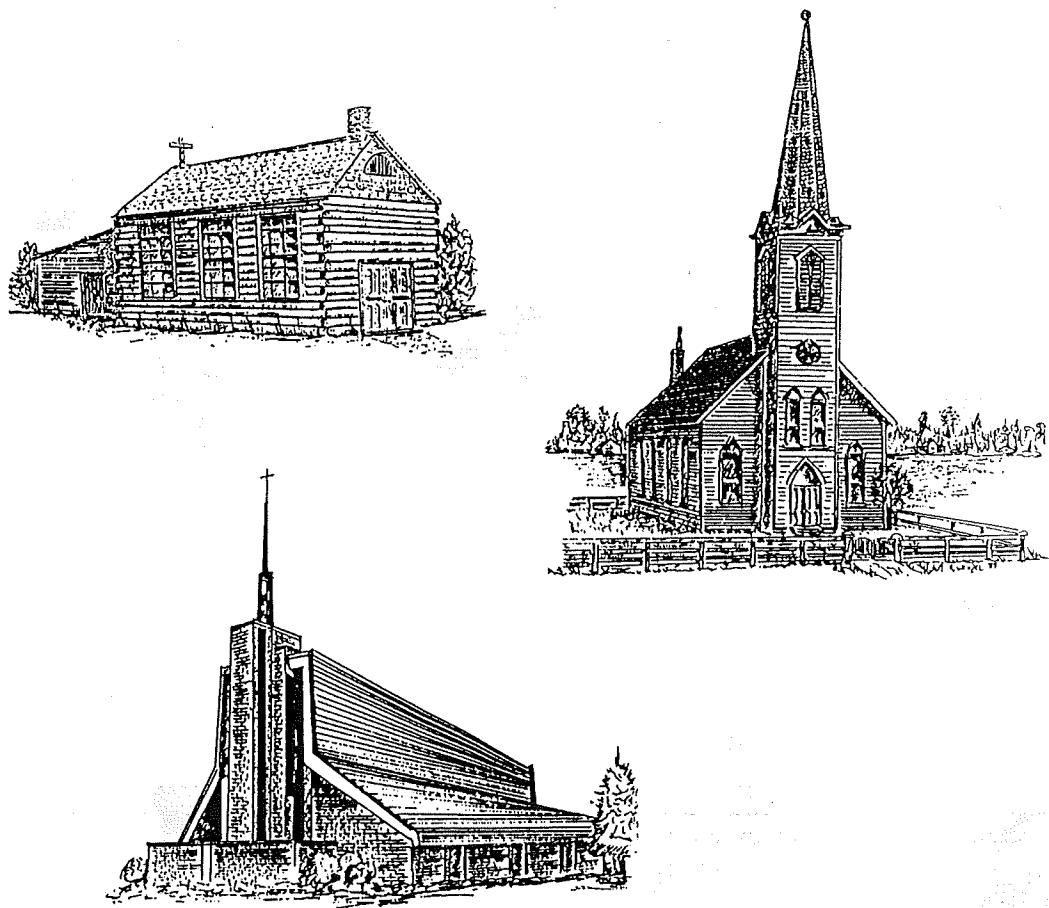


Frankenbilk

150 Years of Heritage

1851 - 2001



St. Michael's Lutheran Church
Richville, Michigan
2001

Hitherto The Lord Has Helped Us.
1 Samuel 7:12



Acknowledgments:

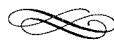
Writers of the previous historical books:

50th Anniversary Book
by Teacher Putz

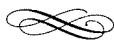
75th Anniversary Book
by Pastor Bekemeier

100th Anniversary Book

125th Anniversary Book Frankenhilf
by Ludwig Bernreuter



Thanks to Pastor Hakes, Pastor Gillaspie, and Julie James for their help and encouragement, and to Carl Hoerlein, Herman Schnell, Roland Sigelko, George Moser, and Don Diedrich for the information given to me during our visits. Also, thanks to the representatives of the different boards and organizations and any others who helped by giving me information.



*Compiled
by
Waldo Roedel*

Forward

As we stand in this place now called Richville, we count our blessings as we think back 150 years to when our pioneer forefathers stood on this same ground and called this place in the forest *Frankenhilf*, thanking and praising the Lord with *Bis hieher hat mich Gott geholfen*, “Hitherto the Lord has helped us.” In the year 2001, as we thank the Lord for the many blessings He has showered on our church and community, can we imagine the anxieties of those settlers as they stood among the trees and swamps? They didn’t look back, but forward -- a day, a month, a year, or more. Dare we look ahead ten, fifty, or even one hundred years and expect that these blessings will continue to be showered upon us? Yes; as long as we keep God’s greatest commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” If we do that and put our trust in our Heavenly Father, He will continue to bless this church and community.

Life was hard in Germany in the mid 1800’s. Young couples found it almost impossible to marry and start families because land ownership was required as a prerequisite for marriage. People searched for an opportunity to better themselves and the Lord who brings both poor and good times used Pastor Wilhelm Loehe to encourage some to settle in an uninhabited wilderness in the new world. They would not have moved had they been content in Franken, Germany. Had they known in advance the hardship they would endure, would they have been willing to take on this task? But with the Lord leading and giving strength, especially spiritual strength, how could they fail in coming to America to further His Kingdom, doing mission work in a new and unsettled wilderness?

In the spring of 1850, a number of families led by Pastor Herman Kuehn left Memmingen, Germany for America to found the fourth Franken colony in Michigan. As they came to Michigan, however, they divided -- some stayed in Monroe and some stayed in Detroit. The largest group left to join other settlements in the lower Saginaw area. Of the original prospective colonists, only Carl Gottlieb Amman and Michael Schwarz arrived in Frankenhilf in June of 1850.

Earlier, when Pastor Friedrich C. D. Wyneken heard that Pastor Loehe had started the Franken colonies with Frankenmuth in 1845, he had said, “*Gott sei dank! Es gibt noch mehr Lutheraner in America! Neue Hoffnung beselte ihn fuer die Kirche dieses Landes, ich siehe es tag werden, nach finsterer Nacht.*” (Thank God there are more Lutherans in America! New hope inspires me for the church of this land. I can see daylight after the dark night.) What comfort and strength these new settlers gained hearing thoughts and concerns of fellow Lutherans like this!

The Settling of Frankenhilf

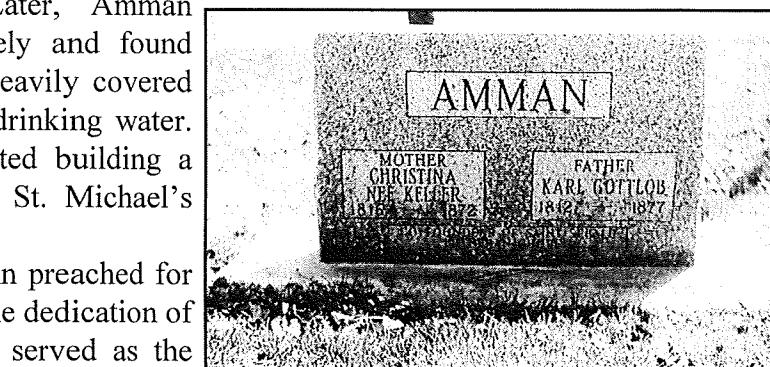
Pastor Sievers of Frankenlust was instructed by Pastor Loehe to purchase land for a fourth colony. With Pastor Craemer of Frankenmuth, he purchased about 1,600 acres of land northeast of Frankenmuth and east of Frankentrost on the Cheboygan River for \$1.25 an acre. The funds came from the Colonization Capital Fund which had already served in organizing the three other Saginaw Valley colonies.

On Monday, June 10, 1850, Amman looked at some land in the middle of that parcel and chose a building site. He had Michael Schwarz and his hired man, Kaiser, begin clearing the site and building a hut. Later, Amman inspected the land more closely and found another building area not too heavily covered by trees near a creek of clear drinking water. He bought 160 acres and started building a cabin on what is now part of St. Michael's cemetery.

On August 17, Pastor Kuehn preached for the first time in Frankenhilf at the dedication of the Amman home, which also served as the worship center for the colonists. With only two families at Frankenhilf, Pastor Kuehn could not be supported and later in August, 1850, he visited in Monroe. While there, the Synod directed him to Illinois to help an ailing pastor. He accepted a Call to a congregation in Illinois, leaving Frankenhilf without a spiritual advisor.



St. Michael's Cemetery



St. Sebald, Iowa

In June, 1851, Michael Gruber and his wife arrived, and that fall, Pastor Johannes Deindoerfer arrived with three more families. On the Second Sunday in Advent, he conducted the first divine service in the Amman home. This marked the founding of St. Michael's as a congregation. During 1852 and 1853, fifteen more families joined the colony. Clearing the land for farming and building houses and barns became easier with more hands to help. The colonists also worked together to build a road connecting with other settlements.

In 1853, the colonists numbered twenty families and the Amman home was no longer large enough for their worship services. They decided to build a church on four acres of land, donated by Mr. Amman. This log church was twenty-five feet wide and thirty-six feet long. Before it was completed and dedicated, doctrinal differences between Pastor Loehe and the Missouri Synod surfaced and Pastor Deindoerfer sided with Loehe. In September of 1853, Loehe resigned his association with St. Michael's of Frankenhilf and then Deindoerfer, together with Amman and his family, left for Iowa where

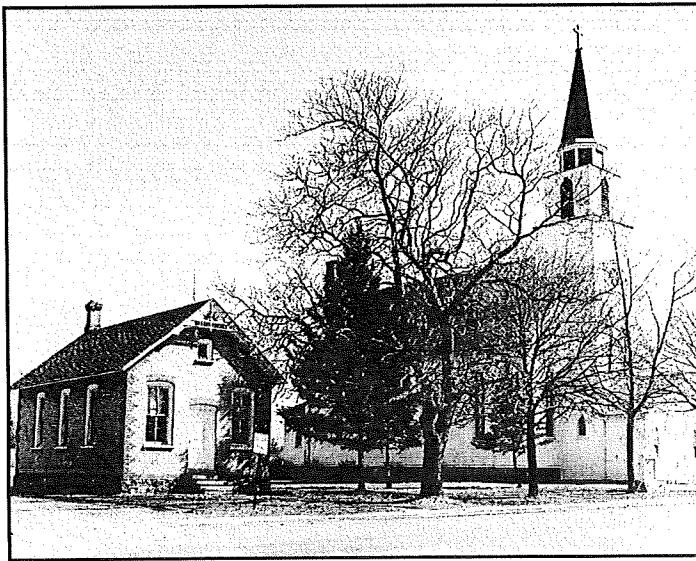
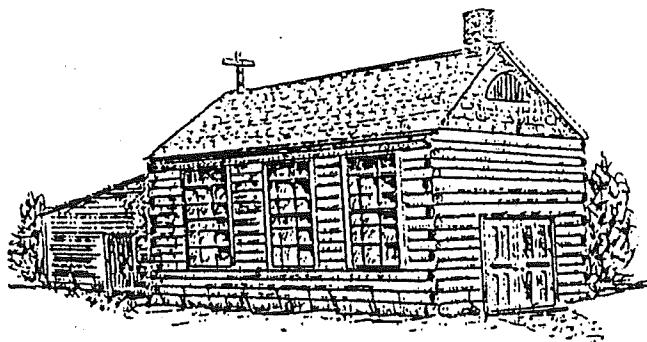
he took part in forming the Iowa Synod.

