

The Story of First Lutheran

Among the early settlers of Leelanau County were Norwegian families who found the hills and lakes of this region strongly reminiscent of their far-away homeland. These people had been brought up in the Lutheran Church in Norway and their church was an essential part of their lives. Although each family conducted its own religious devotion and each Sunday conducted its own church service, it was unthinkable that they should continue without a church or a pastor for public worship, for baptisms, marriages, burials, and the like.

ORGANIZATION As the families visited together, they discussed this need. They had discovered that there was an organized Lutheran Church in this country, and there were a few pastors who were traveling about in this part of Michigan serving the various settlement. So a meeting was called for August 24, 1874, in a home in Suttons Bay for the purpose of organizing a congregation. The congregation was organized and adopted the following resolutions.

1. This congregation should hold fast to the old Lutheran teaching that the Bible is the source of truth, learning, and life, together with the Lutheran Confessions.
2. The name of this congregation should be the Norwegian Lutheran Church.
3. The congregation should join the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Conference which had organized other congregations in this part of Michigan.

Esten L. Bahle and Paul Hansen were elected deacons and Lars E. Bahle was elected secretary. In addition to these men, the following became voting members: Niels Einarsen, Osmund Olsen, John Toresen, Lars Christiansen, Martin Pedersen, for a total of 8 voting members.

A formal constitution was not adopted until January 1, 1877.

CALL PASTOR The problem before the congregation was now to secure a pastor. They were not a large enough group to support their own pastor and therefore they must try to find one who would be near enough to serve them at least a few times during the year. On September 27, 1874, the congregation called the Rev, M.P. Ruh to serve it four times a year. This call Pastor Ruh accepted. Also at this meeting Lars Christiansen was elected treasurer of the congregation.

JOIN SYNOD With the coming of Pastor Ruh, the congregation discovered that there was also another Lutheran Church organization in this country called the Norwegian Synod, and that there was a difference of doctrine between it and the Conference. It decided at once to learn what this difference was. After meeting with Pastor Ruh, the congregation decided that the Norwegian Synod had remained faithful to the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions as the members had learned them, and therefore it rescinded its earlier resolution to join the Conference and then joined the Norwegian Synod.

STRIFE It is evidence of the spiritual strength and stability of this congregation that now after 125 years, by the grace of God, it is still faithful to the Scripture and confessional Lutheran principles. This is the more remarkable when one realizes that it has survived two major doctrinal controversies in the synod, and another controversy in

regard to fellowship relations with the Lutheran-Church Missouri Synod. The first controversy arose in the 1880s and centered on the doctrine of Election and Predestination. Other difficulties within the congregation now found their outlet in this controversy. But by the grace of God and the excellent discussions led by Pastor Maakestad, the majority of the congregation remained faithful to God's Word and so also to the synod. The records of the church carefully preserve these discussions and the result.

The second great controversy came to a climax in 1917 in the synod. This was the result of an attempt to force a union between all Scandinavian Lutheran Church bodies regardless of doctrinal differences. To a large degree it was successful. First Lutheran Church too, was carried along in the impetus of this union. No doubt this was due to a lack of information and the fact that the congregation was without a pastor at this crucial time. Pastor Maakestad had received a call in November of 1917, which he accepted. The Rev. G. Guldberg was then called and arrived late in 1918. Pastor Guldberg had also been swept along into this union, but from the first had his grave doubts as to whether or not it was right and God pleasing. Many members also had their serious doubts. This caused much unrest. The result was that on October 1, 1921, Pastor Guldberg offered his resignation to the congregation, at the same time declaring his intention to withdraw from the union. He gave the congregation six months notice. The congregation accepted the resignation but meantime nothing was done about calling a new pastor. Many members began to study this union very seriously.

By April 1, 1922, the congregation had arrived at a momentous decision. On that day it recalled Pastor Guldberg and tendered its resignation to the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, declaring that it now realized that the union documents were a compromise between truth and error and thus showed disregard for God's holy and inspired Word. At the same meeting it reapplied for membership in the Norwegian Synod. Thus First Lutheran Church was once again back in its own spiritual fold. The congregation did not escape unscathed after this decision. But those who remained faithful to their church had become strengthened in their conviction to remain true to God's Word even to the smallest detail regardless of the consequences.

