

## **Redeemer Lutheran Church: A 75 year (plus) history**

Many years before Redeemer Lutheran Church's 1945 founding in Richland, Lutherans of Norwegian and German descent, attracted by irrigation, had settled in Washington's Columbia River Valley. As early as 1909 a congregation, known as St. John's Lutheran Church and affiliated with the Wisconsin Synod, was formed in Richland and was located on Jadwin and Gillespie. This church was served by Pastor H. Brockman of Bethlehem Lutheran, Kennewick.

When Pastor Brockman accepted a new call to another congregation, Pastor Woker of the Lutheran church in Pasco continued to conduct services at St. John's. He began that pastorate in 1912 and served here until 1917 when, due to ill health, he resigned.

Pastor Henry Messerli accepted the Call to be pastor of Bethlehem, Kennewick. He also served the congregations of Richland, Pasco, and Prosser until he accepted the Call to serve Immanuel Lutheran Church at Albany, Oregon. In 1924 the mission board of the Northwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, sent Pastor Weert Janssen into the mission field in eastern Washington. He continued his ministry here when suddenly the "Old Richland" passed away.

In the beginning of 1943, the people of Richland, Hanford, and White Bluffs were surprised and dismayed as they saw new personnel disturb their daily rounds of work. The government made offers to purchase the land and homes. Prompt settlement was made to property owners. In March of that year orders were given from the government that all inhabitants of the three villages should vacate within thirty days. The Army Corps of Engineers obtained title to 428,000 acres of land for the government and called it the Hanford Engineer Works. With the exception of a few houses and business buildings the village of Richland was demolished and a new city for 17,500 inhabitants was being constructed. Only a few houses, business buildings, and churches, remained intact.

Also in the month of March, construction at Hanford Energy Works began that from physical size has been called the Eighth Wonder of the World. More than 150,000 persons streamed into this part of the Columbia River Valley to labor on the 'Great Secret,' a project whose meaning few could even guess. For the next two years this area boasted a peak population of 51,000.

There were many discomforts to endure. Thousands of workers left their families at home to come and work in the area. Ensuing loneliness was a hazard to many workers. Many of those workers from 'those early days' described the dust storms which led to termination of work for many. "When the winds began to blow, the dust swirled so thick that visibility was down to zero. The houses were filled with dust to such an extent that people used shovels to scoop it out of their homes."

The veil of secrecy that hung over the work in the area was troublesome to many. Among the rumors that circulated were that nylon was being manufactured for war-time use; that the president was having a mansion built for his wife; that fifth term presidential buttons were being manufactured; that most of the buildings were for a concentration camp to house

Republicans; that a chemical explosive was being prepared for army uses. All these wild conjectures came to an end on August 6, 1945 and then everybody knew. It was the Manhattan Project producing fuel for the atomic bomb!

Richland residents Mr. and Mrs. Reinhold Fergin were interested in having Lutheran services and gathered together as many Lutherans as they could find in their homes.

Forming a congregation in Richland took root in the hearts of the people. However, there were some problems to be solved. The government did provide places of worship for the workers living in Richland. Two buildings were erected. These were to be used for worship by the Catholic people and the Protestants. Efforts were made to unite all the various protestant groups into one church. Billboards even featured this idea with the words: "*Where the atom is divided, the churches are united.*"

No suitable building for congregational worship was found in Richland. However, the small group that had gathered at the home of Mr. Reinhold Fergin proceeded with their plan of worshipping together on the basis of Lutheran doctrine and practice. Through the efforts of Mr. Reinhold Fergin who was the superintendent of schools in Richland, a room was rented at the Lewis and Clark school located at 505 Jadwin Avenue. Here the families worshiped in 1944. Worship services were conducted by Pastor Martin Kauth, Bethlehem Lutheran, Kennewick.



Pastor R. Jaech

The Northwest District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod provided a pastor in the person of Reinhold Jaech. He was formally installed on December 3, 1944. The group continued to worship at the school through the year 1944, and on January 22, 1945 the first organizational meeting was conducted. Pastor Jaech was appointed chairman to open the meeting. By this time the small group had nineteen eligible voting members eleven were present for this meeting. Officers were appointed pending a regular election. A. L. Brockelman acted as chairman and Harry Womack as secretary. The name Redeemer Lutheran Church was chosen as the official title of the congregation being formed. A constitution and by-laws of the Lutheran Church were read and approved and an election committee was appointed to

prepare a slate of candidates for church officers. The committee consisted of Howard Donahue, W. H. Thaemert and Paul Meyer.

