
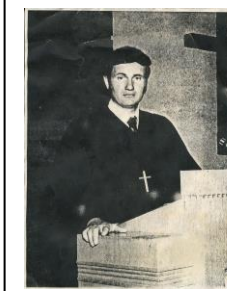


A Brief History of Star of Bethlehem

1963	Mission Board votes to start a new mission in New Berlin
1964	The Koeppen property on Casper Drive is purchased by the Synod as the site for a new mission church.
1965	\$25,000 is allocated from the Church Extension Fund for a new chapel.
1967	<p>Pastor John Raabe, Southeastern Wisconsin District Missionary, begins to canvass the area. First Service is held on July 9th in the basement of the New Berlin State Bank. Sixty-nine people were in attendance. The congregation officially organizes with eight families as charter members. The name "Star of Bethlehem Ev. Lutheran Church is adopted.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div data-bbox="418 615 813 961" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> </div> <div data-bbox="979 621 1334 961" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">STAR OF BETHLEHEM</p> </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px; border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; background-color: #e0e0e0;"> <p>Matthew 18: 20 ✝</p> <p>For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.</p> </div>
1968	<p>Annual meeting shows a membership of 16 communicants and 30 souls. First Sunday School classes and first Church Picnic are held.</p> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 10px;"> </div>
1969	<p>Installation of Julius Wille as the first resident pastor. Ground breaking for the worship facility on Casper Drive.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div data-bbox="521 1539 768 1871" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">THE REV. JULIUS G. WILLE</p> </div> <div data-bbox="878 1524 1265 1877" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="font-size: x-small;">BREAKING GROUND Nov. 4 at Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in New Berlin is the Rev. Ronald Baerbeck. Other (from left) include Jerry Vanosho (architect), Robert Lundy (president of the congregation), John Perzoni, Wayne Lee, John Manku and Allen Martin of the Building Committee. Other committee members not pictured are Gordon Barnes, Don Rye and Cliff Buchholz.</p> </div> </div>
1970	Dedication of new church on June 28th. Ladies League and Lutheran Teens hold first meetings.

1971	Mr. Clifford Buchholz begins to serve two terms of service as Church President. Plans to build parsonage next to church are put on hold when soil test fails. Congregation's children attend Woodlawn Lutheran School in West Allis. When enrollment reached 15 students, we would supply a teacher for Woodlawn.	
1972	Pastor Wille accepts call to Nebraska. Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary serves as Vacancy Pastor.	
1973		Pastor Ronald Baerbock, a candidate from the Seminary, is called, ordained and installed as the new Pastor.
1975	Ground breaking for a new educational addition to the Church.	
1976	Dedication of educational wing. Congregation votes to start its own Christian Day School.	

Early Church Leaders

Board of Elders








Board of Trustees







Board of Education




1977	Mr. Robert Luethy is elected and serves two terms as Church President. Mr. Michael Wiechmann, of Tempe, AZ, accepts the call to serve as first principal and first teacher. Miss Suzanne Kuhl is called to teach grades 1-3 and Mrs. Karen Baerbock teaches Kindergarten when enrollment blossoms. New School opens with 42 students. The Church celebrates its 10th Anniversary.	 <small>YEAR OF BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN SCHOOL, opened its doors Sept. 8 along with other New Berlin schools. Miss Suzanne Kuhl, teacher of grades one to three, shared thoughts. Baerbock, the new work book on the right, says, "In the beginning, we children found and were organized and taught by Mrs. Baerbock." (1977) and provided by Mrs. Baerbock.</small>
1979	Pastor Ronald Baerbock accepts a call to the State of Washington. Mrs. Jill Buchholz accepts the call to teach Kindergarten.	

