

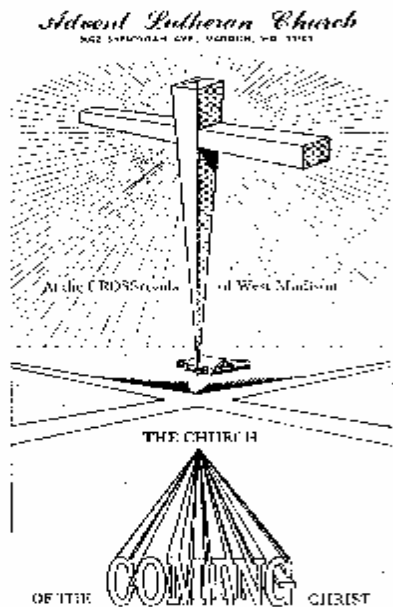
ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

1960 - 1985

**Blest Be the Tie that Binds
Advent Lutheran Church 1960-1985**

“Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above

From sorrow, toil, and pain,
And sin we shall be free;
And perfect love and joy shall reign
Through all eternity. Amen.”



715 Old Sauk Road Madison, Wisconsin 53717

This Anniversary Book gives an account of the first twenty five years in the life of Advent Lutheran Church. It touches on most of the highlights of that history. By focusing on Advent's life in five year intervals through the eyes of a few, it renders a more personal history without attempting to be exhaustive. Thanks to the many who contributed reflections and especially to Carol Korf, for pulling it all together.

Happy birthday to us! It's our silver anniversary, a special time for a special church.

Advent Lutheran Church was born from an August, 1960, survey made of Lutherans in the area of the Sheboygan Avenue site which eventually became its home. A list of newcomers supplied by the Chamber of Commerce, a newspaper article about the new ministry, and enthusiastic support contributed to the early growth of Advent. Some of the first members were transfers from existing Lutheran churches; others were people who had no church home. Pounding of pavements by some pastors with leaflets and members with invitations to be part of our venture brought people within our doors. These first "doors" were those of the 7-Up building on University Avenue.

Pastor David Allen Kramer began his ministry at Advent on July 7, 1960. Within a few months, an important rite was celebrated: Mark Daniel Roberts was baptized on October 15, 1960. A December, 1960, record of membership included these names: Eugene and Jeanette Erickson, Earl and Norma Halvorson, James and Lila Hallen, Eldon and Mavis Hegstrom, Wayne and Joan Hemberger, Howard and Jaclyne Hoveland, Leonard and Beverly Johnson, Bryce and Beatrice Jordan, Henry and Claudine Kerber, Pastor David and Delores Kramer, John and Wilma Law, Jr., Chris and Eileen Lemberg, Tom Lemberg, Harvey and Doris Maahs, Pat Maahs, Larry Maahs, Clarence and Lois Marty, Kirk and Laura McMichael, James and Jean Mesger, Mrs. Freida Moldovan, Robert and Norma Neiland, Elmer and Rose Nelson, Percy and Ruth Olson, Dan and May Piquette, Clifford and Janet Poast, Edward and Arleen Sasser, Donald and Joan Weinkauff, and William and Beatrice Zutter. John Law, Jr., became the first president of the congregation.

February 12, 1961, marked a milestone: dedication of the new first unit of the church building. On March 26, 1961, Palm Sunday, new members were received and the charter was closed. This was followed by a special afternoon congregational meeting to discuss the possibility of increasing indebtedness for a building, property, and parsonage. An evening pot luck completed that day in the life of the church.

1961 contained two joyous "firsts." The first catechetical class was confirmed on May 28th. It included: Barbara Jean Zutter, Richard Harvey Maahs, and Edwin James Sasser, Jr.. On October 7, 1961, Judy Ann Mergen and Robert G. Patterson were joined in marriage. Also, during the summer of that year, Pastor Kramer and his family moved into the new parsonage on Eau Claire, and the cement sidewalk and seeding and sod work for the church were begun. 45-50 pupils and ten teachers participated in a two week Vacation Bible School.

On September 3, 1961, the Reverend David Kramer announced his acceptance of a call to Christ Lutheran Church, Jackson, Wisconsin. At that time the church had 147 baptized members. His last service at Advent took place on September 18, 1961. Pastor Kramer now serves St. John's American Lutheran Church at LeMars, Iowa, and celebrates his 25th year in the ministry this year.

Ruth Olson is the only present member of Advent who was here when the Reverend Kramer served Advent. For that matter, she is the only charter member in Advent's present membership. She appreciates the fact that Pastor Kramer came from the seminary to a difficult situation, that of establishing a new congregation. She remembers him as pleasant, dedicated, and traditional.

Percy and Ruth Olson and their family became involved in Advent initially because it was closer to their west side home than were other Lutheran churches of their choice. They had only one car, and Percy took it to work, which often had to be on a Sunday. Ruth wanted to be able to walk to church and to have the children be able to get to Sunday School and catechetical classes on their own. The proposed Sheboygan Avenue site was convenient for the Olsons.

They found an interesting group with varied church and professional backgrounds. Members were people with young children, and they were active and interested in education. (Ruth used to be a nursery chairman and sang in the choir, which was directed by Eldon Hegstrom.) Many were not "settled" into their professions but were finding opportunities, some of which led to their moving away. The times - and the congregation - were not stationary.

As the years went by, Ruth became enthusiastic about the concept of a shared church building and thought it "a wonderful Christian move to attempt to communicate with other faiths within the city and invite them to participate." Since she remembered the difficulty other churches had had in purchasing land for their requirements, she was impressed that Advent sought to share the land that was a gift to them.