In the first regular congregational meeting the election was held. Robert Kamprath was elected chairman, Herbert Fricke, secretary, and A. Brockelman, treasurer. The first building committee was appointed by the chairman. There were five members on this committee: R. Kamprath, A. Gerdes, G. Morthole, A. Rodeman, and H. Fricke. In the meeting the congregation also decided to incorporate under the laws of the state of Washington. The dual envelope system was adopted for offerings. A roster of thirty communicant members was adopted.

The congregation did not give up its search for a church building which would be more suitable for worship than a classroom was. Their search finally centered on an old church structure on Goethals Drive which somehow was not demolished after the government had acquired the

small village of Richland for housing and supporting Manhattan Project workers. It had been a Seventh Day Adventist Church in that village.



Early in 1945, a special meeting was called to consider renting this old church building. Government authorities granted the use of the building if necessary repairs would be made. The congregation decided to proceed with the repairs which were considerable and extensive. A new roof, painting of the walls, inside and outside, were needed as well as heating and air conditioning facilities. The chairs, altar, and pulpit were provided by the housing authorities. Redeemer dedicated it for use on May 6, 1945.

The new congregation had twenty children of school age. The parents were concerned as to their Christian education. Contact was made with Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Kennewick, and a joint committee meeting was held in May, 1945. Bethlehem Lutheran agreed to cooperate with the plan of sending the school age children of Redeemer Lutheran to Bethlehem School. The members of Bethlehem Lutheran were willing to enlarge their school facilities to accommodate the children of Redeemer. The cost of this additional construction at the school was \$3000 not including the labor which the members of Bethlehem Lutheran donated.

The problem of transporting these pupils to Kennewick and an additional teacher for the school was assumed by Redeemer Lutheran. Subsequently the Northwest District was petitioned to provide the necessary funds as salary for this teacher. The congregation extended a call to teacher Melvin Pohl of Vernon, Texas. He accepted the call and was installed in August, 1946. The school board members were Howard Donahue and N. Roberts.

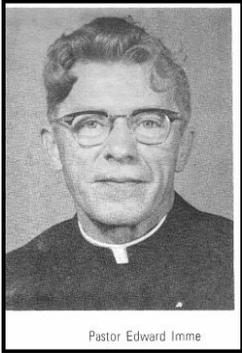
Teacher Pohl was also assigned to be Redeemer's choir director, to assist in teaching Sunday School, and to drive the bus to Kennewick. In a few months, Bethlehem Lutheran asked for the use of the bus to transport children from Pasco to Bethlehem's school. This arrangement continued for two years. In the spring of 1948 the congregation decided to discontinue this service. Teacher Pohl was called by Bethlehem congregation to teach in their school. The school bus was purchased by Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Our Lord blessed the work of pastor and the congregation. The renovated church on Goethals Drive proved inadequate for the church's needs. Members searched for a parcel of ground large enough to build a larger facility. Attention centered on the southern area of Richland. A spacious area was found on Thayer Drive. The congregation leased the 500 by 275 foot lot from the government on which the church's facility is still located.

During 1947 Pastor Jaech was stricken with illness and upon his doctor's recommendation asked for and received a two month rest period. Retired Pastor Walter Georg was willing to be interim pastor until Pastor Jaech's recovery. However, Pastor Jaech's physical condition did not improve and thus he resigned from the pastorate of Redeemer effective January 1, 1948.

