

EARLY HISTORY.....

In those early days, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, organized in 1904, was located on a plot given by the Nice family to the Diocese of Montana (which was the official designation for the Episcopal Church) for the specific purpose of holding church services. It was Lot 15 of the Myers and Nice addition to the town of Stillwater. The town name had to later be changed to avoid confusion with a Stillwater train depot in Stillwater, Minnesota. In present day, this lot is adjacent to the corner lot at 1st Ave and A St. Once the church building was moved to its present site, the plot presumably reverted to the Nice family.

St Paul's Episcopal Church was an unorganized mission of the Diocese of Montana. In the early 1900s, services were held first in the Modern Woodman Hall, then in the Odd Fellow's Hall, and finally in the Masonic Hall as the church congregation grew larger. Sunday School was in its infancy, organized by Mrs. Hugh Campbell in 1908. The Rev. G.W.G. Van Winkle came to Columbus with his family, and several Episcopalian families moved to Columbus at the same time. The Bishop Coadjutor was Rt. Rev. Herbert Henry Heywood Fix, D.D. (1920-1925).

A significant group in the church was the St Cecelia Guild. St Cecelia was recognized as the patron saint of music and art in the Church. The guild was organized in 1907 and was composed of many prominent churchgoers. There was also an Altar Guild, composed of girls of high school age and below. These two groups were instrumental in building the church in 1912. They raised money for an altar which Rev. Van Winkle built and carved. It was still in use when St. James was holding their services in the building. The Episcopalians continued to use the building for their services until 1921 when the congregation had dwindled to the point that there was no longer a church body. Rev. Mr. Price continued to serve the small band of congregation members with the hope that the St. Cecelia would be organized again. Rev. Van Winkle passed away in January 1921.



1920 – 2020

HISTORY OF ST JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH

The English Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the Northwest of the United Lutheran Church of America was established as the English alternative to all of the Scandinavian and German Lutheran congregations and synods in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

This Synod started a few missions in North and South Dakota, Montana and Winnipeg, Canada. Redeemer Lutheran in Livingston, established in 1906 and Zion Lutheran in Butte in 1918 were the earliest mission churches. St James was established as one of these missions in 1920.

District Missionary, Rev. C.W. Seville put a notice in the Columbus News, March 7, 1920 calling "all German, Swedish, Danish, French, Norwegian and Yankee Lutherans" living in Columbus and within a 12-mile radius come together to form one parish or congregation where all you Lutherans can be together in one congregation." The reasoning was that the English Synod of the Lutheran church had many congregations where there were three to ten different nationalities, especially where the congregation size and town size were small, and "all got along fine."

St. James took shape under District Missionary, Rev. C.W. Seville. He conducted the first services on March 7, 1920 with twenty members in the church building of St Paul's Episcopal Church. The membership was composed of *"some of our best townsfolk and the Council is composed of ten very able business men and leading farmers. St James Lutheran Church starts off with a very bright future"* (Columbus News, March 11, 1920).

The Rev A.O.A. Urban was called as Pastor and with the help of Pastor Seville, services were held regularly every two weeks in the Episcopal church building. The Rev Urban served until August 22, 1920.

The Articles of Incorporation of "St. James Lutheran Church of Columbus, Montana" were filed with the Clerk and Recorder of Stillwater County on May 15, 1920. The Board of Trustees named in the document were P.E. Anderson, Ludwig Heicksen, Chris Martinsen, Olaf Nelson and Gustave Simmons. The Church Council consisted of these men plus H.P. Hanson, Joseph Stubkjare, H.G. Stange and Henry Gurkhe.

There were 30 Charter members in March 1920. Four of the Charter members remained members as of 1921. As of 1923-24, eighteen members remained on the church books. After that, several Charter members had moved away or had died.

On August 22, 1920 the Rev. Marlin D. Haferman was called and took charge at once. In October, the place of worship was changed to the Masonic Hall where services were held every two weeks on Sunday afternoons. The switch may have been because the rent was less expensive at the Masonic Hall (\$6.00 vs \$10.00 for the Episcopal church building). This move may have been significant as the entire budget for 1920 was \$315.09, and the pastor was paid \$25.00/quarter.

Confirmation of the first class took place on May 22, 1921. One of the first charter members, Elsie Harris, recalls the first worship services were held two blocks west of the present location. At Christmas services, communion vessels donated by the Emmanuel Lutheran congregation in Clara City, Minnesota were used for the first time. A Ladies' Aid society was organized in February 1921.

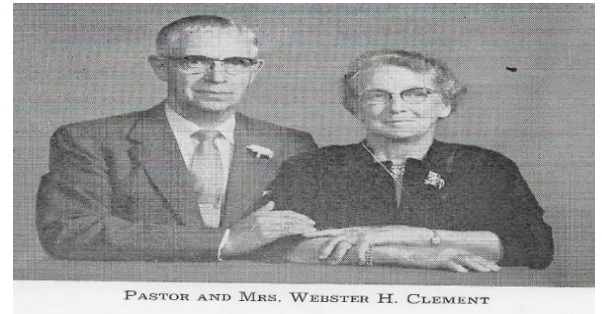
On May 23, 1922, Pastor Haferman left to accept a call in Cannon Falls, Minnesota. The Rev. Frederick C. Scholtz was called to St. James on May 1, 1922 and arrived for active work on June 18, 1922. Some months, he took less money for salary, anywhere from \$7.25 - \$120 with an average of \$32.70. He stayed until October. The church record book was lost until 1931 and when returned was placed with the Pastor for safekeeping.

Rev. George Koehler replaced Pastor Scholtz in December 1923 and stayed until May 1924. Rev. Shelhardt came for June – September 1925. In 1925, receipts totaled \$305.81 and disbursements were \$293, leaving \$22.05 for 1926 expenses.

Rev. Koehler returned in October and stayed December 1925 thru February 1926. Rev. Webster H. Clement, Pastor of the English Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Livingston also served as Pastor for St. James of Columbus. His ministry began in October 1926.

A handwritten annual report of expenses and payments in 1929, showed that the financial situation had improved somewhat. Cash on hand was \$13.90, but receipts totaled \$653.92, more than twice the receipts in 1925. Salary payments to Rev. Clement were still meager, \$253.50/ month which included travel expenses.

The first few years saw many ups and downs for St. James as poor crops forced people to move away. In 1932, Sunday services were again held in the Episcopal Church building with Pastor Clement coming to Columbus from Livingston by train or if the train was late, by car. Services were held every Sunday evening at 8:00pm. There were no Sunday School sessions or morning services at this time.



Pastor of St. James for 26 years

In the Spring of 1933, the outside of the church was painted. Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday of 1934 were memorable for St. James. A class of five (5) young people was confirmed on Palm Sunday and communed later that evening. On both Sundays, thirty-eight (38) communed. 1934 saw large crowds for Sunday evening services and on Easter and the year 1935, saw the largest number of communicants.

In 1937, St. James elected deacons and trustees and purchased the church building from the Episcopal Church. It was apparently paid off by the end of 1939. There is no record of the sale or the amount of the sale. On November 30, 1938, St James also purchased from the Diocese of Montana (Episcopal) for \$600.00 – Lots sixteen (16), seventeen (17) and eighteen (18) of block five (5) of the First Addition to the Town of Columbus, Montana (on the deed as St James English Evangelical Lutheran Church).

The church building was moved to these lots. When bought, the building had no concrete basement floor, and the walls were showing signs of caving due to water damage. Repairs began immediately to fix the caving walls and pour a concrete floor.

Year by year, the congregation at St. James' evening services had been getting larger and larger. The communions had been well attended as well. A new Sunday School was organized during 1939-40 with over 40 students and teachers.



Episcopal Church moved to current location.

Confirmation classes were reorganized and confirmed in 1939 and 1940; a class of eight confirmands in 1939 and six in 1940. Twelve infants were baptized in December 1939 and sixteen infants and children on Palm Sunday in 1940. The average attendance on Sunday evenings was 45-60 members.

