

## HISTORY

### THE HISTORY OF PIONEER LAKE LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Gustaf Adolph Lutheran congregation of Conover, Vilas County, Wisconsin, was organized October 26, 1903 at the August Osterberg home. Reverend N. Gibson of Ironwood, Michigan was guest pastor. The first members were Mr. and Mrs. August Staffen, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Lillund, Mr. and Mrs. August Osterberg and Richard Dahl. The membership totaled nine.

A constitution was also adopted at this meeting and Rev. Gibson retained as pastor. There were two baptisms at this first meeting. On November 10, 1903 the first regular services were held and the name Gustaf Adolph Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was chosen. In 1904 the congregation applied for admission to the Augustana Synod and was accepted. Rev. J.W. Johnson of Ironwood was called as pastor and served until 1907. The services and church business meetings were held in the member's homes and were conducted in Swedish.

In 1906 the Blue Grass Land Company donated 40 acres of land to the congregation to be used for a cemetery. This land was dedicated in November 1906 at the John Hegstrom home. The death of Hildegard Turnquist in 1908 was the first in the congregation and the cemetery was named in her memory. Monheim school was built in 1906 and church services were held in the school thereafter.

In 1906 the Ladies Aid was organized and Mrs. Hanson became the first president.

Jennie Johnson Ewald was our first confirmand, conducted by Rev. Hiller of Rhinelander in 1908. Church records show that the Sunday School was organized in 1907 and conducted in each of the district schools, Monheim, Reed and Pioneer, as were the services.

It was in 1912 that the first efforts were made to procure lots for a new church building. Land owned by Matt Anderson on Pioneer Lake was chosen, which he donated for a new church building and construction on the present building was begun. Seven years later on May 20, 1919 the first service was held in the building. It was a confirmation service. The church was far from finished. White birch boughs filled the window openings and the church was beautifully decorated with leaves and flowers. Rev. Kastman conducted the service.

In 1923 Sunday School was held in the church with Mrs. Peter Hedeem as it's first superintendent. English was introduced into the services at this time.

In 1924 at the annual meeting it was decided to increase the number of deacons and trustees from three to six. On November 12, 1932 the first wedding was held in the church uniting Elsie Marie Carlson and Carl Tore Lindberg. In 1932, Rev. Albin Olson of Minneapolis, held the first Christmas Midnight Service (Julotta) and the first Sunrise Service at Easter.

In 1945 the name of the congregation was changed to Pioneer Lake Lutheran Church. In 1946 worship services were held every Sunday.

A special meeting of the congregation was held April 10, 1951. Pastor T.A. Johnstone, President of the Superior Conference presided. Since we had been severed from the Rhinelander Immanuel Lutheran Church, the purpose of this meeting was to reclassify our church. It was decided we serve as a congregation aligned with the American Board of Missions, having an interne from Augustana Seminary to serve us during the summer months. Vice pastors served the remainder of the year.

Twenty three young men from our congregation served in World War II and three in the Korean War.

In 1953 we celebrated our 50th anniversary. Guest pastor at the morning service was Reverend Herbert. Mr. and Mrs. August Staffen were the only remaining charter members present. Mrs. Peter Hedeem crocheted a beautiful altar cloth, the linen of which was from flax gathered, spun and woven by Mrs. Ella Hedeem, and presented it to the church in honor of the occasion.

A church bell was given to the congregation by the Staffen family in memory of Mr. and Mrs. August Staffen. A dedication ceremony officiated by Pastor Mark Wickstrom was held on December 5, 1954 with 90 people present.

IN 1956 new pews were purchased and remodeling done to the interior of the building. The altar, communion rail, pulpit and baptismal font were a gift from the First English Lutheran Church of Wisconsin Rapids, through the efforts of Rev. A.J. Berghult. The steeple cross was given in memory of Hilder Meyers.

On July 1, 1961 Rev. Charles Holmgren and family arrived. It was a joyous experience for this congregation to have our own resident pastor. With the help of student Mr. Anderson, it enabled us to have twos services each Sunday at Pioneer and Sayner.

Early in 1962 several synods including Augustana merged and became a new church, Lutheran Church of America, of which we became a part.

1963 was another eventful year for our church. The 60th Anniversary banquet was held August 17th at the Gateway Hotel with a large attendance. Guest Pastor Berghult was present, Dr. Andeen guest

speaker and George Palo was Master of Ceremonies. During the year a part of our morning service was broadcast on WERL from 11:00 to 11:30 a.m. Pastor Holmgren also participated in the Chapel of the Air broadcasts.

On November 7, 1963 ground was broken for the educational addition to the church. The building was started the following spring. Dedication of the new addition was held July 3, 1965 with festive services and Pastor Holmgren as guest speaker at both.

Pastor Holmgren had stayed with us until November of 1964. Layman Phillip Lindbloom filled in until 1965 when Pastor Wyberg became our resident pastor.

The floating chapel was first considered in 1968 by Pastor Wyberg. The unique floating ministry served from 5,000 to 6,000 persons every summer. Pioneer Lake Lutheran Church sponsored the ministry which was in operation nine years. Sadly, the floating Chapel ministry was cancelled in April 1977. We were not financially able to replace the pontoon boat as grants were no longer available.

Pastor Wyberg resigned to spend a year studying in Germany. He left the parish on October 1, 1968.

Pastor James Primley was called as interim supply Pastor in October 1968 and served until June 1969.

Pastor Pederson accepted our call for resident pastor in April, 1969. Summer ministry programs were still being carried out.

A special congregational meeting was held in April of 1969 to vote on building a new parsonage and new entrance and front steps to the church. A fund raising project was begun and building of the parsonage commenced June of 1970 and was near completion in December when Pastor Pederson and his family moved in. The entrance and steps had been repaired and the new stairway was soon completed.

Pastor Pederson left us in November 1974 to serve a church in Marquette, MI. Dr. Andeen was interim Pastor from December of 1974 through December 1975 and Pastor Jerome Miller of Boulder Junction served us during January and February until the arrival of Pastor Charles Briggs on March 1, 1976. Pastor Briggs resigned on December 31, 1978.

New road signs made in the shape of our church were made and put up by Bill Sarring and Carl Swanlund.

On January 15, 1979 Pastor Lawrence Day was called and accepted as our pastor.

Several improvements were made to the church; including new siding, inside stairway, new glass doors at the front entrance, new Allen organ, new table in the dining area, new alter, baptismal font, pulpit and cross.

Pastor Day resigned in September of 1985 to accept a call to a church in Amery, WI.

Pastor Grant Quever became our new pastor on March 24, 1986, and installed April 6, 1986. He resigned on November 1, 1988. During Pastor Quever's time, several members left our church to form a new mission church in Eagle River, WI.

In 1988 the Lutheran Church of America, which we were a part, and The American Lutheran Church merged and became the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, which we are presently a part of.

Our present pastor, Richard Inglett came to us with his wife Mary on June 1, 1989 and was installed on June 18, 1989.

Pioneer Lake Lutheran Church began with nine charter members. It stands today as a testimony to the efforts and courage of the people 87 years ago. We can look back and find much to be thankful for. May the years that lie ahead be fruitful years and may we grow and serve an even wider circle of true believers in Christ.

"History compiled by Alice Zielke and Frieda Jefferson, December 1990."