

HISTORY OF ST. JOHN

1850's and 60's Lutheran's were migrating into the Newhall area and meeting in the schoolhouse across from the present St. John cemetery.

Rev. Phillip Studt of Luzerne conducted services. He was the only Lutheran Pastor in the county and was instrumental in starting churches at Newhall, Keystone, Atkins and Cedar Rapids.

Land had been purchased, currently known as St. John cemetery with anticipation to build a church and provide a burial place for their loved ones.

1871 - St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eldorado Twp. Benton County, IA was officially organized. The Constitution was drawn up and signed on Feb. 18, 1871. First congregational meeting was held on March 26, 1871. Charter members were: Christian Goetke, John Nickel, Conrad Kerkman, John Kahler, Adam Werning, Ludwig Segner, John Ahrendt, Herinan Schmidt, John Dunker, Carl Westphal, Fred Haupt, John Senne, H. Kunstorf, and their families.

Rev. Studt and Rev. Home of Atkins led the group in worship until 1877.

A dispute arose regarding their keeping the name LUTHERAN and those of strong Lutheran heritage chose to move two miles north and met in the Eldorado Schoolhouse #2. They were granted

1877 - Conrad Kerkman, a founder of the church, donated a two acre tract of land across from the schoolhouse.

1877 - Rev. F.A. Reinhardt accepted a call to serve at St. John and served until 1894, when he left to help establish St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Van Home.

1877 - John Senne, Conrad Kerkman and Martin Werning were appointed to make plans to build a parsonage, church and barn. The cost was about \$1300.

A parochial school was established during Rev. Reinhardt's ministry. The first schoolhouse was built at that time.

1895 - Rev. G. Matthaideess accepted a call to be Pastor. School enrollment was growing and a lady teacher was hired to assist the Pastor.

MINUTES OF VOTERS MEETING

Dec. 2, 1901 - School too crowded - unhealthy for children. How do we get more room?

Dec. 29, 1901 - Unanimously decided to move the old church and build a new one on the same site. (Site changed later) Building committee allowed to spend \$4500 on the new church. Should a 950 lb. bell be bought or accept a gift of a 1600 lb. bell. Resolved to accept gift.

March 1903 - A new church with a 84' steeple was dedicated - offerings at the dedication morning service went to the building fund, and at the afternoon service the offering went to Synod. The old church will be used as the new school.

1908 - Congregation numbered 395 baptized member - 152 communicants, with 40 children enrolled in the school, and 16 children baptized.

1910 - Rev. Phillip Dornseif accepted a call, filling the vacancy that existed after Rev. G.A. Matthaideess had accepted a call to Sioux City.

1910 - Mr. O.E. Bertram accepted a call as the first full time principal and served until 1923. Previous to this, Pastor's had taught along with other pastoral duties.

1911 - A teacherage was built on a half acre of land, purchased from John Senne which joined the church property.

1917 - During the 1st World War, a transition began from a German speaking congregation to English. The last German service was held in 1940.

1918 - Rev. Steger accepted the call to serve St. John congregation, after Rev. Dornseif resigned due to his age and illness.

1921 - St. John celebrated it's 50th anniversary.

1921 - A spacious bungalow type minister's home was built and it was perhaps the finest parsonage in the Iowa District. The cost was about \$11,535.00.

1925 - Rev. O Neiting began serving St. John.

1944 - Rev. Otto Schreiber accepted a call to St. John. During his ministry St. John and Concordia Lutheran of Newhall united as one congregation. Concordia Lutheran's had held services in Newhall as early as 1887 under the guidance of Pastors John Aaron and G. Thies both of St. Stephens of Atkins. At the time Pastor Matthaidess accepted a call to serve St. John, he soon began serving Concordia in Newhall. The congregation met in the public school building until a new brick, public school was built in 1916. Concordia then bought the old school building located at 100 1st St. East and remodeled it into a house of worship, organized under the name of Concordia Lutheran Church. Charter members were: John Senne, Conrad Weming, Charles Kunstorf, Herman Harste, Leonard Nell, Charles Grovert, Gottlieb Taschner, August Bierschenk, and Christian Fiebelkom. Final service was held in the Concordia church on (kpril 17, 1949 and on the same Sunday St. John's new church was dedicated at 310 2nd St. East. On August 29 the new parsonage was dedicated. The total cost of the building site, church building, parsonage, remodeling the school building, teacherage and school playground (presently new and used car lot) was \$163,120.)

1946 - Celebrated 75th anniversary. 1200 in attendance at two services. Ladies served 600 at noon meal.

1953 - Entire building debt paid in full.

1956 - Rev. B.W. Bruch accepted a call to **fill** vacancy left by Rev. Schreiber who accepted a call to Wisconsin. During this time new pews were added and the carpeting of the chancel was completed.

1961 - Rev. E.F. Dohrmann became the next pastor to serve St. John. He also served as vacancy pastor for Zion Lutheran of Shellsburg for eight years. He is now retired and lives in Newhall.

1964 - Due to over crowding of present school, tht congregation built and dedicated a new 3 classroom school.

1967 - As a result of the formation of Central Lutheran School due to the consolidation of the schools of Luzeme, Atkins and Newhall, with two attendance centers, at Atkins and Newhall,

additional room was needed. Therefore, two classrooms and principals' office were added to the Newhall attendance center.