The congregation, although small in number was rich in spirit. "We have seldom seen such a happy crowd as Tuesday evening, January 28, 1941. One-hundred members gathered for a pot-luck dinner followed by the singing of hymns, playing games and socializing." In those days, church-related activities were probably the only form of entertainment available in the town.

The congregation members met on August 17, 1941 to consider the matter of a loan of \$1500.00 from the Board of American Missions of the United Lutheran Church of America for the purpose of adding a basement to the church building. It was decided to raise the pastor's salary to \$100 a year at the rate of \$25 per quarter.

Later in 1941, a claim was apparently made against Lots sixteen (16), seventeen (17) and eighteen (18) of St James by various heirs to the estate of Horace Countryman. In preparation for the hearing of the claim, Webster Clement and Paul Anderson filed an affidavit of identity certifying that

they were the President and Secretary of the Church Council respectively. As such, they were well acquainted with the Corporation designated as St James English Evangelical Lutheran Church of Columbus, notwithstanding the discrepancies in names. There were no court proceedings, and none of the Countryman heirs presented themselves in court. The court ordered, adjudged and decreed that St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church is the true and lawful owner of all of the above-mentioned lots. The judge hearing the case, Gerry C. Derry, issued a Decree Quieting Title, meaning that the title is to be quieted in name of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church of Columbus, Montana against all claims, demands and pretenses.

On Sunday evening, May 20, 1945, St. James celebrated its 25th Anniversary. The Rev George Koehler of Superior, Wisconsin and former pastor of St James was the guest speaker. Pastor John Shannon, Youth Secretary of the Northwest Synod and Rev. A.C. Baumgardner of Billings were present and gave messages. Greetings were heard from Rev. Covell and Rev. Roukema of Columbus. Another gathering was held on Wednesday evening and the week of festivities closed with a communion service on Sunday. The Women's Missionary Society, Western Conference, Group B met at St James on August 28-29 as a fitting close to the 25th Anniversary celebration.

At the annual meeting in 1948, Mr. Ole Nygaard was thanked for building a beautiful altar for the church parlors. Others were thanked for gifts and kindnesses during the year. It was also decided to increase the Pastor's salary to \$900.00 per year.

A special meeting was held in October 1949 to discuss plans for a new addition to the church. At this time the church interior was only as large as the present nave (from communion rail to the interior back of the church).

During 1951, the addition was added to the rear of the church. The basement was dug and finished as a kitchen with adjoining toilets for women and men. This was the first time that the church building had running water! The new church kitchen was dedicated prior to the 1951 annual meeting. The upper part of this addition was completed on the exterior and roofed. The inside of this addition was not completed at this time. The front wall of the existing church sanctuary separated the two portions of the building.

At the annual meeting in 1952, Pastor WH. Clement announced his resignation at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Livingston, MT, St James Lutheran Church in Columbus, MT and Yellowstone Park Church in Gardiner, MT. Pastor Clement preached his farewell sermon on February 10, 1952 on the theme of "The Good Shepherd." Since St James had been a "Preaching Point" almost since its inception, the congregation expressed interest in a resident pastor. This had been discussed with the Northwest Synod President, Dr. Paul Bishop. Besides, the Synod executives decided that some other arrangement was necessary since the congregation in Livingston wanted a different set-up. In the meantime, Rev Douglas Erickson filled in as interim pastor while he was on furlough from his missionary post in China because of the communist take-over of that country. Under the direction of the Northwest Synod of the United Lutheran Church of America, a religious survey was undertaken by Rev. Douglas in February 1952.

According to Rev. Erickson, *"the survey proved encouraging, and he expressed the opinion that St James possessed great leadership and potential. Rev. Erickson said that the strongest asset of this congregation was a nucleus of faithful and untiring workers. There is a desire for the church to have a resident pastor of its own and that the work go forward."*

"The history of the congregation would not be complete without a mention of the Women's Missionary Society. This group has very fine spiritual roots. It is active in the Western Conference and Synodical Missionary Society. There are some 20 to 30 Life and In Memorial memberships within the

congregation. At present, there are approximately 20 members in this group. Of these, at least 12 are also regular in the Mission Study program of the Society."

"The 1951 Minutes of the Northwest Synod shows the following Parochial Report covering the year ending 1950: Baptized members – 171; Confirmed members – 96; and Communing members – 50. The difference between Confirmed and Communing membership might be partially explained by the part-time status of the services which had been carried out for so long. The Church Council has estimated there are some eighty members who would be considered active and with full-time pastoral work would be faithful in their attendance and contributions.

Mrs. Harold Nordahl, wife of the church secretary is the Sunday School Superintendent. The Sunday School is conducted on Sunday mornings without the presence of a pastor. There are 85 children enrolled with an average attendance of 50-60. With the guidance of a pastor, this Sunday School remarkable in its excellence could be further developed. The departments should be separated for best results."

There is a Luther League which has been meeting every other Wednesday evening. Twenty (20) could be considered as active leaguers. The February 20th meeting was attended by 24 youth.

"The church building is in generally good condition. A new roof is needed and is in the plans for the future. The basement is heated by a convenient gas heater. The church itself is at present heated by a coal stove of the parlor furnace variety. The present plans would include a gas heater with automatic controls for this unit. It is believed that with volunteer labor, both of these improvements could be done for \$700 – 800. The Building Fund for the present year would be directed toward this goal."

"A city survey disclosed fifty-four (54) prospects. Dr Erickson believed that a good share of these can be won with work. Some will not be interested or able until worship is conducted in the morning. Others are perhaps waiting to become better acquainted and to meet the new pastor who would come. Of these fifty-four prospects, there are 12 who together with some members of the congregation are attending membership classes, following the Thursday Lenten service. The Interim Pastor has signed "papers – Christ Invites You," for eight transfers of membership. There are four others who will come in at the next membership service following this class – a husband and wife by baptism. There are eight young people in the Senior Catechism class to be confirmed on Palm Sunday. There are four in the Junior Catechism class."

"The follow-up on the other prospects may reveal others who are ready to come in soon. The work is limited because the pastor also serves the larger congregation in Livingston. The Lenten program and plans for a parsonage building limit the pastor's time in Columbus to two days at the most."

"Dr Erickson viewed that St James has splendid opportunities to enlarge and to be a great service to the community. By focused work, he believed that a good portion of the immediate fifty-four prospects, could be brought in. This congregation will be limited in its growth potential. It will never be a large congregation. However, he felt that it can be brought to a reasonable size and could become self-supporting within a limited number of years. He recommended that the St James congregation be granted Mission status and that pastoral salary aid be granted for a limited number of years, say 5 years."

After a meeting with Dr Paul Bishop, the church council applied for mission aid, and a call was placed for a pastor. In the interim (1952-53), Revs. John Shannon, Robert Bartels, and Emil Dockter served St James. During the 34 years prior to the 1954 improvements, church furnishings consisted of chairs, benches and a pot-bellied stove. In the decade from 1951 – 1960, membership ranged from a low of 293 to a high of 466. Communing during the same period ranged from 74 to 142.

On Easter Sunday, April 5, 1953, Rev. Ralph C. Sandgren accepted the call to become the first resident pastor of St. James in its thirty-one years of its existence. Rev. Sandgren's salary was agreed as \$3,000/year in monthly installments. His first service was June 21, 1953 during which three

infants were baptized. He was installed on July 26, 1953 by Dr Jonas Dressler, President of the Northwestern Lutheran Seminary. The church rented John Wagner's house for \$60/month and furnished it for the parsonage for Rev. Sandgren.

In February 1953, work began to remodel the basement by removing and redecorating the old kitchen wall. The upstairs was painted and the wall to the new addition was removed. All the inside walls were finished with sheet rock or Masonite panels. Resident pastors, aided by faithful, hardworking members, completed the chancel area and the kitchen in the two months prior to the arrival of Rev. Sandgren. Consideration was given to lowering and insulating the ceiling which could result in fuel savings, but no decision was taken. A future project was to make an inside entrance to the basement so that the congregation could move to the basement without having to go outside.



