

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

New Orleans, La.

Organized 1840

THE FIRST 50 YEARS

This brief history of St. Paul's Congregation was written by the sainted Rev. G. J. Wegener, pastor from 1887 - 1933, honorary pastor until his death in 1946.

The original, a German book, was published in 1890, by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, in observance of the 50th Anniversary of the Church. This translation of the original has been prepared by Pastor Frederick R. Zucker, October 1957.

"O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon His name; make known His deeds among the people. Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him; talk ye of all His wondrous works". Thus, in Psalm 105, the psalmist exclaims, as he prepared to describe the history of his people. Not to the glory of his nation, but to the glorification of God he intends to write, God Who has so wonderfully led His people and done great things for them. In this sense the Evangelical-Lutheran St. Paulus Congregation of New Orleans, La., on the occasion of the celebration of its existence for fifty years, has caused the following history to be printed. This congregation does not intend to glorify itself, but desires to give glory to their God, Who has also led them, like the Israelites of old, through very wonderful ways and has done great things indeed for them. This congregation wishes hereby to erect a memorial stone, an Eben-Ezer, as she declares: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us". Thus this congregation wants to erect a memorial for its children and children's children, so that these may all the more faithfully preserve the heritage received from their fathers, the pure Word and the unadulterated Sacraments. This Congregation, finally, also wishes to bear witness before its fellow believers elsewhere of the gracious and wonderful governance of the Lord of the Church also in this place, so that they, too, may rejoice with those who rejoice and praise God with those who have so richly experienced the Lord's goodness and faithfulness.

Now, so far as this history of the congregation is concerned, this booklet will simply present the historical facts, without further embellishment, and these only in so far, as they could be ascertained through oral and written testimony. On account of the absence of any written chronicles various matters could not be reported as precisely and completely as might appear desirable. But also the scanty account that can be given is enough to show that the congregation indeed has great cause in this year to testify before all the world: "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad". May the Lord of the Church bless this booklet for many hearts unto glad testimony.

New Orleans, La., July 1890.

The Author.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE GERMAN EV.*LUTHERAN ST. PAUL'S CONGREGATION
U.A.C.
of
New Orleans, La.

As in other parts of our rapidly country, so too, in New Orleans fifty years ago things looked very different from what we see here today. Many German people had indeed by that time come here, but, due to the all-controlling French influence, received very little recognition. Some German immigrants of that day related that they hardly would have had the courage to confess their nationality publicly.

But an especially sad situation prevailed at that time with respect to church life among the Germans in New Orleans. Most of them were not only churchless, but were also enemies of the Church. There was not before the year 1840 any German Protestant church. Although in the North many German congregations and several synods had been organized, it seems that in New Orleans no effort had ever been made to found an Evangelical, not to say an Evangelical-Lutheran, congregation. When in the year 1840 a beginning was finally made it was done after the pattern of the State Church of Germany ('unierte Landeskirche Deutschlands').

A certain Pastor C. Sans came to New Orleans and published a notice in the local German paper that on the first Sunday of August 1840, he would conduct an evangelical service in a fire-engine house on Chartres, between Clouet and Louise Streets, and invited all Germans to attend. Since a number of people accepted this invitation, it was agreed henceforth to hold regular services at this place. At the same time Sans began to conduct German services in another part of town, at that time called Lafayette (now called "up-town" New Orleans). At both places a German school was also started. These were the first German schools in New Orleans, and the two brothers Jacob and John Ueber, together with a certain Bremer, were the first German teachers.

With that first service on August 2, 1840, the foundation had been laid for what is now the Evangelical Lutheran St. Paulus Congregation. At that time, it is true, the congregation had no confessional standard beyond what was quite broadly expressed in the beautiful names "evangelical" and "protestant". And a long time passed before the congregation even adopted another name. Lutherans, Reformed and Rationalists, etc. were as such equally welcome and had the same rights and privileges.

For the external growth of the congregation the best opportunity had been provided: Almost anything could join the congregation, whoever had a desire, especially if people were willing to pay a monthly contribution.