On the last Sunday in September, the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, 1853, the new church was dedicated to the Lord with Pastor Sievers of Frankenlust conducting the service. Pastors Graebner, Sievers, Dicke, and Eisfelter served St. Michael's on a part time basis until 1862. As the community grew, it needed a full time pastor. The congregation called Pastor G. Bernthal from Kankakee, Illinois. He accepted and was installed April 1, 1862. To provide for the children's spiritual training, in 1863, a room was added to the log church, enabling Pastor Bernthal to teach school during the first years of his ministry at St. Michael's. Having grown to thirty-five families, the need for a larger house of worship was apparent and a new sanctuary east of the log church was built. The size of the new church was 75 feet long and 40 feet wide with a

full balcony on both sides, an altar niche of 20 feet, and a tower and steeple 110 feet high.¹ The church seated 500. It was dedicated on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, the last Sunday of September, 1875. Pastor Sievers conducted the dedication service. That afternoon, Pastor Partenfelder of Bay City conducted a service with an English sermon. With Pastor Bernthal as shepherd, St. Michael's continued to grow.

In his fifty year ministry at St. Michael's, Pastor Bernthal never missed a church service due to illness

and it is said that he never owned or drove a horse and buggy, but was taken on his home calls by church members. In 1912, he retired because of advanced age. A call was then extended to Pastor William Bekemeier of Arcadia, Michigan. He accepted and was installed on Sunday, May 5, 1912. Under his leadership, St. Michael's experienced more growth and strengthening. Christenlehre, which had been conducted Sunday afternoons, was now included in the morning service. It was decided in May, 1931 to conduct an English service every third Sunday of the month in the evening. Pastor Bekemeier's ministry was outstanding in his faithful support of missions and the work of Synod. After serving St.

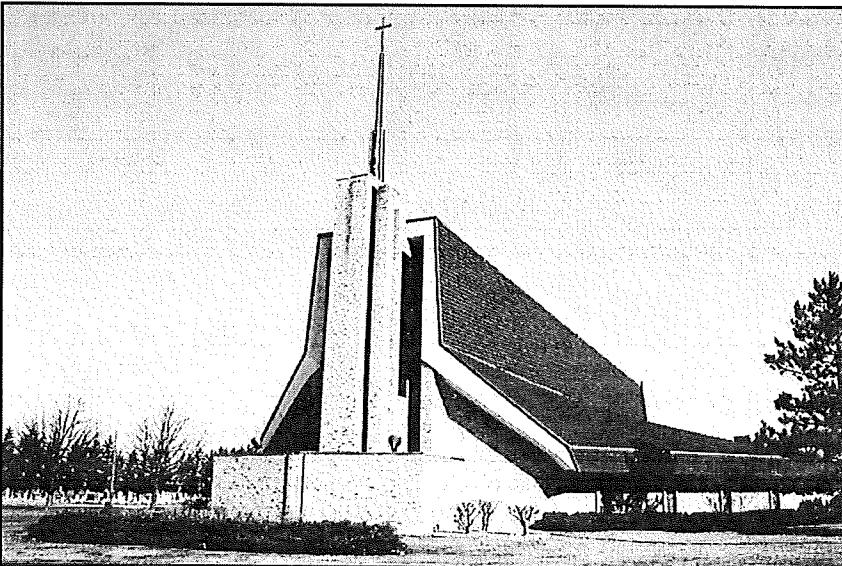


¹ The steeple of the white frame church was damaged during a storm on the afternoon of July 23, 1933. The steeple was then taken down and at the base, the roof was closed up and covered with roofing. Due to the depressed economy, a new steeple was not built until 1938. It remained in place, undamaged, until the church was razed in 1971.

Michael's for twenty-five years, he was called to his eternal home on April 4, 1937.

In June, 1937, St. Michael's called Pastor William Schoenow of Hawks, Michigan, to be its pastor. He accepted and was installed on July 4, 1937. During his first years, the use of the English language increased and English services were conducted twice a month on Sunday mornings. After a while, both English and German divine services were conducted every Sunday morning. As more people moved in and out of Richville, the need to teach religion in the school in English and to do mission work among new residents became apparent. The congregation's voters' meetings continued to record minutes in German until the first Sunday in December, 1950, when they were first recorded in English. With growth in the community, church, and school and the work load increasing, the need for pastoral help was discussed and on September 6, 1964, voters agreed to call an associate pastor. At the December 6, 1964, meeting a call was extended to Pastor Victor J. Spiekerman of Trinity Lutheran Church, Saginaw, Michigan, to lead St. Michael's in the challenge of building a new house of worship. Pastor Spiekerman was installed as associate administrative pastor of St. Michael's on February 14, 1965.

With continued growth and three Sunday morning services (two in English and one in German) the need for a larger place of worship became evident and on December 12, 1965, voters decided to begin planning for a new church building. On March 20, 1966, by a vote of 124-17, voters decided to move ahead with the planning and building of a new church. On February 11, 1968, plans were approved by a vote of 129-25. Ground breaking was held between the morning services at 10:15 A.M. on May 18, 1969. In spite of a light rain, 1,079 worshipers attended. The cornerstone was laid on the annual Kirchweihe fest (church dedication) on the Day of



St. Michael and All Angels, September 28, 1969. Pastor Phillip Janz of Trenton, Michigan, former pastor at St. Lorenz, Frankenmuth, delivered the sermon titled "This Cornerstone is an Invitation". Pastor Spiekerman performed the ceremony of laying the cornerstone. On March 21, 1971, the new building was ready for occupancy and the congregation held a service of entry. The two previous buildings had been dedicated on the last Sunday of September on the Festival of St. Michael. The new building was also then formally dedicated on September 26, 1971, beginning a week of special services.

After nearly 43 years at St. Michael's, Pastor Schoenow went on full retirement on January 1, 1980. With Pastor Spiekerman serving St. Michael's alone, the voters discussed calling a second pastor. In late 1984, the congregation applied to Synod for a candidate from the 1985 seminary class. Timothy McNutt was assigned by Synod's Placement Committee

and installed as assistant pastor on August 1, 1985. When Pastor Spiekerman retired on December 31, 1988, McNutt served alone until Pastor David Hakes of Auburn, Michigan accepted a call to St. Michael's and was installed on January 13, 1991. Pastor William Schoenow died in the fall of 1991. A letter of resignation from Timothy McNutt due to lack of self-discipline was accepted on November 10, 1991. To help with the workload, St. Michael's applied for a vicar and on March 1, 1992, the first of seven vicars arrived. In 1995, Pastor Wesley Gillaspie accepted a call as associate pastor and was installed April 2. Of the eight resident pastors in its first 150 years, two are serving St. Michael's at the present time. Of the six former pastors, one died in service, three retired from St. Michael's, and two resigned.



St. Michael's Ventures into the Vicar Program

In 1991, St. Michael's applied to Synod for a vicar and on March 1, 1992, Steven Tischer began serving as our first vicar. He, his wife Sandy and children, moved into the vacant house where Pastor Schoenow had spent his retirement years. The congregation was well satisfied with his service and decided to continue the program. In 1993, Les Lanier served with his wife, Quandy. Stephen Mahlberg and his wife Martha served in 1994. In 1995, Peter Mills, his wife Jean and family, served the congregation. Jeff Shearier, his wife Barbara and family, were with us for the 1996 and 1997 year. In the 1997 and 1998 year, Jay Klein and his wife Sharon served. Aaron Witt and his wife Tamara served for the 1998 - 1999 year. She was fifth grade and music teacher at our school. In 1999, due to a shortage of candidates, Synod did not assign a vicar to St. Michael's, and with an associate pastor in place, the congregation did not again apply for a vicar.

Continuing Developments at St. Michael's

The final decade of the twentieth century saw a number of significant changes in the congregation. For some time, concern had been growing to allow women to participate in the congregation's government. The first time the issue surfaced, it was defeated at a voters' assembly amid stirred up emotions. The issue lay dormant for a while, but since Synod was encouraging its congregations to allow women to vote, the matter again surfaced. After much study and discussion, it was presented in depth at a special forum and then passed at the November, 1993 voters' assembly and another subsequent one. Since then, the women of St. Michael's have actively participated and held various offices.

Reflecting the changed society of the 1990's with a variety of working schedules, the congregation added a year round Wednesday night worship service to its calendar in April, 1992. A Saturday night service was also added as an experiment but was dropped when we no longer received vicars.

Vacation Bible School was added as an outreach effort by the congregation at the end of the 1980's and grew in popularity, although it was a "step child" at first, providing its own funding and with little official support. Largely through the efforts of Charles and Nancy Heinlein and a dedicated staff, it was adopted into the congregation's programs. It has been held each year since for a one week period in early to mid-July.

A kindergarten and pre-school program also was incorporated into the school's life by the May 5, 1987 voters' assembly, after much study and deliberation. Bonnie Kern has taught in the program with much success since its inception. It meets in the renovated old school building.

A major refurbishing of the pipe organ was undertaken in the mid 90's. This involved new leathers, a reworking of the console, cleaning of all the pipes, addition of a trumpet stop, repairing water damage from roof leaks over the years, the addition of a transposer, and the rebuilding of the chimes. A zimbelstern was added to the organ and an electronic piano placed in the balcony as separate memorial gifts.

Society became very much concerned with the possible spread of contagious diseases. Some members here and elsewhere began looking on the use of the common cup in holy communion with suspicion and distrust. Since this was a matter of adiaphora, the congregation responded by offering individual cups as well as the chalice. However, the matter continued to be a divisive issue, with some demanding that we do away completely with the chalice, while others countered that the use of individual cups should be terminated. To help focus more on what the Lord's Supper is all about and calm the concerns, the congregation adopted an ancient but little used practice of the pouring cup. A chalice was modified with a pouring spout and used to fill individual cups held by members. In this way, all drank from the common cup though each used an individual cup. The system rapidly became very popular and the ladies of the altar guild graciously accepted the extra clean up efforts involved.

As the decade and the twentieth century closed, St. Michael's found itself involved in planning to celebrate its sesquicentennial. Frankenmuth, Frankentrost, and Frankenlust had already celebrated, and now as the "baby" of the Franken colonies, it was St. Michael's turn. A year long observance was planned, beginning with Kirchweihe in September, 1990. The

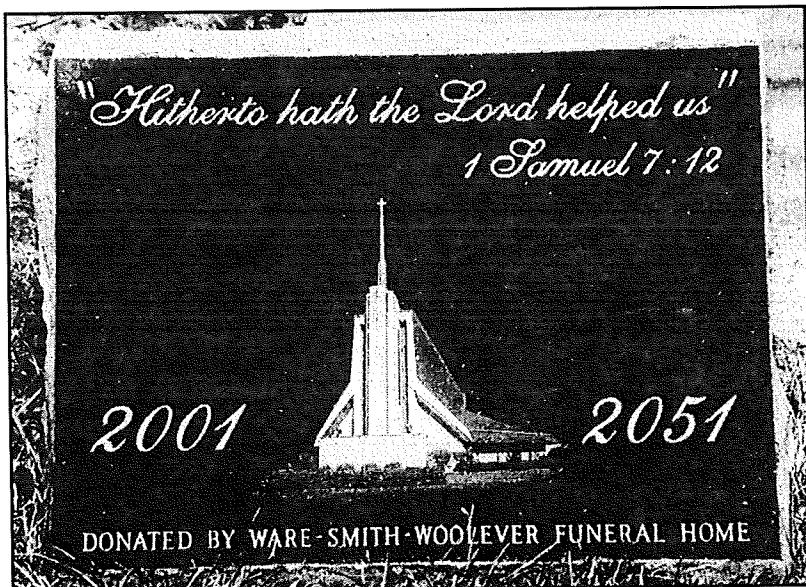
president of our Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod's Michigan District, Rev. William Hoesman, preached for the 10:30 service that day. The early service was held in the German language, with Rev. Eldor Bickel of Lansing preaching. The German language service held annually on Kirchweihe normally is sandwiched between the two English services at 7:45 and 10:30 but for this occasion was moved to the early service time slot to emphasize our heritage. That afternoon, a community parade and historical display was held, since this was also the beginning of the 150th anniversary of the village of Richville. It was spectacularly successful, due in large part to the efforts of the anniversary committee chaired by LeRoy Schluckebier and parade chairman Rollie Wenzel.