Due to all the difficulties of a small congregation in the following years of inflation, increased salaries, and declining population of small towns, St. James has been served by many young beginning pastors.

In August of 1953, the Council decided to use the King James Version of the Bible as Council members thought that too many of the congregation would object to the Revised Standard Version. A learning campaign was held to teach the hymns used in worship services. Twenty-five hymnals were purchased.

In October of 1953, the Women's Missionary Society of the Western Conference, Group B held a meeting at St. James. Mrs. Helen Harder, Missionary to Japan and Mrs. William Chandler, President of the Women's Missionary Society of the Northwest Synod were principal speakers. Over one hundred attended.

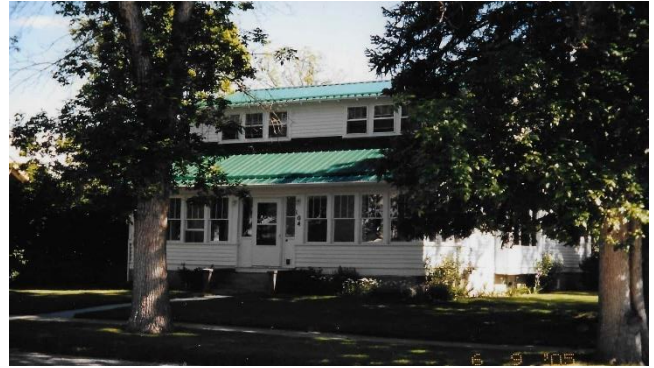
Also, in 1953, St James was approved as a home mission under the Board of American Missions of the United Lutheran Church of America. This meant that St James was eligible for pastor salary support. The church council was urged by the Board and the Northwest Synod to adopt a constitution in accordance with the model provided.

In 1954, the Board of American Missions acknowledged that it was not able to continue to contribute to Rev. Sandgren's salary, so St James had to assume the full load. Congregation members donated a new pulpit and lectern as memorials for departed loved ones. They purchased and refinished about 20 pews, some as memorials. What a joy after thirty-four years of hard-backed chairs and benches and a pot-bellied stove! American and Christian memorial flags were purchased and installed by church members. Jens Jensen took responsibility for finishing the Hall and building a wardrobe. It was decided to have Lenten Services on Wednesday evenings.

The pews were installed in June 1954. During this same year, the first Vacation Bible School (VBS) was established with 10 teachers and 66 students. VBS has continued every year with enrollments as high as 93, often as a joint venture with other community churches. A new sidewalk was built in front of the church. Church Council met every month to decide on payment of bills – what could be paid and what could be delayed. Stewardship campaigns were held with Council Members following up on pledges. Donations of \$2.00 - \$5.00 were requested to sponsor radio promotion of a movie about Martin Luther.

On April 26, 1955 the Altar Guild was organized. Its mission was to care for the altar, vestments, vessels and altar linens. Altar guild members prepared the sanctuary for services and cleaned up afterwards. Altar guild members frequently supervised the decoration of the sanctuary with flowers.

On September 25, 1955 a special congregational meeting was held to take a vote on the church council's recommendation to purchase the former home of Dorothy Ragsdale for a parsonage and pastor's office. Because the vote on the recommendation was not unanimous, a quorum of members in good standing was established. The recommendation passed, and \$14,000 was allocated to make the purchase. A down payment of \$400 was raised in less than two months, and the family moved in on November 15, 1955.



104 W. 2nd Ave North

In 1956, St James had requested and received a certificate of change of name of the church from the Montana Secretary of State. Instead of St James Lutheran Church of Columbus, Montana, the church was now officially named St James English Evangelical Lutheran Church of Columbus, Montana. The term "Evangelical" had been added to the church title informally since the 1930s, but this was the first time that the name along with the descriptor, English, was officially certified.

Rev. Sandgren resigned on April 8, 1956 to accept a call to be mission organizer in Billings, Montana. A call was extended to John Mednis, a graduate of Northwestern Theological Seminary, who accepted the call October 14, 1956 and took office November 8, 1956. He was later ordained on August 6, 1957.

Rev. Mednis was installed by Rev. Dr. Clement Ziedler, President of Northwestern Seminary at a special evening service. Revs. Myers and Sandgren of Billings, Rev. Fellows of Livingston, Rev. Shannon of Billings, and Rev Hasselquist of Great Falls were present. Rev. Mednis resigned December 4, 1960 to accept a call to Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Yelm, Washington.

Work continued on improvements at St James. In 1957, St. James poured a new basement floor because the old floor cracked and heaved, during the rainy season, When it rained, there would be 1-3 inches of water in the basement, seeping up from below and through the floor.

During October 12-18, 1957, an evangelism mission was conducted. Robert Nystul, chairman and Rev Eldred Trede, pastor at St Luke's Lutheran Church in Chicago were missionaries. Six special evening services were held. Fifty-three families (unchurched) were visited by four visiting teams.

At the November 1957 annual meeting, the congregation voted to apply for a loan from Empire Trust and Loan in Livingston to pay Mrs. Ragsdale for the soon-to-be parsonage.

Easter Sunday, April 6, 1958 was the first time that two services were held on Sunday. Church Councilmen served an Easter breakfast following the 6:00 am as a token of appreciation to choir members and Sunday School teachers. Sixty-seven members attended.

The Women of the Church and the Altar Guild united in one group, called United Lutheran Church Women (ULCW).

On August 3 of 1958 at a congregational picnic, a council meeting was held to approve a proposal to build a new church narthex. Construction of the narthex, including a pastor's office and inside stairway to the basement began in October. The estimated cost was \$1,600 and was financed through pledges of \$100 each and completed using volunteer labor.

A congregational Thanksgiving dinner was held on November 23, 1958 in the church basement with 84 members in attendance. This dinner was followed on November 27th by a Union Thanksgiving service held at St. James with the Evangelical United Brethren, Congregational and Assembly of God churches participating.

In February 1959, the Church Council voted to participate in the Lutheran Education Advancement Fund (LEAF) drive to take place later in the year. The objective was to raise \$1,500,000: \$1,000,000 for building a new campus for Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin and \$500,000 for the Northwestern Lutheran Seminary in Minneapolis, MN. St. James' contribution set by the Synod was to be \$2,936. A launch rally was held in Livingston, and charter buses from Billings picked up twelve (12) participants from St. James. In March, a special council meeting was held to discuss ways to conduct the LEAF drive. It was decided to do the best St. James could do.

In April 1959, a LEAF Loyalty dinner was held at St. James. Mr. Ted Stump from Livingston; Mr. Fred Poffenroth, Conference and Area Chairman of the LEAF drive; Mrs. Gentry, Women's Area Chairperson from Billings; Mrs. Henry Lohof, Conference Chairperson and Rev. Don Myers, pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran church in Billings were speakers. There were twenty-three (23) members from St. James present. When the LEAF fund drive was conducted, using 4 visiting teams of 4 members each, \$2,175 was pledged by St. James members.

In June of 1959, the fifth VBS was organized with 11 teachers and 93 students.

In September 1959, a Senior High Luther League was organized with 18 leaguers. Mrs. Harold Nordahl was adviser, Ms. Sherry Olsen was President, Ms. Phyllis Lofing was secretary and Harold Nordahl was treasurer.

In the decade from 1951 to 1960 membership ranged from a low of 293 to a high of 466. Communing during the same period ranged from 78 to 133.

On March 13, 1960 St. James celebrated its 40th anniversary. Rev. George Lundquist, President of the Northwest Synod, preached the sermon during worship and spoke at the banquet. 138 attended the service and 98 attended the banquet. The banquet was held at the Stillwater Civic Center. All pastors from Lutheran churches in Billings were invited.