This same spirit was evident also in regard to the controversy over fellowship with the LCMS (Lutheran-Church Missouri Synod.) Their reorganized Norwegian Synod enjoyed a unity of spirit and purpose, with the Missouri Synod, for over thirty years. But in the early 1950s it became apparent that this unity no longer existed. The LCMS was moving toward a union with the American Lutheran Church which was not in harmony with Scripture. As these facts became more evident, the Norwegian Synod realized that fellowship must be severed. This was done in 1955. But fellowship in the Synodical Conference continued. This was possible because the Synod was still in fellowship with the two remaining Synodical Conference Church bodies: The Wisconsin Synod and the Slovak Synod. But some of the pastors in the synod felt that we were not quick enough in severing our fellowship with the Missouri Synod. The Rev. Neil Hilton, who serving First at the time, was one of those who spoke out. Acting according to his conscience he resigned from the synod on September 22, 1960. This created some tension within the congregation, and between the congregation and the synod. But thanks be to the Lord, the situation was resolved when the synod officially ended its fellowship with the Synodical Conference in 1961. Pastor Hilton was accepted into the synod again at its 1964 convention.

The desire for the congregation has always been for peace. But sometimes strife arises when faithfulness to God's Word is at stake. This has always been true in the Church of Jesus Christ. We praise God that the congregation has had a faith which shrinks from no problem when the issue is clearly drawn by that Word. We pray God for peace, and go forward with the work of proclaiming that peace to others.

THE PROPERTY Property for a burial ground was needed immediately. On January 3, 1875, the congregation began to collect funds for a cemetery. On May 7, 1876, a half-acre plot donated by Paul Hansen was accepted for this purpose. The need for a resident pastor and a church became evident as the congregation grew. Therefore in June, 1875, it was decided to meet the following month with the Lutheran congregation which had been established in Northport to consider buying a parsonage jointly and also calling a pastor. It is not clear whether or not this meeting materialized. At any rate, nothing came of it.

At a meeting on November 1, 1875, it was decided to start a church building program as soon as the congregation was financially able. All during this time the congregation had been meeting at the home of Paul Hansen for its services. On May 7, 1876, it held its first service in the old public school house in Suttons Bay, where it continued to meet until the church was built.

It was not until August 6, 1882, that the trustees were authorized to buy or build a parsonage, for now a resident pastor had been called. The congregation subscribed \$192.00 for this purpose. There is no record of when the parsonage was built, but evidently construction was completed by 1883. Additions were made at later dates, none of which are recorded. A collection was taken in August 1884 to finish paying on the parsonage. This left the congregation free to begin plans for building a church.

Accordingly, on November 27, 1884, it was decided to proceed with building a church and a subscription of money was taken totaling \$391.00. Lars Hokstad, John Syvertson, Herman Morck, and Lars Bahle were elected to the building committee. The building fund did not do well during the winter and by spring there were those who felt the time to build had not yet come. After much ardent persuasion by Pastor Maakestad and a pledge by John Syvertson to pay one-eighth of the cost, it was decided to proceed with the building. In May of 1885, it was decided to accept the plans of the building committee for a church 46' X 28' X 18'.

By this time only \$400.00 had been collected so it became necessary to borrow another \$200.00 before building could be started. The trustees at this time were Nils Bolme, Andreas Pedersen, and Anders Amundson. John Syvertson was elected to secure lumber and have charge of actual construction. The logs were donated by the members and sawed at the Greilick mill at no charge. Andreas Holstad was elected to replace Lars Bahle and Herman Morck on the building committee. Martin Severson helped to skid logs for the building.

The church building was finally finished in the fall of 1886 at a cost of over \$1000.00 plus donated labor and material. The fact that the church still stands today as solidly as the day it was built is a testimony to the labors of these early pioneers.

The present church basement was added in 1899.

Outside of regular maintenance on the property, no improvements were made after the turn of the century until 1965. At that time members began to consider the

possibility of an addition for the front of the church. This led to discussion on building a new church in another location. Agreement could not be reached on the proper course of action, and the immediate effect was to halt all plans. But then in 1970 the congregation began to make improvements; a new furnace was installed in the church, a new kitchen was built with a sewer, and in 1971 a new roof was installed on the parsonage. Then it was decided, in the fall of 1971, to go ahead with a building program for an addition to the front of the church. Plans that had been drawn up in 1966 were reworked by Mr. Timothy Holt. The Holt Construction Company agreed to undertake the task, with the understanding that volunteer labor would be welcome at any stage of the construction. Work was begun by Karl Holt and his men in March of 1972, and completed that summer. Total cost of the project, including over \$1800.00 for a new carpet (paid for by the Ladies Aid) was about \$20,000.00. \$14,000.00 was borrowed locally to cover the cost. Other improvements were made at the same time. A new roof was put on the church and a new sidewalk built in front of the parsonage, a new sidewalk to the rear of the church, repair to the parsonage chimney and a new entrance built for the rear door of the church. In 1973 and 1974 more improvements were made by the congregation; a new wall was built in front of the parsonage, a brick facing applied to the front of the parsonage foundation, and new sod installed in front of the parsonage. The inside of the church was improved with a new ceiling and new lights and sanding of the church floor. This last work was done almost entirely by volunteers, saving the congregation hundreds of dollars.

