

“WE are the end product of our history”

FLASHBACKS

Revealing glimpses of our creative past



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ALMA

The History of the Alma United Methodist Church is actually the history of two churches, the Zion Evangelical Church of Herold, Wisconsin and the Salem Evangelical Church of Alma, Wisconsin. With a strong German-Swiss background, both of these tiny villages are located in Buffalo County, in the hills overlooking the Mississippi River.

Ironically, the beginning of these two churches starts at the same place, at exactly the same time. However, over time, the two churches follow separate paths only to be reunited again as the Alma United Methodist Church.

Our history, as well as every other professing Christian faith, starts over 2,000 years ago with the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus' birth is the actual beginning of the Christian Church. After his death and resurrection, Jesus' Apostles began spreading his Word everywhere they went. Over many years, Christianity found its way to Europe and then to the new world. The dominate church of the Christian faith was the Catholic Church. However, in the early 1500's, Martin Luther challenged the Catholic Church and was excommunicated for it. Luther began preaching a message that stated that salvation was a gift of God's grace, attainable only through faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Luther also translated the Bible from Greek into German. With these two deeds, Luther reopened the door for many other Protestant Faiths to be created.

From this point on, in order to understand the Alma and Herold Churches and their faith journey, one must become familiar with the names Jacob Albright and George Miller. Jacob Albright is an important link in the extension of the Wesleyan revival among the Germans of North America. Born May 1, 1759 near Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and raised in the Lutheran tradi-

tion, Albright was religiously awakened in connection with the death of several of his children in 1790. At about that time he was exposed to the messages of several preachers of the United Brethren in Christ, most notably, Anthony Houtz, who conducted the funeral for the Albright Children.

The young farmer and tile-maker, Albright, went through a long period of penitential struggle as a result of this awakening. In this protracted process, his neighbor Adam Riegel, a lay preacher for the United Brethren, was a constant spiritual friend and director. After an extensive period of repentance and spiritual exercise, Albright emerged with his "enlightenment" - an experience of conversion marked by a sense of pardon for sin and the onset of new life.

Albright's newly found spiritual existence convinced him of a need for a community of like-minded Christians. Because of their rigorous and resourceful organization, Albright found such a community offered most satisfactorily among the English-speaking Methodists. Thus he joined a Methodist Class led by Isaac Davis that had been organized near Davis' home. With these people, Albright mastered enough English to acquaint himself with their Book of Discipline. Eventually, he so progressed as a Methodist that he was called on to speak at their meetings. It should not be supposed that he actually "preached" in taking a text and delivering a proper sermon, but he exercised a religious rhetorical device called exhortation or delivering long, dramatic, highly energized sermons in a lay capacity. For this function, Albright was licensed as an exhorter by the Methodist elder. This role as an exhorter often served as a stepping-stone between status as a full member of the Methodist Church and that of a traveling preacher. Although he learned enough English to gain an understanding of Methodist doctrine and polity, we have no reason to sup-

pose that Albright could exhort, or did exhort, in that language. His speaking appears to have been only in German for it was only with difficulty that he followed the English exercises of the Methodists. This turned Albright to becoming an Evangelical Christian.

As an evangelical Christian, Albright experienced an ever-increasing concern for his fellow German-Americans whom he regarded as outside the influence- much less the experience- of the Gospel as he now understood it. This burden of concern finally brought him to contemplate his own responsibility, and eventually his vocation. In his personal testimony, Albright related the religious experience in which he was called to preach. Enlightened from within, he received a direct challenge, then a command, to preach the Gospel to his fellow Germans. It is at this point that a second period of spiritual struggle began for Albright. In the great tradition of the calling of divine spokesperson we find Albright protesting his incompetence for the task of preaching. But this humility must be seen in light of the fact that this conviction is as much an evidence of true vocation as it is an argument. Such a commonplace objection can hardly be regarded as decisive in the long run, particularly in view of evidence to the contrary. discovered in the process of his function as a successful exhorter.

This brings us to Albright's second objection to his vocation--the protest that he must go out alone with no credentials and no connection. As a Methodist exhorter he had already taken a major step in the direction of becoming a traveling preacher in the Methodist connection. Though he had but little formal education and was only a artisan-farmer, this alone would have been no impediment to his being received as a Methodist preacher. Why then this objection on Albright's part? Why did he not follow the well-trod path from local exhortation to local preaching and finally to itinerant preaching? This is an issue on which hangs the rise of the Evangelical Association as separate ecclesiastical body.

