

# Rejoice in the Lord— *Always!*

**Fifty Years of God's Grace**

**1974-2024**



**Our Saviour Lutheran Church  
Parksville, BC**

**795 Island Highway West  
Parksville, BC**

**[www.oslcp.ca](http://www.oslcp.ca)**

## Introduction

***“Rejoice in the Lord, always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4)***

What a fine theme our Church Council selected when it started planning these 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. St. Paul urges us *twice* to rejoice. In a way, he’s just reinforcing the point. At the time he wrote this letter to the Christians in Philippi, Paul himself was in prison. But even there, he had more than one reason to rejoice. He knew he was not alone. Christ Jesus had already claimed Paul as his own and would return one day to take him to his final home. (Phil 3:12, 20) In the meantime, Paul enjoyed the warm fellowship of Christians who shared this faith—and went out of their way, time and time again, to share their lives with him too. (Phil 4:15-18) That’s why Paul could write with such confidence, even from a prison cell: “I am thankful for your partnership in the gospel—from the first day until now!” (Phil 1:5) A double dose of rejoicing was certainly in order.

But there’s another reason too why Paul repeats himself. Christians rejoice for two different reasons. First, our rejoicing *begins* in the past. It starts by remembering what God has already done to help and save his people. He has forgiven our sins, through Jesus. He has brought us to faith, through the Holy Spirit. He has surrounded us with other believers, in the church. He has provided for our needs, in every circumstance.

Yet that’s only half of it! Paul tells us *again* to rejoice: not just because of what God has done in the past, but also because of what he is going to do in the future. In Paul’s own case, he could say with confidence: “I know that all of this will turn out for my salvation.” (Phil 1:19) We look ahead with equal confidence that God will keep on blessing us in the future, even as he has in the past. One day, our faithful God will lead all of us all the way home.

From this perspective, this history booklet is not just about history. Yes, the committee that has prepared this booklet has done a deep dive into the history of Our Saviour Lutheran Church. Its members have dug into files, gathered documents, pored over reports, collected pictures, interviewed current and former members, tracked down former pastors, and written and rewritten these chapters. This booklet is not perfect and may contain some inadvertent errors, but its *first* goal has been to look back and capture—as fully as possible—the fantastic story of God’s faithfulness to this little congregation. As you will see, the story begins decades earlier than our formal organization in 1974, and involves some really fascinating people and events.

But the greater goal of this project involves looking forward, not just backward. As a congregation, we pray for God to guide us *onward* from this point. Like those who have come before us, we too want to *grow* in his Word and do whatever we can to *increase* our mission. We dare not stand still.

So, yes. “Rejoice in the Lord”—by looking back. Let’s say it again: “Rejoice!”—by looking ahead. As people who have been redeemed by Our Saviour and brought together in this place for his mission, we can all surely rejoice—“always!”

A brief word about the organization of this booklet. The first 9 chapters are organized according to the pastors who served the congregation at each part of its history. Because each pastor brought different gifts and experiences, and strengths and weaknesses, the life of the congregation took on different contours during each of their ministries. Between one pastor and the next, there was always a surprise! But God always gave his people good reason to rejoice when he led them from one to the next. Following these 9 time-focused chapters, there are 4

more chapters dealing with special topics that seem to deserve extra treatment. A statistical summary for the congregation's history completes the package.

The committee that headed these 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations as a whole was headed by Evelin Kruger, along with Wendy Punter and Brenda Chambers. The history sub-committee was headed by Evelin Kruger and Pastor Steve Chambers. The first draft of each chapter was made by a different person: Jeanette Domes, Lois Edelenbos, Evelin Kruger, Donna McAskile, Heinz Sperber, Jutta Storey, and Pastor Steve. Interviews were conducted by most of these same people, plus Sylvia Armbruster, Judy Dyke, Dino Kruger, and Ron Woodward. Photos were contributed and sorted by many people, including Sylvia Armbruster, Jeanette Domes, Lois Edelenbos, Donna McAskile, Darlene McFarland, Toni McKinnon, and Carol Zielke. Editing was a team project for Jeanette Domes and Pastor Steve. To all of these energetic and hard-working contributors (and any others we may have forgotten to name), Our Saviour Lutheran Church says a joyful and heartfelt *thanks!*

On the bigger scale, of course, we also thank God for everyone who has contributed so much time, energy, and talent to the Lord's work here over the years. Some have been employed in the church office. Many have been elected or appointed to positions in the congregation's structure as Council members, committee members, and Elders. Many more have served without pay or formal recognition as volunteer musicians, worship leaders, teachers, visitors, service teams, custodians, craftsmen, landscapers... the list goes on and on! As St. Paul recognizes, "*All of you* are the body of Christ, and *each one of you* is a part of it." (1 Cor 12:27)

Thanks be to Christ our Saviour for bringing together so many hundreds of people into His body here at Our Saviour Lutheran Church, over the decades. To Him be all the glory, now and forever.

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## Chapter 1 The Pioneer Years (1938-1941)



*This chapter is based on a longer account of Our Saviour Lutheran Church's earliest history, which is available from the church office for those who would like to know more. Much of this information comes from the diaries that Pastor Bill Doeling kept throughout his Vancouver Island ministry, 1938-1945.*

What a great celebration it was on Sunday, January 9, 1938. The scattered outposts of “the Vancouver Island Parish” were receiving their very own pastor! Fifty-five people gathered at Trinity Lutheran Church in Duncan to welcome him. His name was Rev. William (Bill) F. Doeling.

The pastor who installed him, Rev. Richard Holtzen, had travelled over from Chilliwack just to do this. Holtzen was the real pioneer. He started visiting isolated little clusters of Lutherans all over the Island back in 1931. He was relieved to hand over responsibility for this huge mission field to Pastor Doeling.