The beautiful addition to the front of the church provided space for people to meet and visit after the service. There is a pastor's office and Ladies Rest Room, and new coat rack. It is now possible to go from upstairs to the basement without stepping outside, and the continual problem with winter ice on outside steps is now gone.

RECENT PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS In 1988 Eda Olson donated an eternal light that graces the front of our sanctuary. The Church entrance and cry room were Ladies Aid. To make it possible for everyone to hear God's Word clearly a new loud speaker system was added in 1991. Mindful of those who have gone on before us a perpetual board was given to the Church in 1993 in memory of Marge Swenson. In 1994 the Ladies Aid purchased a new furnace for the Church. In 1995 extensive improvements were made in the Church sanctuary: New carpeting and padded pews were installed and the floor was stripped and refinished. The up-keep of the parsonage has also been a high priority at First. During the vacancy in 1997 the members donated many long hours to upgrade the interior of the parsonage. The downstairs parsonage walls were painted or covered with new wallpaper and the whole downstairs, except for the kitchen, was re-carpeted. In 1998 the time had come to do something with the outside the Church building. After thorough consideration the men decided to have the Church re-sided instead of painting it again. It was decided to have the Church re-sided with a vinyl lap siding to retain its original appearance. A local contractor Lynn Schaub was contacted for the project which cost approximately \$18,000.00. The job was completed in the fall of 1998. The siding project was paid for that same year thanks to the generous support of members and \$5,000.00 loan from the Ladies Aid. Another improvement in recent years is the addition of a new sign. In 1999 Albert Allington purchased and donated a beautiful lighted bulletin board for the front of the Church.

MEMBERSHIP Charter members of the congregation as it was organized on August 24, 1874, were: Esten and Marit Bahle, Paul and Marit Hanson, Lars Bahle, Nils Einarson, Osmund Olson, John Toreson, Lars Christianson, and Martin Pedersen. The following year these also joined: John and Elaine Syvertson, Herman and Birthe Morck, Ole and Lucia Sjolseth, bringing the total number of souls to 31. Should space permit, it would be most interesting to list all the names of those who have held membership in this congregation, for the list would be a very imposing one. By 1910 the membership totaled 351 souls. Strife and the change in times gradually lowered this total and today, though small in membership, the congregation is looking ahead to renewed growth, with the increasing population growth of this beautiful resort area.

The first baptisms recorded in this congregation are: Ole Morck, son of Herman and Birthe Morck, born September 29, and baptized October 29th of 1876; and Hans Hanson, son of Ole and Ragnil Hanson, born October 30th and baptized December 3rd of 1976.

The first confirmation class consisted of one member, Hans Paulson, son of Paul and Marit Hanson, who was confirmed April 14, 1878. The next class consisted of Elizabeth Paulson, daughter of Paul and Marit Hanson, Laura Kristine Hansen, daughter of Johannes and Kristina Hansen, and Lars Syverson, son of Johan and Eline Syverson, who were confirmed October 12, 1879.

Two marriages took place in 1875: Osmund Olson and Christi Larsdatter, and Anders Amundson and Andrine Pederson.

The first communion was celebrated on May 4, 1879, with eleven partaking: Mr. And Mrs. Anders Amundson, Mr. And Mrs. Esten Bahle, Mr. And Mrs. Osmund Olson, Mr. And Mrs. Martin Olson, Berthe Johannesen, Marit Bahle, and Ingeborg Knudsen.

The first funeral in the annals of the congregation was that of Henry Hanson, born November 28, 1875, and died at birth. Since there was no pastor here at the time, a memorial service was held on September 14, 1877.