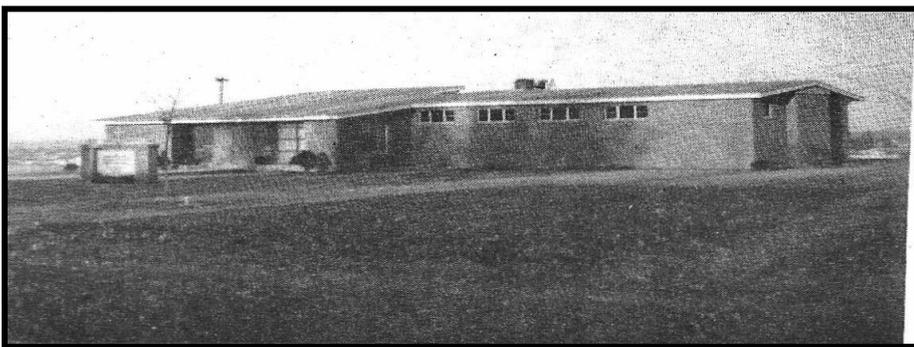
After Pastor Jaech's resignation on January 1, 1948 the congregation began the process of calling a new pastor. On April 13 Redeemer called Pastor Edward Imme. He accepted the call and was installed on May 30, 1948.

The work of the church continued to flourish and the need for more room was the constant concern to the members. Definite steps were taken in 1948 to construct a parish hall and chapel unit on the ground leased from the government. A building fund was initiated with a goal of \$20,000. In the meantime, the congregation rented several rooms in the Lewis and Clark school for Sunday School use. The congregation finally appealed to the Northwest District for a loan to construct the parish hall and chapel unit.



In the meantime, intensive mission work was carried on by pastor and people. Pastor Imme began a weekly broadcast on the local radio station, then known as KPKW located in Pasco. A number of congregations in the immediate vicinity helped finance this program. This weekly radio service brought the name of our church into many thousands of homes. Pastor Imme, together with the help of a parish worker Miss Clara Reinke, began a mission in North Richland where over 10,000 people lived in mobile homes. The Sunday School and worship area was located in the John Ball school. These two undertakings carried the work of Redeemer Lutheran forward especially in winning souls for Christ.

Throughout the year of 1948 there were lengthy discussions in regard to the proposed building program. Finally in February, 1949, the congregation definitely decided to accept the loan of \$17,000 which the Northwest District had offered. Contacts were made with several architects to draw up plans and specifications for the new parish hall and chapel. The building committee for 1949 was composed of the following members: Herbert Fricke, chairman, Arthur Rodeman, Paul Knutson, Gordon Chick, and Earnest Sebade. The architects engaged by the church to make plans for the new house of worship pleaded for time to complete their work. Hence no construction was undertaken in 1949 and the work was delayed until August 1950 when the ground breaking ceremony took place. The architect chosen was Mr. George Peickert. William Rinck was appointed in the place of Gordon Chick as a member of the building committee.



The congregation decided to build the parish hall and chapel with donated time and labor. This was an ambitious venture for a small group of men. However, they began the project and worked patiently and constantly whenever there was any free time available. Often the schedule had

to be revised since materials were not available or were delayed.

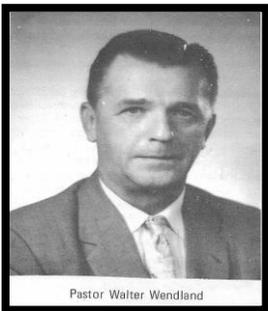


When the parish hall and chapel were completed, the congregation rejoiced and gave thanks to God for the beautiful house of worship and the spacious parish hall for Sunday School. The first service conducted in the new chapel was on June 3, 1951. However, all the work had not been completed at that time and so the dedication of the building was tabled.

Work continued into the year 1952. The completed unit included an office, two storerooms, bathrooms, kitchen, nursery, and a vestry. It was dedicated

September 13, 1953. The estimated cost was \$26,000 but because of the many hours of labor and items donated by the members, the total indebtedness was lowered to \$21,000. That building still serves as the church parish hall.

The congregation had planned for a church that was to cost \$200,000. For the time being the new unit was supposed to take care of the needs of the congregation. The congregation was offered the free use of three Quonset huts placed on our property by Carmichael school authorities. This gift benefitted the parish because the Sunday School enrollment climbed steadily and all the space of the church and the Quonset huts were utilized.



In September of 1951 Pastor Imme received and accepted a call to Palmer, Alaska. On October 14 he preached his farewell service. God had richly blessed the congregation through Pastor Imme. Many souls were won for Christ and the congregation was placed on a sure footing. Pastor Paul Harting, Messiah Lutheran, Prosser, was asked to be the vacancy pastor. He also took over the North Richland mission station. The congregation again began the process of calling a pastor. In July, 1952 Redeemer called Pastor Walter Wendland of Murdock, Nebraska. He accepted and was installed at

Redeemer on August 10, 1952.