As both men knew, the challenges were great. Most of the 4,000 or so Lutherans who lived on the Island were loggers and sawmill workers living in far-flung camps. How to care for them? The first serious attempt to do so had been made in 1936, when Pastor Holtzen arranged for a seminary graduate named Hans Petersen to be sent to Port Alberni. He was a capable man who could preach in English, German, Danish, and Norwegian. He quickly established “preaching stations” in Coombs, Hornby Island, Courtenay, Campbell River, Youbou, Duncan, and Victoria. But for some reason, Petersen did not continue visiting these places for long. The work faltered. It was only when Pastor Doeling arrived on the scene that all of these mission stations began to receive the regular pastoral care they needed.



*Rev. W. F. Doeling  
Seminary graduation photo, 1935*

Pastor Doeling was the right man for the job. Born in North Dakota in 1910, he received a good education at Concordia College in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, graduating in 1935. Unfortunately, it was the bottom of the Depression, and very few parishes could afford to call a pastor. So he had to wait for a year before being assigned to his first parish. Finally, in the summer of 1936, he began serving several small congregations around Vulcan, Alberta.

The very next day after he was installed as pastor of the Vancouver Island Parish, Pastor Doeling made his first visit to Parksville. Mostly he travelled by car between the little mission groups that Petersen had established a few years earlier. The roads were rough, but his farm background made it easy for him to keep his old car, “the Dakota Maid,” going. The church

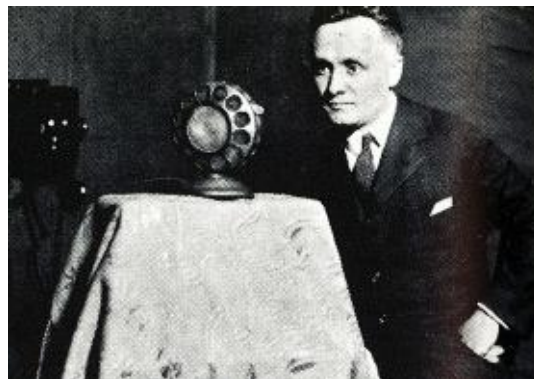
paid him 6 cents a mile: 4 cents directly to cover operating expenses, and 2 cents into a car-replacement fund. To stretch his income as far as possible, he often used the back seat of the Dakota Maid as a camping kitchen.

Obviously, people had to nurture their own faith for the long weeks between his pastoral visits. So, Pastor Doeling offered Sunday School sessions for all ages after each service. To build a good foundation, the textbook was Luther's *Small Catechism*. Every family was encouraged to buy its own copy, either in German for 40 cents or a bilingual German-English edition for 60 cents.

Parksville was the smallest mission in Pastor Doeling's circuit. Its little handful of people met once a month in the home of Mr. Fred Gulbe in Coombs. The first worship service had 8 people in attendance and the offering was \$1.00. Only rarely did attendance hit double digits; the average turnout in 1938 was only 9. Offerings ranged from a low of 45 cents to a high of \$2.35, and the total for the year was \$13.94. Thankfully, the Alberta-BC District was committed to subsidizing Pastor Doeling's ministry and did not require his geographically huge but numerically tiny parish to pay its own way.

Between visits, the pastor kept in touch with his parishioners by letters that he copied on a "hectograph" (a gelatin duplicator). Each copy cost 3 cents to mail, and an average mailing to Parksville was 15 to 20 letters. In addition to an invitation to worship, Pastor Doeling also included devotional resources in some of these mailings, like Lenten devotional booklets.

In weeks when no worship services could be held (that is, 3 weeks out of the month), Pastor Doeling encouraged people to listen to the Lutheran Hour. Its main broadcast originated in St. Louis, Missouri, with Dr. Walter A. Maier speaking. Since its beginning in 1930, The Lutheran Hour had become the most popular religious radio program in the world. A Canadian version of the program also reached a large audience in western Canada. Pastor Doeling's diary shows that he made an announcement about The Lutheran Hour every month or two, as part of his tireless efforts to keep his little mission-groups fed and nurtured in Christ.



*Dr. Walter A. Maier, Lutheran Hour speaker*

It was exhausting work. A typical mission trip to all the points of his parish took 12 days. On one such trip in January 1939, he conducted 5 worship services in English, plus 2 in German... led 1 special "young people's service"... taught 2 Sunday School classes... led 2 confirmation classes... and made 26 pastoral calls... in 6 different towns. Whew!

Later in 1939, the outbreak of World War II created many difficulties for the Island's Lutherans. Until June 1940, German continued to be used in worship services in Duncan and Courtenay. From then on, all activities in the whole Vancouver Island Parish were conducted in English only—as the pastor explained, "in order that we give no offense or appearance or occasion to the enemies of the church."

Supporting this shift to English was the introduction of an excellent new hymnal in 1941. Years in the making, *The Lutheran Hymnal* offered a rich but flexible liturgy plus 4-part musical

accompaniment for every hymn. This was great for congregational singing! Even so, singing was not always possible in very small mission-stations like Coombs—especially when there were only 3 or 4 worshippers! But Pastor Doeling encouraged every family to buy its own hymnal anyway. They were sold at a special introductory price of \$1.00.

As the war continued, a number of special offerings were taken for its victims. In December 1939, the Young People's Society in Port Alberni collected \$10.65 "to help in the alleviation of suffering in the scourge of war." The Vancouver Island Parish as a whole collected \$14.50 in February and March 1941 "to help the physical suffering of the Lutheran foreign missions, which are cut off from their homeland on account of the war." Later that year, Pastor Doeling announced that "The Army, Navy, and Air Force Commission of our church asks for special offerings to help serve the men in our country's services. These are to be made to the pastor privately or by marked envelopes."