Today, although Ruth has thought of returning to Bethel, the church of her youth, since the death of her husband and because it could provide more social life for her, she doesn't feel "needed" in a big church, as she does at Advent. Ruth feels the church here needs some gray hair to help "balance" its youthful membership. She has positive feelings about our church and is happy "with the pastor and the wonderful membership of intelligent people here."



Pastor H.L. Anderson with confirmands: Lynette Radloff, Sue Walser, Jon Iverson, Sue Reighard, Nancy Strampe, Karen Olson, and Kim Harper

On November 2, 1961, the Reverend Henry Leonard Anderson became pastor of Advent Lutheran Church and presided over his first service on the 5th. There was a reception to welcome him and his family on that Sunday afternoon.

Harvey Maahs became president of the congregation on January 16, 1962. On February 25th, there was a service and pot luck meal to celebrate the first anniversary of the dedication. Dr. Austinson was the speaker for the occasion.

From June 30th of the previous year to May 12, 1962, Miss Donna Davidson canvassed a prospect list for us at the expense of the Southern Wisconsin District. On July 23rd, there was a special meeting, at which time it was voted to erect a new parsonage on the church site and sell the existing parsonage. On August 20th, ground was broken for that new parsonage. August 26, 1962, brought a reception for new members through baptism, confirmation, and transfers.

In September of that year, Paul and Irene Rasmussen and their sons joined the congregation, as did George Diel, who would become a Council member in 1963 and treasurer of the church, in which capacity he has served Advent for many years; his long years of devoted service to the church have spanned most of its existence. Milt and Audrey Monicken and their family joined in October. The Bunns also joined Advent that year. On December 30th, Dr. Ernest Steen, of the Madison Conference, presided at the dedication of the new parsonage at 5018 Sheboygan Avenue.

February 23, 1963, saw the dedication of the lectern in the chancel and the guest register desk secretary, which were made by the Reverend Otto Wonn. Milton Monicken became financial

secretary. Lester and Nancee McChesney joined the church that year, along with others, so that the membership became 220.

1964 saw the confirmation of a class of seven, wearing white robes and red carnations. Two floor length, seven-branched candelabra, a gift from St. John's Lutheran Church of Madison, were used for the first time. Paul Rasmussen became a Council member and chaired the worship committee that year, and John and Dotty Brugge and Paula and John joined the church. The Scheibes became members that year, too. On July 5, 1964, Pastor Anderson presided over a farewell communion service, as he was leaving to accept a call from Perry Lutheran Church in Daleyville, Wisconsin. At this time, there were 248 members in Advent.

Pastor Anderson is remembered as a gracious and kindly man by Ruth Olson. He came to the church at a time of merger and had some interesting and progressive ideas. His wife, too, was a great asset to the church and served as a choir director. Sadly, Pastor Anderson died on October 21, 1975, at Sparta, Wisconsin, where he was serving Trinity Lutheran Church.

On December 13, 1964, the Reverend Ray K. Lester and Janet and their children, as well as other new members, joined Advent, which now had 296 members.

1965 was a year that began with a new pastor. John Brugge became vice-president of the church and would be in charge of parish education in 1966; Karen Louise Brugge was baptized in 1965. That year's confirmands included: Ardis Bolstad, Beverly Bunn, Peter Olson, Paul Rasmussen, and Ann Schiebe in a very large class. In 1965, the Bolstads, Korfs, Hildy and Carolyn McGown, and McNatts, and Oliversons were among those who joined Advent. Membership was now around 400.

Myrna and Dobbin McNatt had visited Advent when our congregation was "between ministers." Pastor Wonn filled in at some of these services. Advent's site was relatively close to the McNatt's new home, and they like the small, friendly congregation. The mission church reminded Myrna of one to which she'd belonged when she taught in Wheaton, Illinois. She says, "We had visited several churches, but once we came to Advent, we felt we 'belonged' there and kept coming." Since then, Dobbin and Myrna and their family have continued to enjoy Advent and find it still to be a friendly place; many of Myrna's closest friends are here. "People seem very willing to do their share and get involved." They find Andrew to be a positive influence, like the ecumenical concept, which "makes a lot of sense"; and are pleased with the outdoor activities, such as canoeing and camping.

The big ice storm of the past holds a shared memory for Myrna, Sharon Crandall, and Margaret Smith. Despite the weather, they got together at Myrna's, which was especially appealing because her house enjoyed the luxury of heat that day. The other two women brought their lunches and children and spent the day sewing on one of the banners for the church. Much was accomplished, and their daughters enjoyed a day of "dress up" and fun together. This kind of cooperation has been typical of relationships between Advent families through the years.

As the sixties progressed, Advent received the Grahns, the Johnsons, the Voigts, Sharon Crandall, Wayne McGown, the Proksches, and the Smiths, among others. Ron McGown and Steve McNatt were baptized, and the church now had over 500 members. Hildy McGown was on the Evangelism and Membership committee; and Ingman Bolstad chaired first Worship and then Buildings and Grounds.

It was at this time that some Advent members began to dream. The dream was of an almost unique kind of church, an ecumenical one, in which congregations of a variety of backgrounds could share a building and facilities but keep their individual identities. It was hoped that such a church could "reach out and touch" those who were not attracted to the existing churches of the day and fill some unexpressed needs of the members of the church.