A large float featuring accurate models of the congregation's various worship edifices was constructed for the parade and won many prizes in other parades held in the area.

During the following year, the congregation's children involved in the pastoral, teaching, and music ministries of the church at large were invited back to participate in our worship services. A special anniversary choir concert was held, an outdoor Passion Drama during holy week brought many hundreds of visitors to our community, a community ice-cream social and hot air balloon ride brought many to our park, and our music department recorded a special compact disc.

A special feature of our anniversary celebration involved a Hmong worship service at the time of our annual mission fest, the second Sunday of October, 2000. Pastor Yang of Lansing preached at our services, and children of the refugee families sang in both services. Hmong people wore their traditional clothing and a dinner was held that afternoon at which they supplied native dishes along with the potluck fare of other members. They explained their native customs and expressed gratitude to St. Michael's for having sponsored them and giving them the opportunity to start their lives anew when they were forced to flee Laos. The congregation had sponsored its first Laotian refugees in September, 1976, and a number of families followed, settling in the Richville area.

The celebration of the sesquicentennial concluded with former Pastor Victor Spiekerman preaching for Kirchweihe, 2001. A time capsule, containing among other artifacts a scroll of signatures of current members, was buried to be opened in 50 years. A potluck dinner was held in honor of Pastor Spiekerman and the close of the celebration. A community Oktoberfest was held at the American Legion hall the next week to cap off the year's activities.



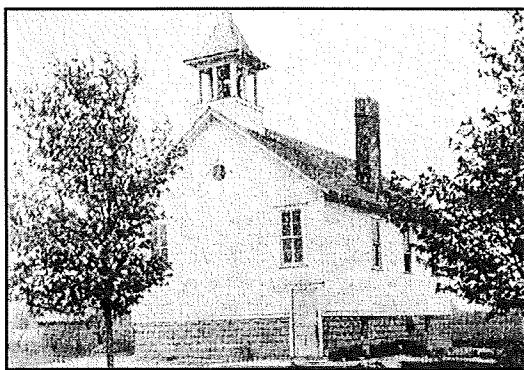
Time Capsule Marker

Education at St. Michael's

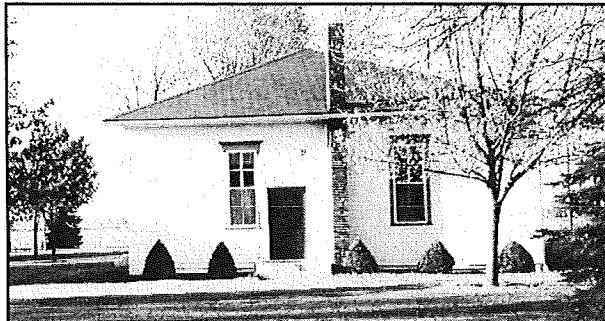
With membership growth and the number of school age children increasing, the congregation called its first teacher, John Walt in 1869, who served four years as public and parochial teacher. In 1873, the congregation called H. Mueller, who also taught both public and parochial school. In 1881, St. Michael's called teacher Waldemar von Renner of Frankenlust and he was installed on May 1, 1881. With the difficulties of holding public and parochial classes together, the congregation decided on May 21, 1882, to operate a separate parochial school system. Plans for a new school building were made and Teacher von Renner began duties as the congregation's parochial teacher in the new building. As growth continued and the distance from homes to school increased, a second school was dedicated September 16, 1894 and was known as the Northern District School. Teacher Karl Dress taught at this school for one year and then the congregation called Teacher J. W. Putz from the seminary at Addison, Illinois. He was installed September 1, 1895. Other teachers who followed at this school were W. Zeile, student Bierlein, Louis Roedel, Anton Neuenkirch, Victor Juengel, J. Bündental, and J. P. Reuter. In 1937, the Northern District School was closed and the children were transported by bus to the village school.

The congregation was still growing and now a third school was built three miles to the east, known as the Eastern District School. Next to this school, a teacherage

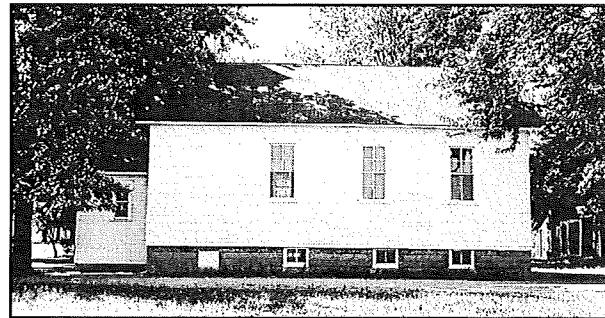
was built. In 1898, this school opened with Teacher O. L. Wissbeck called from the seminary in Addison, Illinois. He was installed on August 21, 1898. He was followed by Lorenz Daenzer, Walter Boesenecker, and Mrs. Erna Hayes. This school was closed in 1952 when the new central school opened. With membership of St. Michael's spreading to the south, the congregation built the Southern District School in 1906, located about three miles southeast of the church. Due to a shortage of teachers, Carl Keinath taught one year.



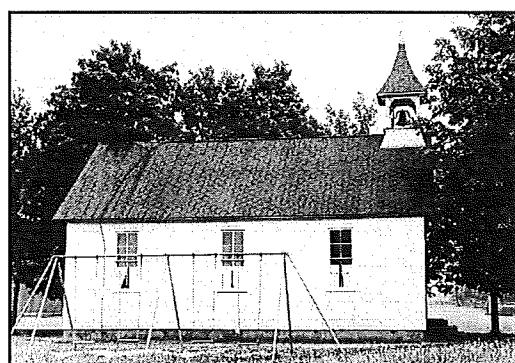
North School



St. Michael's 1st School as it looked in 2001



Eastern School



Southern School

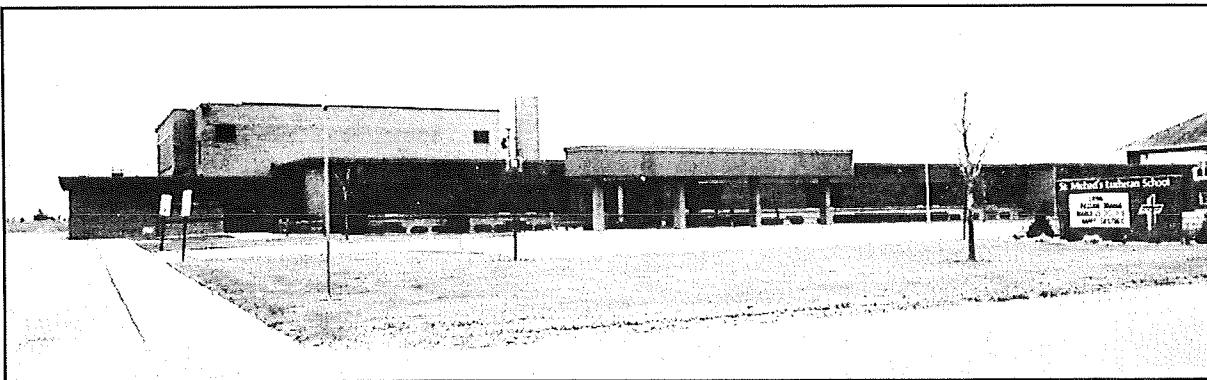
In 1907, Ludwig Daenzer was called and taught at this school until 1952 when consolidation also closed this school. Teacher Daenzer continued to teach until his retirement in 1957. This was an outstanding 50 years of teaching in one congregation, with the last five years in the modern central school.

In 1904, the congregation built an 18 x 30 foot brick confirmation instruction house just north of the church. A two-classroom school was built in the village by the congregation and dedicated on July 15, 1923. When it opened in 1923, Karl Dress was called from Grand Rapids to teach the upper three grades and Teacher



Village School

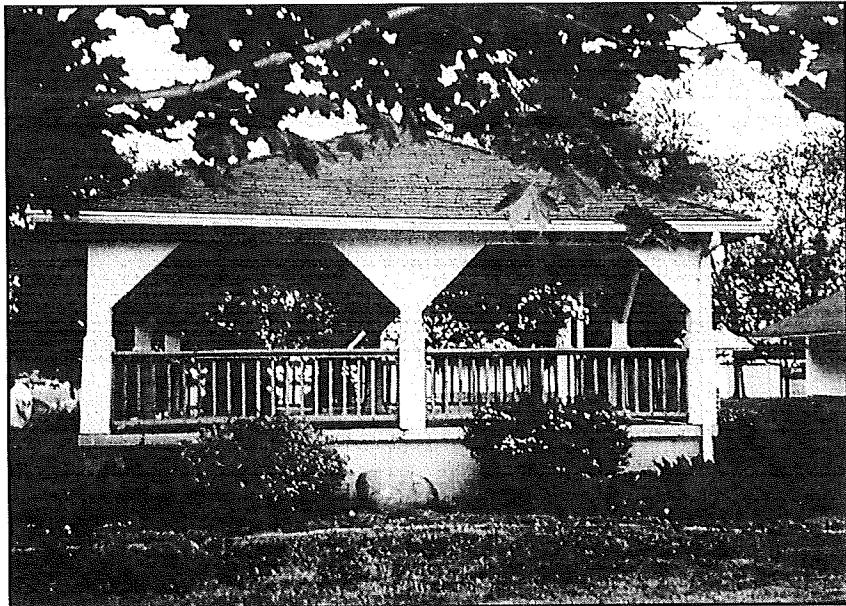
Winterstein taught the four lower grades. A full religious and secular curriculum was taught, some subjects in German and some in English, and the children were confirmed in the seventh grade. They continued with the eighth grade in the public school system. Ill health forced Teacher Dress to retire in 1937 and J. P. Reuter taught the upper grades in the village school until 1940. In 1941, Teacher Winterstein resigned due to advancing age and Clarence Hutfilz of Conklin, Michigan was called to teach the lower grades until 1944, when he accepted a call to Rogers City. At this time, Mrs. Henry Miller of Frankentrost taught one year until the congregation could call another teacher. In the spring of 1945, Leonard Weber of Logansport, Indiana accepted the call and was installed as a teacher. On June 18, 1949, Teacher Boesenecker resigned due to ill health after teaching in the Eastern District School for 33 years. In September 1949, Mrs. Dorothy Keinath taught for two months until help could be obtained. Mrs. Erna Hayes came and taught until June 1951. Teacher Walter Eggert came to St. Michael's in 1940 and served until 1949. When he accepted another call, Mrs. Louise Palmreuter taught in the village school for one year until a permanent staff member was called in 1950. In 1950, Teacher Weber left to accept a call to teach at Kilmanagh, Michigan. With the congregation losing the greater part of its teaching staff, thinking turned to consolidating the school system. Parents asked for the eighth grade to be introduced into the school and expressed a need for a more modern structure that would provide an up-to-date and total program in one building. On May 1, 1949, the educational future of St. Michael's changed when voters approved three resolutions: 1.) To introduce teaching of the eighth grade into St. Michael's school; 2.) To consolidate all schools into one unified school in the village; 3.) To provide a new building to house the congregation's school. On May 7, 1950, preliminary plans were accepted and the architect was instructed to prepare the final blueprints and specifications. On December 3, 1950, bids for the new project were presented to voters. A pledge program was started in early December 1950. After seeing strong support through the pledges, voters approved the building project 86-47 and, after discussing the general and widespread support, then made the vote unanimous.