How long could one man keep all these mission-stations going, under wartime conditions? By the summer of 1940, Pastor Doeling's fading energy forced him to discontinue many of his usual activities, including Sunday School and youth work throughout the parish. Even Sunday services were cancelled for the summer in the Hornby Island outpost. Six months later, Pastor Doeling's relentless workload wore him down to the point that he had to take a full week off.

Even before this, Pastor Doeling had been asking the Alberta-BC District to supply him with a "pastoral assistant." In August 1940, it looked like a candidate would soon be coming. But it turned out that no-one was available. The war had totally reversed the over-supply of pastoral candidates that had been such a problem just a few years earlier when Pastor Doeling himself had graduated from seminary.

Undeterred, Pastor Doeling kept pleading with church leaders for help. In November 1940 he managed to arrange a two-day visit by Rev. F. C. Streufert, the Director of Missions for the whole Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, who came all the way from St. Louis to see the Vancouver Island Parish for himself! This visit seems to have done the trick. Less than a month later, Pastor Doeling announced with jubilation that a second permanent pastor would soon be called to the Vancouver Island Parish.

But still the delays continued. In March 1941, Pastor Doeling reassured the Port Alberni group that this second pastor would be coming "soon." A month later, it was announced that the new man would be responsible for the northern half of the Island while Pastor Doeling would continue serving the southern half. Three weeks later, worshippers learned that the pastor who had received this call had declined it. Then, on June 1: "The divine call to the Alberni parish has been extended to the Rev. [Alfred L.] Enders. May God guide his decision." Finally, two weeks later, a little group of 7 worshippers at the Gulbe home in Coombs was the first mission-station to hear the joyous news: "Rev. Enders has accepted our call."

As a new graduate from the St. Louis seminary, Pastor Enders was ordained and installed in the Port Alberni mission-station, which was not even formally organized at that point, on Sunday, July 6, 1941. After conducting this service, Pastor Doeling turned over to Pastor Enders the full responsibility for what would now be known as the Alberni Parish. As he told the people that day, "Your pastor for the past 3½ years now takes leave to limit his work to the Victoria

Parish.” For the sake of his health, and to help the work move forward, this division of the huge Vancouver Island mission-field was exactly what was needed.

Although this was the end of Pastor Doeling’s ministry in the Parksville area, the rest of his story is worth knowing. The year after limiting his work to the southern part of the Island, Pastor Doeling married his longtime sweetheart, Kathleen McRoberts. They met during his pastorate in Vulcan, when she was still in high school. Sadly, their marriage was short. Pastor Doeling’s heart had been damaged as a child when he contracted rheumatic fever. He became seriously ill in the summer of 1944, right around the time his and Kathleen’s only child, Linda, was born. He died on October 7, 1945, and was buried in Royal Oak Cemetery in Victoria. Although his entire pastoral ministry lasted less than 10 years, Pastor Doeling had poured himself into it and sowed many seeds that eventually came to bear great fruit in many places—including Parksville.



*Pastor Bill and Kathleen Doeling, 1942*

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### ***In Their Own Words***

Pastor Doeling, encouraging people to listen to The Lutheran Hour (April 3, 1938):

The Canadian Lutheran Hour from station CFCN in Calgary (1030 kilocycles) announces their 100<sup>th</sup> broadcast, today at 5:30 PM. If you hear this broadcast, please write and tell them of this reception on this, their anniversary. Tune in also to the [inter]national

Lutheran Hour from the States, coming over a coast-to-coast network of 59 stations, among them KOL of Seattle, which is quite easily heard here. This national Lutheran Hour features Dr. Maier as speaker, universally recognized as one of the most powerful radio preachers on the air. When it is impossible for you to attend here, tune in this Lutheran Hour from KOL at 1:30 every Sunday afternoon.

One of Pastor Doeling's typical mission-trips, starting and ending in Duncan (January 1939):

- Sunday, January 8, **Duncan**: Divine Service (*German*), attendance 43; Sunday School attendance 14; confirmation class attendance 5
- Also Sunday, January 8, **Victoria**: Divine Service (*English*), attendance 11
- Monday-Tuesday, January 9-10, **Duncan**: 3 pastoral calls
- **Wednesday January 11, Parksville: Divine Service (English), attendance 7**
- Thursday-Sunday, January 12-15, **Port Alberni**: Divine Service (*English*), attendance 17; Sunday School attendance 7; confirmation class attendance 4; young people's service (attendance 21); 15 pastoral calls
- Sunday-Tuesday, January 15-17, **Courtenay**: Divine Service (*English*), attendance 32; Divine Service (*German*), attendance 27; Sunday School attendance 11; confirmation class attendance 6; 8 pastoral calls
- Wednesday, January 18, **Hornby Island**: Divine Service (*English*), attendance 28
- Thursday, January 19, drove back to **Duncan**.

Sunday, September 3, 1939 (two days after Germany invaded Poland, but a full week before Canada declared war)—Pastor Doeling's encouragement to the Lutherans in Port Alberni:

As our Word of God in today's service taught us [Proverbs 28:1], let us never lose heart but always practice the virtue of Christian courage, knowing that in all times, war as well as peace, we are grounded on the infallible Rock of our Salvation.

Pastor Doeling's last entry in his diary for 1938, his first year of ministry in the Vancouver Island Parish:

Dec. 31, 1938. Closed another year of grace. God pardon our many shortcomings and continue His grace and blessings upon us. Soli Deo Gloria! [To God alone be the glory!]