Two events and another dream propelled us toward the Madison Christian Community and the church building on Old Sauk Road. The first of these was an offer from a real estate developer to buy the existing building at a time when it had already been decided that our location limited us in many ways. Between May and September 19, 1967, James F. Bakken, John Brugge, Stan Graven, Everett Jones, Pastor Lester, Jerry Spencer, and Ed Vallis became involved in a series of exploratory meetings with representatives from the Madison Area Lutheran Council, the Madison Council of Churches, and the Catholic Diocese of Madison "to see if it could be possible for a group of congregations to carry out this ministry and mission." One of its concepts was that "It is an opportune time to develop and present a unified and cooperative witness to the community." Many more people would become involved in many more meetings, leading in March of 1968, to the formation of a Steering Committee for the Cooperative Church: Stan Graven, James Bakken, Charles Hedgepeth, John Brugge and Wayne McGown. Articles of incorporation, by laws, and a constitution were set up.

By 1968, architectural firms were being contacted, and land sites were being considered. The firm of Weiler, Strang, McMullen and Associates was awarded the study of the sites. The Reverend Richard Wichlei was representing the United Church of Christ. The west side of Madison was recognized by that church body as a rapidly growing area in need of another UCC church. And some of their number dreamed, too, of a church that was different from the "mainline" type of church.

The offer of a gift of land came from Herman Dauck, Jr., whose west side farm land was being sold to Pat Lucey for development of apartments and homes; five acres, however, were to be retained for a church. This plot, together with adjacent land which we purchased, would become the home of the Madison Christian Community, incorporated in September, 1968.

On October 13, 1968, the Reverend Daniel R. Schmiechen conducted the first United Church of Christ worship service in the MCC. Dan, who still serves as the minister of the Community of Hope, has been a tremendous asset to both congregations of the Madison Christian Community. He had a Twin Cities background and ten years of experience in UCC churches in Elsworth, Prescott, and Tomah. He came to organize the new congregation and be an integral part of the realization of the ecumenical dream.



Barbara and Dan Schmiechen and Ray and Jan Lester personify the unity of the new MCC.

Dan's importance to Advent and the MCC is expressed by John Brugge, in the form of a story:

"HOW DAN SCHMIECHEN WORKED HIS WAY INTO OUR LIVES
OR
WE DIDN'T PLAN IT THIS WAY
OR
THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS

Advent Plan I. The Lutheran presence on Madison's far Westside, the corner of Sheboygan and Eau Claire the "Crossroads of Madison". Where are the people? There they are...but they're not coming, they're leaving. The doors are slowly closing. It wasn't supposed to be this way.

Advent Plan II: Wake up, church! It's renewal time! A grand ecumenical venture is underway - 5 or 6 congregations - Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists - sharing in a city-wide ministry from a single site! Line forms to the right! Only one taker? Folks are leaving? But...we didn't plan it this way!

Advent Plan III: Too late to back out now. Forward and hope for the best. The United Church of Christ (who?) signs up, Madison Christian Community letterhead ordered, Reverend Daniel Schmiechen of Tomah arrives in Madison. Never heard of him. Another family leaves? It wasn't planned to be like this.

Sunday mornings - week after week - Schmiechen and his small band of followers gather in the back room of the Sheboygan/Eau Claire "facility". Who are these people? What are they doing back there? How come they do so much laughing, hugging and hand holding? They're writing their own liturgy? You've got to be kidding! Is that real bread they're using for communion and is that a little kid eating it? Is this ecumenism? Let's not get too close. Pastor, tend your flock. The

"Community of Hope?" - what a quaint name! When do we get another congregation or two that we can understand? It was never supposed to be this way.

A year in the "wilderness" - the MCC at Covenant Presbyterian Church. It's getting harder to tell who's who these days. No hug - must be a Lutheran. Schmiechen and his band seem o.k. after all - anyway, they supply a lot of the Sunday School teachers, which is also cause for concern. A few more folks pull out. What happened to our game plan?

Don't build a building? Whose idea was that? We thought so. Dan, can't you control things on your end? This ecumenical business is very tiring. It was never supposed to be this tough.

New building opens. Two congregations, two pastors, fewer than 100 families. Hope will never grow. Where's that neighborhood that's supposed to be around us? Where are the people? Where are the Lutherans? All I see are cows! What happened to all our grand plans?

Dan Schmiechen is organizing a canoe trip to Minnesota? He's doing it again next year? Must have had good times. You say there are nearly 30 people standing in line to go again? And they're not all kids? You're right, Dan, there is mystery and ministry in the Great North. Is it the trees?, the wind?, the water?, the fellowship?, the Stone Cabin?, the campfires?, the cold night on some lake beneath the stars? Hard to figure out exactly. We learned more about you, Dan, and ourselves, than we may have bargained for. It wasn't planned this way, but thanks, anyhow.

Middle High kids and lots of them—maybe big trouble. Dan is going to take them? Good luck! Hey, that middle high group is doing O.K. We just may have one of the liveliest programs in town. Would never have guessed it would turn out this way.

Ray Lester leaving? What to do in the interim. Dan Schmiechen? Makes good sense. Better not, too risky. Hans, a Lutheran, gets us over the hump. That last joint service with the UCC wasn't too bad, though. I'm beginning to tune in a lot to Dan's sermons. Did I feel someone's arm around my shoulder? It was never supposed to be this way.

Troubled waters ahead, floundering; feeling really lousy. I need to talk with a pastor. Where's Dan? Need you. Thanks for all those lunch hours. It wasn't supposed to turn out like this.

Call committee, remember the MCC by-laws on separation of powers. That sounded good and right five years ago, but it's so hard to keep Dan and our Hope brothers and sisters out of all this. Besides, look at all of them who keep turning out to meet our candidates. Thanks for holding back, Dan.

We may be in deep water, but, off the record, what do you think about Rogness? Can we risk it all on a 27-year-old rookie who had the audacity to apply for the job? We need you more than ever now, Dan. You and your band are the anchors holding this fragile ship upright. Brace yourself - Ace says o.k., Susan has her fingers crossed - we hired Andrew. Oh, it was never supposed to be this way.