Present St. Michael's School

As the building project progressed, Mr. Roland Bode of Green Bay, Wisconsin was called to teach the upper grades and be principal. He was installed July 2, 1950. On August 27, 1950, Victor Engebrecht, a graduate of River Forest, was installed as the second village school teacher. A third staff member, Mr. Wilbert Robinson, a graduate of Seward, was installed on August 26, 1951. On August 24, 1952, the new educational facility was dedicated to the Lord in the 9:30 A.M. service. With the school system consolidated in the village, transportation became a concern. A school bus program was developed which worked together with the Reese, Frankenmuth, and Vassar public school districts. Teacher Daenzer, who moved from the Southern District School, now taught in the five-classroom consolidated school. With enrollment still increasing, a fifth teacher was added in the person of Delores Lutz who taught from 1953-1955. Sylvia Raedeke joined the staff, teaching from 1955-1957. In 1956, Duane Wuertz, a graduate of Concordia, Seward, accepted the call of St. Michael's, replacing Wilbert Robinson who had accepted another call. In 1957, Teacher Daenzer retired and Sylvia Raedeke left our staff. The next two teachers in our school were Kristi Miller and Esther Bode. In 1961, with concern for growing class sizes and space, a large meeting room at the school was partitioned to make room for a classroom and a small meeting room. Linda Kallson was then added as a sixth member of the teaching staff. In 1963, due to declining health, Roland Bode was released from serving as principal and teacher. The congregation then called Carol Keinath Reas and Donald Reas to teach. Carol Reas also served as an organist. In 1963, to replace Linda Kallson who had resigned, Deann Kozinski, a River Forest graduate, was assigned to St. Michael's. She taught one year and in 1964, Patricia Niermeir accepted a call to teach here. In 1965, with Kristi Miller retiring and Patricia Niermeir moving on, Mrs. Louise Palmreuter again joined our staff. Lois Winter, a graduate of Seward, was assigned to St. Michael's and with enrollment reaching 262, Anne Block was also added to the teaching staff. Having seven teachers on the staff, the former village school which had been renovated was again put to good use. Clarence Hinz was called as principal with the departure of Victor Engebrecht in 1966 (who also was principal from 1962-1966). Don and Carol Reas moved to a warmer climate for health reasons and the staff had now grown to eight. New members were Richard Lutze, Robert Lindau, and Karen Lutze. In 1967, with Anne Block resigning, Karen Bauer taught for one year and was replaced in 1968 by Dorothy Rathje who taught for two years. In 1969, Kristine Lindau replaced Karen Lutze and in 1970, Bonnie Leidel accepted a call and replaced Dorothy Rathje. Loretta Daenzer accepted a call to replace Kristine Lindau. With the completion of the new church in 1970 and school enrollment rising to 279 in grades 1-8, concern was

expressed about taking care of that large enrollment with eight teachers. The congregation appointed a school study committee in August, 1976, and in March, 1977, a school planning committee was appointed. In February, 1979, the school planning committee was instructed to select an architect and draw preliminary sketches and cost estimates for an addition and renovation of the school. A motion was passed accepting the proposed school addition and renovation project on September 7, 1980. On April 15, 1981, voters accepted the low bid of \$584,064.00 by William Bronner & Son Contractors of Frankenmuth. The bid included adding four classrooms, providing more office space, and closing some windows in the classrooms and gym to conserve energy. The school addition was dedicated February 21, 1982. Also on the teaching staff were Lois Simon who taught from 1972-1974, Donald Scheck from 1973-1981, Mark Schiefer from 1973 to the present, Elaine Keinath from 1973-1995, Darwin Dubke from 1974 to 1994, Diane Seibel from 1974 to the present, Nancy Wilke from 1974 to the present, and Dennis Fischer, who also serves as congregational music director, from 1976 to the present. He replaced Robert H. Lindau who left to study to become a pastor. In 1981, Les Roth was called to replace Don Scheck as teacher and principal. Mrs. Lori Buchinger was added to the teaching staff in June 1989 and served until 1998. She replaced Elaine Keinath who took a leave of absence due to health concerns. In 1985, Mary Rummel started teaching half days in addition to serving as media center coordinator, allowing Principal Roth more time for administrative duties. Miss Joanne Wright taught from 1994-1998. In 1995, Kathy Rosentreter accepted a call to St. Michael's. On Sunday, May 5, 1995, the congregation held a special farewell service and potluck dinner for Teacher Wuertz who retired after teaching at St. Michael's for forty years. Kevin Stressman accepted a call to teach seventh grade in 1996. In 1998, Tamara Witt taught on a ten-month non-tenured call and David Kirchhof for a 24-month non-tenured call. In 1999, Tamara Witt left when her husband Aaron returned to seminary after vicarage. David Kirchhof accepted a call away. St Michael's extended a call to Mrs. Patricia Hamabaum to teach and work with the school music department. She accepted. A call was extended to Jennifer Dietrich to teach and on October 3, 1999, a motion passed to establish a youth directorship for ministry to high school students and the directorship was assigned to Jennifer Dietrich.



Park Bandstand

The Teachers of St. Michael's

John Walt	1869-1873	H. Mueller	1873-1881
Waldemar von Renner	1881-1912	Karl A. Dress	1894-1895
J. W. Putz	1895-1903	O. L. Wissbeck	1898-1903
William Zeile	1903-1908	Lorenz Daenzer	1903-1915
Karl Keinath	1907-1957	Ludwig Daenzer	1907-1957
Student Bierlein	1909-1921	Louis Roedel	1909-1921
J.C.A. Winterstein	1912-1941	Walter Boesnecker	1916-1949
Anton Neuenkirch	1923-1937	Karl A. Dress	1923-1937
Victor Juengel	1926-1932	J. Bundenthal	1932-1933
J. P. Reuter	1933-1940	Walter Eggert	1940-1949
Clarence Hutfilz	1941-1944	Mrs. Henry Miller	1944-1945
Leonard Weber	1945-1950	Mrs. Donald Keinath	1949-1949
Louise Palmreuter	1949-1950	Mrs. Erna Hayes	1949-1951
Victor Engebretch	1950-1966	Roland Bode	1950-1962
Wilbert Robinson	1950-1956	Delores Lutz	1953-1955
Sylvia Raedeke	1955-1957	Duane Wuertz	1956-1996
Kristi Miller	1957-1965	Esther Bode	1957-1962
Linda Kallson	1961-1963	Carol Reas	1962-1966
Donald Reas	1963-1964	Deann Korzinski	1963-1964
Patricia Niermeier	1964-1965	Louise Palmreuter	1965-1976
Lois Winter Bickel	1965-1973	Anne Block	1965-1967
Richard Lutze	1966-1973	Robert H. Lindau	1966-1974
Clarence R. Hinz	1966-1973	Karen Lutze	1966-1969
Karen Bauer	1967-1969	Dorothy Rathje	1968-1970
Kristine Lindau	1969-1970	Bonnie Leidel Kern	1970-1972
Loretta Daenzer	1970-1974	Lois E. Simon	1972-1974
Donald E. Scheck	1973-1981	Mark T. Schiefer	1973-
Elaine Keinath	1973-1989	Darwin Dubke	1974-1994
Diane Seibel	1974-	Nancy Wilke	1974-
Dennis Fischer	1976-	Mary Rummel	1985-
Bonnie Kern	1987-	Lori Buchinger	1989-1998
Elaine Keinath	1990-1995	Joanne Wright	1994-1998
Kathy Rosentreter	1995-	Kevin Stressman	1996-
Tamara Witt	1998-1999	David Kirchhof	1998-1999
Patricia Hambaum	1999-	Jennifer Dietrich	1999-

Boards and Organizations of St. Michael's

Board of Congregational Life: The mission of this board is to coordinate and improve communication between all groups, enhancing congregational life by enabling members of the congregation to use their gifts in becoming the family of God.

Evangelism Committee: The Evangelism Committee reaches out to the unchurched and newcomers in the community. This is done through home calls and visits, with pastoral follow-up. Quarterly mailings of a church newsletter are made to 1500 residences in the area. Christian literature is available at key locations around the church. The committee sponsors a summertime ice cream social for the community. It also operates a booth at the annual Riverfest in Vassar. It works with the pastor to provide a warm welcome to new members of the congregation every year.

Stewardship Committee: This group's goal is to encourage the members of St. Michael's to use responsibly the gifts God has given them to further His work on earth and provide encouragement and support to all of God's children. We work with the Board of Congregational Life to educate members on responsibilities in living for Jesus and serving in His Kingdom. It seeks to actively and enthusiastically involve the members in positive programs and ideas.

Altar Guild: The Altar Guild was organized in 1971 with 31 members. It holds at least one meeting each year when members sign up for service for the upcoming year. Members sign up in groups of 2-4 and serve either two or three weeks during the year. Duties include cleaning the chancel area, sacristies, and worship utensils and furnishings, refilling candles with oil and making sure that arrangements have been made for altar flowers. Guild members wash all communion ware after church and clean and press all altar cloths. The candelabra and pew torches are placed when requested and paraments are changed for the seasons of the church year. Members set up the sacramental vessels and prepare for baptisms. A flower chart enables congregation members to sign up for flowers for special occasions.

Ladies Aid: The Ladies Aid of St. Michael's was organized with 55 members on April 21, 1921. Meetings were first held at the park hall and in 1952, moved to the new school. In 1971, the meetings were moved to the new church overflow room. Money is gathered for charities and mission projects. When the school and new church were built, the Ladies Aid provided many kitchen furnishings. They also provided furnishings for other church areas. The Ladies Aid started the annual Mother's Day chicken dinner. In 1985, the congregation assumed sponsorship of the dinner with the three areas each taking its turn every three years. The Ladies Aid organized as a chapter of the International Lutheran Women's Missionary League in 1946.

Mary-Martha Guild: This group was organized February 6, 1961 with the help of Pastor Schoenow who suggested the name Mary-Martha. Mary -- for the things we do for Jesus, and Martha -- for the things we do for others and ourselves. Twenty-six ladies originally became charter members and the number swelled to forty-six before it was closed. Mary-Martha promotes a lasting and strong relationship with our Lord by offering interesting spiritual speakers and programs, encouraging women to use time, talent, and treasures to God's glory, and be joyful witnesses of God's great love through Christian

fellowship. By having fund-raisers such as rummage and flower sales, the guild is enabled to support mission work and spread the Gospel. The guild also helps support students preparing for full time church work. In 1990, the guild started a Prayer Pal program for students in confirmation class, encouraging them and keeping them in their prayers. Mary-Martha is a member of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League.

Lutheran Laymen's League: At an organization meeting held on February 21, 1977, St. Michael's Lutheran Laymen's League was organized as an arm of the International LLL and Lutheran Hour Ministries with 31 members present. The League serves the cause of Christ Who gave His life for all. All activities and projects of the League are Christ centered. Its purpose is to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to our local community and around the world. The primary objective of the League is to be informed, enabled, and equipped laity in service to God. For the past few years, our League has held peat moss and Christmas greenery sales. Money raised furthers the Gospel's spread by donating to the Lutheran Hour Ministries, purchasing devotional materials for members of our congregation and others who wish them, and also giving to other charities. The pastors guide our learning with devotionals and Bible studies. Other speakers enlighten us when they speak to our group about local and world concerns.

O. W. L. S.: In late 1995, the Board of Congregational Life sought interest in forming a group for older members of St. Michael's congregation. It was determined that there were over 300 members age 55 or older. Those 62 or older were then invited to a luncheon in February, 1996. Approximately 35 persons were at this initial gathering. The name O. W. L. S. (Older Wiser Lutherans) was chosen. The group provides social opportunities for older members, including a luncheon -- usually either a potluck at church or a meal at a restaurant. A speaker, entertainer, or visit to a nearby attraction follows the meal. There are no dues or roll call and everyone 55 or older is welcome.