## Chapter 2

### Steps Forward, Steps Back (1941-1978)



*This chapter is based on a longer account of Our Saviour Lutheran Church's earliest history, which is available from the church office for those who would like to know more.*

Unfortunately, very little is known about Pastor Alfred Enders' ministry in Parksville and Coombs. His first visit to this area took place on the day after his ordination and installation in July 1941, when Pastor Doeling (his predecessor) helped him lead a simple worship service in Fred Gulbe's home in Coombs for a congregation of 7 people.

This was more or less the same pattern Pastor Enders seems to have followed for the next 4 years, until he accepted a call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Chilliwack in 1945. The Lord's Supper was offered two or three times a year to a tiny handful of communicants. Since Fred Gulbe and his mother Julia hosted the gathering, they were always present. So were the Kaisers, a faithful middle-aged couple. It is likely that other people surrounded this tiny core group and sometimes joined in worship, but the list of members did not grow at all between 1941 and 1946.

In fact, the group shrank when Fred Gulbe, the head of its host family, died in January 1945 at the age of 43. A few months later, Pastor Enders too left the tiny Coombs mission when he accepted the call to Chilliwack. What would happen next?

God provided. On November 25, 1945, the Alberni Parish ordained and installed another new seminary graduate as its next pastor, Rev. Reinhold Goetjen. Within six months, the Coombs mission had welcomed not just one but two new families into its midst! James and Melanie Agesen and their young family were to be "regulars" for more than a decade. The other new couple, Bill and Henrietta August, became vital pillars of the Coombs-Parksville assembly of Lutherans until well into the 1980s.



*Rev. Gordon and Dorothy Schultz*

Granted, this little burst of sudden growth (doubling the mission's families from two to four!) did not continue. The same four last names appear again and again in the Communion records for the next 12 years: Gulbe, Kaiser, Agesen, and August. Would the Coombs mission ever really take off?

To some extent, yes. After Pastor Goetjen took a call to Creston, the Alberni Parish welcomed Rev. Gordon Schultz as its pastor on Dec. 4, 1949. Like Pastor Doeling years before, Pastor Schultz too had the benefit of several years of pastoral experience. Recognizing the value of Holy Communion, he committed himself to offering it every month in Coombs. For the first few years, the number of communicants remained very low—usually the same six people from the same four families. But then, in 1952, a middle-aged couple named Roy and Hilda Bull were received as communicant members after a

period of adult instruction. A few months later, two of their teenage children were also confirmed.

Then, another little breakthrough! In February 1953, an advertisement in the *Parksville-Qualicum Progress* announced that Lutheran services were being held twice a month at Grace Community Church in Coombs. (*Photo at right*) This seems to have been the first time that the Lutherans who eventually formed Our Saviour Lutheran Church were able to hold regularly scheduled worship services in a dedicated church building.

Even so, these small steps forward were not enough to make much difference. By the end of 1957, there was still only an average of 7 people receiving Communion in the Coombs mission. The last service recorded in the official church register was held in January 1958. One of the 9 people who took part was Mrs. Kaiser, the last remaining member from Pastor Doeling's pioneering ministry almost two decades earlier. Five of the other 8 were from the Agesen family, who had joined in 1946. Otherwise, only 3 new family names had appeared in the parish records in the previous 6 years. It must have looked like the writing was on the wall! After 20 years, the time seems to have come to suspend the Parksville-Coombs Lutheran mission.

The demands on Pastor Schultz's time in Port Alberni itself probably made this decision inevitable. In the previous 8 years he had conducted 27 funerals, performed 102 weddings, baptized 244 children, confirmed 35 youths and 38 adults, and received 57 new members by transfer from other congregations—in Port Alberni alone! He had also been serving that whole time in Courtenay and Campbell River, playing a key role in helping both of those missions become organized as full-fledged congregations in 1957. By comparison, the Coombs mission must have seemed like it was going nowhere. So, for many years, there are no further records of any official Lutheran presence, or formal mission-work, in the Parksville-Coombs area.

What got things going again was the arrival of Pastor Carl Beiderwieden in February 1974. A friendly man with a big smile, he already had 31 years of ministry under his belt. Crucially, the first 15 of those years had been spent as a mission-developer in North Vancouver. It didn't take him long after his installation as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Port Alberni to start resurrecting Lutheran mission-work in the Parksville area.

Under God's grace, there was still a bit of a base to build upon. Grace Lutheran in Port Alberni had two member families living in Parksville; St. Paul's Lutheran in Nanaimo had three.

**At the Churches**  
*P/O PROGRESS*  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8  
*FEB-4-1953*  
ANGELICAN CHURCHES  
Rev. H. J. Best, M.A.  
St Mark's, Qualicum Beach  
11:00 a.m.—Holy Communion.  
7:30 p.m.—Evensong.

St. Anne's, French Creek  
Rev. John Stainer, MA, Vicar  
9:00 a.m.—Holy Communion.

Parish Hall, Parksville  
10:00 a.m.—Family Service.

St. Mary's, Errington  
7:30 p.m.—Evensong.

Nanoose Service  
Anglican Service at the United  
Church at 3:00 p.m.

**LUTHERAN SERVICES**  
Rev. Gordon E. Schultz  
Services first and third Sundays  
of each month at Grace Church,  
Coombs.  
2:00 p.m.—Adult Bible Class.  
2:00 p.m.—Sunday School.

**CATHOLIC CHURCHES**  
11:00 a.m. — Holy Mass, Parksville.  
9:00 a.m.—Holy Mass, Qualicum Beach.

**UNITED CHURCHES**  
St. Stephen's, Qualicum Beach  
Rev. A. E. Cooke, D.D., Minister  
7:30 p.m.—"The Christian and  
World Peace, or Should We Disarm?"