A co-pastorate. What a wonderful idea! Unspeakable, unthinkable a decade ago. Still it's never stated, it's not to be found in the archives, it just is. You stuck with us, you snuck up on us, Dan. Those are arms around our shoulders, real squeezes, and they feel good. When we weren't looking you became a pastor to us. We never dreamed it would turn out this way."

Having heard about Dan Schmiechen, let us now hear from him.

"Dear People of Advent Lutheran Congregation:

I heard through the grapevine the time has come to make a significant and joyous passage in your life as a people of God. The birth certificate says 25 years old! My hearty congratulations, and the people of the Community of Hope extend their best wishes to you. May your 25th birthday party feature somersaults, handsprings and a bit of zaniness. But above all, a strong word of thanks to God, for the Spirit blew strong and well, shaping your life. I rejoice in our covenant partnership as Advent Lutheran and the Community of Hope came from different ribbers of the Protestant heritage and united, thus flowing as an enduring ecumenical witness. Advent's adventuresome people blazed a trail into the thickets of denominational intrigue and, by gosh, there was a willing partner waiting to walk down the aisle.

I recall: The energetic and faithful leadership of Advent clergy and lay leadership giving heart and mind and voice to our partnership. We blended traditions, kept self-identity and raised high our oneness in Jesus Christ. For Advent and Hope to step to the altar was no easy task, but then God tied the promises and made the bond. Strength came to us through the year beyond our imagining. The marriage had plateaus, misunderstandings, and strong agreements. We weathered the early years. Cheers and thanks to the women and men of Advent who envisioned the dream of the Madison Christian Community and worked so hard for its life.

It would be harder to find a stranger odd couple than Advent and Hope, who found a habitat on Old Sauk Road. I remember early struggles: whose Sunday morning curriculum would we use; what would happen if Lutherans and United Church of Christ folk taught each other's children. It was amazing -no child caught the feared plague. Spirited discussions arose over who worships when; what adult education themes to develop; should the ministers receive equal salaries, especially if Advent pays more to the Hope pastor's salary. Balancing budgets was remembered by heavy breathing and staring at the ceiling. Advent magnificently carried the day as an equal partner. Now the Madison Christian Community is known where the women are strong, the men are caring and all children/youth are above denominational bias.

The most often heard remark in the years of the Madison Christian Community was: what will be distinctive about our shared ministry? Our founding mothers and fathers believed we were uniquely gifted to take big risks and walk big steps for the sake of God's Commonwealth. We have walked together into many mutual outreach ministries. When we stepped into the Ministry of Sanctuary, I believe we found ourselves as never before. We trusted God to carry us despite misgivings, and God did carry. The uniting of the two congregations in a common mission bonded and strengthened our lives. The future stretches out before us still. May we be found faithful to the call of Christ in our lives together.

People of Advent, the Community of Hope give thanks for your life and witness with us. Remember the tears, the struggles, as well as the hugs and joys of discipleship. We salute your courageous spirit, your strong lay and pastoral leadership, and your bold vision to be one in Jesus Christ. May your dreams be abundant the next 25 years."
Peace and Power, Daniel R. Schmiechen

Ecumenism played a part once again. The Sheboygan Avenue site was sold, and the Old Sauk building was not yet an accomplishment. Ground breaking ceremonies would take place in January, 1970. The MCC needed a place to worship, and, in July of 1969, the Session of Covenant Presbyterian Church offered the use of a portion of its educational facilities to us.

During these early years of the Madison Christian Community, the two congregations were learning to work together and decide what education they would share and when and where their individual worship services would take place.

Kathy and Doug Johnson were among those who came to us in the late sixties, the years of change. They say, "We were new in Madison and were starting to visit several churches before choosing one to join. We went to Advent first, largely because we knew how to get there! We had already been lost on Madison's curving, illogically named streets, so we started close to home."

"Upon our very first visit, we were immediately befriended by a couple from our apartment building (Don and Coky Klimpel) who recognized us. They introduced us to their friends (Dick and Bunny Menge), who insisted we join them for brunch."

"This was the time the MCC was just beginning to be discussed, which we found very exciting and wanted to be a part of. The inspired leadership of people like John Brugge and Stan Graven helped us know we wanted to be part of this group of people."

"We had just moved here from Minneapolis, where the Lutheran churches seemed to be stumbling over each other, competing for new members. The idea of sharing resources was very attractive. We were very excited about sharing ministries and education, also. I don't remember that we had any misgivings at all."

"We like the informality, the overt inclusion of children, the different worship settings, the political awareness of the congregation, the acceptance of people with different views and opinions."

"Our first child, Kelle, was baptized by Ray Lester on his last Sunday at Advent. Our second (and last) child, Karl, was baptized by Bob Brown on his last Sunday at Advent. It looks like Andrew is going to be with us for a very long time!"

Sharon and John Crandall began attending Advent in those years, too. Sharon says, "We were invited by Ralph Peuse. We were moving into U.W. student housing at Eagle Heights, and Ralph was doing some work in our apartment. We probably would have gone to Bethel, if Ralph hadn't

told us about Advent." Her home town minister also knew Ray Lester and Advent and encouraged her to transfer her membership. At the time, Sharon was "teaching at Van Hise with Tom Toftey and told Tom and Jane" about Advent, too.

Sharon and John liked the small and friendly church, but they came too late to be involved in "the beginning planning (of the new concept) and were unaware of the discussions and activities surrounding it." However, Sharon says she loves Advent and has "lots of happy memories," a sentiment echoed by many of us.