<p>1980</p>		<p>Pastor John Raabe serves as Vacancy Pastor, assisted by Pastors William Fischer and Roger Fleming. Pastor William Neumann, of Elizabeth, IL, accepts the call to serve as pastor. Miss Betty Bilitz from Chicago, IL, accepts the call to teach grades 1- 3, and Miss Julie Pfothauer accepts the call to teach grades 4-5. Dedication of new additions to the church and school.</p>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <p>Psalm 25: 5 † Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior and my hope is in you.</p> </div>		
<p>1981</p>	<p>Pastor Leo Gruendemann, a retired pastor, is called to serve as Vacancy Pastor. Pastor John Raabe's Funeral Service is held at Star of Bethlehem. Seminary candidate Thomas Horner is assigned to serve as Pastor at Star of Bethlehem. Mrs. Jan Fleming and Mrs. Ruth Wiechmann volunteer to teach Grades 4-5.</p>	
<p>1982</p>	<p>Church celebrates its 15th Anniversary. Pastor Horner accepts a call to serve as a missionary in Puerto Rico. Pastor Leo Gruendemann again serves as Vacancy Pastor.</p>	
<p>1983</p>	<p>Mr. Allen Martin is elected and begins to serve two terms as Church President. Pastor John Gawrisch, of Little Rock, AR, accepts the call to serve as Pastor, and is installed on April 24. The first Evangelism Committee is formed.</p>	
<p>1984</p>	<p>A new organ is dedicated. Improvements are done to the Principal's office and carpeting is installed in the classrooms.</p>	
<p>1985</p>	<p>Mr. Blair Schaper is called through the Assignment Committee to teach grades 4-5, and is installed on August 25.</p>	
<p>1986</p>	<p>Christian Day School has an enrollment of 96 students. The parking lot is paved, and planning begins to construct a parsonage on church property.</p>	
<p>1987</p>	<p>The Christian Day School celebrates its 10th Anniversary and the church its 20th Anniversary.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div>	
<p>1988</p>		<p>New parsonage is dedicated. First Vicar Eugene Andrus is shared with Resurrection congregation to offer pastoral assistance. Mr. Lee Westphal is elected and begins to serve two terms as Church President.</p>
<p>1989</p>	<p>Pastoral assistance is provided by Seminary Senior Vicar Jonathan Nitz. Wednesday morning Services at the Linden Grove Health Care Center began. Mrs. Ruth Wiechmann is called to teach Kindergarten. Church is remodeled to provide increased seating capacity.</p>	

1990	Thursday Night Services begun to relieve overcrowding on Sunday mornings. Pastoral assistance is provided by Seminary Senior Vicar Virgil Hanson. Men's Chorus is formed. Christian Day School enrollment passes the 100 mark. Wooden playground equipment is constructed.	
1991	Miss Karen Schalow called through the Assignment Committee to teach grades 3-4. Pastoral assistance is provided by Pastor Dale Tollefson.	
1992	25th Anniversary of Church and 15th Anniversary of Christian Day School. Membership surpasses 500 communicants and 700 souls. Architect Robert Strass and Associates is selected to do a Master Site Plan in preparation for future expansion of Church and School.	
1993	Master Site Plan is adopted. Approval to call an Associate Pastor when funding is available. Approved concept of starting a preschool when space and funding are available. Formed Building Committee to plan a four classroom and multi-purpose gym expansion. Mr. David Schoeneck serves as Chairman of the committee.	
1994	Mr. Thomas Neitzel is elected Church President and begins to serve two terms. 121 students now enrolled in the Christian Day School. "Christian Worship" is adopted as our new hymnal. Ladies League disbands in favor of a new organization for men and women, SOS, Stars Organized for Service.	
1995	Pastor Dale Tollefson is installed as the first Associate Pastor on June 25. The BUILD theme (Believers Uniting in Living Discipleship) conveys to the membership the need for expansion of the Christian Day School and the need for a multi-purpose gym.	
1996	Ground breaking Service for the four-classroom and gym addition. Mrs. Christine Mastrocola is called to teach Grades 3-4. Both individual cup and the common cup are now offered in all Communion Services. Secretary's office and Associate Pastor's office are completed.	
1997	30th Anniversary of the Church and 20th Anniversary of the Christian Day School. Dedication Service for our school addition on August 17. 137 students are enrolled in the Christian Day School. Mrs. Kris Witt serves as our first Preschool Teacher and Mrs. Renee Hussman serves as Preschool Director. Seminary Senior Marcus Schulz provides pastoral assistance. Retired Pastor Herbert Lichtenberg also offers preaching help once a month and at Linden Grove. Present membership stands at 611 Communicants and 821 Souls.	
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>Psalm 122: 1 †</p> <p>I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord".</p> </div>	
1998	151 students enrolled in the Christian Day School. Pastor Jonathan Nitz, of Granite Falls and Echo, MN, accepts the call to serve as our Associate Pastor. Second parsonage is purchased. Miss Becky Steffenhagen accepts the call to teach Grades 2-3. Mr. Daniel Larabee is called through the Assignment Committee to teach Grade 4. Installation Service of new called workers on August 23. Fellowship hall is remodeled. Saturday night and Monday night Services began. Star Seniors hold first meeting. Nearly 1000 people worship at Star of Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. Present membership stands at 630 Communicants and 881 Souls.	
1999	Mrs. Patti Snyder is called as our Preschool Director. Preschool for 3-year-olds begins. Mrs. Carol Wendt and Mrs. Christine Mastrocola teach part-time in the Christian Day School. First Christmas for Kids event is held. Mr. Wiechmann steps down as our Choir Director after 20 years of faithful service. Miss Becky Steffenhagen is asked to serve as his replacement. Present membership stands at 636 Communicants and 878 Souls.	