Grace Church, Coombs  
11:00 a.m.—"The Perpetual Adventure of Faith."  
Legion Hall, Bowser  
3:00 p.m.—"What Are You Worth?"  
Dr. Cooke will speak at all three services.

Knox Church, Parksville  
Rev. Peter Kelly, D.D., Minister  
10:30 a.m.—Sunday School.  
Mr. A. Knox, Superintendent.  
7:30 p.m.—Evening Service.

**PARKSVILLE REGULAR BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Kolodychuk Hall  
Rev. V. Y. Burnett  
9:45 a.m.—Sunday School in the Kolodychuk Hall.  
7:30 p.m.—Rev. V. Y. Burnett will speak.

Udenominational, Coombs  
11:00 a.m.—Morning Service.

Pastor Beiderwieden's visits uncovered four more families that were interested in attending services.

All he needed was permission to get going! Permission from the Alberta-BC District was no problem. The sticking-point was the Western Regional Committee—a group that helped the major Lutheran denominations coordinate their work. One of its goals was reducing competition in the field so each church could concentrate its efforts where they would be the most effective.

Sensing a vacuum in the Oceanside area, the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) had applied in 1973 for the right to do mission-work in Parksville, Coombs, Qualicum Beach, and Qualicum Bay. Because the ABC District had suspended its work in Coombs so many years earlier, its leaders had agreed to this request. However, the LCA hadn't really gotten anything going. And now Pastor Beiderwieden was on the scene with missionary expertise, a plan, and a cluster of families that were eager to get going. Would the LCA be willing to give up its rights and let the ABC District move ahead?

The answer, eventually, was “yes.” It took almost two years of negotiations, but in a letter to Pastor Beiderwieden in May 1976, the ABC District president (Rev. Ed Lehman) shared the good news that the Committee had “granted clearance for our church [the ABC District] to work in Parksville and area.”

That was great, because Pastor Beiderwieden had already been busy! In the middle of September 1974, he led a meeting in Parksville for the 9 families that were interested in Lutheran services. The first worship service took place a few weeks later—on Thanksgiving Sunday, October 13, 1974. The location of this service is unknown, but a while later, the pastor reported that services were being held in the Chapel of Pines funeral home. Its owners charged no rent for using what Pastor Beiderwieden called its “very attractive chapel.” That was a blessing, because the average offering at that point was only about \$25 per service. That was pretty good for a group that averaged only 18 people in worship. But it was definitely not a strong enough financial foundation to let that little group move ahead very far, or fast, on its own.



*Rev. Carl and Alma Beiderwieden*

Thankfully, Pastor Beiderwieden's excellent relationship with the ABC District kept the ball rolling. His enthusiasm for Parksville's potential was infectious. “This district is called the fastest growing community in Canada,” he wrote in June 1976. The previous year, 1975, Parksville's population was 4,300, but “close to 400 families have moved into Parksville so far this year.” Looking ahead, local authorities were projecting a population of 14,000 by 1985 and 22,000 by 1995.

The ABC District leaders didn't need much encouragement. Less than two months later, the District's Executive Secretary, Rev. Les Gierach, encouraged Pastor Beiderwieden to keep moving forward and promised to subsidize an expansion to the work. A few months after that, Pastor

Beiderwieden dashed off a quick letter to District President Lehman asking how to go about buying some land. Prices were shooting up and desirable properties were selling quickly. Within two weeks, District staff told Pastor Beiderwieden to start looking around for a suitable property. The hunt was on!

Nor was that all. A few months later—January 1977—the ABC District encouraged Pastor Beiderwieden’s church in Port Alberni to apply for a vicar (a student pastor) for the 1977-1978 academic year “for the purpose of exploring and intensifying work in Parksville.” The District was already setting aside funds for that work. In May, Grace Lutheran Church was officially informed that Daniel E. Georg, a third-year student at Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, was being assigned to serve the Parksville mission between Sept. 1, 1977, and Aug. 31, 1978. Hopes were high that this would turn out to be a big step forward, especially since Vicar Georg had served for a few months the previous summer in another small ABC District mission in Hope, B.C.

Meanwhile, the hunt for a suitable property was also moving ahead. A 4½ acre lot became available on Wembley Road, close to Island Highway. The price was \$75,000. The lot already had electrical service and two good wells. Even better, the pastor wrote to Rev. Gierach,

There is a double mobile home on the property and it has been placed on a solid and full concrete basement. [...] I don’t know if you are familiar with mobile homes but these double ones are not a makeshift affair. It should provide an adequate parsonage for indefinite years. The property has enough frontage to erect a future church on the road side and, of course, have adequate parking in the rear. If it should happen that the work in Parksville might eventually be dropped, there is little doubt that the investment in this property would be returned.

A loan was quickly arranged. Payments were \$500 a month, which was more than 40% of this tiny group’s first budget. Only about 20% of its income in that first year came from its own members. All the rest (\$11,445 out of \$14,544) would have to be provided—and was provided—by a generous subsidy from the ABC District.



*The double-wide trailer, 1978. Today it is a private residence (775 Wembley Road).*

At last, all the pieces were in place for the start of Parksville's very first full-time Lutheran ministry! Vicar Georg was inducted for his year-long internship on Sunday, September

## ***Georg is named Lutheran vicar***

Vicar Daniel Georg was inducted Sept. 25 to serve as spiritual leader of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Parksville.

Almost three years ago, Lutheran services were begun in the Chapel of Pines Mortuary on the Island Highway between Parksville and Qualicum Beach. Now, property has been purchased on Wembley Road, about one-half mile south of Highway 19. The property contains a double mobile home and services will be held in one half, as the Vicar uses the other half for his living quarters.

Beginning with Sunday, Oct. 2, services will be held in the mobile home at 7 p.m. each week.