In 1970, William Grahn, Dan McGown, Philip Oliverson, Kathy Smith and Paul Voigt were among the babies who were baptized, and Kris Korf was one of the confirmands. October 25, 1970, marked the first services in the building on Old Sauk Road. That date had been established, and, despite the fact that the carpeting had not yet been installed, regular services and church school were held that morning. A pot luck supper was enjoyed in the evening. Dedication Sunday was celebrated on May 23, 1971, with services in the morning and an Open House in the afternoon.

The early seventies saw the Essers, the Gustafsons, the Moormans, the Robertses, the Stones, the Ullsviks, and the Wallukses adding to the numbers at Advent. Through the years, of course, many other families have been a part of our community, but many have moved to other cities and are no longer able to worship with us. We have been enriched by their presence, even though their stays have not been permanent.

Pastor Lester served Advent and the MCC until September, 1971, when he became a chaplain at a hospital in Milwaukee. From there he went to Sheldon, Washington, to work as a prison chaplain. He is not at the Center for Renewal, a retreat center in Isaquah, Washington. Ray and his family were blessings to Advent and are remembered fondly.

"Pastor Lester was especially good with young people and they responded to him. In Peter's (Bolstad) opinion, he was 'a man of good humor and conviction, who took his work seriously but not self.' During Pastor Lester's tenure, Advent was in something of a turmoil (and so was our country), but he discussed the issues with which he disagreed and acknowledged honest differences." These are the words of Ingman Bolstad.

Paul and Irene Rasmussen say: "The history of Advent Lutheran Church was significantly changed during the tenure of Pastor Lester. He left a profound impact, both on the church as an institution and the individual lives of the congregation. Among the many people we meet in this life, we all are aware of certain individuals who stand out more than others - Pastor Lester was such an individual. He excelled at preaching and interpreting the scriptures, and he had a special ability to reach the young people. In times of crisis he was there, providing comfort and assurance. His ability to translate the message of the Bible to life's daily problems made him unique among clergymen, and in the formation and development of the Madison Christian Community he played a most vital role."

Jean Oliveresen remembers: "When Ray, Jan, Tammi, Heidi, and Micky came to Advent - that was when Otto and I decided that Advent was to be a part of our family. I remember all the picnics at Fireman's Park in Middleton with good food, good fellowship, and the inevitable water fights. I remember the surprise baby shower for Jan and the birth of Andy. I remember plays, father-son banquets, father-daughter banquets, Andrew Club, salad suppers, a production in which Carol Korf sang a song to the tune of Madam Butterfly, Betty Harper doing her exercise/cake-baking routine, Ray as Pester Lester, the Jester-to mention a few. My girls remember the fun of the canoe trips to the Boundary Waters and coming back with bug bites, sunburn and 'Sacagawea.' It was during one of these trips that Ray was dubbed MOSES. There were many more good times and some sad times. Ray was always there to give comfort and concern for those with a loss and those with problems that seemed too much to handle."

"Otto and I became good friends of Ray and Jan, and with Howard and Jolene Hagtens we had many good picnics, card games, and just crazy times. I remember the going-away party for the Lesters and Ray's farewell sermon. We were sad to see them leave Advent but happy for them as they left to follow a new life.

Ray had a unique way of making people feel he had known them all their lives. His ability on the golf course, though, was second only to his ability to wrap a club around a tree. Jan always had the coffee pot on and the door open for friendship and care for those who needed her. I miss them. I don't know what they're doing now, but I know that whatever it is, the people around them love them as we did and do."



Pastor Bob Brown with confirmands: Michael Graven, Heidi Oliveresen and Mary Henney

The Reverend Robert J. Brown served as pastor of Advent Lutheran Church and a minister of the Madison Christian Community from February 13, 1972, to June, 1975. During his tenure, great advance were made in creating joint programs within the community. people, and their love for each other and for education programs within the Community. Bob and Helen and their children were amiable people, and their love for each other and for others was manifested in many ways.

Advent members grieved when we learned of Bob's death in March of 1985; many attended his funeral and sent expressions of sympathy to his family.

"Although our contacts with Pastor Brown were primarily through the Sunday services, we did feel we knew him well enough to appreciate his scholarly approach to the gospel and his compassion for people. Pastor Brown was a modest, reserved person, dedicated to preaching the word and serving his congregation to the best of his ability. His untimely death has left a real void in our community, especially among those he served in his last job, Volunteers in Probation, Inc." These were the sentiments of Paul and Irene Rasmussen.

Hildegarde Scheibe's tribute to Robert J. Brown follows: "Pastor Brown had been at Advent only a few weeks at the time of Elmer's (her husband) unexpected death. Although very new to the community, he took charge and guided us through those difficult days. I remember with gratitude his help and kindness to our family at that time."

Doug Johnson adds, "During his tenure: we began aggressively seeking new members in the newly-developing (finally developing) neighborhood. Bob and Dan made many visits to new people just moving in; the present approach to adult education began; we joined the Madison Urban Ministry (the first Lutheran church to do so!); we started the gardens and attempted a 'farmer's market' of our own; after a long hiatus, we re-instituted the Every-Member Visit and annual renewal of membership. Bob was: editor of the newsletter for the Conference on Inner City Ministries; a member of the Board of Regents of the ALC Seminary in Columbus, Ohio; one who served on the ALC task force on

Racism in the Church; served on the Madison public school superintendent's task force on religion in the schools (a hot topic in the early 70's!)."

Throughout the voicing of their remembrances of Pastor Brown, people have found this common thread: compassion and caring were the characteristics that set him apart from many other men. Although he didn't live to be old, Robert Brown lived for others.