Until the year 1843 services were conducted partly in the fire-engine house on Chartres and partly, after this had been destroyed by fire, in a private dwelling on Chartres, between Port and St. Ferdinand streets. On March 23, 1842, the Congregation was legally incorporated with the name, "German Orthodox Evangelical Congregation of New Orleans and Lafayette". In the year 1843 on a piece of property at the corner of Port and Burgundy (at that time called "Craps" Street), a church was built, which at the same time served as a school. This first church measured about 65 by 27 feet, was very plainly built of unfinished lumber called "flat boards", and had a steeple about 75 feet in height.

The above-mentioned Pastor Sans served the Congregation until the end of the year 1843. After his moving away a split occurred in the Congregation. A certain R. Kerndoerfer, who somewhere in the city had opened an office, where, at a set price, he conducted baptisms, marriages and funerals, was hired by a part of the congregation

as their pastor. The other part, however, not satisfied with the hiring of Korndoerfer, called as their pastor a preacher named J. E. Schneider. Both factions claimed sole ownership of the Church. Several times there occurred encounters, like duels, since each faction would come with its preacher and try to force its way into the Church. Schneider's faction was successful several times, since they had the key. But when a vote was taken in a joint meeting, it appeared that Korndoerfer's party had the majority; these people retained possession of the church building. The other part therefore separated themselves and organized another congregation under Schneider. This occurred on December 2nd, 1843. According to a list of members still in existence this group bore the name: "German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of New Orleans, Third Municipality". But after only a few months Schneider resigned, Pastor Christian Schrenk became his successor. Soon afterward Korndoerfer also left his party, to their joy, as it is reported, because he was said to have led a grossly offensive life. Under Schrenk's guidance both parties were again united into one congregation. But according to an old manuscript in his own handwriting the congregation, now re-united, bore the name: "German Evangelical Orthodox Church in New Orleans". He served the congregation a little over three years, from 1844 to 1848.

He was succeeded by Pastor Jacob Buehler, who was active in the congregation slightly over eight years, 1848 to 1856. For a time he had as his assistant a certain Pastor E. Schoene. Judging by the great number of ministerial acts recorded in the church records for this time, there must have been a great number of adherents. So for instance, for the year 1848 no fewer than 185 baptisms, 97 marriages and 39 confirmations are recorded. During all these years the name and the unionistic confessional standpoint expressed in it, remained the same as under Schrenk. Lutherans and Reformed, as it is creditably reported and confirmed, participated in Holy Communion at one altar, and according to the Reformed ritual. Without previous announcement any one who happened to be present in the church could partake of the Sacrament. Altogether the church practice was thoroughly unionistic and lax in the highest degree.

With the end of Pastor Buehler's ministry, in the spring of 1856, the first chapter of the history of the congregation comes to its close. No fewer than six different pastors worked in the congregation during the first 16 years of its existence. But during that whole time the congregation remained what it was from the beginning: a lax, thoroughly unionistic aggregation, in which everyone, without distinction of confession or faith had the same rights, everyone having his own confessional standpoint, or, rather, no confessional standpoint at all. This was the time of gathering, which had to be followed by a time in which the spiritual knowledge and the faith of the members needed to be clarified and firmly founded on the Word of God, if the congregation was to have a satisfactory development. In His limitless grace God now brought about the beginning of such a development.

As early as the late fall of the year 1855 Christian Gottlieb Moedinger, having been trained at the Mission Preparatory Institute at St. Chrischona, had come, via Galveston, Texas, to New Orleans and had been appointed as Assistant for the Parochial School. Besides he was to assist Pastor Buehler in the ministry. Christmas 1855 he preached his first sermon to this congregation. After Buehler left the congregation in May 1856, Moedinger was called as pastor of the congregation and on June 28th he began his ministry here. Although he had been trained in a unionistic institution, Pastor Moedinger had a sincere desire to be a Lutheran and did not want to have any part in the wide-spread unionistic practices. Convinced of the truth of the Evangelical-Lutheran standpoint and the rightness of Evangelical-Lutheran practice, in so far as he had by that time gained an insight into both, he could not be satisfied with the utter lack of a confessional standpoint in the congregation and the lax practice to which it had led. Hence from the very