The Lutheran Church basis its teachings on three principles.

First — the Scripture alone: the Bible as the inspired and inerrant Word of God is only rule and guide for faith and life.

Secondly — grace alone: it is only the love of God through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, that provides forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Thirdly — faith alone: for-

givenness is neither earned nor deserved, but accepted by the individual by personal faith in Jesus Christ.



**DANIEL GEORG**  
... spiritual leader

25, 1977. A few weeks earlier, the new worship area in the mobile home had been outfitted with 40 folding chairs and an electronic organ. The chairs cost \$400 plus tax and the organ cost \$500. Members were asked to contribute toward these expenditures, above and beyond their regular offerings. After the service, the entire congregation—about 30 people—was invited to a “get-acquainted-with-the-vicar” gathering at the home of one of the members.

Even so, Pastor Beiderwieden was not off the hook quite yet. Vicars were only students, so Pastor Beiderwieden still had to drive over the hump from Port Alberni to offer Sunday-evening Communion services once a month. To make sure everything was going smoothly, he had to make many other visits too to meet with the vicar, talk to worshippers, and keep the work moving forward.

Still, the pastor's three years of hard work seemed to be pointing toward the promise of a good harvest. After twenty years of faithful but relatively unfruitful mission-work in Coombs (1938-

1958), followed by a long period in which the whole field was completely fallow (1958-1974), many seeds were at last being sown—and starting to sprout. In a letter to the little mission-group right before Vicar Georg's induction, Pastor Beiderwieden wrote:

Under the blessing of our gracious God, the Parksville Mission has grown steadily—in spite of the fact that the undersigned has not had time to put much effort into any kind of evangelism program. Now, with the coming vicar I know that you are all looking forward to more rapid growth, and I'm sure that will come. But it will come mainly through your individual efforts. I would plead with each one of you to become what every Christian actually is—a missionary. Invite people to church, tell them about our services, keep an ear and eye open for Lutherans who have not become aware of our services; supply the Vicar with names of contacts. Always remember that your Vicar is still a student and that he is here in a learning process. Your patience and assistance, your mature advice and willing help will make this year a blessing to him, to you, and to Our Savior Lutheran Church.

Then, in a postscript that testifies to his ready good humour, Pastor Beiderwieden wrote: “Ladies, you who still need to satisfy the motherly instinct, remember that the vicar is a bachelor and for all we know, may not be a very good cook!”

Whether he was a good cook or not is hard to determine at this point. But it seems that Vicar Georg served up a rich smorgasbord of activities to the people of the congregation and community. Besides Sunday morning services, Sunday School, and Bible study, he led a junior youth group on Monday evenings, senior youth on Tuesdays, and confirmation classes on Wednesdays. A ladies’ group, an altar guild, a service committee, and a variety of recreational activities kept both him and the congregation busy throughout the year of his leadership.

One more loose end needed to be tied up. Shortly after Vicar Georg’s arrival, the ABC District Office sent a letter encouraging this little mission-group “to become formally organized as Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, Parksville, B.C.” To achieve that goal, its members needed to prepare a constitution and submit it to the province of British Columbia for official recognition. As the next chapter of this history will show, that was good advice that deserved careful attention.



*The worship area in the mobile home, 1978*

+++

***From those who were there***

Pastor Beiderwieden, in a letter to ABC District officials (June 22, 1976):

You fellows have had a lot of experience dealing with statistics, so I won’t offer too much advice. [But] I have no doubts that the [Parksville-Qualicum] area will continue to grow rapidly. It will be a high percentage of older people—it is an ideal retirement spot. This, I would think, would play a part in the financial future. There will be plenty of work for a

man in the area in the near future, and indeed, [one] could be used now. The site of a future church should be between Parksville and Qualicum, but definitely closer to Parksville. That land should be looked for soon.

Pastor Schultz, in a letter to Our Saviour on its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary (1979):

My serving of the Parksville congregation was in its early development. In those days we were still a pilgrim church, using various buildings in Coombs, and then moving to the old United Church building in Parksville. We can be thankful for the use of these buildings, for they gave us a churchly atmosphere of worship, and greatly helped our small group. Now we are thankful that you have your own property and can grow from there.

Mary Parker grew up in the Coombs area and has a few special memories of these early days of OSLC's history. She no longer remembers the date when she joined OSLC, but it was definitely when Pastor Schultz was serving in Port Alberni. He led services regularly in Coombs and then also in the United Church in Parksville. There was always great fellowship after worship. She enjoyed teaching Sunday School, and the house-to-house Bible studies that were conducted in those days. Mary was instrumental in starting to decorate the church's cross with fresh flowers for Easter. Many people questioned this, but with the blessing of Pastor Schultz, it is a tradition that continues to this day.

## Chapter 3

### The Lassman Years (1978-1984)



*This chapter is based on a longer account of this part of Our Saviour Lutheran Church's history, which is available from the church office for those who would like to know more.*

Pastor Ernie V. Lassman was ordained and installed as Our Saviour's first resident pastor on August 13, 1978. He was a new graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Although he had lived for some years in Washington State, it was a big adjustment for him, his wife Kathy, and their young son Aaron, to settle into their new life here in Parksville.

Pastor Lassman had no idea how God was going to use him to establish a new congregation that was facing so many challenges. He had never contemplated serving a *mission*. There were no local patterns or traditions in place for how to do anything. Everything had to be invented from scratch.