Helen Proksch reminds us that "Hans Frederich Gustafson, a native of Chicago, served our congregation during the interim period between Ray Lester and Robert Brown. Some of the contributions he made to our worship were his thought provoking sermons and his dedication to the liturgical part of our worship. He challenged us to consider offering communion every week." Many of us join Helen in remembering Pastor Gustafson's service to Advent with appreciation.



Andrew and Patti Rogness with quilt made by Advent members for their first son, Joel.

The celebration of Advent's silver anniversary coincides with the celebration of ten years of ministry to Advent by the Reverend Andrew Rogness, who came to us on September 27, 1975, with his wife, Patti. This was Andrew's first pastorate, but he had had earlier experience in child and family guidance and as a researcher for the Democratic-Farmer Labor party caucus in the Minnesota capitol.

1975 was the year when Karl Johnson was among those who were baptized, and Paula Brugge and Lucy Esser were among the confirmands. Rita and Rich Olson and Ginger and Phil Hinderaker were among those who joined Advent in 1975.

Phil says: "The first Sunday we visited Advent was the Sunday Andrew was installed as minister. As Ginger was transferring from another denomination, we attended an instruction group taught by Andrew that included Rich and Rita Olson."

"We had been attending various churches for some time, looking for one to join, but not finding anything we felt really comfortable with, or at least with some special attraction. One weekend we attended a Strollers play at the MCC and learned of Advent. From the very first visit, we knew this was what we had been looking for. There were no 'official greeters,' just all with whom we visited. I particularly remember after service conversation with Roger Proksch over a relaxing cup of coffee."

"Shortly after we joined, we were married at Advent and later contributed to Advent's mini baby boom of the late 70's. We, of course, have special memories of the baptism services of Matt and Ryan, which were made more meaningful because of Andrew's policy of allowing the parents to choose the baptism liturgy and the music for the service."

"We have always felt that Advent and the MCC are very special. Since we have moved to the northeast side of Madison, we have often talked of moving to a church more conveniently

located, but we always find an excuse to stay. It seems every time we get serious about transferring membership, we go to a service and come out feeling so good we say Advent is just too good to leave. That special joy and fellowship we were attracted to ten years ago remains alive and healthy today."

And Phil and Ginger find that they admire "the ability to deal with current issues in a Christian activist manner and yet avoid internal divisiveness. I believe this is because of a high degree of respect by each member for other members, even though their views may differ substantially."

There is, also, "the extra effort to make special occasions memorable. The Confirmation Sunday service each year must require tremendous work and time, but the result is absolutely wonderful," according to Phil Hinderaker.

The closing years of the seventies brought Mary Bowman, the DeWitts, the Ermers, the Lehmanns, the Libbys, the Muehls, the Nelsons, the Paulsons, the Rowes, the Simouseks, Liz Spengler, the Streits, the Torgrudes, the Torstensions, and Paula Waller's family into membership at Advent.

In 1980, the Carvins, the Kuneses, the Pettersens, Linda Pils and her children and Jane Zimmerman and hers were among those who made Advent their church home, as did the family of Ellen Lindgren and Eric Streicher. Ellen remembers that they joined the church on the same day that their oldest child, Karl, was baptized. They joined a church because they "felt a need to commit (themselves) to a Christian community." They joined Advent because it had "many families with young children. Parenting is made easier with people around who are striving to raise their children in a Christian home and are going through the same problems and can offer support and guidance."

In addition, they were attracted by our concept of a shared building and ministry. They still like Advent's people, and, like so many members, "feel like we have some good friends, to whom we can turn to enjoy sharing and seeing our kids develop friendships within the church."

Peter Streit and Peter Torstenson were among others who were baptized in 1980. Candy and Tammy Lehmann and Ron McGown were among that year's confirmands. And now we're at 1985 and our silver anniversary. The eighties have brought us Eldon Anderson, Sue Blekeberg, John Borquist's family, Lynn Breedlove and Evelyn Mazack, Valerie Dantoin, the Dintingers, the Fortins, Jon Gunderson, Carolyn Hahn, the Heggens, Diana Hicks and Keith Thomas, Jane Jensen, Ken and Chris Johnson, the Kents, Tracey Meyer, the Murkves, Ginny Poeschl's family, the Schneiders, Susan Thompson, and Emily Wixson. This year we've received Julie Walsh and Nancy Warden and baptized Kristin Louise Muehl, Danielle Rae Russell, and Kelly Maureen Walsh. The confirmands in 1985 were Jennifer Crandall, Kelle Johnson, Erik Pettersen, Jennifer Torgrude, and Erika Ullsvik. Ellen Ermer and Jeffrey Braun were united in marriage.

Julie Walsh, like many Advent members, found that "Advent's initial attraction was its proximity to (her) home. However, after attending services there, (she) was attracted to the small congregation, variety of worship formats and its commitment to the sanctuary movement." She

believes "the shared building and ministry are very positive" and appreciates Dan Schmiechen and the UCC, in addition to our pastor and congregation. Julie likes the people of Advent and enjoys the feeling of "community."

The Madison Christian Community building has often been a happy place and will provide even greater pleasure with a new roof, a 1985 project, one that had been needed, as those who've been here when the old one was leaking will agree. The building has housed many user groups in addition to the two congregations. Through the years these have included: Human Development Center of Division of Health; Strollers Theater, Ltd.; day nursery sponsored by Church Day Nurseries, followed by the Learning Tree, and now Stepping Stone, a preschool and kindergarten; Madison Boys Choir; Planned Parenthood; the WIC program; Madison Bible Church; many musical recital groups; and Brownies. The Wexford Association holds board and annual meetings here, as do other area neighborhood groups.

We have worshiped here, celebrated the sacraments, confirmations and weddings, and enjoyed square dances and family oriented pleasures of great variety. We have gone from here on camping outings and canoe trips, as well as other pleasant excursions. It has been a real church home for many of us.