The most adequate solution to this riddle is found in the relation of Methodist to ethnicity, at least ethnicity that is other than the predominant one-- in this case, English. Reservations with regard to Albright's vocation to preach to the Germans could be anticipated in two directions, both of which would tend to threaten the Methodist principle of a general itinerancy. First, preaching in German to the German-Americans would

tend to raise up German classes and German congregations. Eventually it would probably lead to a German Methodist Church, in effect a separate denomination.

Not unrelated to the first reservation is one more directly related to Albright as a German. Albright was German-speaking and apparently was unable to preach in any other language. As such he would be unable to move from circuit to circuit in the Methodist pattern, but would be limited to his usefulness to such circuits as might be made up of German-speaking societies and preaching places. There is no definite indication of Albright's encounter with these issues and perhaps other reservations of the Methodists regarding his vocation. One can, however, observe his protracted struggle with that vocation, one that would have been resolved with relative ease had the path to it been open through the Methodist Church.

As things stood, Albright was brought to submit his destiny only through extreme spiritual and physical agony. Through a period of the most severe trials, he was brought at last to submission.

Albright's pursuit of his vocation as traveling preacher led him through a period of preparation marked both by scriptural study and harsh ascetic self discipline/ In this process, we find no indication of the role that would likely have been played by a senior colleague in the Methodist System. Albright apparently carried through this preparation on his own. When he set out on his first preaching tour he set out alone. He obtained colleagues in the work only as he managed to touch other Germans who were awakened, converted and eventually drawn into the work by him.

Albright's first tour of preaching began in 1796. His early work was met by a combination of interested acceptance, indifference, and bitter rejection, but by 1800, Albright was organizing his first classes. In 1802, his followers had begun to gather in what were called "Big Meetings" which lasted for several days, and by 1803, these had led to the holding of the first conference session. At this conference, Albright was ordained to the gospel ministry by his "evangelical friends." At that time there were only five classes, all in Pennsylvania, east of the Susquehanna. At a second conference in 1806, a strong follower named George Miller, was sent to the area west of that river and managed to form ten classes there.

The first annual conference was held in 1807, where the decision was made to become a "newly-formed Methodist Conference" commonly known as "Albright's People". Albright was elected its first bishop and was further commissioned to draw up its *Book of Discipline*. It appears clear that Albright was uncertain that a new German denomination was to be formed, but this was in fact what had taken place. Yet Albright was not to be its leader, or the writer of its *Discipline*. His health had begun to fail, and he was afflicted by consumption complicated by the overwork of constant travel and preaching. In the spring of 1808, he was on his way home to die when he became too ill to travel any further. Albright spent his last days in a room provided for traveling preachers at the home of George Becker in Kleinfeltersville, Pennsylvania. There he died on May 18, 1808.

At the time of his death, the Albright's People numbered about 300, all found in Pennsylvania Dutch country of eastern Pennsylvania. His work was begun and had received its first stamp by its founder, but it was far from definite what it was to become. Its future was left to a great degree in the hands of George Miller, to whom it fell to write the *Book of Discipline* and to confirm the foundation of the Albright People by a representation of the life of its founder, Jacob Albright.

George Miller was trained in his Lutheran family as both a millwright and a miller and was successful in his business dealings. In 1798, he resolved to stop building mills and to seek God. Having embarked on this spiritual pilgrimage, Miller met Albright and was awakened by his preaching. It was not until 1802 that Miller once more encouraged Albright and under his influence experienced a gracious conversion. In 1803, Albright formed a class in Miller's neighborhood and Miller became its leader.

In 1805, George Miller became an itinerant preacher under Albright and his colleague John Walter. Miller traveled both with Albright and by himself. In the two years that followed, Miller had a busy and fruitful ministry, and in 1807 at the first Annual Conference, he was ordained an elder.

After Albright's death, the work of compiling a *Discipline* fell to Miller. In December of 1808 he began this, his first literary effort, and it was completed and published by the Conference of 1809. His short biography of Albright was re-

ceived and approved by the Conference in 1810 and published by Johann Ritter of Reading, Pennsylvania in 1811.

Already in 1808, Miller had experienced a failure in his health, which very soon necessitated his withdrawal from the traveling ministry. This disability was a major contributing factor in his fruitful literary career. In 1815, he undertook the writing of his autobiography, which remained unpublished until 1834. In 1812, he had been commissioned to revise the *Discipline*, but this revision was not yet finished at the time of his death. That work was completed by John Dreisbach and Henry Niebel before the General Conference of 1816. George Miller died on April 5, 1816, of tuberculosis, when he was only 42 years of age.