Music Ministry: St. Michael's Lutheran Church recognizes music as a gift and blessing from God. It is an integral part of our Lutheran worship services. Martin Luther stated, "next to the Word of God, I give music the highest praise! The gift of music combined with the gift of song was given to man that he should proclaim the Word of God through music." Music is a powerful part of our worship life. It is a means by which we proclaim God's Word, praise Him for His goodness, and lead the worship services. The instrumental and vocal ensembles work hard to accomplish this goal. St. Michael's congregation is blessed with much musical talent. Opportunities are provided to participate in choirs and instrumental groups which enhance our congregation's worship and school life. Our congregation currently has seven choirs, an extensive school band program, hand-bells, and a brass ensemble. Hand bells, hand chimes, and the school bands participate in worship services and concerts. School classrooms, Sunday school students, instrumental ensembles, and soloists are also scheduled to sing and play for church services. Their focus is to use their talents to help God's people praise Him for His many blessings. Much time and effort are spent planning, rehearsing, and preparing. Our prayer is that God's gift of music unite our congregation in praise and lead others in the worship of our Creator, Lord, and Savior.

Ushers: The ushers of St. Michael's help seat worshippers, distribute bulletins and worship materials, direct members to the communion rail, take care of lighting and ventilation, post hymns, and close up after services. They are divided into 12 groups with two groups serving each week.

Hearts and Hands: This group began in 1995 and was first named Happy Crafters. It was a group of women who enjoyed a variety of crafts and Christian fellowship. In the fall of 1998, the group decided to be of service to fellow Christians. It was renamed "Hearts and Hands" and officially became a Lutheran Women's Missionary League group on October 19, 1998. Mites are collected for projects of the LWML. Service is extended to the local community by making baby quilts to give to abortion alternative shelters in the area and lap robes for local nursing homes. Occasionally, personal quilt projects are undertaken. Along with our service mission, the group also is committed to fellowship with all women of St. Michael's.

Parent -Teacher League: This organization was formed in 1967 to encourage greater communication between the parents and teachers of St. Michael's school. Parents of former, present, and future students at St. Michael's school are considered members. The purpose is to keep channels of communication open between church, home, and school. The organization also fosters the ideals of Christian education and promotes the welfare of the school by supporting its programs. Speakers often present topics dealing with Christian education. The League has several fundraisers yearly to support the school library, maintenance, provide office equipment and needed school supplies. The League hosts a dinner to thank school volunteers each year. It also plans family activities such as roller-skating parties and an annual family camping weekend.

Gifts and Memorials: In 1994 the elders formed this committee which was then incorporated into our by-laws. It manages all non-designated funds received as special gifts or memorials and make recommendations to the Church Council for memorial priorities.

St. Michael's Sunday School: Sunday School started in 1952 with classes held at the new school primarily for nursery and kindergarten aged children. Later, a class was started for older children of parents attending Bible class in the church. Eventually, children were grouped by age levels and we now have nursery, pre-kindergarten, first and second grades, third and fourth grades, fifth and sixth grades, and seventh and eighth grades.

K. I. T.: K. I. T. (Keep In Touch) was organized in 1988 by a group of parents who realized the need to keep their children who were away at college or in the military informed of events at St. Michael's. Teachers and students of St. Michael's Lutheran School are involved in this effort, since many of our students will some day also be away at college or in the military services. Students prepare artwork, letters, poems, or cards. The KIT team mails these items monthly, along with Portals of Prayer, Advent and Lenten devotional booklets, Christmas and birthday cards, and other news or items of interest from the congregation. A special mailing of cookies is sent each holiday season. By keeping in touch with these young adults we hope to encourage them to remain faithful, loyal members of God's Holy Church.

Lutherans For Life: This group witnesses to the value of human life through education based on the Word of God. Lutherans for Life of Michigan believes that the church is compelled by God's Word to speak and act on behalf of those who are vulnerable and defenseless. The growing immorality of our age showing in such concerns as the widespread destruction of human life through abortion-on-demand, legalized assisted suicide, and euthanasia demands such Christian witness. We strive to give witness from a Biblical perspective on these and related issues such as chastity, post-abortion healing, and family living. We at St. Michael's have raised money to help the Saginaw Rescue Mission,

Positive Alternatives in Caro, Abortion Alternatives Information of Saginaw County, and both the statewide and national Lutherans for Life organizations. In January, Sanctity of Life Sunday has been celebrated. The Candlelight Vigil in Caro, the Mother's Day Statewide Diaper Shower, the Midland Life Chain, and the Lutherans for Life state conferences are other activities that members have participated in.

St. Michael's Student Loan Fund: The Student Loan Fund was started in 1987 to encourage youth to consider full time church work as pastors, teachers, deaconesses, etc. By giving financial support during their education in Synod's schools. The board consists of the Congregational Chairman, Treasurer, Pastor, Principal, an Elder representative, and two members at large. The goal is to have a balance of not less than \$50,000 and distribute from the interest only. In certain cases, it may draw from the principal if needed. The principal is accumulated by individual contributions and special collections throughout the year if needed. Special consideration may be given in certain cases with a special collection.

St. Michael's World Relief Quilting: The quilting group started on October 10, 1978. The object of the group was to salvage used or new materials and turn them into quilts for Lutheran World Relief which distributes them to needy people throughout the world. As of 2000, the group has sent out 1,355 quilts, most going to Lutheran World Relief and a small number for other needy causes. The group meets in the church basement on the second Monday of the month.

St. Michael's Youth Group: Youth of St. Michael's were involved in group gatherings and joined the International Walther League in the 1930's. Both a senior and junior Walther League were organized. Later, when youth took a new direction and there was less interest in Walther League, the youth at St. Michael's formed a local organization. Vicar Stephen Tischer was instrumental in organizing an active youth program in 1992. In October 1999, Teacher Jennifer Dietrich was named Youth Director. The high school youth meet twice a month, once for Bible study and once for an activity. Youth are involved in many activities such as a Christmas party, caroling to convalescent homes, making Christmas cards for shut-ins, hayrides, bonfires, bowling, softball, car washes, Easter breakfasts, and others. In the summer of 2001, seven of our youths attended the National Synodical Youth Gathering in New Orleans. A goal is to attend future youth gatherings on the District and National level but the main mission is to nurture strong Christian values in our youth and keep them involved in Christian fellowship so that they remain faithful, loyal members of God's Holy Church.

Volunteers at St. Michael's: At the present time, we have members who voluntarily help with a variety of duties at the church and school, including checking the physical plant and keeping it operating. Volunteers also take care of flowers and shrubs around the church property. Also included in volunteering is the greeters group which was initiated at St. Michael's on December 6, 1987. The greeters welcome visitors and members at the Sunday morning services and also hand out informative materials to visitors.

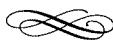
Vacation Bible School: VBS was started in 1989 so young children of our congregation and those interested from other areas could hear about the Word of God in an informal setting different from grade school. It is for students three years old through sixth grade. It is held each morning for one week in the summer. The staff is made up of volunteer teachers and helpers. In 1989, there were 189 students, with 41 being non-members of St. Michael's. In 2000, there were 225 attending, with 85 being non-members. In the year 2000, there were 78 staff members, with ten being non-members.

Mission Zeal at St. Michael's

In the 1840's when Pastor Loehe sent the first Franken settlers to America, it was for the purpose of doing mission work among the American Indians. In 1850, the first settlers going to Frankenhilf shared that same purpose. In the first years with the settlers struggling to exist and little permanent pastoral guidance until Pastor Bernthal came in 1862, mission work among the Indians was not the main priority. In later years, the zeal for mission work developed and numerous sons and daughters of St. Michael's went into church work as pastors and teachers. As farming and commercial businesses developed, financial support for Synod and District missions increased over the years. In 1971, our mission zeal reached a new direction when men of our congregation went to Germfask to help Lutherans there build their church. Later, some of St. Michael's members went to Lewiston and helped with their building project. In 1995, the congregation began co-sponsoring a missionary family, Dan and Kathy Conrad, in Venezuela through Synod's Together in Mission program. Over the last 25 years, the members of St. Michael's have put their cooking skills together, publishing two cookbooks. The profits of this project were used to help new mission congregations in Michigan get started. Some help was given to congregations at Ortonville, Drummond Island, St. Charles, Owosso, Kingston, Harrisville, Carleton, and Port Austin. Over \$50,000.00 was given for this cause. In the fall of 1999, St. Michael's had the opportunity to do mission outreach on a national level when the music department was asked to present its Christmas Concert on U. S. Farm Report, a weekly program aired by W. G. N. - T.V. and radio for its annual Christmas program. The hour-long program was aired on December 25, 1999 on national television throughout the United States. Participating in the program were all our choirs and all our instrumental groups. In March of 2000, the U. S. Farm Report featured St. Michael's on its weekly "Country Church Salute", a one-minute segment of the program. St. Michael's strength in missions also showed in the number of students who continued their education at our Synod schools and entered full time church work as pastors and teachers.

Hmong Ministry

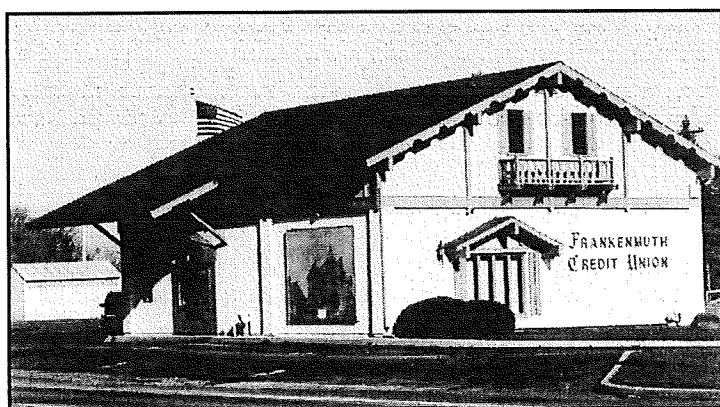
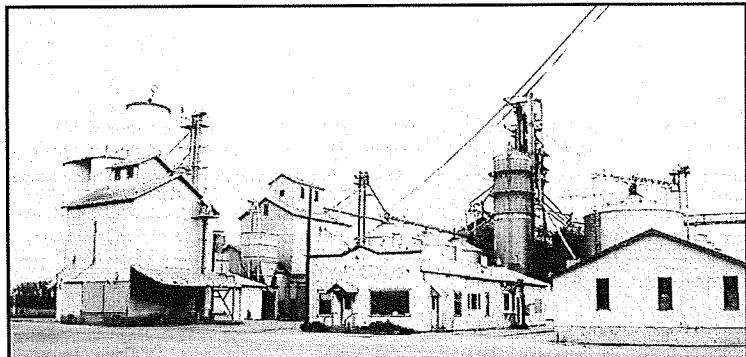
After the Viet Nam War, the Hmong people of Laos who had served with the United States in the struggle against communist aggression were forced from their homeland by the communist takeover and were welcomed to our nation. In 1976, members of St. Michael's prepared for the arrival of Tru and Lee Hang and family into our midst. Since then, many more relatives and friends of the Tru Hang family have arrived and become members of the church and community. The second family, including Tru Hang's mother, came in the summer of 1978. At the present time, 64 Laotians have been baptized at St. Michael's over the last 34 years. Many of them have attended our school and some are students at this time. In 2000, the Hmong Lutherans sponsored a special service and dinner afterward, thanking St. Michael's congregation for its support and generosity.



