the movie there was a call to come forward just like at Rev Graham's crusades. I remember being tearful and going forward. It was a very poignant moment in my Christian life. When I got back to my seat, leader Audrey Little sat with me and spoke about the impact of the event and became a spiritual mentor for me. I believe that Vonnie Pautzke was there as well.

Glenn and I moved our family back to Springfield in 1994. Glenn had been raised in and attended Lutheran churches. Since I was already a member of the Springfield United Methodist Church he agreed to join. We attended the membership classes together and he became a member.





## Anchor—Christina Schwarzrock Van Batavia

Christina (Schwarzrock) Van Batavia didn't know it at the time she started a new youth group on February 18, 2016, but she was living into what became the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary theme of "Faith in Action, Empowering Generations." With a hope and passion in her heart to lead kids to Christ, she launched Anchor with just two kids at their first gathering, one of whom was her niece. Christina's husband Taylor often reminded her what Matthew 18:20 says, "...where two or more are gathered in my name..." Every week thereafter, on Wednesday nights, and then Sunday nights, Anchor grew from two kids to an ecumenical group of 45+ students ranging from 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade. They shared a family meal together, played games, worshipped together, and heard a weekly message from Christina that met them where they were in their young teenage lives. Through lock-ins, bonfires and night games at the VB's, serving as clean-up crew for church suppers, learning every crevice where to hide for their favorite game Sardines, and serving on a big mission trip to San Francisco, the Anchor kids found a home within SUMC and their Anchor family.

Sadly, Anchor came to an end in July 2019 when Christina and Taylor moved to Marshall where Christina was hired as the fulltime Director of Children & Youth Ministry at Cornerstone Church. Indeed, many young lives were touched by the hand of God through this outreach ministry, both youth and adults alike. "We have this hope as an ANCHOR for our soul, firm and secure." Hebrews 6:19



## Partners with Christ — Putting our faith into action

As of December 31, 2020 the local unit of United Methodist Women disbanded and for the first time in a very long time, the church was without an organized women's group. Feeling the need to carry on supporting the projects and ministries of our UMW, but with a more localized emphasis, a group of several women met with Pastor Rick on Jan. 26, 2021 to start the conversation of where do we go from here. By the end of that meeting, Partners with Christ was born. We had a name. From there a mission statement was developed and Ephesians 2:10 became the focus verse.

What's happened since then: *Fundraisers:* Annual Chow Mein Supper, plant sale, and Turkey Dinner; Christmas Basket silent auction. Also challenged the congregation to match \$1500 toward the second new furnace. *School-Church Partnership Grant* through the Conference enabled us to give a new book to every child Pre-K through 6th grade at Springfield Public, St. Raphael Catholic, and Comfrey Public Schools. *Monetary contributions and product donations* were made to Emma Norton Services, Springfield Area Food Shelf, St. John Lutheran Home, NUMAS Haus in New Ulm, \$500 to the church roof expense, in 2023 contributed 100% of the Chow Mein Supper profit to the church's general fund, awarded camperships to two youth not affiliated with our church, contributed to housing need for an adult not affiliated with our church, paid for new curtains at the parsonage and continue to pay for the subscription to Upper Room devotional. *Care packages for teachers and staffs* at Springfield and Comfrey schools are distributed during back-to-school teacher workshop days; *Christmas caroling to shut-ins*; *Prayer Board* for congregational prayer requests.

## **Gerrit Molenaar — former District Superintendent (1989-1997)**

The congregation has a proud record of faithful service to the Springfield community, and we do send our congratulations upon this achievement. Our prayer for you is that you all may continue to serve faithfully, and celebrate this wonderful occasion with thanksgiving in your hearts, and the determination for continued service.

In Christ: Gerrit and Jean Molenaar

## **Rufus Campbell — former District Superintendent (2003-2011)**

The Campbell's have very fond memories of Springfield, MN - especially the Springfield United Methodist Church.

When the Minnesota Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church appointed Rufus to become the District Superintendent of the (then) Southwest District, we had little idea of what it would be like for two people of Color to live in a rural community of approximately 2,200 souls. It did not take long to find out. Several members of the congregation stopped by the district office to warmly welcome us, and we gained several lifelong friends in the process. It was hard to come up with the one fond memory of Springfield UMC, but we finally decided on one.

We believe it was Shirley Brand or Rose Lee who invited us to participate in the annual Chow Mein Supper. Carolyn helped debone chicken and assisted with keeping tables orderly the night of the event. Rufus helped to deliver dinners and cleanup after. Sometimes it took Rufus awhile to return to the church because he enjoyed meeting so many people in the community and had to spend a few minutes chatting – sometimes about what it was like to live in Springfield, sometimes about the state of the Minnesota Annual Conference, and even how many meals have gone out the door already. Both of us were tired as were so many others who had dedicated their time and resources to make a successful event happen, and all enjoyed the conversations shared and the pleasure of seeing so many nourished. Carolyn said her feet were tired from walking around the fellowship hall, but her hands remained baby soft for several weeks after deboning chicken. We have been searching for good Chow Mein ever since.

It is truly an honor to celebrate this 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with all of you.

Rev. Rufus and Carolyn Campbell

## **Phil Strom — former District Superintendent (2011-2015)**

To the Springfield UM Church — Phil and I have good memories of our visits to the church both as attendees and guests. A special memory was the Sunday that Phil and I showed up with 8 of our 11 grandchildren (we had to bring 2 cars to church to fit them all), ages 15 mo to 9 but the crew was quite a sight and quickly activity bags were dropped into our pew and lots of smiles as we attempted coffee time as they saw cookies!

Many wishes for a great celebration!

Our best, Phil & Alice Strom

(Phil died August 26, 2024. Blessed be his memory.)



# Empowering Generations













*Thank you to all who contributed to this 150th Anniversary booklet. Your memories and stories reflect where we have been, and by the grace of God, how we can impact our future.*

*The History Committee:*

*Deb Beyer, Cheryl Diede and Joyce Schwarzrock*