In January of 1960 or 1961 the ULCW repainted and redecorated the basement with help of volunteers. In June the Spring Forum of the Woman's Missionary Society, Western Conference, Group B was held at St. James with forty-five (45) in attendance. In July, Luther League Caravanners visited and had wonderful meetings with the youth. In October, the ULCW, Western Conference Group B held their convention at St. James. Mrs. Gentry, Conference President and Mrs. Th. Rees, President of the ULCW Northwest Synod were the leaders. The banquet was held at the Civic Center. The speaker was Rev. Walter Morris, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church ELC in Helena. The convention was a success.

On February 14, 1960 Rev. David Gerberding, Stewardship Secretary of the Northwest Synod preached. Mr. Milton Fiene, a representative of the Lutheran Laymen's Movement spoke at an informal gathering after the service about the Laymen's Movement. Two members, Harold Nordahl and Almer Stene joined the Movement.

A congregational meeting was held in November 1960 to vote on the resignation of Pastor Mendis. While the overwhelming number of members were against his resignation, Pastor Mendis had accepted the call to serve at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Yelm, Washington. "In spite of our small group of Christians, we little realized how effectively "the Leaven" may be. A little girl had attended the Junior Confirmation class. Then her family moved to South America. She wrote to ask Pastor Mendis if she could be confirmed "by mail." His last service was December 4, 1960. Rev. Donovan Myers from the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Billings served as interim pastor.

Synod President, Rev. George Lundquist conferred with the church council and Rev. Ralph Loges was asked to preach a trial sermon in January 1961. Later that month the congregation voted unanimously to call Rev. Loges. He assumed the pastorate on April 1, 1961 and was installed by Rev. John Shannon later that month.

Since St. James was far removed from large congregations of Lutheranism, it has always been at the "tail-end" of the Synod. Under the Northwest Synod, the executive offices and the closest seminary were in Minneapolis. After the national merger of three Lutheran bodies in 1963, St. James became members of the Lutheran Church of America (LCA) of the Northwest Pacific Synod with headquarters in Seattle, Washington. The congregation adopted the new constitution and accepted the resignation of Rev. Loges as of May 31, 1964.

In June of 1964, the congregation called Rev. Daniel Lee Bohline, a graduate of Pacific Lutheran Seminary. Pastor Bohline was ordained and installed by Dr. A.G. Fjellman, President of the Pacific Northwest Synod, LCA. In 1964 Harold Houghton built the chancel cross and wall plaques which were painted by Pastor Dan Bohline.

In 1964, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Schulze purchased a church bell from farmer Roel Larson, east of Laurel in honor of their 30th wedding anniversary. The bell, 17 inches in diameter, was chosen because of its pure and vivid tone. It was nicknamed "Little David" because though small, it was accurate and packed a punch. The youth of St. James helped to build a new bell tower to house the bell. The bell and bell tower were dedicated by Rev. A.G. Fjellman, Bishop of Pacific Northwest Synod on December 6, 1964 when the bell was first rung. Two-hundred thirty attended which was a record.

In August of 1964, the planter box and church sign were completed. In October a new altar was dedicated as a memorial to Ole Nygaard who had built and carved the original altar. October marked the first use of Eucharistic vestments. Pastor Bohline wore a cassock, alb, amice and chasuble.



1965 marked the 45th anniversary of St James. Dr. Fjellman was the guest speaker. Harold Houghton, Ken Hegg and Curt Riemann built and mounted the 30 ft cross on the adjoining lot. Many women of the church made the white Christmas ornaments and banners which are still used to this day to adorn the church Christmas tree.

The basement and kitchen were redecorated in 1966. The following year, 1967, the church was completely redecorated, carpet was added to the basement and the chancel was remodeled. The cost was \$2300. St James was grateful for the many members who provided financial support, cleaned, scrubbed, waxed, poured cement, planted trees, painted and pounded nails to make St James a beautiful place to worship. Dedication took place on May 10, 1967. Pastor Bohline's last service was in December 1967 before leaving to accept a call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Spokane, Washington.

In 1967, Sunday School enrollment was 82 with average attendance at 59. Cherub Choir enrolled 20 with average attendance of 14, and the Junior Choir enrolled 27 with average attendance of 17. The women made the Cherub Choir gowns.

In March of 1968, the congregation voted to extend a call to seminarian Gary Brenna of the Lutheran Seminary in Berkeley, California. A special Wednesday evening service was held for the installation of Rev. Brenna with Dr. A.G. Fjellman presiding. Pastors Lee from Livingston; Seastrand, Mattson and Estergren from Billings, Erickson from Absarokee and intern Darrell Jacobsen participated.

Discussions were initiated to look into merging with St Paul's Lutheran Church in Park City (Missouri Synod)) according to a procedural guide. However, these discussions reached an impasse and were put off indefinitely.

In May 1969 Sunday School had 7 classes with 44 enrolled. The church council received the tentative resignation of Pastor Brenna conditioned upon completion of a recommendation that St. James share a pastor with Immanuel Lutheran Church in Absarokee. Later that year, a joint meeting was held composed of the church councils of St James and Immanuel and Dr. A.G. Fjellman, President of the Pacific Northwest Synod (LCA) and Rev. Wicks assistant to the President of Montana district (ALC) to explore the possibility of a joint arrangement and the items that would be involved. It was evident that sharing a pastor with Immanuel Lutheran Church in nearby Absarokee would lighten the financial burden of both congregations. After discussions between the two congregations and councils, an agreement was reached to share a pastor without uniting Synod properties. The plan became operational around July 1, 1969. Rev. Earl Erickson, current pastor of Immanuel, was called to serve St. James as part of the joint arrangement. In August, Rev. Erickson presided over his first worship service. He was later installed September 7, 1969 by Dr. Fjellman. He continued to reside in Absarokee.

The Golden Age group of 32 – 42 members met on Tuesday evenings for dinner, work on projects and play games. In 1971, they met in the afternoons to continue working on projects. The products included 16 rag dolls and 7 monkey socks for the Boulder School, 21 lap robes and 3 hospital gowns for the Columbus Nursing Home, and 35 night-shirts for the Big Timber Nursing Home.

Celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the church were held on August 2, 1970. Pastor Erickson preached at the 11:00 am worship. The anniversary service was in the afternoon with Dr. A.G. Fjellman, District President of the Lutheran Church of America, as the speaker. Known Charter members still living were Herbert Nelson and Mrs. Esther (Nelson) Swallow of Columbus; Mrs. Jean (Nelson) Neal of Yakima, WA; Mrs. Elsie (Swan Harris) of Spokane WA and Mr. and Mrs. E.H Ebersviller, Sr of Laurel, MT. Discussions were held regarding putting the parsonage up for sale with the proceeds to go into bank notes for the pastor's housing expenses. No decision was taken.

In 1971, SS enrollment was 57 with average attendance of 30-35. Twenty flannelgraph stories were being used. The Golden Age group, now in their fourth year, met in the basement during noon and afternoons. The group made 27 bed pads, 6 night-shirts and bibs for the local nursing home.

The debt of \$2,900 on the Parsonage loan was paid in full in 1972. Mrs. Ted Stump donated an organ, valued at \$5,000 which had been stored in Livingston, MT.

In 1973, it was reported that a certain amount of good will had been established with the other Christian denominations in the area. Sunday School enrollment was 44 in KG through high school. Sunday School was using a set of split 35 mm filmstrips, covering the entire Old Testament, purchased with money from the Golden Age Club. Birthday pennies were sent to the Christian Children's Fund.

In 1974, Sunday School enrolled 35 – 40 with 25 attending on average. Sunday School began using a packet of materials prepared by David Cook, including weekly take-home albums, covering the New Testament. The cost was \$1.70 per child per quarter or \$5.00 per year.

In 1975, Sunday School prepared "Kiddie Kits" to be delivered to children overseas through Lutheran World Relief. The proceeds from the LCW's annual salad luncheon would be used to purchase 24 Children's Living Bibles to be given to children in the 3rd grade class.