2000	<p>Mr. Chip Tesch is elected Church President. Miss Heather Boese is called to teach Grade 2. Mrs. Carol Wendt and Mrs. Nan Szaj share teaching responsibilities in Grade 5. God's Ways Bible Class is held on Monday evenings. The 150th Anniversary of our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is marked by engraving a stone and planting a tree near the parking lot exit. Miss Betty Bilitz and Mr. Blair Schaper observe their 20th and 15th Anniversaries of faithful service to our congregation respectively. Mrs. Joy Patterson and Mrs. Karen McAdams assist in the Preschool. Present membership stands at 649 Communicants and 900 Souls.</p>	
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <p>John 3: 16 †</p> <p>For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.</p> </div>	
2001	<p>Mr. Joshua Lepke is called to teach the 7th Grade and installed on August 26. Mr. John Petzold and Mrs. Judith Petzold step down after many years of faithful service in our Sunday School. Worship Committee is formed. Mr. Blair Schaper accepts a call to teach at Wisconsin Lutheran High School. Building Committee prepares for next phase of expansion, new church, which is designed by Anderson-Ashton, Inc. The Building Fund Committee and Building Committee present design and funding information to the membership. Present membership stands at 657 Communicants and 898 Souls.</p>	
2002	<p>Funeral Services were held for former Vacancy Pastor and Seminary Professor Wilbert Gawrisch and for former Church President Allen Martin. Our indebtedness to AAL is paid in full! Mr. Michael Chappell, from Green Bay, WI, accepts the call to serve as our new 6th Grade teacher and Athletic Director, and is installed on September 1. The 35th Anniversary of the Church and the 25th Anniversary of the Christian Day School are observed on September 21-23. Mr. Michael Wiechmann, our first and only Principal, has completed 25 years of faithful service to our congregation. Present membership stands at 687 Communicants and 947 Souls.</p>	
2003		<p>Mr. Tim Snyder is elected Church President. Offices are relocated in anticipation of demolition. Our final services in the old building are held June 14-16. Ground Breaking for the new worship facility takes place June 22. The old church is demolished to make room for the new. Twenty-five years of ministry by Pastor John Gawrisch is celebrated by the congregation. Present membership stands at 702 Communicants and 958 Souls.</p>
2004		<p>Mrs. Kristin Kampmann, called to teach 6th grade, and Mrs. Debra Tjernagel, called to be Preschool Director and teacher, are installed on Sunday, August 29th. A Memorial Service is held for former Church President Robert Luethy. A Parish Nursing program is begun. The cornerstone for our new worship facility is laid on Sunday, August 15th. The Dedication Committee, chaired by Mr. Howard Cook, plans for the dedication of our new building, to take place on Sunday, October 17th. Present membership stands at 744 Communicants and 1003 Souls.</p> 
2005	<p>Timothy Snyder/Church President resigns as President when Mrs. Snyder accepts a call to serve as Preschool Director and Teacher at Christ the Lord Lutheran Church; Lee Westphal is elected to fulfill his term as President. Aug. 28 – Installation Service for Michelle Yass / Preschool Director and Teacher, Christopher Fischer / 6th Grade Teacher and Athletic Director, and Shawn Riesop / 7th Grade Teacher. 25th Anniversary Service and Luncheon for Miss Betty Bilitz – Oct. 16. Hand bell Choir formed and played for first time for Advent by Candlelight. Present membership stands at 757 Communicants and 1031 Souls.</p>	