beginning it was his earnest endeavor to lead the congregation entrusted to him by the Lord to the true understanding of the Word and to a firmer conviction in their faith. In that same year 1856 he joined the Texas Synod that is still in existence today, but is regrettably not a truly Lutheran church body. The introduction of wafers in Holy Communion and personal announcement of the communicants, as both are common practice in the Lutheran Church and the introduction of the Pennsylvania Hymnbook instead of the unionistic and rationalistic hymnal in use here till then, naturally under circumstances then prevailing, led to sharp clashes and a division in the congregation. As a result a certain number who adhered to a Reformed viewpoint and others left the congregation which from this point forward was accepted as being Evangelical-Lutheran. In the year 1858 the congregation adopted a new Constitution and the name "The First German Evangelical-Lutheran Congregation of New Orleans, La." In this Constitution the congregation expressly affirmed its allegiance "to all the Symbolical Books of the Evang.-Lutheran Church, as the form and norm drawn from the Word of God, according to which, because it is taken from God's Word, not only the teaching in our congregation must be performed and tested, but all eventual doctrinal and religious differences are to be judged and regulated." That this confessional standpoint was to be taken seriously is obvious from another paragraph of the same Constitution in which anyone to be received into membership is placed under the obligation "that he should not only in a general way declare himself in agreement with the Evangelical-Lutheran church, but expressly to our Evangelical-Lutheran Church." While it must be admitted that this Constitution contained some things not in keeping with the confessional paragraph quoted above, and that, for some time to come, doctrine and practice still fell short of the true and full measure of the Lutheran spirit, yet this action meant a considerable step forward on the way to the right goal. The adoption of the Constitution was no easy matter, for to many the name "Lutheran" and the Lutheran Confession was not welcome. The sainted Pastor Moedinger often told of the heated battles he had at that time, and that at the first reading of the new Constitution not more than two or three members were ready to sign it, and that only gradually did the remaining members become ready to sign.

Hardly had quiet been restored when the congregation was subjected to another hardship. In a very destructive conflagration in April 1860, by which whole squares were reduced to ashes, all the buildings owned by the congregation, church, school and parsonage, were destroyed by the flames. That was a double severe blow after the difficulties just described. Without a church-home, without means to rebuild, still owing a debt on the church that was burnt down- that was the situation of the congregation that had just begun to prosper again - and already the sky was darkened by clouds presaging the breaking out of a terrible war with the Northern States. But the Lord helped in this trouble and gave the members courage and joy to undertake a building project that they themselves would have thought impossible. During this time the congregation, which until then had never had any Synodical connection whatever, joined the Texas Synod. In December of the same year they were permitted to dedicate their new church. This second church building of the congregation, erected on the same location, was so arranged, that the lower space could be used as the school. The church measured 80 feet in length, 44 feet in width, with a steeple 125 feet high, and had a seating capacity of about 800. At the same time the congregation erected the two-story parsonage that is still standing (1890), which was later enlarged. The total cost of church and parsonage, including the bells and the organ amounted to \$17,000.00 The heavy indebtedness occasioned through this building was later paid off by annual house-to-house collections. Later the congregation acquired another piece of property with a building next to the church, which first served as a teacherage and later, together with the basement of the church, as school, and is now serving as a meeting place.

Regardless of the vicious civil war between the Southern and Northern States,

which lasted for four years, and from which also New Orleans suffered considerably, the Congregation was permitted to continue its peaceful growth. While the number of voting members remained comparatively very small - at this time there was probably about 40, still the services were well attended, the morning services sometimes so well, that, as we were told, the number of hearers exceeded the capacity of the church. In the year 1866, under the guidance of Pastor Moedinger, a society for the purpose of taking care of poor orphan children was formed under the name: "Orphans' Home Society of the First German Evangelical-Lutheran Congregation of the Third District, New Orleans". Later, through co-operation of other congregations in New Orleans and vicinity, this was expanded into the "Evangelical-Lutheran Bethlehem Orphans' Home Society in New Orleans, La.", and is still in existence. In the year 1867 the Sunday School was founded.