In 1808, at the time of Albright's death, his followers were few and generally despised. In Miller's words "Our enemies greatly rejoiced that they were rid of the man...for they disliked him so much." The 300 or so Albright's People would soon be doomed to oblivion. It was proclaimed of this little group that "they are defeated now; Albright is dead, and they are at an end!" "However," countered Miller, "They greatly erred, for although Albright was dead, yet God, who was the author of the good work, still lived, and ordered the work as His, knowing how to carry it on and how to extend it."

Two years later, the Albright's People had by no means disappeared. Still embattled, these people were in danger of losing touch with their founder and forgetting the sense of their name. The oral tradition about Albright, his life and ministry, still lived among his followers, but it was rapidly fading. It remained for the most literary among his immediate disciples to document that tradition.

Thus in 1810, we find George Miller was determined that the people should not forget their spiritual benefactor and that they should not forget who they were as "Albright's People." Thus he wrote a book about Albright entitled "The Life." The *Life* was addressed in particular to "the fruits of Albright's work." More broadly the *Life* was addressed to "every lover of truth."

The *Life* seems to have had a twofold purpose. The first and most important was to spiritually edify the reader. It was intended to be devotional literature. This is nowhere made as clear as it is by the inclusion of an exhortation at the end. Its second and also its secondary purpose was apologetic. It was intended to encourage the Albright's People and to refute their detractors.

At the outset Miller renounced any intention to "construct a connected account" of Albright's early life. He rather proposed "The task of briefly imparting to the public the story concerning the heart and the ministerial service of Jacob Albright. He proposed " to provide a pleasurable exercise to all those who with him were witnesses to the exemplary piety and tirelessness with which Albright dedicated his life.

The *Life* was widely read among German speaking people and its ideals were carried with these people as they migrated westward in the form of the Evangelical Movement. One of the places these German speaking people migrated to was Galena, Illinois where a prosperous Evangelical organization was established.

In January of 1844, the Reverend J. G. Miller and Bishop J. Seybert traveled from Galena by horse and buggy to Sauk County, Wisconsin. There they conducted a Sunday morning service in the school of Sauk City on July 28th with Bishop Seybert preaching. On Monday night, July 29th, a service was conducted in the farm home of B. Ragatz, where the first Evangelical class in Wisconsin was formed. This was located near Honey creek, in Sauk County.

In 1845, the Illinois 'Conference formed the Winnebago Mission which included all of Wisconsin, Northern Illinois, and Iowa. During this time the Rev. J. G. Miller began preaching in Jefferson, Dane and Fond du Lac counties as well as cities along Lake Michigan. The Reverend Miller was also the Evangelical Missionary in Western Wisconsin.

By 1845, the Sauk Circuit had been formed and encompassed Southwestern Wisconsin. From this point in time the Evangelical Church, or the Evangelische Gemeinschaft, as it was known, began spreading up the east side of the Mississippi River.

By 1855, the Evangelical Movement had reached LaCrosse and the LaCrosse Mission was established. Preachers from the mission spread out into other parts of the area including North Prairie, Fountain City, Buffalo City, Alma, Alma Bluff (Herold), Beef River, Gilmanton, Eagle Valley, (then known as Creek Tahl), Hensel Valley (Cortland), Arcadia, Independence, Wauamndee, Little Waumandee (Lincoln), Scotch Prairie, Montana and Mondovi.

Preaching was usually done in farm homes or in school houses. Each summer, mostly in the month of June, after corn planting time, a

two week camp meeting was held. Families would gather at these camps, which usually were in some nice spot in a wooded area, bringing tents and provisions for a two week stay.

The camp grounds took on the appearance of a hollow square in an open spot in the woods with tents all around it. A pulpit was built with a roof over it. This is where the pastors sat and it was also where they delivered their messages from in front of the pulpit. Logs were laid lengthwise about 8 feet apart with planks set on top of them to provide seating.

Also in 1855, three Evangelical Swiss families came to this area. They had traveled by ox-cart from Sauk County to settle in the Waumandee Valley. They were the Von Wald, Kind-schy, and Paul families. They joined the Runkel family who had arrived in the Valley in 1854 followed by the Helwig family in 1856. Ironically, Mr. Von Wald's brother was an Evangelical Pastor named the Reverend Len Von Wald. He paid a visit to his brother in the summer of 1856. During his stay, the Reverend Von Wald preached through out Buffalo County, strengthening the presence of the church in the area.