The work of the church to spread the Gospel of salvation continued, and within two years the congregation was faced with the problem of providing space for Sunday School and worship services. The three quonset huts had been removed and were no longer available to Redeemer. Rooms were rented for Sunday morning classes at Marcus Whitman school.

Also during 1954, the government was preparing to sell the homes in Richland to the families living in the city. The congregation decided to relinquish the ranch house at 629 Cedar Avenue which was used as a parsonage and to construct a parsonage and a daylight basement for Sunday School purposes on church property.

Definite plans were underway in the beginning of 1955 to purchase the land being leased and to build the parsonage next to the chapel. The congregation decided to procure the funds for this project from the AAL Institutional Financing Plan. The trustees for this fund were Howard Donahue, Orlando Kroll, Don Semmern, and Florence Ungefug. The goal of \$35,000 was set,

which included \$8,000 for the deficit remaining on the chapel and parish hall, the plot of ground for \$6,400, and the cost of the parsonage at \$22,500. Bids for the construction of the parsonage were solicited late in 1955 and Mr. Allen Opp, Sunnyside, Wash. was awarded the contract. The building committee for the construction of the parsonage and Sunday School basement were: Robert Hueschen, chairman, Toivo Hamalainen, Ralph Altman, Kermit Wright. Herbert Fricke and Ernest Sebade were advisers. During the construction period Robert Hueschen was transferred to Milwaukee, Wis. and Harvey Lindbloom was appointed to be building chairman.

On April 15, 1956 the ground-breaking ceremony took place. Construction of the parsonage was completed in December and was dedicated December 9. Former Pastor Edward Imme, who had moved to Aberdeen, Washington, conducted the service. The members of the congregation installed partitions for the Sunday School rooms. Pastor Wendland's family moved into the parsonage just before the year ended. It was the first home built on privately owned land in the 'new' Richland since the government had released property for private ownership.

In 1958 Pastor Wendland made an extensive survey of the Benton City area in regards to establishing a mission. A confirmation class of ten children was already in progress. The survey forwarded to the officials of the Northwest District convinced them that a mission pastor should be located in that area. Four families were released from our congregation to form a nucleus in the new mission. Pastor Vincent Larson, Messiah Lutheran, Prosser, WA., served the new mission church. He reported that the average attendance for the first month was forty to sixty in the worship service and forty children in the Sunday School.

By 1960 the enrollment in Redeemer's Sunday School reached 185 and the membership increased to the 450 mark. In the fall months a committee was chosen to study the possibilities of expanding facilities either by adding on to the chapel and parish hall building or construct a complete new church. Visits were made to new churches in the surrounding area and a goal of \$75,000 to \$100,000 was decided upon. This planning continued into the year 1962 when it was definitely decided to construct a new church with a seating capacity of 350.

Various committees were busy with the search for an architect, pledges for funds, and the type of church desired by the members. By the end of 1962 the architect firm of Austin and Johnson, Tacoma, Wash. was chosen. \$100,000 was borrowed from our synod through the Northwest

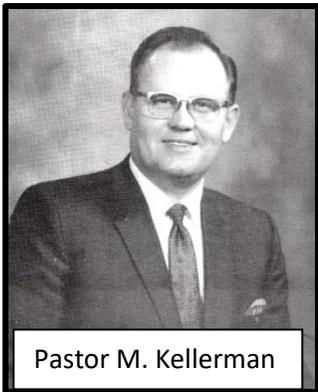
District, and preliminary sketches of the new church were posted.

Building committee members were Dick Beck chairman, Howard Donahue, Sidney Attend, and Paul Mercier. Poland Construction Company, Kennewick, Wash. was the



Builder. Groundbreaking took place on May 19, 1963 and construction began a few days later. Building continued into the month of December, 1963 and on December 15 the new church was dedicated. Dr. Carl Bensene, President of the Northwest District, was the dedication speaker. The cost of the new house of worship reached a total of \$114,000. This did not include the organ for \$5,000, nor smaller expenditures. The new church structure included two spacious rooms for Sunday School, a large office, nursery, and vestry.