Unfortunately the Congregation during this time again passed through a sad experience. In the year 1869 an assistant pastor was called for their faithful Pastor Moedinger. Like Moedinger himself, this man was also a product of the St. Christophona Mission Institute. His name was O. Koelle. At the beginning things went along well. Through the constitution of the congregation and through accepting the call to the ministry in their midst he had agreed to obligate himself to uphold the Lutheran Confessions, and he pretended to be definitely a Lutheran. But after only a few months he turned his back upon the congregation and upon the Lutheran Church as a whole and, without any further ado accepted the pastorate of a German 'united' church that just happened to become vacant and was nearby. But because he even now pretended to be a Lutheran he succeeded in drawing a number of members from the Lutheran congregation; a number of these returned when together with his congregation this man named O. Koelle, joined the Presbyterian Church. We may well believe that through such behavior many weak Christians were offended and confused. The sainted Pastor Moedinger often said that this was the saddest experience he had had in his long ministry and he would condemn this unfaithful behavior with the most derogatory terms. In spite of a natural desire to omit this dark page from the history of our congregation, we felt in duty bound to tell the truth, especially since the respective person is still active in the same Presbyterian congregation and some people who do not know all the facts still consider him and his congregation as orthodox. But even the experiences just reported could not lastingly damage the Congregation. The damage that had been done was soon made good in other ways by the Lord. Instead of those unfaithful and deluded ones who left the congregation the Lord brought others into the congregation. And both the Pastor and the Congregation were richer by another valuable experience. The valuable result was that our people became more and more wary of indifferentism and unionism, and were all the more serious in maintaining the Lutheran confession.

Before we proceed with the history of the Congregation, it is necessary that we review several things regarding the parochial school. As has already been reported, such a school was in operation from the beginning. From 1840 to 1850 the two brothers John and Jacob Ueber were in charge. Partly from ill will against Lutheran teaching and practice, partly from other motives, they later left the congregation and became, the one a Methodist and the other a Presbyterian. Meanwhile they had already opened a school of their own quite nearby our school (which is still being continued by them). Almost still sadder experiences came to the congregation through later teachers. In spite of all efforts it was often impossible to obtain a decent and efficient teacher; often the congregation was glad to release those who had been employed and quite a large number had to be dismissed on account of a grossly offensive life. It is not difficult to understand that under these circumstances a proper training of the children in the fear and admonition of the Lord was out of the question, that the school could not make proper progress, and that many parents preferred to send their children to other schools. But also for the school better times were soon to come, as will be seen from the following paragraph.

For some time past Pastor Moedinger had had the conviction that the Texas Synod, to which he and the congregation belonged, although having the name of an Evangelical-Lutheran synod, was not serious, neither as to doctrine nor as to corresponding practice, and that it could not be the proper connection either for a pastor or for a congregation. And since no improvement in these matters was to be expected, he saw it as his duty to sever connections with this Synod and to move the Congregation to withdraw. This was done in the year 1870. The question as to where to turn now was soon decided, when through oral testimony of the local pastors as well as through public witness in church papers, the faithful adherence to the Lutheran Confessions of the "Evangelical-Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States" had become clear. Both he and the congregation were all the more inclined to join this synod, because that opened up to them the prospect in future to obtain suitable and efficient teachers for the parochial school, and especially, since they had already enjoyed having such a teacher in Mr. C. F. K. Zeige. It is true that the affiliation with this synod was displeasing to a few members, met with strong objection and produced hot battles. As early as March 1872 the congregation had decided by a majority vote to send the Pastor and a lay-delegate to St. Louis for the Convention of the Western District. But this resolution was later reconsidered and was made unanimous only in December 1873. The official reception into membership in the Synod came in June 1874. Shortly before that the Constitution of the Congregation had been once more carefully scrutinized with reference to the Scriptures and the Confessions and several paragraphs not quite completely in keeping with them had been correspondingly changed. Since the old document of incorporation had expired about this time, the congregation had itself incorporated anew, and since then (February 20, 1872) bears the name: "German Evangelical-Lutheran St. Paul's Congregation, U. A. C., at New Orleans, La." Several years after reception into membership in the "Missouri Synod" (1878) the truly Lutheran hymn-books published by this Synod were introduced in the Congregation.

Although before the eyes of man the blessings to follow upon these changes may not have been so evident, yes, though it appeared to some as if through them the congregation had been more harmed than helped - at this time again several people left the congregation - the blessing had to come. The more faithful proclamation of the pure Bible teaching in all its parts through public preaching, in the school and in the sincerely Lutheran church papers that were now spreading in the congregation, had, and must continue in the future to have glorious fruit.