1971 - St. John members celebrated it Centennial. Pastor Bruch and Pastor Waldo Weming were the speakers.

1974 - A young married couples and singles group was organized.

1977 - Pastor E.F. Dohrmann took semi-retirement and accepted a call to Buckeye, Iowa.

1979 - Rev. Thomas H. Mueller accepted a call to serve

1981 - Lutheran Worship Hymnal became the order of worship. The old hymnal had been used for some 50 years.

1985 - A handicapped accessible ramp was installed to the front entry of the church.

1987 - Women were given the right to vote and hold all offices of the congregation except elder, chairman and vice-chairman.

1989 - Rev. Steven Rempfer accepted a call to **fill** the vacancy left by Rev. Mueller who accepted a call to Minnesota. Pastor Rempfer was installed on Oct. 8.

1992 - New pew pads donated.

1992 - Mission statement adopted: The purpose of St. John Lutheran Church, as God's chosen people is:

- A. Sharing with all people the good news of Jesus Christ.
- B. Serving with love those in need.
- C. Growing in personal faith--so that all would believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.

1993 - St. John along with the other affiliated congregations of Central Lutheran, built a new wing on the Newhall attendance center, consisting of three class-rooms, library, bandroom, computer room and two restrooms. Part of the old building was remodeled into an office, conference room and a teacher's storage room, as well as putting a new steel roof on the old building. Total cost of \$182,00.

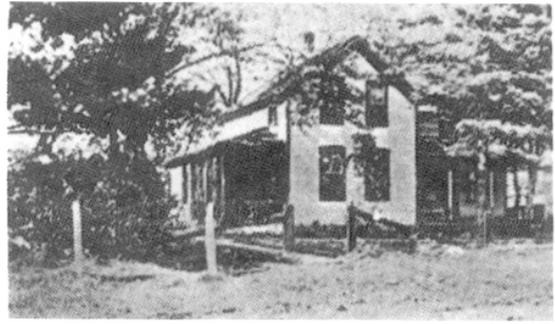
1993 - Special Fund Committee established to handle bequests, memorials, and encourage members to remember charities in their wills and also gifts while living to these special needs.

1994 - A new two stall garage was built by congregational members for pastor's use.

1994 - Voted to purchase bells for a 3 octave bell choir, using present Bell Fund monies.

1995 - St. John Lutheran Church has 742 baptized members, 582 communicants.

1995-1996 As God's called children, we thank HIM for the Good News of Jesus Christ that has sustained St. John Lutheran Church these 125 years. We ask His Continued blessings as we focus in our Mission of Sharing the GOOD NEWS, SERVING WITH LOVE AND GROWING IN PERSONAL FAITH SO THAT ALL WOULD BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AND BE SAVED.



First Parsonage



Teacherage in Country



Second Church built in Country



First Church

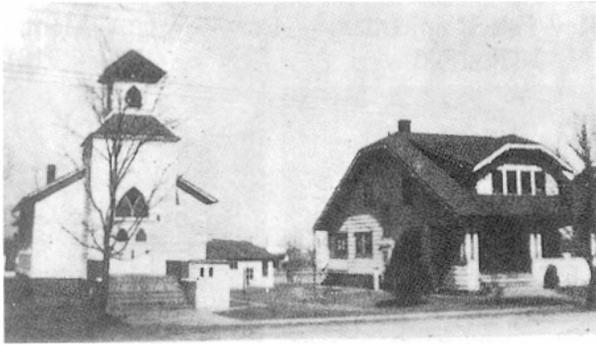
ST JOHN LUTHERAN CEMETERY

The land consisting of 4 acres, plus 1 1/2 acres donated in 1980 by Mr. & Mrs. Walter Timmerman, now serves as the cemetery purchased by German Lutheran's in the late 1860's to be used as burial ground and erection of a church.

In 1871 the church was organized and the members were meeting in the schoolhouse across the road from the cemetery. A disagreement arose regarding keeping the name LUTHERAN and those of strong Lutheran heritage chose to move two miles north and met in the Eldorado Schoolhouse #2. They maintained possession of the property which currently is the St. John Lutheran Cemetery, and remains a place for the burial of loves ones.

A cemetery board of four, elected by the voter's body of St. John Lutheran Church make the decisions to maintain the grounds with perpetual care funds. They are responsible for following the Constitution and By-laws and keeping the cemetery creditability sound.

There are approximately 940 burials since it's beginning, the earliest was in 1869.

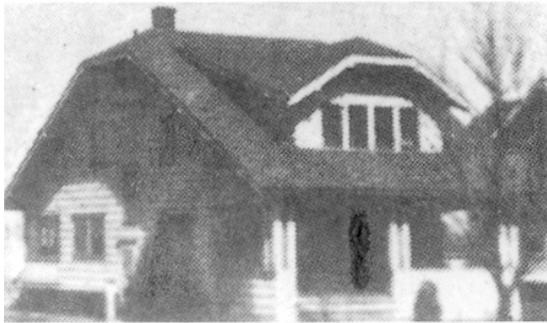


Church and Parsonage in Newhall, Iowa



Remodeled School 1949

Remodeled School 1949



Present Teacherage