

Our Savior Lutheran Church – Brief History

On May 12, 1947, the Board of Directors of the Iowa District East (IDE) of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) called E. A. Breiholz of St. John Lutheran church, Wellman, Iowa, to serve as a missionary in Bettendorf with the purpose of starting a new congregation. During the following months Rev. Breiholz conducted a religious survey of Bettendorf north of Central Avenue which indicated over half the families in the area were unchurched.

On October 5, 1947, the first worship service of the new Bettendorf mission was conducted in the seventh grade classroom of then Washington School (former Children's Museum) located at the corner of 16th Street and Mississippi Boulevard. Approximately forty people were in attendance. A week later a Sunday school was started with ten children participating. In January 1948, the IDE Board of Directors purchased property on the northwest corner of 23rd Street and Central Avenue. A temporary chapel was dedicated on this property on June 12, 1949.

On June 29, 1948, Our Savior Lutheran Church, Bettendorf, Iowa, was officially organized. Missionary Rev. Breiholz was formally called by the congregation as its first pastor. On July 19, 1948, the Voters Assembly adopted Articles of Incorporation, which were filed with the Secretary of State of Iowa on July 22, 1948. On August 16, 1948, at the regular Convention of IDE, Our Savior was formally received into membership in the LCMS.

Rapid growth led to the construction of a church building on property adjacent to the chapel. This building was dedicated on November 22, 1953. Continued growth led the congregation to relocate on 11.7 acres at 3775 Middle Road (out in the country) with the vision that this new location would become the geographic and economic center of Bettendorf. The first unit, a worship-education building, was dedicated on the Middle Road site on April 18, 1971. A new sanctuary was built and dedicated on October 28, 1979.

Two significant events occurred in 1997: our church debt was retired, burning the mortgage in the final 50th anniversary service on October 5th; and in November a second worship service on Sunday morning was introduced to meet the needs of a growing number of worshippers. On April 22, 2002, a third service on Sunday afternoons was added but discontinued in 2005. In September 2008, a third worship service on Saturday afternoons was added, which has been well received ever since.

On August 31, 1998, Our Savior Lutheran Preschool opened its doors for the first time to seventeen preschoolers. Jennifer Bullock was hired as the first preschool Director/Teacher. Sharon Davis was hired as Director/Teacher in 2001. Lisa Piotter was hired as Director in August 2006 with a staff of eight serving 115 children. A Parent's Day Out Program was introduced in 2005, Dawn Nickles was hired as Director/Teacher and one assistant to serve twenty children.

By September 2010 the preschool ministry grew to require use of almost every classroom in the facility, and Parent's Day Out changed to 2-3 year old preschool; a staff of twenty-one serving over 200 children. By 2016 the preschool grew to its maximum of 310 children and a staff of thirty-two.

On May 14, 2000, a groundbreaking ceremony was held to inaugurate an extensive expansion project to the southeast side of our campus. The 32,000 square foot addition/renovation was completed by summer of 2001 and dedicated to the LORD's service on September 9, 2001. In October 2000, a pastoral call was extended to and accepted by Rev. Arthur "Jack" Goldberger of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Rochester, Illinois, to serve as the congregation's first associate pastor. Pastor Goldberger was installed on Sunday, February 11, 2001, and retired June 3, 2018. The congregation voted to call a seminary graduate from Concordia, St. Louis, and in May 2019 was assigned Caleb Weight as associate pastor; his Installation service was on June 30, 2019.

In 2005 the congregation approved to participate in Concordia Univ. Seward's Director of Christian Education (DCE) Internship Program. Jason Phelps was assigned as our DCE intern. In April of 2008 the congregation called its first DCE, Larry Yochum, who was installed to the position of Director of Youth Ministry in June 2008 and served until 2013. Eric Brei was then called and installed as Director of Youth Ministry in June 2014.

In January 2016, responding to facility/staffing needs and future growth potential, the congregation carried out a major capital campaign to retire debt and provide seed money for a ministry expansion program. On October 25, 2016 the congregation approved a building project to renovate and add another 16,600 square feet. A month later the congregation payed off the building loan, and a mortgage burning celebration was held at the Thanksgiving worship service on November 23, 2016; a ground breaking was scheduled for April 2017. Dedication of the new facilities took place on Palm Sunday 2018.

Pastors who have served Our Savior Lutheran Church since its birth nearly 70 years ago:

Edwin Breiholz, July 1948 - April 16, 1950

Jack Goldberger, Feb. 11, 2001 – June 2018

Otto Schumacher, July 2, 1950 - July 26, 1959

Caleb Weight, June 30, 2019 – present

Erwin Wiedbush, Sept. 6, 1959 – Dec. 1, 1963

Alfred Bertke, June 28, 1964 - June 4, 1967

Robert Schroeder, Feb. 4, 1968 - July 31, 1988

David Oswald, June 4, 1989 - June 15, 1994

Keith Piotter, Jan. 29, 1995 - present