By 1857, the numbers of faithful in Buffalo County had grown to such a size that the church governing body established the Buffalo County Mission. In 1859, the Buffalo Mission was given its first resident pastor. His name was the Reverend Lewis Seder and he preached in the Western part of Buffalo County.

Several years passed and a number of pastors were given one year appointments to the area. Having resident pastors drew more people to the church and in 1866, the Alma Mission was established and was made up of Alma, Alma Bluff (Herold), Beef Slough, Beef River, and Mondovi. And it is at this point we see the Alma Church and the Herold Church begin construction of their own churches and become somewhat independent.

On Alma, services were held in member's homes or wherever a place could be found to hold services. The Congregation was formally incorporated in June 1869 with the Reverend P. Speich acting as both pastor and president. Herman Bauman, Gottlieb Kurtz, John Marty, William Herold and Fredeick Kaste served as the governing board. In July 1869, Gottlieb Iberg donated a building site and A. J. Auer was hired to erect a frame church, the first church in Alma. The church was known as the Salem Evangelical

Church and is the same building that is used today. A parsonage was also built for the resident pastor who also served the Herold, Glimanton and Cochrane churches.

Life in the Alma Church went on. On February 10, 1920, a Ladies Aid Society was organized. On April 5, 1922, the Ladies Aid became a member of the Mission Aid society, allowing them to be connected with the mission work at home as well as in foreign countries. In 1944, extensive remodeling was done to the Alma Church and new furniture was installed. In September, 1958, the congregation celebrated its centennial year and a new Hammond Organ was installed. The church basement was also completely remodeled.

Life in the Herold Church was similar to that of Alma. On October 15, 1866, a business meeting of the Herold Church was called to draw up plans to build a church. The building committee purchased 1 1/2 acres of land for the price of \$20.00.

On August 1, 1867, the first church building was completed, at a cost of \$1,400.00. In that same year, the Sunday school was organized with G. Kurz as the first superintendent. However, the congregation soon outgrew the usefulness of the first building and a second one was constructed in 1892 on the same location. The new building was 38 x 50 feet, \$2278.58 was spent on materials and the labor was largely donated. The building was dedicated on October 30, 1892 by Bishop Horn. Years continued to pass and the membership in the Evangelical and United Brethren faiths began to dwindle. Being of similar beliefs and customs, the General Conferences of the two faith groups joined together in forming the Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1946. The Herold Church adopted the name of Zion and The Alma Church became Salem.

Church membership continued to drop and in 1968, The Cochrane Church closed and part of their membership began attending the Alma Church. After 110 years of service, the same was experienced by the Herold church as well. They, too, joined the Alma Congregation. Situations similar to this were occurring all over the country, With this in mind, the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church merged in 1968, forming the United Methodist Church and thus, the Alma United Methodist Church.

1968 also brought another significant change. The newly formed Alma United Method

ist Church joined with the Pepin United Methodist Church to create the Pepin/Alma charge, served by the same pastor who resided in the Pepin Parsonage. The Alma Parsonage was rented out until 1979 when it was sold. The Alma Parsonage was eventually torn down and the Alma Congregation repurchased the lot which is adjacent to the church.

The combined Alma/Herold church members have always been very mission minded. Alice Johnson was an inspiring lifelong member who served as a missionary for several years at Red Bird Mission in Kentucky. The congregation has been a Global Partner Church for ten years. Previous to the two churches combining they had shared mission partners including Richard and Caring Schwenk who worked in the Philippines. For many years, Delores Herold faithfully corresponded with them and she arranged several visits to Alma where they shared their experiences. The present mission partners are Dan and Rachel Gabler who are now in South Africa. They too have visited the congregation and shared their mission stories.

Kate and Harry Buck, Martha and Frank Kuhlman and Grant Seitz have participated in the Volunteers In Mission (VIM) programs at a number of locations around the world. The VIM groups travel in the United States as well as overseas working to help build new churches and repairing churches and homes, especially in disaster areas. Volunteers pay their own expenses and usually spend two weeks on a project. Grant has gone on ten overseas mission trips with thirteen different groups. He has worked in seventeen states, He has been to Biloxi, Mississippi three times following Hurricane Katrina. The longest was to Alabama where he worked with groups from Wisconsin and Pennsylvania for six weeks. In addition to other work he has helped cook for many groups who always enjoyed his special meat loaf.

Members have been contributing to Heifer International the past few years giving three heifers and flocks of chickens, ducks and goslings. The congregation is very supportive of UMCOR and other church mission works. They also support and volunteer for the Buffalo County Food Bank, the Senior Citizen Meal Site, the Alma area Schools and several local organizations and clubs.

