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. Henges (1919). 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 church) in our early history
as the German-English Evangelical Lutheran church.

Worship services were held the first Sunday of every month.

Rev. Krueger was the Pastor.

It's written in first Lutheran history, we became a
member of the Western District of Nebraska in 1897. In 1907 we
became a member of the newly formed Mid-South District.

In 1943, Mr. Harrell Jage from Nebraska accepted
our call to be principal and teacher in First Lutheran School.
However, it wasn't until Sept. 1944 that Herbert and I became
active in First Lutheran, primarily because Mr. Jage persuaded
us to send Marilyn, our oldest, to First Lutheran School, which was a
room school, all grades in the one room. Marilyn's first three
grades were in Cedar City School, two blocks from our home. She
had to ride the city bus, transfer to another bus on busy Clay
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. Klotzschman.

This same year, 1944, it was voted to start a kindergarten.

Miss Marie Stickley 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
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 Asquith, Herb Szegly, Carl Shitzer, Herb Hunger and Harold Jorgo. 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 faith.

In our large school room we also had Sunday School classes, our adult Bible class was held in the church. Our church at 472 and 5th Avenue had theater type seating (in the round) choir sections were down front near the pulpit. Enrico Lewis played the piano and brother Clyde 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 trionic 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 today). It was large enough for us to have school and church services there. Our second kindergarten teacher, Miss Margarita Shitzer of Chattanooga had living quarters in an upstairs bedroom. Yes, she was underpaid—we lived 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.
Our present school structure was completed in 1947. What a joy! A celebration we did have! Mr. Chelber was principal and his wife Mary a nurse. A beautiful celebration and service of praise and thanksgiving. The pews 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 McCullers became members of First Lutheran at this time. We went from 1949 to 1955 in this situation and it was very frustrating for Pastor Freking.

Plans for building our church continued.

Disagreements over the large amount of money to be spent were many. Plans presented were not accepted, not 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 Luther churches, Grace and Christ's Victor, First Lutheran had a membership around 500, and over 900 in Sunday school.
First Lutheran helped to buy the property in Deaden for Grace Lutheran, transferring around 40 communicant members there.

In 1967 Christus Sister 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 Teachette 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: 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 Royuck as principal. A loan was obtained for this addition from First Lutheran. We are now 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 Lutheran.