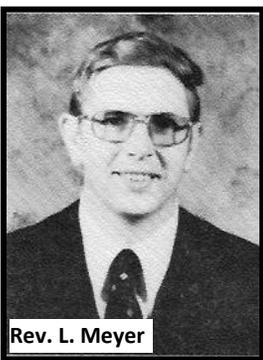
In 1967 pavement was added to the entrance from Thayer Drive at a cost of \$1,000, and a new pastor's office and secretary's office were added in the parish hall.



Pastor M. Kellerman

In 1966 Pastor Walter Wendland, after serving the congregation for almost fourteen years, was forced to resign due to ill health. Pastor Fred Riess of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Kennewick, became the vacancy pastor. Pastor Mervin Kellerman, McMinnville, Oregon accepted the call to Redeemer and was installed on October 23, 1966.

Redeemer's membership steadily grew. Richland was a one industry town until the late 1960s when the town began a diversification program. It was hoped that this program would tend to make the residents more permanent than in the past. Redeemer had experienced a constant change of membership. Records show that 249 family units were transferred to the congregation and 169 units were released to other congregations over a twenty-five year period prior to 1970. This fluctuation disrupted many goals and programs within the congregation. Many families remained as members for a one or two year period. However, during that time the members worked faithfully to promote the work of the church. In those difficult times, Redeemer's members grew stronger, clinging to the truth of God's Word. Pastor Kellerman left in September, 1980 to assume the pastorate at Faith Lutheran, Mountain Home, Idaho.

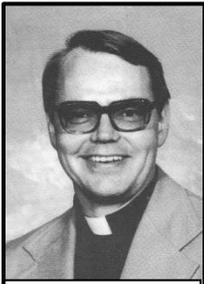


Rev. L. Meyer

During the following eighteen months, Redeemer had a pastoral vacancy period with Pastor William Haak, Sunnyside, WA, serving as vacancy Pastor. Pastor Laurence Meyer, from Emanuel Lutheran Church, Hamburg, MN was called on December 27, 1981. He accepted the call, and was installed on March 14, 1982.

Upon complete payment of the church building loan, the note was burned May 9, 1982. Redeemer's fortieth anniversary was celebrated in 1985 under the theme *In the Shadow of His Hand*. The first observance was held on January 20 since this date was close to Redeemer's initial charter date. Guest speaker was Northwest District First Vice-President Rev. William Hernmenway. On May 4 a banquet and program was held at Roy's Smorgy. Pastor Kellerman preached on May 5, the date most closely commemorating the date of Redeemer's first church building dedication.

In January, 1983 Redeemer partnered with the Northwest District to plant a new church in the Meadow Springs-Orchard Hills-Hills West areas. Redeemer members canvassed the area to discover potential members. Pastor Wilbur Gehrke, Glendive, Montana, was called through the District's Board of Directors during its April, 11, 1983 meeting. He was to spend 2/3 time in



Rev. W. Gehrke

planting the church and 1/3 time ministering at Redeemer with primary responsibility for evangelism until the new church was in operation. The new church's first service as conducted at Badger Mountain School on January 8, 1984. They chose the name Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church. In March, 1985 the church's worship and activity was moved to the Electrical Training Center, Kennewick. It chartered on June 9, 1985 and called Pastor Gehrke to be pastor. He was installed on October 6, 1985. The formal arrangement with Redeemer then ended.

Following the economy's turndown resulting from all closure and stoppage of nuclear-related projects, the Tri-Cities experienced reduction of population which impacted many churches. With some of its members moving and less population to serve in the community, Shepherd of the Hills voted to dissolve in 1988. Pastor Gehrke accepted a call to Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, Reedsport, Oregon. Community leaders made new efforts to diversify the economy and improve the viability of the area.

On November 8, 1987 Redeemer held a groundbreaking service for the addition and renovation of the Parish Hall. Siefken and Sons Construction was engaged as General Contractor. The November ceremony was highlighted with all of Redeemer's members pulling a horse drawn plow guided by Bill Siefken to turn over the first section of earth. The renovated Parish Hall was dedicated on April 17, 1988 in time for Redeemer Men's Club to host the 1988



Washington-Alaska District Lutheran Laymen's League Convention on April 23-24. The debt was paid in full by May, 1990 and mortgage burning was October 28, 1990.