Frankenhilf - Growth during the First 150 Years

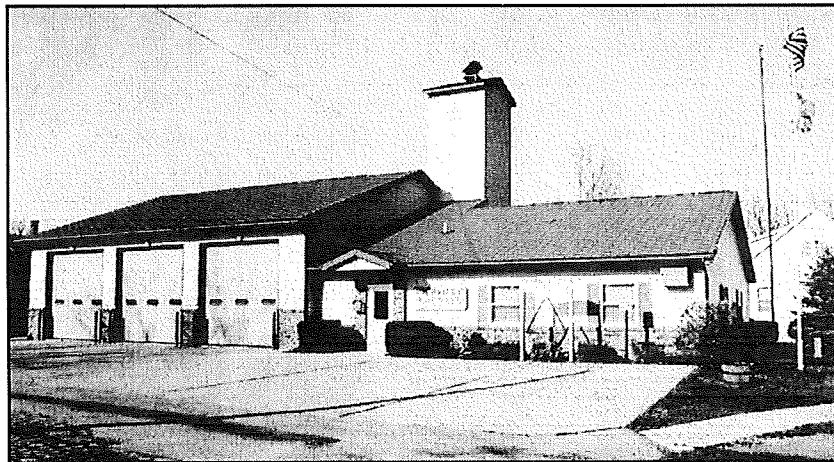
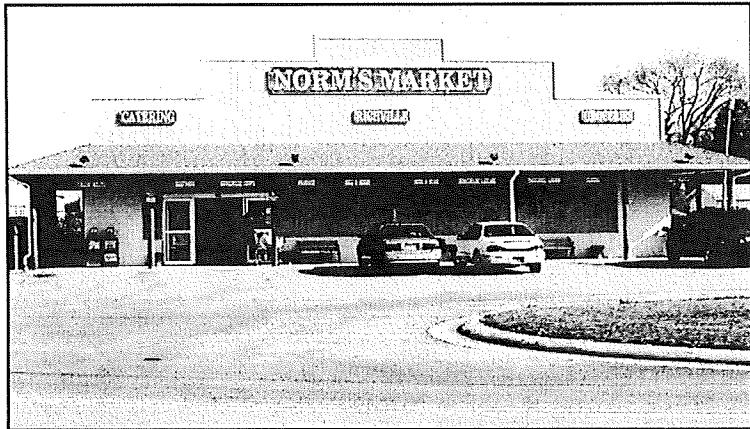
When Pastor Bernthal came to Frankenhilf in 1862, not a single wagon road penetrated this part of the country. A log church and school house had been built but no store or center of activity, not even a blacksmith shop, marked the future village of Richville. The active membership of the church numbered only 22. In the late 1800s, some businesses had been started in the community. These included the Richville Lumber and Building Company Association recorded in 1902 with two principal signers being Henry Luebkert and William Kern. Peter Schluckebier later operated the business.

The Richville Manufacturing, Mercantile and Elevator Company was started by stockholders in 1908. The purpose of the company was for the manufacture and sale of farming implements and vehicles, mercantile business of a general store, grain elevator, and grinding of flour and feed. The elevator burned in 1911 and Ortner and Hoerlein bought the business when the stockholders decided not to rebuild. The E. C. Schultz General Store was located on M/46 near M/15. Mr. Schultz was also postmaster for Richville. Ernie Moser later bought the store. In 1941, Ernie Moser built a store that included the Post Office on M/15 near the center of the village. In 1955, a new Post Office was built east of the Moser store and George Moser became the postmaster at that time. With the former post office space vacant, Jack Matonek moved his barbershop into the Moser store. The building is now the Richville Party Store, owned by Mike Trombley. In 1900, on the western point of the M/15-M/46 intersection, the Racquet Hotel was built and was later called the Richville House. It was destroyed by fire in 1912. Then Gugel and Lehman sold cars at this location. By 1920, John Lehman operated the Richville Garage on the site. On John Lehman's retirement, the Gratiot Farmers Fuel Supply Company bought the property. The Richville station of the Gratiot Farmers Company was started in 1929 and was built on the site of a former sugar beet receiving station with the railroad depot being on the north side of the railroad line. The Richville station of the Gratiot Farmers Company was discontinued in 1980. First of America Bank bought the former Richville Garage site in the late 1970's and the Frankenmuth Credit Union is occupying the site at this time.



On Van Buren, south of the elevator, was the Farmers' Auto and Machinery Company which was

bought by Ed Schluckebier and operated as a farm machinery and auto sales and repair shop. Glen Reinbold later operated it as a lawn and garden equipment sales and repair shop. Precision Autobody now operates it. The eastern point of the M/15-M/46 intersection was occupied first by a trading post built in about 1865. Later, with more rooms added it became the Richville Corner Hotel owned by Fred Rausch. Fred Schultz later owned it and it is now Fritz's Family Restaurant, owned by the Dietrich family. On the northwest corner of the M/15-Van Buren intersection was the Bauer Hotel, also known as the Central House. The site is now occupied by Richville Recreation. Food, drink, and bowling are available there. A grocery store was located north of the Richville Recreation and was first occupied by Beland, then by Matzke. Later it was owned by William Kern, followed by his son Edwin Kern, and finally by Edwin's son-in-law, Norm Rupprecht. When the store was destroyed by fire early in 1999, a modern store called "Norm's Market" was built on M/15 on the property west of the former market. The new facility opened in August of 1999. The building also houses his catering service.



Korthals had the service station and restaurant until 1947 when Howard Hecht and Emil Hetzner bought the place and operated it as the Sunoco station and the Transit Inn. Later, the service station closed and Irma Hetzner had the Transit Inn, which later became the Hetzner Catering Service. It is now Dietrich's Catering.

made up of shareholders living within a designated distance of the station. Volunteers man the fire department. A board of directors oversees the operation of the department. The DX service station on M/15 at Tressla was owned by Nowak Trucking and later operated by Leach Trucking. Then Erhardt

Gone, But Not Forgotten

The Richville Cheese Factory was located across M/46 from St. Michael's Church. The cheese makers were Sam Mueller and Oscar Schemm. The business was stockholder owned and bought milk from many area farmers. The Cider and Jelly Works was an important part in the early days of Richville, turning the fruits of the many area orchards and vineyards into juice and jelly. It was operated by Chris Nickodemus. The Richville Train Station was west of Van Buren, with the depot on the north side of the rail line. The John Jordan Blacksmith shop was on the northeast corner of M/15 and Van Buren and was razed in 1928 to make room for a gas station built by Ed Schluckebier, now Doud's Service. The Richville Bank was on the southeast corner of M/15 and Van Buren. Early bankers were Ealy and Pardee. Jack's Barber Shop was in the building after the bank closed. The Richville fire barn was east of the present day Party store. Otto Kern, the local undertaker, had a furniture and picture framing business. Chris Nickodemus owned a barber shop but also sold soft drinks, candy, and tobacco products. Herman Weber was the local photographer until he moved to Saginaw.

There also was an assortment of businesses like Ruben Kern, painter and paperhanger; J. Mike Roth, interior decorator, painter and paperhanger; Conrad Mueller, mason contractor; William Kern, carpenter, contractor, and house mover; E.L. Nickodemus, electrical equipment and appliances; Ray Buchinger, grocery store operator (on Van Buren, next to the former Gratiot Farmer's Station, later occupied by Drake meat cutting and deer freezing.) The Star of the West Milling Company now owns the site of this store and the Gratiot Farmer's property. Another important part of the Richville area was the Gruber pond, located south of M/46 on the east side of Van Buren. It was used in the summer for swimming and in the winter, ice was harvested to fill the icehouses in the village and also for some area farmers. The Christ Hildner wagon shop was located on Van Buren, north of M/15. Fred Ranke was the local well driller. He also had soft drinks, candy, and tobacco products. The business was later a bar with a barbershop in a separate room. It was first operated by Spotty Rogner, then a Schluckebier, followed by Jack Matonek, and then Joe Leroux. It has now been converted to apartments. Joe Leroux built a new place called Joe's Bar in the mid 1970's, serving food and drinks.

In 1939, Ethel Wenzel opened "Wenzel's Ice Cream Parlor". This was a favorite stop for the youth of Richville until it closed in 1948. In the late 1940s, Mr. Wing built a pea canning factory west of the Gratiot Farmer's station. The cannery was closed after one year of operation, due to the lack of ample water supply. A sweet corn freezing operation moved into the place until the mid 1950s. Fiddes-Moore took over the plant to make paneling for mobile home manufacturers in 1957. In the early 1960s, Evans Products operated a lumber wholesale business at that place until the mid 1970s. Weyerhauser took over the business for about five years, closing out the business in 1981. Star of the West bought the facility in the summer of 1981 and it is now their Plant Food Division in Richville.

Denmark Junction

Denmark Junction is located one and a half miles east of the M/15-M/46 intersection on M/46. The first business located there was the John Frank and Albert Schluckebier Lumber

Company. The first log was cut at their sawmill in 1894. In 1911, Matthew Weber bought the business. His son, Elmer, joined him and later bought the business from his father in 1937. He owned it for 25 years until 1964 when he sold it to his son Don and his wife, Shirley. They operated the business until 1996 when they sold it to Wolohan Lumber Company. The last log cut at Weber Lumber was in 1969, after which the sawmill was closed down. The business is still known as Weber Lumber Company Incorporated. The railroad was built through Denmark Junction after the lumber mill. The depot was west of the lumber company and had passenger service to Saginaw and Bay City. The station had a water tower and coal dock to supply the steam locomotives. It also had a switch to direct trains either to Bay City or to Saginaw. Hobos riding the rails and looking for a free meal frequented area farmhouses.

Another Denmark Junction business started during World War II in the 1940s was a plant at the corner of Bradford and M/46, built by Weber Lumber to build sleds for the military. After the war ended, R. J. Manufacturing bought the plant and made plastic products. In 1974, Weber Steel and Body bought the plant. After discontinuing building truck bodies, it became Weber Steel which is in the steel fabricating and supply business.

Richville American Legion

The Alvin F. Miller Post #400 was started in 1947. It was named in honor of Alvin F. Miller, a member of St. Michael's who gave his life during action in World War II. The new Legion Post was built in 1952. It is located 1 mile west of Richville on M/46. One member of St. Michael's, Herbert Schwab, died during World War I while serving in the military. The Legion is a support group for veterans and their spouses. It participates in Memorial Day services and also in various parades throughout the year. The Legion Auxiliary membership is made up of veterans' wives and other family members.

Special Anniversary Celebrations of St. Michael's

50th Anniversary - 1901

In 1901, on August 18th and 19th, St. Michael's held a celebration of thanksgiving for 50 years of blessings and guidance. The celebration was observed with 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. services on Sunday, August 18, and the following day with a picnic.

75th Anniversary Celebration - 1926

On Sunday July 18, 1926, the 75th anniversary was celebrated with a 10 a.m. German service with Prof. Theodore Graebner of St. Louis, Missouri, preaching the sermon. At the 2:30 p.m. English afternoon service, the sermon was preached by Dr. L. Wessel of Springfield, Illinois, and a German address was given by Rev. E. A. Mayer of Frankenmuth.

90th Anniversary Celebration - 1941

August 13, 1941, St. Michael's celebrated the 90th anniversary of its founding with a 10 a.m. German service with Pastor E. C. Weber as the speaker. At the 2:30 p.m. English service, the Rev. Herman Mayer was the Speaker.

Centennial Service - 1951

On Sunday August 19, 1951, St. Michael's celebrated its Centennial with a morning service in German, with Pastor Ed Weber as guest preacher. The English afternoon service had Dr. Andrew Zeile as the guest preacher. Both services were held in the church grove with big crowds of worshipers present.