As in the past, church members work well together to maintain and keep the church functioning. One member, organist Ruth Breitung,

has played for over 70 years. The church is also fortunate in having members who are lay speakers. Irene Turner was a lay speaker for many years. Carol Craig continues doing lay speaking in both our River Valley Charge and other Circuit 8 churches. A new member of the Alma Congregation, Mary Beth Scow is a candidate for Methodist Ministry and is also an able speaker and conducts services occasionally.

On July 1st, 2007 yet another important change took place. The Arkansaw United Methodist Church joined with Pepin and Alma to create River Valley United Methodist Charge. This new three point charge has prospered greatly from this union and has faithfully served their communities for a combined total of 461 years.

The history of the Alma United Methodist church would not be complete without mention of the various women's organization that have existed within the church.

The Women's group story begins on February 10, 1920. when group of women gathered at the parsonage to form a Ladies Aid organization. Ironically, Pastor Emmanuel G. Gilkaeser was appointed Chair of the group until the permanent officers were elected. At the meeting \$1.75 was collected and the next meeting date of March 3, was selected.

The first official meeting took place on March 3, at the parsonage due to poor road conditions., The first order of business was the election of officers. Mrs. Annie Glaeser was elected President. There were thirteen charter members Mrs. Mary Walter, who had passed away shortly before the Ladies Aid organized was given an honorary membership. Of these original members, Alice Johnson became a teacher at Red Bird Mission. In many ways, this set the stage for the Lady's history of global mission work.

This global mission work received a big boost on April 5, 1922. Acting on the suggestion of the Rev. G. Kunz, the Ladies Aid became a member of the Mission Aid Society and since that time has been connected with mission work throughout the world.

During the first years of the Ladies aid Association with the Mission Aid Society, the treasury was built up from literally nothing to the point where the were able to assist the congregation in many ways. Numerous Bazaars were held and comforters and quilts were made with the money going to offset church expenses such

as payment for wood, fixing up the basement, purchasing new stoves, fixing the parsonage, purchasing a new piano plus many gifts to charity and missions. And whoever the pastor happened to be, his wife worked side by side with Aid members.

During World war II, the Ladies Aid did much for those people serving in the Armed Forces. These activities included sending packages overseas and providing money for missions.. After the war a German family was adopted by the ladies Aid. The ladies provided clothing and money for missions. These activities continued until 1857 when they started tackling a new problem.

In 1957 and 1958 the Ladies Aid assisted the church in remodeling the basement of the building,. They were entirely responsible for planning and furnishing the new kitchen. Additionally they donated a total of \$390.96 for missionary work while also sponsoring the Boy's and Girl's fellowship groups as well as the youth fellowship group.

After the November rmerger of the Evangelical Church and the United Brethren in Christ-Church, the women's missionary society was changed to the Women's Society of World Services. In June of 1958, The Women's Societies of the Herold and Alma churches were combined., making it possible to further their efforts to bring the Word of God to more people and to enrich their faith. Upon merging with the Methodist Church in 1968, the group was known as the Women's Society of Christian Service. Later this was changed to the present name of United Methodist Women.

The Alma Women's group has also played a vital role in the World Day of Prayer. In 1956, the sponsored the First World Day of Prayer service to be held in Alma. From 1968 to 1971, the World Day of Prayer alternated between the United Church of Christ and this church. Then in 1972, The Alma Lutheran Women assisted in the World Day of Prayer Service. In 1980, the Catholic Women hosted the Service at St. Lawrence Catholic Church. Today services alternate between five different churches consisting of four different denominations.

Today the UNited Methodist Women of Alma are still a significant part of the church. They have an outstanding record of supporting the World Day of Prayer. This incredible group of women has participated in the ecumenical

Christmas tea for many years in cooperation with the three other Alma churches. They are also proud of making their financial pledge to the District UMW and being a five star Unit for many years, In recent years members of the unit have been both district and Conference officers.

The women also support local needs such as the Food Pantry. At present the women the women volunteer to sort and count milk caps and Campbell soup labels as a fund raising effort for the Alma school district. The women work together to provide food for funeral meals and other events. They also plan a summer picnic and a December Hanging of the Greens enjoyed by all church members. Hat's off to the Ladies to the Alma United Methodist Church.

So in this, the 150th year of service to God and the Community of Alma, it is only fitting to say to the members of the Alma United Methodist Church, past, present and future, job well done.

This history was written by Irene Turner and Bruce Gardow.