2006	Tiling of two classroom floors was completed. Church parking lot was resealed and striped. Five classroom windows were replaced. Downstairs classroom was expanded. Present membership stands at 815 Communicants and 1077 Souls.
2007	Jennifer Treuden is called and installed as our Afternoon Kindergarten Teacher on Aug. 26. Church's 40th Anniversary and School's 30th Anniversary Service with Pastor Michael Turriff as Guest Speaker held on Sept. 23 (Remember, Rejoice, Reflect theme). Present membership stands at 850 Communicants and 1,122 Souls.
2008	Jodi Wandschneider is added as an Administrative Assistant to work with Karen McAdams in our Church and School Office. Vicar Matthew Reis assigned to Star of Bethlehem on May 22. Mrs. Becky Aldinger resigns her call to teach at Star of Bethlehem for family considerations. Mrs. Amy Cain called to teach 2nd Grade next school year on June 23. Kathryn Luebke accepts call to teach Part-time in the Upper Grade Classrooms. Mrs. Kathryn Luebke resigns her Part-time teaching position for Family reasons. Mrs. Becky Aldinger called to replace Mrs. Kathryn Luebke for Part-time teaching in the Upper Grades on October 28. Present membership stands at 862 Communicants and 1,130 Souls.
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> <p>Romans 15: 13 †</p> <p>May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.</p> </div>
2009	Vicar Reis offered support to our pastoral staff in many ways; preaching, teaching, youth ministry, hospital calls, shut-in visits, meeting devotions, nursing home devotions and school chapel services, etc. Randy Alf elected Church President on Jan. 29. Christopher Fischer (6th Grade Teacher and Athletic Director) accepts call to Divine Savior in Doral, FL. Becky Aldinger is called to replace Christopher Fischer. Jennifer Treuden called to be a part-time 3-year-old preschool Teacher. Extended Care Program begun for before and after school child care. Hot Lunch Program in School begins in October. Present membership stands at 883 Communicants and 1,142 Souls.
2010	Patrick Freese, in his 2nd year at the Seminary, and Adam Winkleman, a 1st year student, received their Early Field Experience here at Star of Bethlehem, helping out with liturgy and Communion, making some hospital and shut-in visits, preaching, and offering help with Teen Bible Class. Present membership stands at 883 Communicants and 1,129 Souls
2011	Installation of Heidi Biesterfeld as Upper Grade Part-time Teacher and Brian Gulrud as a Staff Minister Intern on Aug. 21 with reception following. Present membership stands at 909 Communicants and 1,151 Souls.
2012	Michael Wiechmann retires as Principal of Star of Bethlehem School after 35 years of service. Retirement Service and Dinner held on June 3rd. Timothy Mueller accepts call to serve as Principal. Present membership stands at 898 Communicants and 1,146 Souls.
2013	Installation Service for Darnell Anthony as Upper Grade Language Arts teacher on Aug. 25. Present membership stands at 1,181 Souls and 926 Communicants.
2014	Retirement Service and Dinner for Jan Fleming and Ruth Wiechmann was held on June 8th. Installation Service for Jessica Novotny and Rebecca Berger held on Aug. 24th. Present membership stands at 1,205 Souls and 927 Communicants.
2015	<p>School renovation was completed to create a new 2nd grade classroom and a new computer lab, which provided needed pre-school expansion for a program at maximum capacity. Gene Szaj is elected church President in January. Pastor Nitz celebrated his 25th anniversary in the ministry. The congregation membership stands at 941 Communicants and 1232 souls.</p> <div data-bbox="1036 1751 1393 1988" style="text-align: right;">  </div>

<p>2016</p>	<p>Pastor Jacob Schwartz was installed as the Star of Bethlehem 3rd pastor, joining Star with his wife and 4 children. Vicar John Schwartz with his wife and new baby also served at Star. An Extended Learning Center was added to the school. Denise Bloomquist accepted a call to teach 2nd grade. Heidi Biesterfeld accepted the call to teach 7th grade. The congregation membership stands at 940 Communicants and 1263 souls.</p>
<p>2017</p>	<p>The choir of MLC brought their message to the congregation. The school staff expanded to include a full-time principal and eighth grade teacher / vice principal. John Schleis accepted a call to teach 4th grade and serve as technology coordinator. Micah Waltz accepted a call as Vice Principal and 8th grade teacher. Molly Phelps accepted a call as Extended Learning Center Coordinator. Becky Aldinger transferred to teaching Kindergarten replacing Jessica Novotny. School expansion plan presented to the congregation. The 50th Anniversary of the Church and the 40th Anniversary of the School were both celebrated in August. The congregation membership stands at 937 Communicants and 1,270 souls.</p>