In 1976, the budget was getting larger with larger receipts of \$12, 347.88 with disbursements of \$10, 627.18, leaving a balance of \$1,720.70. Proposed budget for 1977 was \$11, 180.65. This included funds of \$400 for the parsonage in Absarokee.

In March 1977, Rev Erickson resigned. Discussions were held as to whether the new pastor serving Absarokee and Columbus should be from ALC or LCA. It was decided to let the new pastor decide where to live. If Immanuel Lutheran Church wanted the pastor to reside in Absarokee, this was ok with St. James.

Rev. Howard E. White was called in May 1977. On July 24, 1977 Rev. Howard E. White was installed by Dr. A.G. Fjellman. Rev White later resigned in 1979 to accept a call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Clinton, IA. St James received a letter from the Board of American Missions commending St James for becoming self-supporting in Pastor's salary. The Lutheran Church Women donated money for books for a women's university in Indonesia. Sunday School attendance was declining to 25. New hymnals were purchased in 1978.

The endeavors of St. James haven't all been for material things. St James has always supported benevolence, been mission minded and supported the national educational programs of Lutheran colleges and seminaries. The first women's group was a ladies' aid society, then a missionary society and finally becoming the United Lutheran Church Women. The women's groups have been the working arm of the church, serving in education, church maintenance, charity and promotion of fellowship of the congregation members.

Immanuel Lutheran wanted to split the joint arrangement 50:50 for utilities, travel and moving expenses. It was agreed to split 60:40 until the end of the fiscal year. St James would later consider 50:50 split on moving expenses and supplies.

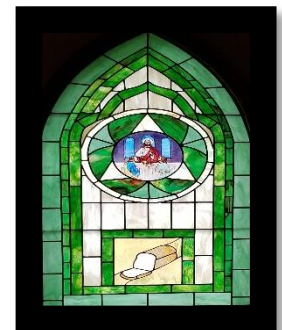
The pastor from Absarokee suggested starting the second service at 11:30 to allow time for getting to know congregation members and participate in church school classes and other events.

The church needed to be painted. Church Council suggested the need to build up reserve funds to have available for necessary repairs without having to go into debt. For the first time, church finances were in the black.

Bruce Jenkins was called in 1979 and later resigned in 1983 to move to Great Falls, MT. While at St. James, he initiated the Word and Witness program which covered 12-15 people for 2-3 hours per week for 26 weeks. In 1979, the budget was higher to accommodate new hymnals, moving expense split with Immanuel, parsonage maintenance and new church sign. Receipts totaled \$21,371.50 with disbursements of \$19,366.99, leaving a balance of \$2,004.51. The main project for 1979-80 was caps and mittens for Rocky Boy Reservation and layettes for Lutheran World Relief.

Congregation members contributed items for church use. Gordon and Olive Gallentine purchased 2 ranges for the kitchen. Frank and Lolly Kovanda provided the stained-glass windows in the Sanctuary. Later, card holders and pencil holders were added to the pews through the donations of eight (8) members. Three paraments and altar linens were donated.

In 1980, Pastor Jenkins asked for a "Pastor Relations" committee to help him better serve both Immanuel in Absarokee and St. James. In August, the 60th Anniversary was celebrated with a special meal.



In 1981, the council considered putting a hide-a-bed couch in the basement for convenience this winter! VBS had approximately 76 attending with equal representation from Catholic, Congregation and St. James churches. The small room at the foot of the stairs was completely redecorated, including a new carpet, paint, etc., paid for by the LCW.

A used organ was purchased in 1982 for \$995. A piano was donated and both instruments are at the back of the church. Pastor Bruce held the LCA Pastors Conference at St. James. A luncheon

was provided for those attending. It was approved that NO hand-held candles would be used during the Christmas Eve service due to the danger of fire and personal injury.

In 1983, Bruce Jenkins tendered his resignation and we called Rev. Charles A. Sider, who continued to serve both Immanuel and St. James.



A new narthex was added to the front of the church in 1984. Twenty-three members (23) contributed to the narthex and seven (7) contributed to the pew cushions. The annual Lutefisk dinner was held on Jan 29th with proceeds being used for repairs on the church building. Pastor Sider led discussion of establishing a food bank in Columbus. St. James became a charter member of St. John's Lutheran Home.

In 1985, a combined youth group from area churches planned 6 events, including bowling, swimming, sledding, roller-skating, a camp-fire and a Billings Mustang game. A new furnace was installed in the parsonage, increasing the rent to \$325/month.

In 1987, due to growth of the Columbus and Absarokee congregations and increased demands, Pastor Sider resigned from St. James only. In March 1988, Pastor Scott Jurgens accepted the call to be our full-time pastor, provided he was given 2 days off/month for military reserve duty. Prior to his arrival, the congregation reroofed the parsonage.

In January 1988, three national Lutheran Bodies joined together, the Lutheran Church of America (LCA), the American Lutheran Church (ALC) and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) with its new headquarters in the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Illinois. Twelve conservative ALC congregations that did not want to participate in the merger formed the American Association of Lutheran Church which has since grown to 87 congregations.

The ELCA is the product of a series of mergers and represents the largest Lutheran Church body in North America (15 million members). The ELCA was created in 1988 by uniting the 2.85 million members of the Lutheran Church in America, 2.25 million members of the American Lutheran Church, and the 100,000 members of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. Previously the LCA and ALC came into being in the 1960s as a result of the merger of 8 smaller ethnically-based Lutheran bodies, composed of German, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Swedish, Slovak, Dutch and other folk.

Throughout the church's life, its history tells of additions, renovations, remodeling and repairs which have been needed and completed to improve the church's functions. Many of the additions and repairs were supported financially by congregation members. In addition, members volunteered their labor and gave items for use in worship services such as a Paschal Candle stand and a Hymn Board in 1989; a choir music board in 1990 and restoration of the cross in the sanctuary in 1991.

In the 1990s, it was evident that the church building was again in need of repair. A review of heating and utilities bills showed that heat loss through the ceiling had been substantial. The sanctuary needed to be insulated and the outside needed to be re-sided with permanent siding to save on the cost of repainting. The basement windows needed to be replaced, the parsonage needed new windows, and storm windows were needed in the sanctuary and rear entrance room. The windows for the church and storm windows for the parsonage would wait until Spring.

The Crazy Mountain cluster meeting (WELCA) was held in Big Timber. Verna Ingty from India spoke. At the Fall cluster meeting, the speaker would be a pastor who was an expert on "Hug Therapy."

The Pathfinder, St James' monthly newsletter, has served as a source of information for members as well as a means of outreach. The editorial staff of Shirley Adams, Maureen Hemphill, Jo Lind, Charlotte Jacobson and Florence Kem were often congratulated for their excellent work.

Bishop Chilstrom of the Northwest Synod developed Mission90 to help create a vision for the Lutheran Church, dream a little, and discuss our Christian faith and the Scriptures.

In 1991, the School District's pre-school classes were held in the basement for \$10.00/ day.

The call committee of St James worked with the Bishop and Synod during the summer of 1992.

In April 1992, Pastor Jurgens accepted a call to Odessa, Washington. At the end of August, Rev. Mark Lingle became the resident pastor of St. James. This was Pastor Lingle's first congregation.

A Folk Service was held. Fifty-one members responded to a survey. Sixty-two% liked the service, 19% liked it somewhat, and 17% did not like it at all. 57% disliked the length, 42% liked the music, 49% like the variety, and 9% liked the format. 76% wanted the folk service once a month, while 24% wanted it less often. Suggestions included: the music was too hard and too loud, the service was too long, the print of the service was too small. Several liked the previous folk service.