Sadly, we have also said goodbye to members who have preceded us in death. Sylvan S. Wild, Peter Christianson, Jeffrey Harper, Charles C Martin, the Reverend Otto H. Wonn, David B Rasmussen, Dr Charles Noble Lewis, Selma Mergen, Alfred L Bunn, Edward Lemke, Elmer Harry Scheibe, Percy W. Olson, Delmar E. McGrew, Margaret Hickey, Robert Marquardt, Roger B Proksch, Dorothy M Ehster, and Raymond B Esser have been buried from our church. We rejoice in their memories.

Our sense of community, referred to so frequently, has been shared with others. The MCC has sponsored a Laotian family, that of Tsi-Tsu, finding them a place to live and providing furniture, transportation, and help in establishing themselves in the United States. More recently, Rogelio and Maria Gonzales and their children were given sanctuary by the MCC and other Madison Churches, who then found them a safer home in Canada.

We have not been laboring alone through the years. Lutheran Home Missions and the Board for Homeland Ministries of the United Church of Christ, the latter our present mortgage holder, and many individuals have been generous with their help in many ways. Happily, Advent has not been on subsidy since 1980.

Susan Thompson, Service/Mission Director/Wisconsin of the American Lutheran Church, and a member of Advent tells us: "I'm delighted, both professionally and personally, to write these words of congratulations to Advent congregation in this year of celebrating your (our!) 25th Anniversary. Even though I haven't been part of Advent's life for 25 years, it's easy to think historically about the congregation as I sit here at my desk. For one thing, my office is located only blocks from the site of the first Advent church building. For another, I remember other letters I wrote you at this desk in the mid-70's, when you were a subsidized congregation of the ALC and I was your Service Mission Director.

I learned a lot in those years about the vision and commitment of the people at Advent towards creative and faithful servanthood to God and to God's people, both inside and outside the congregation. I know that that commitment required a lot of hard work as you sought to reach out to people in Madison's growing west side. I also know that that vision led you down exciting yet difficult paths - the move to and building process at Old Sauk Road, the development of the MCC with the new Community of Hope, and the delicate work which those processes entailed with one another and with the church offices of the related denominations. It's clear that through all the joys and pain which that particular birth and growth period brought, the vision and commitment remained and still flourishes.

I thank God for that. And, on behalf of the American Lutheran Church, I congratulate and thank you - for serving this community, for serving the ills of the world through the ministry of sanctuary and other MCC commitments to God's people in need, and for serving the church at large through your continuing witness to the fact that ecumenical ministry is possible. The latter, by the way, is a witness I have been able to use several times in my work developing new congregations.

This is also an opportunity for me to thank you for what the ministry of Advent Lutheran Church means to me now as a member of the congregation. When I joined Advent in 1982, after moving into the neighborhood, it seemed in many ways like a homecoming. I continue to cherish the chance to be part of this worshiping and serving community of believers. May God bless and keep each of you, and the ministry of Advent Lutheran Church, always."

Through the years, Pastor Rogness' presence at Advent has been and continues to be a powerful influence for progress in our community. He is much appreciated. Margaret Smith's tribute begins with a Bible verse:

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me." Rev. 3:20

"I think of this verse every time I remember the first time Advent met Andrew. He had come from Minneapolis to deliver a 'try out' sermon to the congregation on a sunny Summer Sunday morning, only to find that no one had a key to open the church door. We were all standing outside, trying to think of whom we could contact who would have a key, while Andrew walked around the building, rattling doors and jiggling windows to see which would offer the least resistance to breaking into the church. Fortunately, a key arrived before it became necessary to do this.

I have seen Andrew in many different roles this past decade. Not only has he conducted our worship services these past ten years, but he has also seen to many of the physical needs of the church building. He has sewed the altar cloth and blue paraments, patched the roof, repaired the organ pedals with a tube of toothpaste, coaxed a balky duplicating machine along, and he is the one who hangs from the ladder with one leg and rearranges the banners while Dan supervises from below and is prepared to administer last rites to Andrew, if needed. He and Dan have been

overheard discussing the plumbing problems at the MCC and the merits of plastic versus ceramic pipes. I wonder how many credits the seminary gives for Plumbing 101.

Andrew has graced us with his musical talents. He has led us in the singing of new hymns and liturgy, provided us with guitar accompaniment and written and performed his own music for us.

He has a gift for children and youth that we have all witnessed in his children's sermons. I am so glad we adults can listen to them, too! The rapport he has with the youth is special - whether they drop in after school, discuss the latest most gory movies or he takes a youth and friend, who is interested in the church, out for a soda so they may become acquainted, or in the handling of 15 rambunctious confirmation class students! I really do think Andrew is a teenager at heart, who has to shave!

Andrew has been a comfort to many of us as we have met the joys and sorrows of living our individual lives. He has voiced concern for us, encouraged us, rejoiced with us, prayed with and for us, and cried with us. He has given us much love!

He has also met many needs of the Madison community outside of the MCC. He has brought comfort and friendship to prisoners in jail, has provided help to the indigent, either in providing the money or obtaining the items needed, and has provided counseling to those with emotional needs.

How fortunate we are that Andrew knocked at our door - and how thankful I am that he waited for us to open it for him!"

Hildy McGown says:

"Even though Andrew came to Advent young and inexperienced, his credentials were gold: The Preus and Rogness families were and are well known in American Lutheran church annals. Yet status doesn't seem to interest him, and he is just "Andrew" to young and old alike.