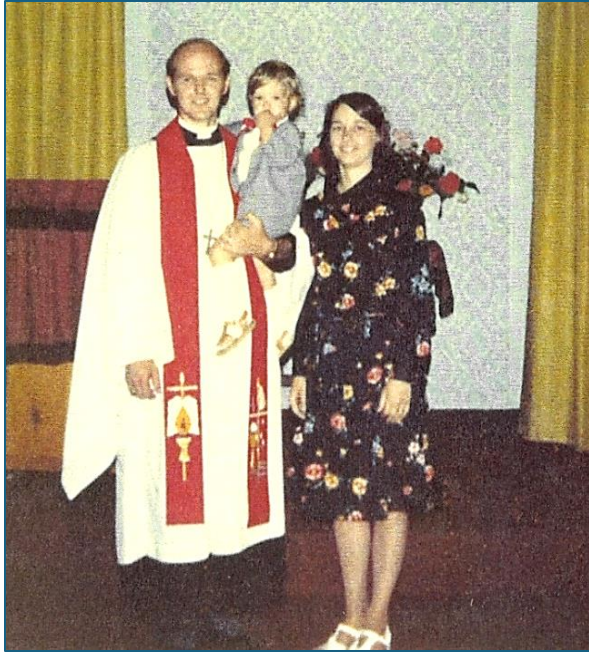
*Farewell, Vicar Georg... Welcome, Pastor Lassman!*

Thankfully, Pastor Beiderwieden continued to be a great mentor, just as he had been to Vicar Georg. Thanks to the strong start both of them had made the year before, the Parksville mission was actually up and running. It already had almost 50 members, who appreciated their modest double-wide-trailer. Renovations had been made to turn it into a suitable church with a sanctuary, classrooms, and cooking and fellowship areas. The altar, pulpit, lectern, and baptism font had been made by Bill August—one of the longtime members of the Coombs mission who joined that little group way back in 1946. The paraments (linens) for this furniture were made by some of the church women. Everyone pitched in wherever they could, to do whatever had to be done.

Pastor Lassman too learned to be a jack-of-all trades. His young family had only one car, so he bought an orange and white moped so Kathy could use the car in the morning before



he needed it for his work in the afternoon. Every Saturday evening, he drove over to Port Alberni (presumably in the car, not the moped!) to print the Sunday bulletin at Grace Lutheran. He had to figure out how to do many other office and administrative tasks as well, including record-keeping, report-filing, and so on. Most significantly, he started to develop his own Adult Instruction program which eventually led to a 15 session, 30-hour video course on the Lutheran faith, which can still be found today on his website. <https://pastorlassman.org/>



*Rev. Ernie, Kathy, & Aaron Lassman, 1978*

The first annual Voters Assembly was held in February 1979, followed in good Lutheran fashion by a potluck supper. Reports indicated that the congregation had a membership of 78 members—an increase of 30 members in six months! The church’s activities had grown too and now included Bible classes, Sunday School, youth programs, choir, an Altar Guild, and meetings of the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League (LWML), which included 14 members. Longtime member Helga Becker remembers with great fondness her service as member and president of this early and enthusiastic LWML group.

Still, there were many more steps that had to be taken for Our Saviour Lutheran Church to become a registered organization.

Some of these steps were accomplished quite easily with the help of the ABC District Office. But others were discovered almost accidentally through a series of financial and organizational challenges during these first few years.

As noted in the previous chapter, the congregation relied from the very beginning on a large annual subsidy from the Alberta-BC District. Under Vicar Georg, that subsidy was more than \$11,000. But vicars are cheaper than pastors. While the vicar’s salary had been \$648 per month, the pastor was now earning \$960 per month plus \$500 for rent and utilities. This major increase, plus the need to pay both the Lassman family’s moving expenses from the U.S. and Vicar Georg’s moving expenses back to the U.S., caused a sudden ballooning of the congregation’s expenses that came as quite a shock to everyone. The deficit in the last six months of 1978 alone was projected to be more than \$12,500.

Accordingly, an urgent subsidy request was submitted to the ABC District for the calendar year 1979 in the amount of \$23,619. Money was so tight that the District’s decision to grant the congregation \$22,000 led to further negotiations on how to manage even that relatively small difference. The same pattern was repeated the next year, when the congregation’s request was again reduced. In a letter to the District Office, Pastor Lassman pleaded: “The Council asked me to write and request that our subsidy be reconsidered. We believe that our budget is conservative and realistic. We did not try to ‘pad’ our budget. [...] We leave the final figure to your discretion. We will do the best we can to meet our responsibilities.”

Besides these budget problems, it came to light in February 1979 that property taxes on the Wembley Road property had not been paid since the land and mobile home had been purchased back in 1977. The debt was more than \$1,500 and the government was charging 13.5% interest on that balance. Apparently, the province assumed the property was still privately owned. On the congregation's side, the taxes seem to have been neglected because of an assumption that churches were exempt from property tax.

It took months for the congregation to apply for and receive a full property-tax exemption. By that time, there were three years of unpaid taxes to be dealt with! In all, three steps had to be completed in the right sequence to resolve this situation.

First, the congregation had to write a constitution and have it accepted by the Alberta-BC District to become an official congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Somehow this step had been neglected, despite the instructions received from the ABC District Office in 1977 (as noted in the previous chapter).

Second, the congregation had to submit this constitution for approval under the Societies Act of the Province of B.C. so that the congregation could be recognized as a charitable organization. Until this happened, none of its members' offerings could legally be claimed as charitable donations.

Third, after these other steps were complete, the congregation could then apply to the Regional District of Nanaimo for tax-exempt status as a church.

Many applications and appeals went into addressing these problems, which would take an entire book to describe! But finally, by the end of 1979, the congregation was properly registered with all the right authorities, and the tax bill was paid. Whew!

In the meantime, the congregation had started considering a building program for a bigger and better church home. Worship attendance had grown steadily until it reached 40 per Sunday late in 1978. It had not increased significantly since that time. Partly, it was felt, this was because the double-wide trailer could not comfortably accommodate more people.