From March to August 1992 the parsonage was cleaned, the inside was painted, new linoleum installed in the kitchen and hallway, new carpeting was installed in the study, the ceilings in the dining room and main floor bathroom and a fan installed in the bathroom. In 1992, repairs and renovations continued to be made to the parsonage and the church building, including a new chancel wall, dividers in the basement for Sunday school classes, new sanctuary and basement carpeting, and a nursery space with high chairs, changing tables and pint-size tables and chairs at the base of the stairs to the basement. Planning continued for the addition of a fellowship hall and facilities for handicapped access.

In the summer of 1993 sanctuary and communion rails were painted. In the winter of 1993, St. James completed a re-roofing and re-siding project, financed by a pot-luck fundraiser and other donations. The roof cost \$4,900, \$2,100 more than the estimate because of bad sheeting. The siding cost \$7,200 to be completed in phases, \$2,000 to \$2,500 more was needed to finish the siding. There would be a 50-year warranty, even for discoloration. The re-siding would be placed over the existing siding.

The Call Committee called Rev Michael J. O'Hearn who answered the call to St James in 1994. There was a need for a plan from the Memorial Committee for the back of the altar. Budget discussion was postponed until a decision was made on the new ministry.

In 1995, St. James celebrated 75 years of being a part of the Columbus community. July 19th, we began with a communion service. On July 21st, an ice cream social was held as a time to share the church's history and memories. On July 22nd at 6:30pm, a banquet was held at St. Mary's Catholic Church. The welcome was given by Council President Tom Hohn, the prayer by Pastor O'Hearn and reflection messages from Pastor White and Pastor Lingle. A letter from Pastor Brenna was also read. A 10:00 am worship service was held on July 23rd, followed by an outdoor barbecue to end the celebration.

Also, in 1995, the outside painting and siding was completed. The organ and piano were moved to the front of the church to increase seating capacity. Main issues for the year included the front wall of the sanctuary, a new copier and basement windows. WELCA received \$200 from the Lutheran Brotherhood. Pat Terland made new green paraments. Steel trim was added to the stained-glass windows. Shirley Adams and Dick Martin presented the Memorial Committee's design of oak boards and wallpaper for the back of the altar.

In 1996 the crack in the northern most roof truss at the west wall in the church proper could no longer be ignored. It probably occurred when the building was moved to its present location. However, money in the building fund had already been designated for basement windows, and repair of the Parsonage bathroom. The Council decided to hire an engineer to submit a design for the repair, and the repair would be completed by church volunteers with Mr. George Eaton supervising.

Timber had been offered by HKM Planners. A decision on repairing the roof truss was tabled. In the meantime, the insurance policy by Church Mutual was cancelled. In 1998 after the work was completed, HKM Associates (an engineering firm) checked the beams in the sanctuary and found them to be safe.

The youth at St. James had an active and fun year. The youth served dinner for the Kiwanis three times, held a dance and served meals at the auction, thanks to Jon and Gloria Brown. Our fundraisers allowed St. James to do things together with little expense to individuals. The youth were encouraged to invite friends so all can share fellowship together.

The youth enjoyed activities such as church hockey night with the Billings Bulls, roller-skating, bowling, and a hike to Sioux Charlie lake. Sixteen (16) signed up for Christikon, paying only the \$35.000 pre-registration fee. The balance for all campers was paid from the youth fundraising.

Plans for the future will be to get a youth movie night started at the church with the donation of the TV and VCR. Special thanks to Leanne Sekora for all of her help with the youth.

Christikon, the camp up the Boulder River, was one of the ways that St James joined with other congregations to carry on a special ministry both within and beyond the circle of individual congregations. This was all within the marvelous outdoor setting with which the Lutheran churches were blessed, touching the lives of young people, families and adults, and the developmentally disabled.

Christikon's congregations provided annual support for the camp's ongoing work. Together with gifts from individuals and proceeds from the annual Quilt Auction, which many of our St. James women worked on, helped keep camper fees within reach of nearly everyone. During 1998-99 fiscal year, St James contributed \$746, an average of \$3.19 per confirmed member.

Women of the ELCA (WELCA) also worked many months cutting, sewing, and putting together several quilts for Lutheran World Relief (LWR). They also put together health kits, sewing kits, school kits and layettes to give to LWR for their overseas work. Ongoing activities of WELCA included putting together college care packages; organizing a salad luncheon, funeral luncheons and special receptions; holding birthday parties for residents of Beartooth Manor, the local nursing home; providing baby blankets to local groups and putting together Christmas plates for shut-ins.

Future needs included handicap accessible bathrooms, more rooms for education, updated kitchen and heating facilities; in essence facilities accessible to everyone.

Additions in 2000 included a new heating system, a new sewer line, 2 new kitchen stoves donated by Mrs. Olive Gallentine, new protective coverings on the outside for the stained-glass windows, a new back door and screen door, a new Baldwin organ and a refrigerator donated by WELCA. The sanctuary carpet was replaced in 2002. In 2004 volunteers created a nursery space with high chairs, changing table, rocking chair and a privacy curtain at the base of the basement stairs for use by parents of the congregation's youngest members. A weekly program to provide childcare for nursery to preschool aged children was also started at about the time. The childcare program afforded families with young children the opportunity to listen to the sermon and participate in communion.

Pastor reported on the new sewer line, tree trimming, new men's toilet, and painting of the kitchen floor. Things yet to be done are wiring of the kitchen and kitchen drop ceiling.

Vacation Bible School was held at St James in conjunction with the Columbus Community Congregational church. This year the Concordia College Summer Outreach Team led the students in the theme, "2000 Ark Avenue- God's Great Get-together." The students were treated daily to lessons, songs, crafts and games. The week culminated in a program on the last day for teachers and students and their families.

WELCA carried out their usual programs, health, school kits and quilts for Lutheran World Relief; a quilt for the Christikon auction; a quilt for the raffle for Project Hope, etc. Two hundred dollars was donated to the Food Bank at Project Hope, and \$200 will be given toward Thanksgiving boxes.

At the semi-annual meeting in 2001, Jon Brown gave an overview of the Synod Convention in Great Falls. Pastor Rich Omland of Billings was elected the new Bishop.

Pastor handed out materials on Call to Common Mission and Word Alone. A debate was held pointing out the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Sunday School got off to a good start. Youth Bible Study (high school students) continues to meet every other Sunday. Missy Klee is heading up the Sunday School Christmas program again. Pat O'Hearn has been coordinating Sunday School music for special occasions and teaching the students new songs which they perform during worship service once a month.

WELCA continues its program of helping others. \$300 was given to St James to help pay for the piano. \$100 was donated to the Women's Prison chapel to help purchase furniture. \$500 was donated to help send youth to Christikon. WELCA donated many study bibles for our own youth. Pastor Mike uses them for children going to First Communion. Forty-three (43) quilts were sent to Lutheran World Relief. Funds were donated to the Camp Christikon Scholarship Fund and to the Women's Prison to help furnish their new chapel. WELCA also purchased new folding chairs for St. James. The ladies of WELCA hosted a number of receptions this year honoring Confirmation graduates and high school and college graduates. Nine Student Bibles were presented to our third and fourth graders for completing their communion classes successfully.

In 2002 at the semi-annual meeting, Jon reported that the new carpet was in, and the Endowment Fund brochure would be available later. The Council decided to post a cleaning list for members and groups that use the church. Jon reported that the gutter and flower bed projects are complete. Dorothy Erie suggested that a "Donate A Window" fund be started for the parsonage.

Sunday School again got off to a great start in 2003. The teachers gathered several students and parents and spent an afternoon passing out flyers to recruit more children. Twenty-five students came out on the first day. This year Sunday School is trying out a new series called "Seasons of the Spirit." The lessons follow along with the sermon and includes a great songbook for our opening music. Missy Klee is once again working on our Christmas program to be held during the regular church service. The program is also being performed for the nursing home and assisted living center.