Especially were these blessings of the new church connection evident in the school. Instead of the men, in many cases not only without a confession, but without character, the school now had men who were not only able, being well trained at the Teacher Seminary at Addison, but also orthodox and conscientious, in charge of the school, teachers to whom the congregation could well entrust their youth without fear, men under whose careful nurture the parochial school proved itself truly a nursery for the church and the congregation. Here is a list of the men who served the school since the congregation had joined the Missouri Synod:

1. Jacob Broders, 1868 - 1884,
2. C. F. K. Zeige, 1871 - 1879,
3. H. D. Schroeder, 1871 - 1875,
4. L. Wisbeck, 1873 - 1874,
5. C. W. Sauer, 1878 - 1887,
6. J. F. Thomson, since 1879,
7. F. Doepke, since 1887.

Accordingly, the school had from 1871 - 1873, three classes,

" 1873 - 1874, four "

" 1874 - 1875, three "

" 1875 - 1878, two "

" 1878 - 1884, three "

and in the years since 1884 again two classes.

Another blessing that came about through the Synodical connection was this that the Congregation, which formerly had been standing alone in the big city, could now enter into the communion of faith and brotherly life with the two local sister-congregations (Zion and St. John) and, for that reason could so much more successfully co-operate with them in the up-building of the Kingdom of God and in works of Christian charity. So there was organized out of members and fellow-communicants of this and and sister-congregations, named the "German Evangelical-Lutheran Mission Society of New Orleans, La.", whose purpose is to "prosecute home-mission work in the southern states of our country, and particularly in the city of New Orleans and its vicinity". Through the help of this society among others the "Evangelical-Lutheran Trinity Congregation" in the 5th District of New Orleans (Algiers) was organized, whose members had until then belonged to St. Paul's Church. For a time there also existed a united young men's society of the three congregations, which unfortunately after the death of its founder, the Rev. Pastor G. E. Friedrich, had ceased functioning. Similarly, at a later time, the "Evangelical Lutheran Bethlehem Orphans-Home Society" was organized.

With the exception of the short period during the year 1869, while the assistant pastor, previously mentioned, who later fell away, stood at his side, Pastor Moedinger did the work in the Congregation alone until the year 1883. When in that year the "Ev. Lutheran Bethlehem Orphans Home" had been founded and the Reverend J. M. Maisch had been called as head of that home, the latter was also employed by the Congregation as assistant to the Pastor. Under his guidance the "Ladies' Aid" still in existence was founded about that time. But already in August 1884 Pastor Maisch followed another call, whereupon Mr. J. Broders, who was school teacher, became head of the Orphans' home.

About this time the need for sermons and services conducted in the English language was felt more and more, especially in St. Paul's Church, since the young people growing up and grown up, not having had any schooling in German, either could speak no other language but English, or at any rate did not understand enough German to assimilate the desired blessing of services and confirmation instruction. In order to meet this need, and, at the same time to furnish some assistance to Pastor Moedinger, Pastor G. Franke was called as assistant pastor in the Spring of 1884; and he, besides helping in the work that was conducted in German, preached English sermons on Sunday evenings. Even before that several pastors of the city, at the request of the Congregation, had conducted English evening services here. Shortly after that, under Pastor Franke's guidance, an English congregation, consisting mainly of young members of the German congregation, was formed. This group retained its connection with the mother-church in so far as they used its church and were served by its Assistant Pastor, but otherwise had their own organization and contributed toward the salary of the pastor. While Pastor Franke was working here, about three years, about 125 to 150 children were instructed and confirmed by him. But when Pastor Franke in the summer of 1887 accepted another call, the English congregation dissolved.

About this time St. Paul's Congregation was also faced with the task of calling a new pastor. For 31 years Pastor Moedinger had faithfully served the congregation and experienced the Lord's blessing. His declining powers no longer permitted him to do the heavy work in this large congregation. He therefore withdrew from the more onerous duties and himself proposed to the Congregation, that they call another pastor for that work, while he declare himself ready to continue serving the congregation with preaching and official acts, so long as he felt sufficiently strong and would be asked for his help.

The Congregation, agreeing to this proposal, therefore called the writer of this booklet as their new pastor, who had been until this time in Altamont, Ill., and was installed on the 23rd Sunday after Trinity, November 13th, 1887, on the authorization of Pastor Timothy Stiemke, then President of the Southern District, by Pastor Moedinger himself, with the assistance of all Lutheran pastors in New Orleans; and on the following Sunday he preached his initial sermon.