Membership total today is 88 souls and 81 communicants.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH PASTORS

Rev. M.P. Ruh (1875-76)

Rev. A.R. Rystad (1876-79)

Rev. Abel Anderson (1879-82)

Rev. John J. Maakestad (1882-1918)

Rev. G. Guldborg (1918-38)

Rev. Eivind. G. Unseth (1938-45)

Rev. Raymond. M. Branstad (1945-49)

Rev. Neil Hilton (1949-1964)

Rev. Robert Moldstad (1965-70)

Rev. David Lillegard (1970-75)

Rev. Harold Vetter (1975-81)

Rev. Bradley Homan (1982-87)

Rev. Michael Smith (1987-88)

Rev. Homer Mosley (1988-90)

Rev. Harvey Abrahamson (1990-91)

Rev. Kurt Uhlenbrauck (1991-96)

Rev. Ronald Pederson (1997 – 2013)

Rev. Paul Zager (2015 - Present)

PASTORS Throughout its history, the congregation has been served by a total of eighteen pastors, seven of them being full time, resident pastors. The Rev. M.P. Ruh was the first pastor and served only in a part-time capacity. He conducted services here four times each year from 1875 to 1876. The Rev. A.R. Rystad served in a similar capacity from September 24, 1876 to October 19, 1879, also the Rev. Abel Anderson of Muskegon from November 27, 1879 to 1882.

In that year, the Rev. John J. Maakestad was called to be the first resident pastor. He arrived on September 25, 1882 and held his first service here on October 1st. His pastorate was the longest in the history of the congregation, lasting for nearly 36 years until July 2, 1918. At this time he accepted a call to Norge, Virginia. The Rev. Maakestad

was truly a pioneer pastor, covering most of the region of Northern Michigan to conduct services and perform pastoral functions. During his pastorate at First Lutheran he served and in many instances organized congregations at the following places: Leland, North Manitou Island, Port Oneida, Donnybrook, Empire, Glen Arbor, Northport, Good Harbor, Elk Rapids, Duncan City (Marquette County), Frankfort, Wallin (Benzie County), St. Ignace, East Jordan, Ironton, Boyne City, and Traverse City.

In order that he might carry on this extensive mission work, Pastor Maakestad was given an assistant pastor, the Rev. H.S. Rue, who served the congregation in this capacity from 1895 to 1905.

The Rev. G. Guldberg arrived October 19, 1918. However at that time the Spanish Influenza epidemic raged through this region, and all public meeting places were closed. He was not installed until November 17, by the Rev. J. Nordby. Pastor Guldberg served both First Lutheran and Immanuel Lutheran Churches of Suttons Bay until First Lutheran once again joined the Norwegian Synod. Pastor Guldberg remained until 1938, delivering his farewell sermon on Palm Sunday, April 10. The following day he and his family left for Fosston, Minnesota, where he had accepted a call. While still serving this parish, Pastor Guldberg died very suddenly July 31, 1941.

The Rev. E. G. Unseth of Holton, Michigan, was then called and began serving the congregation at once, although he did not move here until June 27th. He then continued to serve the Holton congregations from here. This arrangement continued all through his pastorate. Pastor Unseth was granted a release on August 20, 1945, in order to accept a call from St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Chicago.

On that same date a call was extended to the Rev. R. M. Branstad, Duluth, Minnesota. Pastor Branstad conducted his first service on October 7, 1945 but was not formally installed until November 4, by the Rev. L.S. Guttebo, of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Pastor Branstad was called to serve the Holton congregations only until they could secure a pastor. This arrangement continued until July 1, 1947. From that date Sunday school and services were held regularly each Sunday. In September 1949, Pastor Branstad accepted a call to Concordia Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and preached his farewell sermon on October 9, 1949. The Rev. Neil Hilton of Chicago had already been called, and began serving the congregation on that date.

Pastor Hilton served the congregation until November, 1964. At that time he accepted a call to the East and West Paint Creek Congregations at Waterville, Iowa. He was installed there November 15, 1964. The congregation was served on a temporary basis by the Rev. James Olsen of Holton, Michigan. Then the Rev. Robert Moldstad of Lombard, Illinois, accepted the congregations call, and was installed on March 28, 1965. He renewed the work in Traverse City that had been started in 1964 by Pastor Hilton, and in 1965 a congregation was organized there and services began regularly every Sunday. Late in that same year, Pastor Moldstad also began holding worship services in Petoskey, and in 1966 a congregation was organized there. A church building was purchased near East Jordan, and worship was held there every Sunday afternoon or evening.