125th Anniversary Celebration - 1976

The first of six special Sunday celebrations was September 26, 1976, on our annual "Kirchweihe" or church dedication anniversary. The Rev. Dr. Edwin C. Weber was guest speaker at the two morning services. Following the church services, the congregation served an ox roast and bratwurst dinner. The next special service was December 12, 1976, with the Rev. Dr. Gilbert Otte speaking at the three morning services. On February 27, 1977, the Rev. Dr. Oswald Hoffman, International Lutheran Hour speaker, preached the sermons. On May 8, 1977, the Rev. Dr. J. A. O. Preus, president of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, preached the sermons. On June 19, 1977, the Rev. Dr. Paul Maier, author and chaplain at Western Michigan University, spoke. On this day at 2:00 and 7:30, a pageant was presented at the school with the church band providing music before each pageant presentation. To close the year long celebration on September 25, 1977, the Rev. Dr. Richard L. Schlecht, president of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod's Michigan District, was guest preacher.

140th Anniversary Celebration - 1991

During 1991, seven special Sunday celebrations were held, beginning with Rev. Lorenz F. Weber as speaker for the May 19 services. Five sons of St. Michael's preached on other Sundays throughout the year. Rev. Steven J. Hess spoke on June 16, Rev. Dale Kern on June 30, Rev. Hubert G. Riethmeier on July 28, Rev. Elmer B. Schiefer on August 11, and Rev. Bruce R. Kischnick on September 1. The Rev. Dr. Richard L. Schlecht was the guest speaker on September 29.

150th Anniversary Celebration - 2001

St. Michael's celebrated its 150th anniversary with a yearlong celebration that started on Kirchweihe Sunday, September 24, 2000, with a 7:45 a.m. German worship service. Pastor Eldor Bickel was guest pastor for the early service and the 10:30 a.m. English worship service had LCMS Michigan District President Rev. C. William Hoesman as guest pastor. A community parade followed at 2:00 p.m. with a picnic-type festival in the church park. Those attending also enjoyed a memory lane in the school that featured memorabilia of past years, brought in by members. A variety of special services and concerts were held throughout the year, with guest pastors, organists, and choirs featured. A highlight was the staging of an outdoor Passion Drama during Holy Week that was so successful it was decided to continue it in the future. Another was the special choir concert in June. The year

of celebration closed on Kirchweihe Sunday, September 30, 2001, with former pastor Victor Spiekerman preaching. Photographs of those attending services were taken and a time capsule buried to be opened in 50 years. Members of the 150th committee were representatives of various boards, committees, and societies, along with some members at large. A community Oktoberfest was held at the American Legion Hall to wrap up the community wide celebration and it proved extremely popular.

Students of St. Michael's who became teachers are listed below.

John Bernthal
William von Renner
Otto von Renner
Ernst Mossner
Albert Engelhardt
William Winterstein
Wilfred Rogner
Paul Winterstein
Norman Weber
Erwin Bauer
Raymond Bauer
Marie Bauer
William Rupprecht
Edward Rupprecht
Kenneth Palmreuter
Ronald Schnell
Stuart Kern
Carol Keinath (Reas)
Marajean Palmreuter
Jean Rodammer
Leonard Schnell
Bruce Kischnick
Lydia Riethmeier
Dan Buchinger
Martin Roedel
Dennis Kern
David Auernhamer
Steven L. Buchinger
Jane Keinath Post
Mary Kay Bekemeier Dittman
Sue Rodammer Heidle
Krystal Palmreuter Helbig
Mary Palmreuter Cowan
Monica Frank Heissenbuettel
David Palmreuter

Pamela Roth Eschmann
Ruth Dubke Krieger
Kathy Palmreuter
Dan Reinert
Lynn Scherzer Kruetzer
Valerie Scherzer Beck
Kamie Reinbold

Those of our Parish who have entered the pastoral ministry are:

Paul Wiechmann
Herman Riethmeier
Herman von Renner
Herman Gugel
Reinhold Bekemeier
Elmer Schiefer
Hubert Riethmeier
Dale Kern
Steven J. Hess
Bruce R. Kischnick
Ronald M. Loesel

Clarence R. Hinz - Principal and teacher at St. Michael's school
left here to enroll at the Springfield Seminary and entered the ministry.

Robert H. Lindau - Teacher and Minister of Music at St. Michael's
left St. Michael's for another call and then studied for and entered the ministry.

Resident Pastors who have served St. Michael's

Johannes Deindoerfer

The Rev. Johannes Deindoerfer was born July 28, 1828 at Roszstall, Bavaria. He was the son of George Heinrich Deindoerfer and Anna Eva Leupold. He came to the United States in 1851 and received his elementary education at his village school and his pastoral training at the mission school in Nuremberg and from Pastor Loehe at Neuendettelsau. He was ordained at Hamburg, Germany on September 14, 1851.

He married Katherine Elizabeth Weege on October 18, 1852 at Frankenhilf. She died on July 10, 1900. Pastor Deindoerfer died on May 14, 1907 at Waverly, Iowa. Pastor Deindoerfer became pastor of St. Michael's at Frankenhilf in 1851, but left in 1853 for Iowa. He took part in organizing the Iowa Synod of the Lutheran Church. St. Michael's of Frankenhilf was the only Missouri Synod church that he served. After the Iowa Synod was formed, that was the only Synod he served. In 1853, he became pastor at St. Sebald, Iowa, in 1856, pastor of St. John at Madison, Wisconsin; in 1860, pastor of Zion at West Union, Iowa; in 1861, pastor of St. Peter at Eldorado, Iowa; and in 1865 pastor of St. John in Toledo, Ohio; in 1870, pastor of St. Paul in Defiance, Ohio; and in 1889, pastor of Grace in Ripon, Wisconsin. Pastor Deindoerfer served as Vice-President of the Iowa Synod from 1854 to 1893. He was president of the Eastern District of the Iowa synod from 1874 until

1889. He was president of the Iowa Synod at its Waverly, Iowa headquarters in 1893 and served as such until he was forced to resign in 1899 due to poor health. He retired from active ministry in 1904.

Pastor Deindoerfer became Dr. Deindoerfer when he was granted a doctor of divinity degree by Augustana College at Rock Island, Illinois in 1900.

George Bernthal

Pastor George Bernthal was born November 9, 1837 in Roszstall, Germany. When he was nine years old, he came to America, directly to Frankenmuth, Michigan. In 1853, he entered the Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and began his ministry May 4, 1859 in northern Illinois where he remained for one year. In 1860, he became pastor of a church near Kankakee, Illinois and on April 1, 1862 he was installed at St. Michael's in Frankenhilf, now Richville. In 1860 he married Maria von Renner who died a year later. In 1863, he married Frederika Reh of Waldenburgh, who died eleven months later. In 1864, he married Mrs. Katherine Maria Wiechmann nee Bezer, the widow of Rev. Wiechmann. Pastor Bernthal served the Lord at St. Michael's for fifty years until 1912 when he retired. It is said that he never owned or drove a buggy but that church members took him on his calls. It is also said that in fifty years, he never missed a Sunday church service due to illness. Pastor Bernthal went to his eternal home on March 8, 1913 and is buried in St. Michael's cemetery.

Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Bekemeier

Pastor C. F. William Bekemeier was born April 17, 1866 in Westphalia, Germany to William and Louise Arning Bekemeier. At the age of fifteen, he learned how to be a shoemaker. In 1885, at the age of nineteen, he came to America to join his older brother who had come earlier. Both worked in the coal mines in Illinois and soon after, he moved to Kansas with his brother and wife and went into the shoemaking business. Later, he again returned to Illinois to work in the coal mines and on a farm. Going to church every Sunday, he was most impressed by a sermon of the rich man and Lazarus. Thinking about his confirmation vows to remain faithful and reading in a Lutheran paper about the need for pastors and church workers, he went to the seminary in Springfield, Illinois to study for the ministry. He was twenty-three years old. In his last year at the seminary, he worked for a vacant congregation at Bishop, Illinois. He never had any spare money but also had no debts. On August 1894, he was ordained and installed at Traverse City, Michigan. He pastored four small outlying congregations and after three years, he was given eight more places to serve. He traveled by train and horse and buggy in an area of 100 by 100 miles. In 1895, he married Bertha Brandhorst of St. Louis, Missouri. In their first seven years of marriage they had five children. One was Laura, who married Ed Schluckebier of Richville. The other girls were Clara, Alma, and Esther and one son, Reinhold, who became a pastor.

After five years at Traverse City, he was called to Arcadia, Michigan where he stayed twelve years. In 1912, he received a call to St. Michael's at Frankenhilf, now Richville, where there were 1,100 members. He was installed on May 5, 1912 and he served St. Michael's until his death on April 4, 1937. Until his health gave him problems in 1935, he had missed only one church service due to illness. During his 25 years at St. Michael's, the need for divine service in the English language made itself felt and in the May meeting of

1931, it was decided to have an English service in the evening of every third Sunday of the month.

William Schoenow

Pastor William Schoenow was born August 5, 1897 at Saginaw, Michigan to Rev. C. F. W. and Wilhelmine Starke Schoenow. During his youth, his father served congregations at Centreville and Belknap, both in Michigan. While at Belknap, he worked for area farmers during the summer months. He graduated from Concordia College at Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1915 and after that, he vicared in Montana. He graduated from the Seminary at Springfield, Illinois in 1920. He was ordained at Au Gres, Michigan on September 12, 1920. On September 7, 1924, he became pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church at Sawyer, Michigan. While at Sawyer, he married Florence Golm on October 20, 1924 at Stevensville, Michigan. To their marriage were born four children: William Jr., August 22, 1929; Gertrude, July 31, 1932; Henry, October 20, 1933; and Louis, August 11, 1936. He became pastor of St. Michael's Lutheran Church at Hawks and St. Paul's Lutheran Church at Posen, Michigan on November 3, 1929. While at Hawks and Posen, he also served as vacancy pastor at Roger City for one year. He accepted a call to St. Michael's at Richville, Michigan and was installed July 4, 1937. He served as pastor there until his retirement January 1, 1980. He served as Visitor of the Michigan District, Vice President of the Michigan District and served on the Synod Commission on Theology and Church Relations for three years. He enjoyed nature, especially hunting, fishing, walking and working in the woods.

When Pastor Schoenow would be vacationing at their property near Hawks enjoying nature and relaxing, he would never refuse to come home for a funeral or wedding if he was requested to serve as the pastor. He went to his eternal home on September 25, 1991 with the funeral on September 29, 1991. He is buried at St. Michael's cemetery.

Victor J. Spiekerman

Pastor Victor J. Spiekerman was born August 20, 1925 to Norman and Olga Hartman Spiekerman in Blumfield Township, Michigan. Following parochial education at Immanuel Lutheran School at Frankentrost, he attended Michigan Lutheran Seminary where he graduated in 1943 as the class valedictorian. He graduated from Concordia, Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1945. He attended Concordia Seminary at St. Louis and afterwards vicared in Detroit and St. Louis. He graduated cum laude in 1948. After attending post graduate mission school, he was ordained at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Frankentrost on July 18, 1948 by the Rev. Andrew Zeile.

He married Dorothea Ruediger on June 19, 1948 at Marion Springs, Michigan. She was born June 24, 1926. Their marriage was blessed with seven children: Katharine Louise, born October 15, 1949; Martin Paul, born June 21, 1951; Christine Olga, born December 24, 1953; Lorna Ruth, born November 15, 1955; Anne Elizabeth, born June 21, 1957; Michael Gerhardt, born December 30, 1958; Stephani,e born December 28, 1960.