WAUTOMA

In 1859, The Methodist Episcopal Church and the Congregational Church were each seeking to form followers of Jesus in the Wautoma area.

The Rev. M. D. Warren was sent here as a circuit rider preacher to Wautoma in 1859 and during this time, a lot was purchased on Oxford Street, near Main Street. Although the Civil War was at its height, a church building was erected by the Methodists on this site in 1863. This building served until 1893 as our place of worship, when it was sold and moved away.

It was decided to build a new church on the same place, which would be larger and more modern. This new building was dedicated in February, 1895, with the Rev. F. G. Parish as pastor. The total cost was \$6,000.00. It was believed to be equal to any in northern Wisconsin. The windows were nearly all stained memorials and the bell was donated by lawyer Levi Soule.

A House was purchased in 1902 on the southeast corner of Main and Oxford Streets at the cost of \$1,500.00. It was near the church building. This two story house was moved away and is no longer owned by us. On the next lot

south, a church was constructed in 1894, and served for fifty years as our house of worship. It was destroyed by fire in January, 1944. The Rev. S. B. Lewis was the minister in charge and immediately started a campaign for a new building.

In 1918, the Spring Lake church was added to the Wautoma charge. The Raymond congregation was already a part of our circuit for several years. In 1952, the Raymond Congregation was removed from our circuit. The official closing day of the Spring Lake Congregation was December 31, 1994. January 8, 1995 was their last service.

World War II was just ending in the summer of 1945 but the shortage of materials, labor, etc. held up construction. Through the kindness of the Norwegian Lutheran Church (now known as Hope Lutheran Church) we were able to conduct services in their building, then on East Main Street.

Mr. Marvin Weeks, chairman of the building committee, and other men removed the old walls and built the new footings, but it was not until the summer of 1947, that services could be held in the basement only. In 1951, the church building was completed and formally dedicated by Bishop H. Clifford Northcott. The total cost of this building was approximately \$70,000.00.

The Evangelical Church was started in Waushara County on August 18, 1875 in the Village of Dakota by Gustav (Joe) Zinke, Alfred Mueller and William Daye, who lived in that vicinity. In 1903, an Evangelical church building was built about four miles south of Wautoma, near the present airport, also in the Township of Dakota. It served them in that location for 35 years, then it was moved to Wautoma on West Elm Street. There it was enlarged and remodeled. In the meantime, the Village of Dakota Church closed services there and moved to Wautoma. The building was sold to another denomination. A Deerfield church of the Evangelicals was torn down and some materials were used in the rebuilding of the Wautoma Evangelical Church.

Pastors of the Wautoma =Spring Lake Methodist Circuit included, Kenneth Engleman in 1954-58, Guy Holiday, 1954-61 and Barry Shaw in 1961. Pastor Shaw also served the Raymond Congregation until it closed. Ministries from this time included that the Wautoma Methodist Church held special joint services and youth events with the Wautoma Evangelical United Brethren Congregation. There was strong youth ministry for

junior high and senior high youth. One of the youth fund raisers was getting 17 youth into a Volkswagen Beetle. There was also a cross cultural exchange of youth between Wautoma and an inner city Chicago youth group. A young couples ministry was also started during this time called "Methodist Merry Mates." Pastor Shaw also helped with the local Boy Scout troop. It was during this time that downtown stores in Wautoma started to open on Sunday. Pastor Shaw moved in 1964.

Over the years there have been three EUB church building locations: Dakota, Deerfield, and Wautoma. There were three Methodist church buildings located on South Oxford Street, and the present building at Southgate Terrace

In 1967, the Wautoma Methodist Church and the Grace Evangelical United Brethren merged in Wautoma under the new name of Grace United Methodist Church.

Norman Silvester was appointed the first pastor to served the new congregation and served from 1968 to 1973. During his time, the congregation had three church buildings and three houses at its disposal for ministry. One of the houses was used for Sunday school to accommodate the size of the new merged classes. The former EUB Building upstairs became a gathering place for ministry with mentally challenged adults. The basement was used for a community nursery center in the mornings. In the afternoons it provided class space for special needs children. This was an outreach ministry in the community and done in conjunction with the Waushara County Social Services Department. A major focus of Pastor Silvester was helping the two former congregation to become one new congregation. Pastor Silvester also did an exchange with Siegfried Eisenmann in Germany for six weeks in the summer of 1972. He liked to play guitar in worship services. He composed liturgical music that was published and recorded nationally.