Shortly before that a change among the teachers in the parochial school had occurred. Teacher C. W. Sauer, who for many years had taught the upper class, accepted a call to Schaumburg, Ill.; Teacher J. F. Thomson, who since 1879 had taught partly the lower, and then the middle class, was moved to the upper class, and Teacher F. Doepke, formerly in Houston, Texas, was called for the lower class. The last two mentioned are still working in the school, but the latter has accepted a call to Texas, which he will be following shortly.

Also under the newly-called pastor the need for English services was soon felt again, since not only those who had been confirmed in recent years were entirely unsupplied, but already in the first year a class of approximately forty children had to be instructed in English and confirmed. After their confirmation in April of 1888 the Congregation again instituted the English Sunday evening services, but with the express provision that founding an English congregation within the German congregation would not be permitted, but with the declared purpose of working toward the building of an English Lutheran congregation entirely separate from the German congregation. During the summer months of the same year several members of the previously formed English congregation organized "The First English Evangelical-Lutheran Congregation of New Orleans, La." Their services were temporarily still conducted in St. Paul's Church, which had been placed at their disposal. They were served by the writer until in October 1888 they obtained the Rev. Theodore Huegli as their pastor; and in January 1889 they dedicated their newly-built church to the service of God.

St. Paul's Congregation had hardly returned home from this joyous dedication of their daughter-congregation's church, when, according to the inscrutable counsel of God, there came for them a time of great sorrow. During the evening of February 5th, 1889, when the pastor, one teacher and one lay-delegate had just left the day before to attend the Convention of the Southern District at Houston, Texas, in a manner still unexplained, fire broke out in the church, and the latter was reduced to ashes down to the foundation. The parsonage and the school, miraculously, were entirely unharmed. For seven long months the congregation was, so to say, homeless. Services, during this time, were conducted in the German Methodist church nearby, which had been kindly offered them for Sunday afternoon services. Although, regrettably, some members became indifferent and lax in the use of the means of grace, yet for many others this divine visitation became a means of spiritual revival, and hearts were all the more firmly united in common prayer and shared work in God's kingdom. Trusting in God, the Congregation immediately went about the rebuilding of their church. Since the foundation walls were still intact, the new building, after necessary repairs and raising of the foundation to a greater height, was completed. Although the new church on the whole was built on the same plan as the old one, it makes quite a different impression, also on the outside, by reason of several changes that were made; the inside arrangement was entirely new.

After the necessary preliminary work had been completed, the cornerstone of the new church was laid on Palm Sunday, April 14th, 1889, in the presence of a large number of people. This cornerstone, cut out of white marble, bears this inscription in letters of gold: "German Ev. Luth. St. Paul's Church. Destroyed by fire February 5th, 1889. Rebuilt 1889." And under that: "Built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Cornerstone. Eph. 2,20". Into this cornerstone the following objects were placed: 1) Several items concerning the Congregation: A short history of the Congregation, that had been previously read publicly, the Constitution of the Congregation, a list of all officers and the voting members, a hymnal, a catechism and the Constitution of the Ladies' Aid. 2) Items concerning the synodical connection and Christian fellowship: Constitution of Synod, Report on the Delegate Convention of the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States of 1887, Report on the Southern District Convention of 1888, and one copy each of the following church papers: Lutheraner, Missionstaube, Ev.-Luth. Blaetter, Lutheran Witness, Pioneer, and Lutherisches Kinderblatt; 3) Items pertaining to government and public life: List of the President of the United States, the Governor of Louisiana and the Mayor of New Orleans, several coins and one copy of the following: Rundschau, New Orleans Deutsche Zeitung, N. O. Times-Democrat and N. O. Picayune.

Five months had to pass before this joyful celebration of the laying of the cornerstone could be followed by the more joyful festival of the dedication of the new church. On September 15th, the thirteenth Sunday after Trinity, 1889, the congregation entered their new house of worship, dedicated it to the service of the Triune God, full of thanks and praise to God for His grace and truth, which they had now experienced anew and will experience henceforth. Also their aged and faithful pastor C. G. Moedinger was able to attend this joyful celebration.