Unlikely ever to say a negative word about anyone else, Andrew is open and forthright about his own doubts, failings and shortcomings. Yet he models for us all a gentle, kind nature, a simple life style, a sincere interest in people and families, a voice of hope in a sadly imperfect world, and a strong faith in God's love and promises.

Unflappable Andrew has been upstaged a few times by the Notes for Young Folks crowd, but through thick and thin he's gotten his message across: God loves you, no matter what.

You can feel the love in both directions as he leads the Vacation Bible School song fests, another one of the duties on which he seems to thrive.

He stays in great physical condition, which is good because each June he leads a Quetico wilderness canoe trip and each winter a northern Wisconsin ski trip for the high school kids of both congregations. In fact, if you haven't seen Andrew on a high school hayride, you can't know just how good his condition, how strong his back, how amazing his stamina.

No one can forget an Advent confirmation service. We are grateful to our pastor for the creativity and time he pours into this annual event. Each one has been a joyous celebration of the precious lives of our young people as they renew the vows which brought them into the Christian family years before. Song, pictures and scripture have challenged us to listen with a more sensitive ear for the deep longing expressed in much contemporary music. In Andrew's skillful hands the unexpected source speaks loud (oh, yes) and clear: Christ is the answer. Surely he has led his congregation in directions few would have thought possible - for Lutherans - a short while back. Under Andrew's leadership and following a study of communion, Advent adopted the practice of allowing families to decide the age at which children would begin to receive communion.

Aware of our desire for more than one liturgical form, Andrew has introduced a variety of settings and styles of worship. We now accept as routine innovations other congregations haven't dared to consider. Our services are enriched by our pastor's ability to chant, sing, play guitar, banjo, harpsichord, and to write music.

Advent was the first ALC congregation to declare itself a Sanctuary for Central American refugees. Of all of us, Andrew was undoubtedly the most vulnerable to arrest and prosecution, had the INS chosen to press its case here as it did elsewhere. It didn't seem to bother him.

In the years since 1975, we all shared Patti and Andrew's happiness as first Joel and then Steven arrived. Advent and the MCC have great affection for all four Rognesses plus one enormous dog, Luther. In return we feel their love and genuine concern for us. Whether in great sorrow or great joy, most would say, 'Let's give Andrew a call.'"

Yes, now it is 1985, and we look toward the future, with hope that with God's grace we may continue to make accomplishments in His name. Pastor Rogness says: Of all the thoughts that come to mind in reflecting on 25 years of Advent history, I probably marvel most at the simple fact that the _Last ten years, during which I've been fortunate to be the pastor, have gone so quickly. Like looking at family slides, I am surprised to note the changes. Yet I know there have been clues along the way.

I don't get as much mileage out of trying to play naive as I did when I first came. "Gee, I'm kinda new at this. What do you think we ought to do?" is a line that doesn't bail me out like it used to.

Instead of being the new kid on the block, I discovered that only a third of the membership has been here longer than I, with many others who have come and gone during that time.

Hearing young adults reminisce with each other about their days of being in confirmation class - almost bragging about the times I tried to discipline them as though it were a mark of distinction.

The factors that have made it easy to be here for ten years have remained constant. And when I think of that I know why time has gone quickly:

People mostly.

People who have been generous with their warmth, friendship, and love. Who give freely of time, suggestions and compliments.

A colleague, Dan Schmiechen, who set aside differing age and experience to build a relationship of equality, honesty, and good humor. In the church such collegiality is highly sought after and, strangely, not often found.

Particularly in worship, but in other forums as well, the spirit that invites creativity and innovation, and that values warmth over formality, is constantly energizing.

I am continually awed and humbled with the preaching of the good news of Jesus Christ week after week, and with the fact that we continue to gather together week after week to be blessed by the hearing of that good news.

What of the next 25 years? What blueprint shall we follow? It is essential to remember that in leaving his disciples, Jesus gave them very little to go on. There were no master plans and no goals and objectives, But these compelling words:

If anyone would come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever would save their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, to the end of time.

It is almost as though Jesus didn't want to give them any more details than this, lest they should forget the core of what they were to be about. Moreover, the absence of details says plainly that where people have UNITS-L at the center, the path of discipleship will be found.

So our blueprints and goals are dynamic and continue to emerge. For at the core of our life together will be Jesus Christ and our daily giving our lives to him as Lord and Savior. In this spirit, what we do will likely be God-pleasing. Advent, together with Community of Hope in the Madison Christian Community, is well suited to face the future in the following ways:

In the midst of our culture, we can meet the challenge of continually defining what it means to follow Christ and how that might be different from consumerism, competition, and hedonism that pervade our culture.

While we value each person and celebrate the unique gifts of each individual, we can risk the bonds of community, building interdependency as brothers and sisters in Christ, as a distinct alternative to society's individualism.

Because we make our faith in Christ the core of all we are and do, we are free to use any style or innovation that matches the needs of our lifetime. As long as we worship Christ and not styles, we remain vibrant.

Continually I hear both how warm and friendly our congregation is to newcomers and how inclusive we are of all people. There are many in our community who are outside the church but who would benefit by our warmth and inclusiveness. Reaching out and drawing others into our circle is a quality to nurture.

Our first allegiance is to God and to serving God. We have shown the willingness to follow that allegiance both when our government is in agreement with our social positions which we've arrived at through our faith and when following Christ risks confrontation with our government. That our congregation has been willing to take these stands is commendable. We will always be faced with issues. Let us always be supportive of each other in coming to terms with these issues through the eyes of faith.

Reliant upon God's grace for ourselves and each other, we dare hope for 25 more wonderful years.

With deep gratitude for my years as your pastor and as God's servant,"
Andrew

The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord; She is his new creation by water and the Word. From heav'n he came and sought her to be his holy bride; With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died."

