

HE ANSWERED THE CALL

As a young boy in an act of compassion, William George, saw a little dead bird on his grandparents' farm. He buried it and took sticks to make a simple cross. A few years later he witnessed his older friend being baptized, and he realized that if he were a minister, he could perform baptisms. He knew then that was something he was called to do. However, after high school, he first attended the University of Missouri- Columbia, ??? where he took a master's degree in Public Administration and Development. He learned how organizations are structured and how they work. This knowledge has been beneficial in his years of pastoral work. However, still hearing the call to be a pastor dating back to his childhood days, he followed that call and enrolled in Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, receiving his degree in divinity. He finally had found his life's work.

There were some difficult times in his early years in a family beset by various kinds of problems, but his faith in God always carried him through. Along the way he met and married Carla and they had a daughter, Amanda. One of his greatest joys occurred daily when he would ride the bus home from work in ??? and at the bus stop, Carla and Amanda were waiting for him. Seeing them waiting there for him, always gave his spirits a special lift. In his pastoral work, he has served in different states and in a variety of capacities, including being a chaplain in Victoria, Texas, ??? at a hospital serving the indigent population. A former member of the Missouri Synod, he has been on the ECLA clergy roster for many years.

After several years in Texas, he was transferred to Columbus, Ohio, where he was Director of Pastoral Service. His responsibilities included developing new areas of service, especially in hospitals and nursing homes. He developed programs including how to recruit congregations and pastors, and designing Sunday School programs. At that time, Medicare had been reduced, creating a challenge on how to be successful with "the reality of the situation." That meant without having to generate income from institutions. He held that position in Ohio for five years, then came back to Cole Camp, Missouri, where he was pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church ELCA for a short period.

When an opportunity opened up in the Kansas City area where their daughter lives, they readily accepted it. He is officially retired, but serving he finds the church and its congregations still present a challenge hard to resist. He has filled four interim ministries and is now in his fifth one with our church. When asked why he made all the moves with different pastoral positions, Pastor Bill replied, "Each one is another challenge and another opportunity for service." He says he finds our congregation "open and flexible," which greatly enhances the work he is doing here. When he receives "the final call" ending his life's work, he wants to be remembered as a loyal and caring pastor, one not afraid to build on controversy.

His hobbies include gardening and starting a new one- painting with acrylics. He began painting about a year ago but readily admits he needs some teaching. For a man who all his life has been teaching others about the Lutheran Church and God and Jesus, maybe it is time for him to take on a new challenge—that as a student of art.

Welcome, Pastor Bill to All Saints. Be sure to have your paint brushes and easel close by.