About 1979, it was decided that the building consecrated in 1951 was no longer suited for our growing congregation and the location was not the best for expansion of the building. Also, parking was becoming a problem,. After 100 years at this location with our church building, a new building was built south of Wautoma on Southgate Terrace. In 1981, the Rev. Robert Hays and the congregation walked from the old church to the new building , carrying a large cross as a

part of the celebration of the first church service in the new building. The cost of the new building was \$451,443.00.

Virgil Holmes became pastor in 1986. A bell choir was started while he was here. He baptized his first set of twins. He promoted Camp Budsins. During his time of ministry, Grace UMC continued with a strong mission emphasis and music ministry. He also presided over the burning of the church mortgage complete with a hot air balloon on site to celebrate. Pastor Holmes retired from Grace UMC after 42 years of ministry.

Graham West became pastor in 1992. He was only here few weeks when Wautoma had a tornado and there was damage to the church building. Fortunately, the windows that had been brought over from the church building on South Oxford Street were only slightly damaged. During his time, the "Quiet Waters" ministry to care facilities was started. The first youth director was hired. The youth program and other various ministries were strengthened during this time as the congregation grew. A new parsonage was purchased. Grace Roots was started during this time.

Doris Hanson became pastor in 1997. She brought drama to the pulpit through various skit performances and extended the church's presence with the "Burden Bear." A stuffed bear would be passed around during worship to receive hugs and then taken to those in need with a special note. Also during this time, a tape ministry for shut-ins was started. Discussion began on offering a contemporary service in addition to traditional worship. Employee policy manuals were also created and staff job descriptions were written and up dated. The newsletter was redesigned to increase its communication effectiveness, much of which is still in use today.

Dale Hanaman came in 2000. During his time a puppet ministry was started. The congregation's mission ministry was strengthened, including an increased participation in "Habitat for Humanity." Pastor Dale also went twice to help build in Mississippi to repair damage from Hurricane Katrina. He offered a clown ministry and helped the contemporary service to begin.

George J. Kafer was appointed in 2007. He is very energetic and is helping the congregation continue strong ministries such as missions, while working to revitalize other areas of ministry , including a revitalization of the youth group ministry. A current area being revamped is Christian education, In the fall of 2009, we will offer youth

and adult classes on Wednesday nights instead of Sunday mornings as a way to try and increase participation. During this time the congregation has been reflecting on its identity. begun a four years ministry plan, increased stewardship, is getting more involved with the community , and is making shifts to increase our outreach and effectiveness at our mission of loving God, loving and serving others and forming followers of Jesus Christ.

The celebration of 150 years of the congregation was held on September 27, 2009. In addition to a number of musical presentations, the scripture found in Psalm 23 was read from a 140 year old Bible,. Seven former pastors were present for the service. The Rev. Steve Polster, Assistant to Bishop Lee, preached the morning sermon. The service was followed by a festive dinner.

Material supplied by Phyllis Grebe, Church Historian.

A THREATENED PASTOR

The Winter 2009-2010 issue of Wisconsin Magazine of History, a publication of the Wisconsin Historical Society, has an interesting article about the Anarchist Scare in Milwaukee in 1918. Included in this material is the description of the threats made to Augusto Giuliani, the founder of the Italian Evangelical work in Milwaukee. The editor has consented to the reproduction of some of the article for Flashbacks.

The Italians anarchists were a part of the first Italian radicals that began trickling into the country in the 1880s. In Milwaukee there was a small group of anarchists living in Bay View as early as 1880. A more sizable group settled in the Third Ward after 1892.

Anarchist groups flourished as Italian immigration to the United States surged from 1900 until the government crackdowns and deportation of radicals during the World War I era.

One of the most widely known anarchists was a woman named Gabriella Antolini who was usually known just as Ella. She had been arrested when she was carrying thirty-six sticks of dynamite while traveling by train to Chicago.

THE BAY VIEW INCIDENT ON SEPTEMBER 9, 1917

FBI documents and other sources reveal how Ella was linked - directly and indirectly - to these communities. She was even connected with the wave of grizzly assassinations and bombings that swept through the land from 1901 - 1920.....