Additions were made to enhance our worship. Through memorials and thankofferings a four octave set of handbells was put into use on Easter, March 26, 1989 and a two-octave chime set dedicated on September 10, 1989 ringing the Lord's praises. On July 10, 2005 a new three octave chime set was dedicated. A new electronic piano was dedicated on December 16, 1990. In February, 1991 a new sound system was installed. Pew cushions donated by AAL branch were installed in the sanctuary and padded chairs replaced balcony pews during 1992.

On February 12, 1990 the church's daily operation was brought into the computer age with the addition of computers in the pastor's and secretary's offices. These have been periodically updated. On May 31, 1992 Beverly Darsow retired after serving as office secretary for 11 years. On June 1 Audrey Jenkins assumed that role. On June 1, 2000 Gwen Schienbein began her service to Redeemer as secretary. Ronda Wolfe assumed the role of Administrative Assistant on October 6, 2015.

A constitutional change ratified a second time during the February 7, 1991 Voters meeting incorporated women's suffrage.

Celebrations emphasized joy at Redeemer. On September 22, 1991 the congregation celebrated Pastor Meyer's 25th anniversary of ordination. Throughout 1995 Redeemer celebrated its 50th anniversary under the theme *Celebrate the jubilee! Glorify His Name!* based on Leviticus 25:9-11. On January 29, former Pastor Mervin Kellermann preached on the subtheme *Remember*, focusing on God's action in the congregation's history. During May the church bathrooms were remodeled to meet Richland's code for handicapped. During the June 25 service laymen shared faith stories of what Redeemer's ministry has meant to them under the subtheme *Rejoice!* To complete the anniversary theme, Northwest District President Warren Schumacher preached on the subtheme *Rededicate* and commissioned Redeemer to enter its second half century of ministry.

1996 was a year to begin the second fifty years of ministry. Under the theme *Growing through Prayer* each standing board, committee or fellowship organization led a month's ministry emphasis highlighting their particular ministry. The end result was that the congregation's entire ministry was highlighted and prayed for in public services by lay leaders. By the end of the year three major actions were made: dedicate a new church identification sign on March 17, dedicate a 15 passenger van on October 31 and start the process to add a Director of Youth and Education to the staff with a calling to start in 1997.

On March 19, 1997 work began to construct a semi-circular drive and miniparking lot including handicapped parking in front of the Parish Hall. Use of it began on April 19. Blacktopping projects began in June, 1988 when the church's north back parking lot was constructed and the south back parking lot was blacktopped the week of April 20, 1994.

In August, 1977 David Seegar was inducted as the first of 27 vicars to receive their third seminary year with practical parish pastoral training. Redeemer provided this internship-type opportunity for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's seminaries through July, 2005. Ten were students at Concordia Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana and seventeen were students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. Pastor Meyer had supervised 22 of the vicars.

Following careful consideration and study on calling a Director of Youth and Education, several calls were issued and declined. On January 15, 2000 Jennifer Swisegood, a Director of Christian Education graduate of Concordia University, Portland, OR, began a one year intership at Redeemer. At the end of the internship she chose to return to her California home area. Sandra Cox, a DCE graduate of Concordia University, Portland, OR was installed on July 22, 2001. When her husband Steven decided to enroll in the pastoral ministry program in 2002, she submitted her resignation to move with him to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO.



On May 8, 2005 groundbreaking was held for the construction project to connect the church and Parish Hall, creating a choir/music section on the main floor, Mother's Cry Room,

Nursery, enlarged sacristy, and a Music Room. Also, a fire sprinkler system and refrigerated air conditioning was added to the sanctuary. The cost for this construction was estimated at \$350,000 and a loan from Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) was obtained. The congregation engaged Laborers for Christ from LCEF to head the construction project with congregational volunteers assisting. Seven Laborers for Christ worked on the project and were encamped on a temporary RV Park created at the back of Redeemer's property.

The congregation had also shared its ministry with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Northwest District when Pastor Meyer was elected to serve as the District's Inland Empire Vice-President first by the District Board of Directors to fill the existing vacancy to serve from 1985-88. He was later elected to the same position at the 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003 and 2006 District conventions. He retired from this position in 2009.