In 2004, Kim Olson, architect, was working with the Council on drawings regarding the handicap access and expansion of our building space. Rafters need attention regardless of what we do with handicap access. We are sitting too close to curb and do not have enough parking space. A building committee was formed with volunteers. The committee was asked to look at all our options, even looking for other property that may be available to buy. The committee needed to find out if the city will grant variances for curb setback and parking. The Committee was asked to start meeting and when they come to a decision another congregational meeting will be called.

A member survey was discussed. About 50% returned the survey. About 80% of the respondent's survey, said that an addition to our existing building was needed. The highest responses to what the addition needed to have are: Larger fellowship hall, 80%, Handicap access 75%, office 50% and a

larger sanctuary and entryway 40%. It was the consensus of the congregation to give the Church Council authority to commence with drawing up some plans.

In 2004, WELCA had an active year. Donations were made to 9 deserving charities, 5 new tables were purchased for the basement meeting rooms, 97 quilts were finished of which 50 were sent to Lutheran World Relief along with 32 pounds of soap, 22 health kits, 33 school kits and 15 baby layettes. WELCA hosted coffee hour in recognition for graduating seniors, and contributed a centerpiece and one quilt for the Christikon Quilt Auction. WELCA held monthly birthday parties at Beartooth Manor for 7 residents, each of whom received a gift-wrapped handmade afghan, contributed 12 small quilts for uses as lap robes for residents at Beartooth Manor and gave Bibles to Sunday School 3rd graders.

Sunday School is continuing to use the "Seasons of the Spirit" curriculum. Confirmation class had 9 students. All the children who went to Christikon over the summer participated in Soup and Bread Lenten services in February and March. They took turns presenting plays for the services.

Vacation Bible School was held in June 2004 with St. James hosting the event and working with the Congregational Church. The theme was the International Heifer Projects which focused on teaching the children to be producers as well as consumers. At the end of the week, the children presented a program for their parents.

Patty Sundberg and Brad Kimble have started a youth program for junior high and high school students. The kick-off was at Mystic Lake and included a campout and hike. They had planned several community-service projects, like raking leaves for people in the community, helping with the Thrivent Dinner. Other activities included caroling, sledding, ice skating, bowling, crafts at the nursing home and an all-night lock-in. The youth and family camp-out in August was a great success

During the year 2005, the worship committee had been discussing how we worship and how we can meet the worship needs of our congregation. It was decided to offer a second worship service on Sunday evenings at 6:00pm for those who may work on Sunday mornings or are away for the weekend. This was started in June and the plan is to continue offering the evening service and evaluate it after a few months. The average attendance from June – October was about 13 with an average of five people attending both morning and evening services. The hope is to have a budget line for worship to be able to buy worship materials and send members to seminars and workshops on worship development.

A joint community service was held on April 17, 2005 at 4:00pm at St. Mary 's Catholic Church to pray for rain and an end to the drought. There were about 100 people in attendance. During the worship and prayers, the clouds came rolling in, and there were 4 days of blessed rain.

The Building Committee reported that they attended a grant writing seminar. They are looking at professional fundraisers. The dilemma is how to build something that will serve us in short-term but still phase into a larger building for the future. The first phase plan contains handicap access to our building both up to the Sanctuary and down to the basement, bathrooms, bible study room, nursery room and an office for the pastor and/or Church Council.

It was decided that the Mission Statement needed to be reworked – something that will say in a few words what St. James' mission to the community is; something that can be memorized by church members.

The Building Committee was authorized to not spend more than \$500.00.

Pastor Michael has formed a worship committee with Tosha McDonald as Chair.

Sunday School continued to use the "Seasons of the Spirit" curriculum.

Vacation Bible School was held June 6-7 at the Congregational Church. The theme was "Searching for Jesus."

The Junior High and High School students are joining with other students from the Congregational and Catholic Churches for Youth Group. The leader is Carlene Hanse who is the Youth Group Director for Peace Lutheran Church in Billings. The group meets the first and third Wednesdays of every month, alternating between St James and the Congregational Church.

In 2006 the parsonage roof was replaced with a green metal roof. Tree trimming, a new men's toilet, and painting of the kitchen floor were completed.

In 2006, Rev Michael O'Hearn accepted a call to First Lutheran Church in Havre, Montana. Rev William R. Dohle and his family accepted the call to St. James that same year. In preparation for their arrival, church members installed a chain link fence in the parsonage backyard. Several rooms were repainted and the pantry was stocked. New linoleum for the bathroom and new carpet in several rooms in the parsonage were also installed by church volunteers.

In the church building, kitchen cabinets were made and donated by the Houghtons, the center island was donated by Yellowstone Bank, paint for the kitchen and downstairs were donated by Mrs. Shirley Marstealler and Mrs. Olive Gallentine. They also did the painting and donated new curtains and blinds. New center supports were added in the basement. Altar linens and pew cushions were bought by the Memorial Committee, the desk in the office was donated by Yellowstone Bank, the computer by the St. Dons and the storage building by the Sundbergs.

The year 2010 marked the 90th anniversary of the church. In September on All Saints Sunday, a pot-luck celebration was held after the 10:30 service. A visual display was organized pertaining to items from the church history being prepared by Sally Bisch.

There had been many discussions regarding an addition to the church. A special meeting was held on April 2010 to present building plans. The new addition would be 645 sq. ft. This would include a lift to all 3 floors, enlarged landing for wheelchair access, relocating the existing stairs with a widened head clearance, handicap accessible bathroom on the main floor, space to hold coffee hours after church service, new wing for the sanctuary. A fellowship hall would be considered in the future. The estimate for the first phase was \$135,000. The construction had to be done so as to have minimal structural damage to the current foundation. It was decided to canvass the congregation to ascertain level of financial commitment by members.

In May 2010 at the semi-annual meeting, the congregation approved the design of the remodel/addition of St. James that fulfilled out goal of bringing handicap accessibility to the Sanctuary and basement, added a handicap restroom and an upstairs gathering area. The construction documents were completed by A&E Architects, P.C. by the end of May. Through the winter, the building committee worked on getting variances from the City.

In October 2010, Kurt Robbins was contracted to replace the roofs on the church, parsonage and garage at the parsonage at a cost of \$25,563.70. The Endowment Fund CD value of \$10,900 matured and was cashed in November. \$1500 in memorials was added to bring the total to \$12,400. The \$2,549.94 interest not spent was put in Savings.

On April 11, 2011 a special meeting of the congregation was held to discuss the bids. We received two bids, one from L&L of Red Lodge and the other from Stadel Construction of Columbus for the Building Shell.

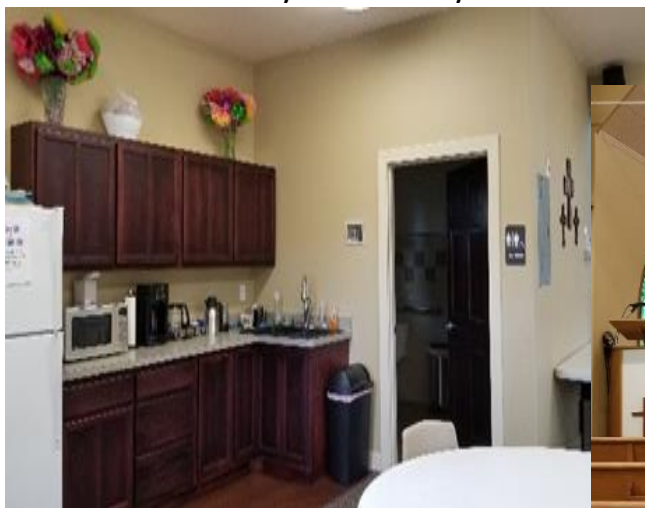
There was approximately \$80,000 in the building fund and the remainder was financed through a construction loan at Yellowstone Bank. A motion was passed to continue with the construction of the addition using the Parsonage as collateral for the loan.

Stadel Construction with the lowest bid of \$183,000, was awarded the contract and began demolition at 7:00 am on May 16, 2011. Pamphlets were handed out showing the lift and addition along with a request for a commitment response.