It is only right and proper that we should here devote a few more words to this servant of the Lord. For next to God's blessing it is due to this faithful pastor that this congregation has become what she now is. Part for part, as he himself grew in the knowledge of the Word he led his congregation onward and upward and labored unremittingly according to the measure of the gifts and powers that God had given him at the inward and outward growth of the congregation. Through many years he preached twice every Sunday, and besides that also once on a weekday. Added to that were the many other duties of his ministry, that will ever have to be done in a congregation. And his strength was put to an especially severe test during the various yellow fever epidemics, with which New Orleans was visited from time to time. At such times he would go courageously from house to house, from one sick or dying member to another and brought them all the comfort of the Word and the Sacrament. At such times he often found no relaxation day or night. Once, during the horrible epidemic of 1878, when the pastors of two New Orleans congregations had become victims of the epidemic, and the pastor of a third N. O. Congregation was away in the North, he alone had to serve all four churches and visit the many sick and dying members. Not only at such times, but generally, he placed all his strength into the service of the Lord and His Church. Everyone must bear witness that he literally sacrificed himself for the congregation, and often worked beyond his strength. That, in spite of all that, the congregation did not make progress in the measure that one might expect, and that even until this day certain evils have not yet been overcome, is explained partly thru the earlier history of the congregation, and partly through the especially difficult conditions of church life in Orleans in general; but principally by this that in the face of the many pastoral duties in a congregation simply too large for any one pastor, there were so many pastoral duties, that the highly necessary cure of souls in private admonition and guidance had to remain undone, especially in the last years of Pastor Moedinger's increasing physical weakness. But when you compare the situation of the congregation in earlier times and now, it becomes very clear that Pastor Moedinger's

work was crowned with truly great blessing. Now finally he had worn himself out and needed rest. How he in 1887 withdrew from the larger part of his work and the writer of these lines was called to serve in his place, has been reported above. Here and there Pastor Moedinger was still able to help with ministerial acts, the last time he preached to his congregation from the pulpit was before Pentecost 1887. To his own physical ailments there were added other sufferings and hardships, until finally death brought him release and the rest he had hoped for. On January 25th, 1890 he died a blessed death in faith in his Savior at the age of 58 years, 9 months and 14 days. Two days later, with truly grand participation, his body was accompanied by all the Lutheran pastors to its last resting place, where amidst hundreds of his former parishioners, it is resting in the hope of a glorious day of resurrection. For all those whose pastor and teacher he was we record here the word of God that was one of the texts used at this funeral service: "Remember them which have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose faith follow considering the end of their conversation". Hebrews 13, 7.

Before we bring this history of the Congregation to a close, it may be in place to offer a few more items of information that will facilitate an insight into the conditions as they prevailed in the Congregation. Numerically the Congregation - or, rather - the number of those who were adherents of the Congregation and were occasionally served by its pastor, was no longer so great as in earlier years, altho there are still near 1,000 communicant members,⁽¹⁾ and many others occasionally call for the services of the pastor. Many who formerly belonged to the Congregation either have lost completely any connection with the Church or they have in the course of time become members in other churches or other organizations. Our young people are becoming completely English and offer material to our English sister-congregation for rapid growth. Add to that the fact that as against the immigration of great numbers of Germans in earlier years, immigration has now stopped completely. And in New Orleans, perhaps more than anywhere else, the flourishing lodge activity has contributed much to estrange many from their church. These and other causes will make clear why the number of those who stand by the Congregation and occasionally attend its services is no longer as high as in earlier years. But there is hardly reason to bewail this lessening of numbers. Those who on account of the lack of knowledge of the German language have turned to our English sister-congregation are, of course, not lost to the Church; and those who are not for Christ and His kingdom, and only consider church and communion attendance a matter of custom to remember from time to time are in reality no asset, but only a liability for the Congregation; and the Congregation loses nothing when such people leave it entirely; the church only gains in that case.

If then, in this respect, there has been a retrogression also in the last years, yet we must not fail to notice that in other respects, under God's blessing, even if slowly, the congregation is making constant progress. The pure Word and Sacrament, God's Word and Luther's doctrine, have definitely found a place and are entrenching themselves more and more, and the number of those who come regularly for Word and Sacrament, is, thank God, not decreasing, but increasing. Although certain old evils have not yet been completely overcome, yet the Congregation is more and more assuming the shape of an Evangelical-Lutheran one, and is constantly growing in its appreciation of the task that this implies.