And yet, just as people's destinies are often changed forever on the whims of others, it's entirely possible that Ella and the Bay View anarchists would have led quiet lives and gone on unnoticed if the Reverend Augusto Giuliani hadn't decided to hold a series of open air "loyalty" rallies in the Bay View soon after the United States entered the European War in 1917. Giuliani was the pastor of the Italian Evangelical Church in downtown Milwaukee. A former Catholic priest and a recent immigrant, Giuliani had guided the church and its nearby mission with his wife, Katherine Eyerick, until she died in 1916. Giuliani wasn't a stranger among the several thousand Italian and Sicilian immigrants in the city's Third Ward just a short walk from his church. But he must have been somewhat skittish about venturing into new Bay View territory. He surely knew that the anarchist club was just a block away from the spot where he planned to gather. He would have been aware of the other neighborhood residents who were not anarchists who also dropped by the club to play cards and music or listen to radical speakers and who might be nearby when he arrived to speak. What he probably didn't know was that the Bay View's anarchists apparently had ties to anarchists in Chicago, who in turn were connected to Valdinoci and other intimates of Sacco and Vanzetti.

On two consecutive Sundays in late August and early September of 1917, Giuliani brought a small group of musicians and other followers to the corner of Bishop and Potter Avenues. His goals for his visits were ambitious. He hope to attract other Italian converts to Protestantism, and to spark support for America's recent entry into the European Wars. He also planned to urge Italians to comply with the new Military Conscription Act, which required men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty to register with their local draft boards even if they weren't U. S. citizens.

On both Sunday afternoon visits to Bay View, Giuliani's aide, organist Maude Richter, accompanied by two cornetists, began the rallies with religious and patriotic tunes. The music

pierced the quiet afternoons and drew gatherings of from fifty to one hundred persons to see Giuliani's group. Catcalls and threats leaped from the crowd soon after the pastor began to speak. Catholics at the rally were livid that this former priest now renounced their religion. One later claimed that Giuliani had called the pope "a pig." And the anarchists were incensed when Giuliani urged them to support the government, which they believed caused much of their misery. Many anarchists raised their fists as they screamed epithets. Giuliani later claimed that during his second visit, some one in the crowd called him a "coward a man paid by the government," and said "we do not want to listen about the war because we have our own brothers in the war in Italy, we will smash your face, we will destroy you, and will throw you in the lake if you come again."

Such threats didn't deter Giuliani from making a third Sunday visit to the same street corner with fifteen followers on September 9. This time police were there to protect him. As the group stepped off a streetcar just after three o'clock, fifteen to twenty Italians were in the anarchists club rooms listening to a talk by John LaDuca, the executive secretary of the Federazione Socialista Italiana, a syndicalist organization affiliated with the Socialist Party of America. Others chatted on porch stoops or strolled by the lake. News of Giuliani's arrival sizzled through the neighborhood. A crowd quickly pressed toward the minister. Just as police began frisking a few of the men for weapons, someone fired a revolver, and in seconds police shot and killed two men. Two detectives and several bystanders were wounded. Police arrested eleven Italians from the crowd and charged them with conspiring to murder Giuliani and the police. Police also confiscated literature and other items from the anarchist club and from the houses where some of the anarchists lived.....

Where would anarchists strike next? Were anarchists who ostensibly led quiet lives in neighborhoods like Bay View secretly plotting fresh attacks throughout the land? In fact, anarchists hatched at least three bomb plots to avenge the arrest of their Milwaukee Comrades. They first surfaced on November 24, three days before the trial of the eleven defendants was to begin. Late that morning, the daughter of a cleaning woman at Giuliani's church found a bomb next

to the building and showed it to her mother. Giuliani was out of town and his aide, Maude Richter, was busy elsewhere. Richter didn't notify police about the bomb until mid-afternoon. When the authorities hadn't arrived by early evening, Richter sent an eighteen-year-old boy to police headquarters with the twenty-pound bomb. The boy delivered his package and left. Minutes later the bomb exploded, killing nine policemen and a woman who had come into the building to file a complaint. Police rounded up and questioned dozens of Italians, but no one was charged and the case was never solved. In December, the eleven defendants were convicted and sentenced to twenty-five years in state prison. The famous Chicago Attorney . Clarence Darrow, successfully appealed their case to the Wisconsin Supreme Court and all of the defendants were eventually released and deported.

Editor's note: A detailed account of the life and work of Augusto Giuliani can be found in the history of the Italian Evangelical Church work in Wisconsin can be found in the book "I Must, I Must, I Must," written by UNited Methodist Pastor, Anthony Farina. Pastor Farina has a detailed account of the above incident of the bombing in Bay View. His book is available from the Wisconsin Conference Archives headquarters.

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A reminder: Printed copies of Flashbacks will be sent only to those who have subscribed. But this issue and the previous issue can be found on the Wisconsin Conference web page.

I am interested in church histories, biographies and other articles of interest. We are also working on a history of missionaries from Wisconsin. If someone in your family or your congregation served on the mission field, Please send me information and details. Lois C. Olsen, editor