Early in 1970, Pastor Moldstad began serving a congregation at Hillman, and it was decided that the work would progress in this area only if another pastor was called. Therefore the congregations at East Jordan and Hillman extended a call to Pastor Moldstad and he was installed on October 8, 1970. In the meantime, the congregation, along with Concordia at Traverse City, had been calling for a full time pastor, and in October the Rev. David Lillegard of Oklee, Minnesota, accepted the call. He was installed on November 8, 1970 and served the congregation until July 27 1975 when He

took a call to Bethany in Luverne Minnesota. A call was then sent Pastor Harold Vetter of Savannah Georgia. He accepted the call and was installed on September 7, 1975. Pastor Vetter preached his farewell sermon on October 25 1981 and accepted a call to Portage Wisconsin. The congregation then contacted Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary and issued a call for a Candidate of Theology. The Seminary assigned candidate Bradley Homan who was ordained and installed at First Lutheran on July 18, 1882. Pastor Homan served the congregation for 5 years and in March of 1987 he accepted a call to Our Savior's in Madison Wisconsin. Again the congregation turned to Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary for a pastor. The Seminary assigned candidate Michael Smith to Suttons Bay where he was ordained and installed June 28, 1987. In November of 1988 Pastor Smith took a call to Bullhead City, Arizona. Immediately Pastor Homer Mosley of Grant Pass Oregon was given the call to serve the congregation. He accepted the call and took office on November 17, 1988. Pastor Mosley served for two years and then accepted a call to Tacoma Washington where he is currently serving as their pastor. Upon his departure the congregation then called the Rev. Harvey Abrahamson pastor at Our Savior's in Princeton Minnesota. Pastor Abrahamson accepted the call and took office on October 3, 1990. In July of 1991 Pastor Abrahamson accepted a call to Calvary Ulen, Minnesota and Our Savior's Hawley, Minnesota. Rev Kurt Uhlenbrauck of Our Savior at Grant Pass, Oregon was then given the call to serve First Lutheran. He accepted and took office on August 15 1991. Pastor Uhlenbrauck served for five years and then accepted a call to Grace in Muskegon Michigan, a WELS congregation. The congregation then called Pastor Ronald Pederson of Bethany, Ames Iowa and Grace Newton Iowa. Pastor Pederson accepted the call and was installed on August 24 1997.

OTHER CHURCH ACTIVITIES

The Ladies Aid has played an important part in the history of First Lutheran Church. Unfortunately we have been unable to find the earliest record of the Society. However we have discovered that it was first organized in 1889 and that Mrs. Maakestad was its first secretary.

The Society started early in charity work. An annual project was their gift to the Children's Home in Stoughton, Wisconsin.

Their gifts to the congregation are numerous. They purchased the bell, a Meneely Rotary Yoke, and presented it to the congregation in September, 1891, with the inscription on it: Glory to God in the Highest. Luke 2, 14. In 1894 the Aide purchased the church organ and the altar painting which still graces our altar. The altar frame was purchased by them in 1895. They helped pay for the installation of the new basement under the church in 1899. In 1901 the first carpet was purchased by the Society and also the altar drapery. In 1926 they helped purchase a furnace for the parsonage. In 1936 they donated the funds necessary to build the new steps leading into the church. A new carpet was purchased by the Ladies Aide in March, 1939, and again in July of 1972. They also remodeled the kitchen, redecorated the basement, and supervised the alteration on the altar.

On June 12, 1913, an "English" aid was organized and called the "Elim" Aid. This group was formed to accommodate younger mothers who could not meet during the day. At the first meeting, Mrs. Mary Reitzel served as hostess. The following were the officers: president, Mrs. John Husby; vice-president, Mrs. Henry Smith; treasurer, Mrs. Lars Bolme; secretary, Esther Severson. This branch of the Aid was established as is

readily seen, to remedy the language situation. The regular Society still used the Norwegian exclusively and new members and the younger element often found this difficult. This society, however, did not remain in existence very long. It held its last meeting on March 11, 1915, when it again merged with the regular society with the understanding that both English and Norwegian would be used.

For many years, the Ladies Society conducted auctions to which the members would bring everything imaginable. This provided fun as well as funds for their work. The biggest event each year was the Mission Festival for which the Society always prepared a big meal.

The 45th anniversary of the Society was celebrated on December 13, 1934, with an appropriate program of Christian knowledge and service. Two meetings a month were held, an afternoon and an evening meeting. Both had a topic series of study planned for the entire year.