Pastor Meyer conducted his farewell/retirement service on July 17, 2005. District President Warren Schumacher assisted Pastor Meyer in returning the stole as a symbol of the pastoral office to the congregation and led the closing dialogue of leading Redeemer into the pastoral vacancy period.

At Pastor Meyers' retirement, Redeemer decided to go into an "intentional interim" period as recommended by Northwest District President Warren Schumacher. During this period, the congregation went through a period of introspection under the guidance of a trained Intentional Interim Pastor to identify the congregation's strengths and goals and to help find the best shepherd to guide Redeemer into the future. Rev. Dr. Loel Haak consented to assume that role and officially assumed his office in December, 2005. Pastor Leland Wendland served as Redeemer's vacancy pastor from July 18 until Pastor Haak could assume his role upon fulfilling previous commitments. (He was the son of Rev. William Haak who had been Redeemer's Vacancy Pastor from September, 1980-March, 1982.)



**Rev. T. Schroeder**

In the Spring of 2006, a call committee, with the assistance of the Northwest District office and with member's input, formulated a list of 10 call candidates. These candidates were subsequently interviewed by telephone and in person. In a Call Service on July 9, 2006 in which prayers asked for Gods' guidance, Rev Todd E. Schroeder was selected. Rev. Schroeder had served his vicarage at Redeemer in 1999-2000. On August 13, 2006, Rev. Schroeder accepted the Call to be Redeemer's Pastor. He

was installed on September 24, 2006 by his former vicarage supervisor and Northwest District's Inland Empire Vice-President Rev. Laurence Meyer.

On December 31, 2006 Redeemer dedicated new hymnals, Lutheran Service Book, which had been published during the year. In an October, 2007 Voters meeting a new governing structure was passed with emphasis on individual member care and community outreach. A new multimedia system was installed in the church.

In 2016 Redeemer celebrated Pastor Meyer's 50<sup>th</sup> ordination and Pastor Schroeder's 15<sup>th</sup> ordination anniversaries. Additional anniversaries observed in 2017 were the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League.

Redeemer's last charter member, Verna Fellman, died in February, 2018 at the age of 99. February, 2019 brought record snowfall, breaking the previous 1916 record. The month's recorded 25-40 inch snowfall also broke the church's snow removal budget.

Repairs were needed on the church organ. Hearing of the need the Wallace Ruff family made possible a new three-manual Rodgers 589 computer-sampled organ in memory of former organist Ruth Ruff. It was installed on March 4-5, 2018. Director of Music Dan Niebuhr played it for the first time at the March 18 services. Dr. Scott Hyslop, Director of Parish Music at St. Lorenz Lutheran Church, Frankenmuth, Michigan, played a dedicatory concert on April 15, 2018.

In 2020 Redeemer began its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary under the theme *Shine like Stars* based on Philippians 2:14-15 with special service and program on January 26, 2020. Former Pastor Laurence Meyer was guest speaker. Plans were made for two more special observances during the year. Those plans were altered when at the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic Governor Inslee imposed lockdown mandates to many activities, including church services. On March 22, the first Sunday of lockdown, Pastor Schroeder, with the help of Director of Music Dan Niebuhr and IT specialist Nathan Gruzs streamed the worship service. The second 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary service was streamed on June 14. Pastor Schroeder was scheduled to preach but at the last minute he contracted covid and Pastor Meyer conducted the service and delivered the sermon.

During summer mandates were lifted to the extent that at first communion services in the parking lot were allowed on the Saturdays of July 28 and August 8. The first outdoor worship service on the church parking lot was held on August 23. On November 1, 2020 indoor services were allowed with social distancing and masking mandates, thus reducing the number of worshippers who could gather indoors. Finally on October 17, 2021 the last 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary service, which had been postponed from October 18, 2020, was held with some of the covid restrictions still in place. Northwest District President Paul Linnemann was guest speaker.

(Live streaming of worship services, Bible studies and devotions which were begun during the covid-19 pandemic continue as a ministry to the world. The services, devotions and Bible studies are archived. Sunday services are currently at 10:00 am. Special services are also held

seasonally or for special observances. They can be watched on Facebook or You Tube links at [www.richlandredeemer.org](http://www.richlandredeemer.org))

To be continued.