(1) About that number of different persons have communed in the course of one year; but the number of those that are considered communicant members at present (July 1890) amounts to no fewer than 1,200 names of such as have communed here during the service of this writer and have not yet terminated their connection with the Congregation. It is true that in hundreds of cases this connection must be a very loose one.

The bond of Christian fellowship is becoming more firmly knit and the realization of belonging together becomes clearer. A special cause for gratification is also this, that a large number of young people are diligent in hearing the Word and partaking of the Sacrament, so that, also in the future, the Congregation, under the Lord's blessing, can continue to build itself up.

For the furtherance of the spiritual growth of the Congregation the traditional Catechism Reviews (Christenlehren) have been introduced in the Autumn of 1888, which have been so richly blessed, but which, unfortunately, do not enjoy a large attendance. Since the dedication of the new church the Confessional Addresses before Holy Communion have been introduced, whereas formerly the congregation was satisfied merely to hear the Admonition read. Both of these, besides the public preaching, serve to carry the Word of God into the minds and hearts of the hearers; and that this cannot ultimately remain without blessing and success - this is made sure by the Lord's promise. In order that also among the young people the bond of Christian fellowship might be strengthened and to train them with God's help to become efficient members of the congregation, a Young Men's Society was established on November 11th, 1888 and a Young Ladies' Society on December 1, 1889, both of which are enjoying a continued healthy growth. Another indication of the blessed flourishing of the Congregation doubtless is the fact, that already in this year no less than \$2,000.00 of its debt has been paid, so that also in this respect, we can look joyfully into the future.

Finally we want to include here several figures which will be of interest as showing the size of the local field of labor. Since the installation of Pastor Moedinger (1856) until July 1st, 1890, there were 7560 Baptisms, 2770 Confirmations, 2060 Marriages and 1820 Burials. Because the entries in the Church records of those times are not numbered, it is hardly possible to compute the exact number of pastoral acts. An estimate based on actual count through several of those first sixteen years shows that from 1840 to 1890 more than 10,000 children were baptized, more than 3200 were confirmed, over 3,000 couples were married and at least 2500 people were buried. Reading such figures one cannot help asking: Where are the thousands who once through Baptism were made members of the Body of Christ? If we assume that of those 10,000 who had been baptized, once again as many as are recorded in the Church records had died (that is, 5,000), then 5,000 of those baptized must still be with us. But when, on the other hand, we consider those still living who had been baptized in Germany, parents, grandparents, older brothers and sisters, the number of souls in our congregation must be placed at no less than 6,000; but in reality this figure is, at the highest estimate, only 1,800. Then where are the other thousands? The answer has already been given above. A number joined the English sister-congregation; many fell victims to the traitorous sects; but most of them have entirely fallen away from the Lord and His Church. Hundreds of people who had been baptized and confirmed in St. Paul's Church, live in the immediate neighborhood like heathen people and show not the slightest interest in God or His Word and Sacrament, except that many want to have the pastor called when death is near, sometimes in sincerity, because God does grant grace at the very end leading to repentance and humble return; but often only for this reason, that when they have died, they might be given an honorable Christian burial. O, what a totally different anniversary this congregation might celebrate together with all the angels in heaven, if those that are lost had remained faithful to the Lord and His Church and could celebrate with us! O that God might grant that they all might remember from what they have fallen and might return while the Day of Grace still lasts! But perhaps we must be satisfied, when now and then a lost sheep returns to the fold of Christ. Praise God that at times we have been permitted to experience this joy.

Then may the Congregation itself, looking back on its fifty year history, thankfully acknowledge the great grace of God that is given her in Christ Jesus! May she acknowledge as an undeserved gift of God's grace that the faithful God has led her out of the swamp of unionistic church life and the thin dilution of faith and confession that any unbeliever can profess, and through His pure Word has made her rich in all things, in all doctrine and in all knowledge. May just that be the cause of loud praise at this remembrance of her fifty year existence! Together with that the admonition of the Lord must never be forgotten: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown!" (Rev. 3, 11), and that of the Apostle: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord". (I Corinthians 15,58). Looking back upon the past let us say:

Praise, honor, thanks and glory
Be sung to Thee, O Lord,
That as in former ages
Thou still dost help afford.

And

As we look into the future:

In these last days of sore distress
Grant us, dear Lord, true steadfastness
That pure we keep, till life is spent,
Thy holy Word and Sacrament.

Pastor G. J. Wegener