Pastor Spiekerman served as missionary to Africa, arriving in Nigeria in February of 1949 for two tours, a total of six years. At his first post in Nigeria, he served 24 churches and ten schools until the missionary returned from furlough. At his next place, his work included a leper colony and beginning work among the Eleme people. After a furlough, he returned to Eket until the hospital was finished. He served the last two years moving into a mud and

wattle home which they had built. At the first service, 169 people were baptized, 70 were confirmed, and 37 couples were married at a service which began at 8:00 a.m. and ended about 3:30 p.m. After returning from the Mission field, he accepted a call to Trinity-Merrit Township to lead a congregation in building the school. In 1960, he accepted a call to Trinity in Saginaw and in 1965 he accepted a call to St. Michael's to lead the congregation in the challenge of building a new church. He served as chairman of the Saginaw Valley Pastoral Conference and also served on the District Mission Board for eleven years. He was chairman for five. Pastor and wife, Dorothea, hosted the annual Campus Pastors' Retreat for 25 years. Pastor Spiekerman retired December 31, 1988 and the couple moved to their home near Johannesburg, Michigan.

David E. Hakes

Pastor Hakes was born January 17, 1937 at Goshen, Indiana. He grew up and attended schools in Elkhart, Indiana, where he was confirmed at Trinity Lutheran Church. After graduating from high school in 1955, he joined the U. S. Army and served in Korea. In 1957 he entered Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois. He vicared at St. John Lutheran Church, York, Pennsylvania. His first call upon graduation from the seminary in 1963 was to St. John, York, where he had vicared. In 1968 he accepted a call to Resurrection, Baltimore, Maryland. In 1974, he came to Grace Lutheran Church in Auburn, Michigan. He accepted a call to St. Michael's in Richville, Michigan in December 1990 and was installed as Associate Pastor on January 13, 1991, becoming Administrative Pastor when Timothy McNutt resigned in late 1991. Pastor Hakes married Charlotte Woltman on June 12, 1966. Their children are David Jr., Stephen, Timothy, Christina, and Deborah. Over the years, he served as editor of a district edition of the Lutheran Witness, a number of terms as Circuit Counselor, and was the Continuing Education Representative for the Michigan District. He served St. Michael's until retiring in February 2002.

Wesley S. Gillaspie

Pastor Gillaspie was born July 2, 1959 near Fairfield, Iowa to Robert and Joy nee Bauer Gillaspie. He was baptized and confirmed at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Fairfield, Iowa. He graduated from Fairfield High School in 1977. He entered Concordia College, Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1977; Concordia, River Forest in 1980; and Fort Wayne Seminary in 1981, graduating in 1986. He served as vicar at Crookston, Minnesota. He served a dual parish at St. Paul, Fairview, Kansas, and Zion, Powhaten, Kansas, from 1986 to 1995 and at St. Michael's, Richville, Michigan, as Associate Pastor from 1995 to the present.

On August 23, 1980 Pastor Gillaspie married Ann Keegan who was raised in Hillman, Michigan. They have two sons, Eric and David. He served on the Rural Ministry and the Recruitment Committees of the Kansas District L. C. M. S.. He also was pastoral advisor to the L. L. L.



In Conclusion

As we look back on the 150 years that we have read about in the preceding pages, we cannot help but think of the future. We have seen that the "House was built on the rock", as it has withstood many trying moments of anguish over those 150 years. We look ahead with a proposed building program approved by the voters with additions and improvements for church and school, office work space, staff facilities, more overflow room space, expanded gymnasium, and larger kitchen facilities.

We think back to the beginning when the settlers were without a pastor or teacher, and Michael Schwartz as a layman instructed children in God's Word and the three R's. The importance of education, especially in God's Word, showed in the process of building district schools and calling teachers to staff the schools, and then, after 100 years, consolidating them into one central school system. The central school was expanded in 1982 and consideration is now being given to add room for expansion of the curriculum, better sports facilities, and more workspace for teachers and staff. Teaching our children and keeping them in God's Word is truly building on the "Rock", which will carry St. Michael's into the future. All glory be to the Lord Who has hitherto helped us.

Important Dates in St. Michael's History

April 18, 1850: Colonists boarded ship in Bremerhaven
May 21, 1850: Colonists ship docked in New York
June 10, 1850: Amman and others start to build a hut
September 11, 1850: Amman family moves into home
December 7, 1851: St. Michael's founding day (2nd Sunday in Advent, 1851)
September 25, 1853: St. Michael's log church dedicated on St. Michael's Fest
April 1, 1862: Pastor G. Bernthal installed as pastor
September 26, 1875: St. Michael's white frame church dedicated on St. Michael's Fest
May 1, 1881: Teacher W. Von Renner installed as teacher for public and parochial school
May 21, 1882: St. Michael's decided to operate its own parochial school system
January 28, 1882: St. Michael's dedicates first school building (Village)
September 16, 1894: St. Michael's dedicates second school building (Northern)
1898: St. Michael's opens third school building (Eastern)
1906: St. Michael's opens fourth school building (Southern)
May 5, 1912: Rev. W. Bekemeier installed as pastor
March 8, 1913: Pastor Bernthal called to his eternal home
July 15, 1923: Dedication of two room school at St. Michael's
April 4, 1937: Pastor Bekemeier called to his eternal home
July 4, 1937: Rev. William Schoenow installed as pastor
April 1, 1951: Groundbreaking for new school and Memorial Building
July 8, 1951: Cornerstone laying for school and Memorial Building
August 19, 1951: Main Centennial service

August 24, 1951: Dedication of school and Memorial Building
February 14, 1965: Rev. Victor J. Spiekerman installed as Pastor
May 18, 1969: Groundbreaking for new church building
September 28, 1969: Cornerstone laying for new church building
March 21, 1971: Special service of entry for new church
September 28, 1971: Kirchweihe Fest - Dedication of new church
February 21, 1982: Dedication for school addition and renovation
August 1, 1985: Timothy McNutt installed as pastor
January 13, 1991: Rev. David Hakes installed as pastor
September 25, 1991: Pastor Schoenow called to his eternal home
September 29, 1991: Last of seven 140th Celebration Services
December 5, 1993: By-law articles 4, 11, 16 passed (including women's suffrage)
April 2, 1995: Rev. Wesley Gillaspie installed as pastor

Officers of the Congregation

School Board Members

Waldo Roedel (1971-1976)	James Doud (1972-1977)
Robert Kischnick (1973-1978)	Melvin Rupprecht (1974-1979)
Don Holzhei (1976-1981)	Kenneth Hess (1977-1978)
Wilbur Hecht (1978-1980)	Myron Ortner (1979-)
Larry Bauer (1979-1984)	Robert Hadaway (1980-1983)
Norman Reinert (1980-1982)	David Buchinger (1981-1986)
Michael Buchinger (1982-1987)	Larry Zwerk (1983-1985)
Myron Ortner (1984-1987)	Roy Knoll (1985-1990)
Larry Kischnick (1986-1991)	Richard Kern (1986-1989)
Terry Henne (1987-1992)	Robert Caldwell (1988-1993)
Gerald Schluckbier (1988-1992)	Alan Rodammer (1990-1994)
Dale Heinlein (1991-1993)	Dennis Gruber (1992-1996)
Bruce Landskroener (1993-1999)	Wayne R. Bierlein (1994-1997)
Charles Zwerk (1993-1999)	John Schnell Jr. (1994-1997)
Bob Raney (1995-1997)	Douglas Doud (1997-)
Lavonne Richards (1998-)	Ken Thorp (1998-)
Connie Hecht (1998-)	Steve Cook (2000-)
Mike McKay (2000-)	

Trustees

Clarence Mossner (1972-1977)	Rudolph Mossner (1972-1977)
James Hecht (1974-1979)	Gordon Bierlein (1976-1981)
Gene Buchinger (1976-1981)	Terry Keinath (1978-1983)
Donald Kischnick (1978-1983)	Arnold Bekemeier (1980-1985)
Robert Buchinger (1982-1987)	Ruben Mossner (1982-1987)

Walter Bauer (1984-1988)
Larry Putman (1986-1990)
Gary Kern (1988-1993)
Robert Kischnick Jr. (1990-1995)
Neil Arnold (1991-1995)
Art Reinert (1991-1995)
Alan Kischnick (1993-1997)
Roy Rodammer (1995-)
Dan Bauer (1996-1999)
Kurt Rodammer (1996-1999)
Roy Knoll (1997-)
Arnold Kischnick (1998-)
Luke Bierlein (1999-)
Dennis Schultz (2000-)

Glenn Mossner (1984-1988)
Carl Bauer (1986-1991)
Dennis Reinbold (1989-1994)
Dennis Weber (1991-1996)
Timothy Bierlein (1991-1996)
Scott Keinath (1992-1994)
Gerald Bierlein (1993-1997)
Wayne V. Bierlein (1995-1998)
Klair Bierlein (1996-1999)
Howard Weber (1996-1998)
Scott Weber (1997-)
Herman Rupprecht (1998-)
Walter Hecht (1999-)
Brian Kern (2000-)

Salary Fund Treasurer

Floyd Hecht (1976-1985)

Treasurers

Arthur Reinert (1986-1988)
Robert Rembisz (1995-1998)
Douglas Doud (2001-)

Charles Heinlein (1989-1994)
Sandra Reinbold (1999-2000)

Trustee Fund Treasurer

Arthur Reinert (1976-1985)

Assistant Treasurers

Charles Heinlein (1986-1987)
Thomas Daenzer (1991-1996)
Eileen Rodammer (2001-)

Robert Koch (1988-1990)
Richard Rose (1997-2000)

Chairmen of the Congregation

Clarence Weiss (1970-1974)
Don Weber (1978-1979)
Michael Zwerk (1984-1987)
Terry Henne (1994-1997)

LeRoy Schluckebier (1974-1977)
Tom Jaffke (1980-1983)
Tom Jaffke (1988-1993)
Dennis Kern (1998-2001)

Secretaries

Victor Engebrecht (1964-1966)

Don E. Weber (1967-1977)

Louis Schoenow (1978)
Melvin Rupprecht (1982-1987)
Jay Trombley (1993-1996)

Earl Palmreuter (1979-1981)
Wayne Hecht (1988-1992)
Don Weber (1997-2001)

Elders

Albert Scherzer (1973-1979)
Arnold Landskroener (1974-1979)
William Steck (1975-1980)
Howard Buchinger (1979-1981)
Waldo Roedel (1981-1986)
James Hecht (1982-1987)
Terry Keinath (1986-1989)
Ronald Stange (1986-1989)
Fred Bekemeier (1986-1990)
Arthur Gugel (1988-1993)
Dennis Kern (1989-1994)
Ralph Bernreuter (1990-1991)
Ronald Frank (1992-1995)
Larry Putman (1992-1998)
Bruce Heinlein (1994-1997)
Roland Wenzel (1995-1998)
Larry Bauer (1996-2000)
David Miller (1998-1999)
Lynn Gray (1999-2002)
David Rodammer (1999-2002)
Charles Bauer (2000-)

Waldo Mossner (1971-1977)
Albert Weber (1976-1981)
John Schluckebier (1978-1983)
LeRoy Schluckebier (1980-1985)
Milton Otto (1982-1987)
Charles Rodammer (1983-1988)
Waldo Schluckebier (1986-1991)
Robert Bickel (1986-1991)
Donald Weber (1987-1992)
Clarence Weiss (1988-1993)
Donald Holzhei (1990-1995)
Dale Janson (1991-1996)
Ronald Stange (1992-1998)
Glen Doud (1993-1999)
David Jewell (1994-1997)
Wilbert Wirth Jr. (1996-1999)
David Janson (1997-2000)
Dennis Weber (1998-2001)
Don Baesl (1999-2002)
Arnold Reinert (2000-)
Gerald Rodammer (2000-)