The Aid now meets regularly each month at the Church. Study of the Word of God is held at each meeting, and the ladies make decisions regarding current projects. Through the years the ladies have made clothes for Bethesda Lutheran home of Watertown, Wisconsin; paid for new carpet in the church; redecorated the parsonage; helped pay for the new organ, purchased in 1973; made donations to numerous Lutheran Charities; conducted food drives; delivered baskets for shut-ins at holidays; performed volunteer clean-up on Highway 22 with Michigan's Adopt-A-Highway program; and helped with other church projects such as the Building Fund.

1999 officers of the Ladies Aid are: President, Sandy Laetz; Vice-president, Ann Hawkins; Secretary, Julia Johnson; Treasurer, Donna Allington; Sunshine-Lady, Anna Severance.

MEN'S CLUB The first Men's Club was organized as the Lutheran Laymen's League in October 1947, to provide knowledge and service. The league completed two projects for the 75th anniversary: It converted the little room near the entrance of the church to an office and built cabinets in the pastor's study in the parsonage. It also conducted the preliminary canvas for the Elk Rapids mission. The officers of the league were: Mr. Ray Brassow, President; Mr. Don Send, Vice-president; Mr. Robert Rude, Secretary; and Mr. Julius Johnson, Treasurer.

The Men's Club did not meet regularly during the years following 1950. But meetings were again held on a regular monthly basis in the fall of 1970, and the men formally organized on February 10, 1972. They met in the homes of members, held a study of Scripture and various topics, and adopted projects. They sponsored the camping youth, erected a church sign on the highway leading into Suttons Bay, and helped improve the Concordia property. The men were also responsible for organizing the Family Nights which was held about six times a year.

1974 officers of the Men's Club were: President, Larry Snyder; Secretary, Ernest Johnson; Treasurer, Timothy Holt.

EDUCATION OF YOUTH The instruction of the children has been foremost in the work of the congregation. Immediately upon Pastor Maakestad's arrival, it was decided that he should conduct six hours a week of religious school. Many of the older members still remember the Wednesday school which he conducted so many years.

Sunday School did not become popular until his later years here. In 1949 the Sunday School numbered 25 pupils and has varied in size through the years. Teachers

who have served in recent years include: Ernie and Julia Johnson, Al and Donna Allington, Millie Martinson, Mary Holt, Ione Lillegard, Linda Swenson, Sandy and Bob Laetz, Stan Allington, Dorothe Vetter, Cathy Laetz, Julie Schraufnagel, and Christi Uhlenbrauck.

The Congregation has often conducted a week of Vacation Bible School. This is an opportunity to bring the gospel to those who are un-churched. Teachers have been Julia Johnson, Donna Allington, Linda Steck, Sandy Laetz and Mary Holt, along with the serving pastor and his wife. The Ladies Aid has also given support to Vacation Bible School through the years.

The children of the Sunday and the Vacation Bible School have been encouraged to help our work of missions. The pupils have supported an orphan in Nicaragua and have been helping with contributions to our foreign missions on a regular basis. The children of the congregation have also enriched worship with music and Christmas pageants.

FAMILY NIGHTS In the past the congregation has also conducted Family Nights for study of the Word of God, for Christian fellowship, and for entertainment. These activities have been held on Sunday night, with pot-luck supper and activities following. Guest speakers were sometimes obtained, there have been movies and parties, and related activities. In addition, the congregation has planned for outdoor worship services, held at the Suttons Bay Marina during the summer, with tent set-up and pot-luck dinner, followed by games for all. On Easter morning the congregation has often held a sun-rise service followed by a breakfast. For the last 25 years the congregation has hosted a chili supper in October with donations matched by AAL and LB. The chili is made by Ernie Johnson who uses a special recipe which has become a favorite of everyone. The chili supper has given the congregation an opportunity to show hospitality and friendship to many non-members in the community.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES The congregation has been involved in helping and supporting various activities outside its own membership. The Faith Mission Society was organized in 1971, with the first board meeting being held on February 6, 1972. This society was formed to encourage interest in and support for the cause of missions. It publishes the Mission News, a paper which informs about the work of missions in this country and abroad. The society is working on materials for Bible Study Courses, and helps in supporting the work of missions, especially in South and Central America. The congregation also helps support Camp Lor-Ray, a 160 acre campground which serves the youth and camping families of our fellowship. This campground was purchased in 1965 mainly through the efforts of First's Pastor, the Rev. Robert Moldstad. Four weeks of camping for the youth are provided in July each year, and Family Camping facilities are open during the entire camping season to members of the Camp Lor-Ray association.

Michigan Women's Rally Days are held each spring and fall together with other congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Michigan. The women of these congregations come together for Bible and Topic study, Christian Fellowship, and a business meeting.