

Marge Henze

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My membership in First Lutheran goes back many years. I find myself rooted in God's love and this has given me precious memories.

Herb Henze ^{came} in 1929. He was called by many "Mr First Lutheran" because of giving his time to the school, church and His Lord. He attended his first church service in Knoxville and later realized it was not his church. It was St John's Lutheran. We (First Luth) in our early history were known as the German-English Evangelical Lutheran church. German services were held the first Sunday of every month. Rev. Krueger was the Pastor.

It's written in First Luth. history, we became a member of the Western District of Mo. Synod in 1897. In 1967 we became a member of the newly formed Mid-South District.

In 1943, Mr. Harold Jagel from Nebraska accepted our call to be principal and teacher in First Luth. School. However it wasn't until Sept. 1944 that Herbert and I became active in First Luth, primarily because Mr. Jagel persuaded us to send Marilyn, our oldest, to First Luth. school, which was a ^{one} room school, all grades in the one room. Marilyn's first three grades were in Steub City school, two blocks from our home. She had to ride the city bus, transfer to another bus on busy Gay street. That was a heavy decision for us to make, but we knew the Lord would watch over her. The parent-teacher league was active, having been organized by the Rev. Kretzschmar. This same year, 1944, it was voted to start a kindergarten. Miss Marie Stickway from Nebraska was called as teacher and to get it organized. It was to open in the Parish house, 605 N. Broadway, which at one time was used as our

parsonage. The upstairs rooms were used as an apartment for our custodian. The Parish house rooms were made ready, installing steam heat and other necessary requirements by Harry Argueth, Herb Etzler, Carl Pfitzer, Herb Hunge and Harold Jegels. I do not remember how many were enrolled for the first one. Our Bill was six years old, so he was already in first grade at First South.

In our large school room we also had Sunday School classes, our adult Bible class was held in the church. Our church at Broadway and 5th Avenue had theater type seating (in the round) choir section was down front near the pulpit. Emma Lewis ~~and~~ played the piano and brother Clifford the violin for the opening of Sunday-school.

In 1937, a building on Market Street, downtown, was ours after payment of back taxes. A bequest from the Albert Miller Family. This property was sold and the Francis property, our present location, Broadway and 5th was purchased in 1946. It had a huge house on it (It must have been a mansion in its day). It was large enough for us to have school and church services there. Our second kindergarten teacher, Miss Margaret Pfitzer of Chattanooga had living quarters in an upstairs bedroom. Yes, she was underpaid - we had budget problems at that time also. Marilyn's Confirmation was held in the living room of this old house. Four girls and two boys as I remember -

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Our present school structure was completed in 1947. What a joy! A celebration we did have! Mr. Chalcher was principal and his wife Mary, a nurse, planned a beautiful celebration and a service of praise and thanksgiving. The petitions for the top floor rooms were not put in -- we had a nice large room or hall for our church service. This is where Bill was confirmed and had his 8th grade graduation. Bill had his 8th grade under Mr. Krause as principal. I also remember the Bill McConnells became members of First Lutheran at this time. We went from 1947 to 1955 in this situation and it was very frustrating for Pastor Fierking.

Plans for building our church continued. Disagreements over the large amount of money to be spent were many. Plans presented were not accepted if weren't large enough so new plans were drawn for it to seat about 450 to 500 people. Plans were finally accepted, building got under way and the church was dedicated May 15, 1955. The cost was approaching \$200,000. Our stained glass windows were given later as memorials, and our organ fund drive was successful, the organ costing about \$60,000. We also had disagreements over our new blue (worship) hymnal. We lost members over this.

Prior to the organization of two other Mo Synod Luth. churches, Grace and Christ's Victor, First Lutheran had a membership around 500, and over 200 in Sunday school.

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First Lutheran helped to buy the property in
Deaden for Grace Lutheran, transferring around 40
communicant members there.

In 1967 Christus Victor was organized, we again
transferred about forty of our members there.

In the early years, we had an active
Ladies Aid Society, a missionary League, and
Parent teachers league.

We were served by pastors: ~~in my years at~~
~~First Lutheran~~: Krueger, Frerking, Dautenhahn,
Smith and Schulz in my years at First Lutheran
all very dedicated to the task of saving souls.

Note 1

I failed to add that in 1979 an addition to the
school was added - more school rooms and a gym.
A larger enrollment under Mr Ron Royack as
principal. A loan was obtained for this addition
from LCEI. We are still paying for this - the
decision to build the addition was another crisis
for First Lutheran.

May God continue in His wisdom to bless us and
give us guidance in the years ahead at First Luth.