As the remodel progressed in the basement, new windows were installed, the walls were re-sheet rocked. Kevin Schotts (along with Carl Sariin) removed all of the baseboard heaters so that we could easily access the walls. Dennis Gauthier directed the remodeling efforts, with the assistance of Harold Houghton and Carl Sariin. It was discovered that the foundation on the west wall of the basement had a horizontal crack that needed to be repaired. With church labor, the outside of the foundation was exposed and sealed. Long bolt anchors were installed followed by a slurry pour to stabilize the foundation.



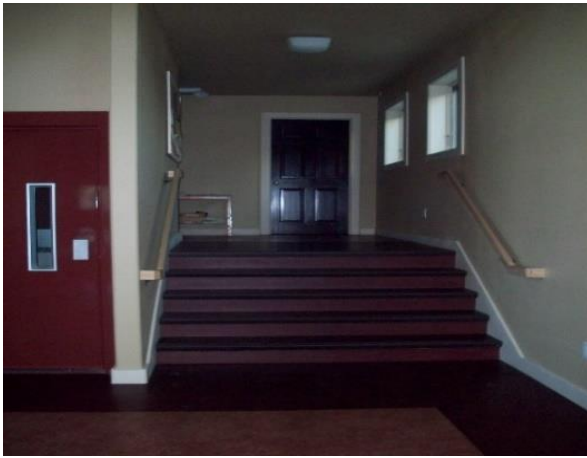
August 2011 – Our new addition and church remodel is complete.
With the help of many, many of our members, our vision happened.
Thank you to everyone who had a part in this beautiful project.



The upstairs gathering area



The completed sanctuary



Why the red door, you ask? It's because red doors traditionally mean "sanctuary" — the ground beyond the doors is holy, and anyone who goes through them is safe from physical (*and spiritual*) harm. In ancient times, no one could pursue an enemy, past red doors into a church, and certainly no one could be harmed or captured inside of a church. Today, the red reminds us of the blood of Christ and that we are always safe in God's care!"

Thank you, Mina Morse for this explanation!

**The beautiful lighted cross
made by Carl Sariin.**



St. James Lutheran Church as it looks today.

Pastor Dohle tendered his resignation effective May 31st, 2011. A Call Committee was established in July 2011. Bishop Christ asked Dick Hardel to work with the Council and Search Committee to lead a visioning process. The group established Core Beliefs and Values, their understanding of the purpose of the congregation and role of Church Council and worked through SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). A Vision Statement was created as the focal point of all ministries. "We worship together, share our faith, grow our faith and serve with the love of God."

St. James decided to have LPA's (Lay Pastoral Assistants) to serve while the congregation was in the call process following Pastor Doyle's departure. Tonia Fisher-Clark was invited to St. James as pulpit-fill the first of June 2011. She continued to serve in the capacity until December, when she was asked to apply for the position of Synodically Authorized Minister. (A SAM is one who serves a church as a Pastor under the authority of the Bishop).

In 2012, following a vote of the council, she was hired in January to serve in this capacity. Tonia moved to Columbus in mid-February and was later installed as a SAM of St. James. She applied to and was accepted for the TEEM program (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) a

three-year program which offered a route to ordination. We held a Dedication Ceremony and Dinner for our new addition on Sept. 30th @ 4:00pm. A King's Kids Wednesday after-school group was formed this year and our 1st annual Christmas progressive dinner was held.

After Tonia finished classes the summer of 2015, the church issued a call, which she accepted. Tonia Fisher-Clark was ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament at the 2016 Synod Assembly and installed that fall as the Pastor of St. James. Sally Bisch also completed her LPA Program and was recognized at the Synod Assembly.

Air conditioning was installed in the Sanctuary in 2016. What a nice addition this was! St. James also hosted the community Thanksgiving Service with great attendance. Handicapped parking has been designated with signs and a "Reserved for Pastor" sign has also been installed.

In 2017, a votive memorial candle holder was purchased for use in the sanctuary. Harold Riensche re-stained the Memorial Board and reorganized & updated the names of our deceased members. It is hanging at eye level on the Narthex Wall as you enter the Sanctuary. For added security, a wireless "doorbell" was installed at our front door. A Pie & Plant sale was held with all proceeds split between Project Hope and the Senior Center. Volunteers helped at the 3rd Annual "Hope Floats" moneymaker event at the BBQ Cookoff in Absarokee. Proceeds go into the Youth account to help defray costs for youth to attend Christikon Bible Camp. The council voted to change our current name of "St. James English Evangelical Lutheran Church" to simply "St. James Lutheran Church". Exciting News! Our member and past president, Mina Morse has been elected to sit on the St. John's Lutheran Ministries board of directors. Donna Zeigler introduced a prayer service called "A Quiet Time with God". The Church Council discussed the monthly mortgage payments to the Yellowstone Bank for the new addition. It was decided that a "Burn the Mortgage" campaign would start in November.



In 2018, major projects completed included tree trimming, installing underground sprinklers at parsonage and gutter repair at the church. Many smaller projects were also completed. A 2017 – 2018 Membership Directory was completed thanks to Carrie Williams, Connie Bokma and Betty Ames. Judy Bjorkman & Liz Cox completed their LPA program. Donna Zeigler started her 2-year LPA program. We welcomed new members. The Above & Beyond "Burn the Mortgage" campaign reported that the loan balance at start of campaign was \$56,704.54 and in December 2018 the balance was \$19,559.16. Well done St. James members!

In 2019, the former cry room was turned into a "quiet place to pray & visit with Pastor Tonia". Donna set up Community Forums on the subjects of Grief, Dementia, Alzheimers & Suicide prevention, to be attended one time per month. This year St. James will not be continuing our afterschool program, King's Kids, as the number of children eligible dropped off in numbers. A big thank you to those who made this ministry such a positive outreach program for the youth in our community, for many years. The church rang with laughter, young people learned of God's love, they created, and prayed. To those who provided treats, those who came to clean up, those who brought supplies, and to those who came week after week to teach and befriend our youth – THANK YOU!

Columbus experienced a lightning storm and the Parsonage "lost" one of its trees and a window was also broken! More keys of our electronic keyboard (which is about 16 years old) have broken and are very cumbersome & expensive to fix. The Memorial Team offered to purchase a new Clavinova Keyboard for the church! The fall & winter have been very active for our members: our musicians, past & present, were honored; the JOY group made bath bombs and had a Taco Bar/Bingo night of fun; a 2-day Lefse making event was held (to be sold at the annual Christmas Lights Parade); and the

fourth Annual Progressive Dinner was held with appetizers at the Pastor's house, main dishes at the Hollingsworth's house, ending up at the Morse's for desserts and singing.

**December 2019, our new addition loan was "paid in full"- years early.
Thank you, St. James Lutheran Church Members!**

The exciting year is here!

*The 100th Anniversary of St. James Lutheran Church!
We celebrated our very 1st service, which was MARCH 7TH, 1920,
at the reception after worship on Sunday March 8th, 2020.*



This same Sunday, we celebrated the good news of our paid in full loan and "Burned the Mortgage" (copy) to our "New Addition"!

Your commitment and generosity were very much appreciated!

CONGRATULATIONS St. James! And WELL DONE!

Our 100th Anniversary Celebration was off to a great start in 2020, but came to an abrupt end, when the world suffered the Coronavirus Pandemic.

For the safety of our congregation, St. James postponed "in church" services on March 15th, 2020 to shelter-at-home and provided our congregation with "at home" services using You Tube, Face Book and Vimeo videos. The rest of the year is full of uncertainty, so the 100th Anniversary Committee has chosen to postpone all upcoming events i.e. Worship/Banquet and the German & Norwegian Dinners, until next year – 2021. Watch for "save-the-date" postings, so you can be sure to join us for our celebration.

To be continued.....

THANK YOU, Sally Bisch for the unsurmountable amount of research you did and for "Our Complete Story"!