An opportunity arose in the spring of 1980 when the Chapel of the Pines funeral home at 795 West Island Highway became available for purchase. The congregation was familiar with this building, having used it for a number of special events including Pastor Lassman's ordination and installation service. It was a beautiful structure, situated on 1.9 acres of land. Some of that land was undeveloped, a forested area that was enjoyed by the neighbourhood children. The property's owner, Gerald Hagel, was prepared to sell it to the congregation on the condition that he could keep using part of the building for his funeral-home business.

In July 1980, a deal was struck. The purchase price of \$264,350 was partly offset by



*Bill August and "his" pulpit: OSLC, 1980*

the sale of the Wembley Road property, which went for \$76,000. The congregation ended up with a five-year mortgage of \$183,850, which was held by Mr. Hagel.

This was a big financial commitment for such a small congregation to make—especially when mortgage rates hovered around 14.5%. Thankfully, Mr. Hagel did not require any payments toward the principal but was satisfied to receive interest payments alone. Still, that was a bill of about \$2,400 per month. The only way the congregation could make those payments was by asking for—and, thankfully, receiving—a huge hike in its subsidy from the ABC District.

A story in the *Parksville-Qualicum Beach Progress* on July 15, 1980, under the headline “Lutherans Take Over” (!), noted that the new facility was ideal as a church. It seated 160 and there was plenty of room for Sunday School. The congregation planned to remodel the altar area and update the entire sanctuary. A kitchen and small fellowship hall were going to be added. The parking garage on the back of the building would be closed in to serve as a larger fellowship hall. Most of these plans could not be set in motion until the following summer, because of the ongoing arrangement with the Chapel of the Pines funeral home.

The congregation’s first service in the new facility was held on Sunday, July 6, 1980. The chancel furniture that Bill August had built for the mobile home was moved over, and the patterns of worship and congregational life continued as before. The biggest change was a healthy jump in attendance! In a letter to the ABC District, Pastor Lassman reported: “Our first three Sundays in our new church have been very encouraging, attendance-wise. Last quarter we averaged 32 per Sunday. In the new church the figures were 61, 51, 58. We are convinced that our new building and new location will greatly contribute to our growth.” Praise the Lord for this big jump forward!

*You're Invited*

The members of Our Savior Lutheran Church cordially invite the public to attend Church Dedication Services on September 28, at 4 p.m.

The Rev. Les Gierach, executive secretary of the Alberta/British Columbia District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod will be the guest preacher.

A tour of the facilities will follow the service.  
A light lunch will also be served.

*Our Savior Lutheran Church*  
759 N. Island Highway

The congregation dedicated the new facility to the glory of God on Sunday, September 28, 1980. The guest preacher was Pastor Les Gierach, an ABC District official who had been so supportive of Our Saviour all the way along. Pastor Beiderwieden served as the lector (reader) for the service. A big ad in the local paper celebrated this new development and, of course, encouraged community members to come and visit. Every effort was made to maximize the outreach potential of this major upgrade in the congregation’s facilities.

In fact, the local community was very much on the congregation’s mind in many ways. The congregation did not just “take” but also “gave.”

Invitations to church events were published in local newspapers. Advertisements were purchased on CHPQ, the local radio station. A letter from the Presbyterian church expressed thanks for being able to hold services at Our Saviour while their own church was being finished. The circuit counsellor of the Vancouver Island Lutheran churches thanked Our Saviour for hosting a leadership conference. The ladies of the congregation hosted a zone workshop for the LWML, with attendees from all over Vancouver Island. Pastor Lassman was a leader in setting up the “District 69 Ministerial Association” and served as its first chairman.

Unfortunately, the congregation once again found itself entangled in property-tax trouble. Because the Chapel of the Pines was still using the building for its funeral-home business, taxes were being assessed by the Town of Parksville at the commercial rate. And somehow, the congregation had once again been neglecting to pay those taxes. It neither appealed—nor paid—its 1981 and 1982 tax assessments. By the time this problem came to light, more than \$13,000 was overdue. The town agreed to an 85% reduction in the church’s taxes for 1983 but refused to waive the previous years’ bills. If the congregation did not address the matter quickly, town officials said they would be forced to seize the property for a tax sale in September 1983.



Thankfully, the congregation managed to dodge this fate. Two members took out a personal loan to pay the longest-overdue portion of the church’s tax bill. That removed the immediate threat of losing the property. The congregation also terminated the rental arrangement with the Chapel of the Pines to remove any doubt that the property was being used for religious (and therefore tax-exempt) purposes. Still, it took a great deal of time and effort to resolve the congregation’s tax status with the town. By the end of 1983, the town agreed that Our Saviour Lutheran Church would receive the same 100% tax exemption as every other church.

This crisis led to another big step forward. Conversations with the ABC District about the tax situation drew attention to the mortgage the congregation had taken out with Mr. Hagel. It was coming due for renewal in July 1985. Although Mr. Hagel himself had recently died, his company was offering to extend the same interest-only arrangement for another 5 years, if the congregation made a \$40,000 lump-sum payment toward the principal. The new interest rate would be 13%, which was about 1% above the bank rate. But the congregation’s other options were limited, since it would not qualify for a regular commercial mortgage. What should it do?

Thankfully, the District was willing to help. Its Church Extension Fund (CEF) had been established in the 1920s for exactly this purpose of providing loans to growing churches at below-market interest rates. Church members who deposited their money in CEF were willing to earn less interest than they would receive from the bank, in exchange for the

satisfaction of knowing they were supporting the Lord's work. So, the District found a way to give the congregation the loan it needed. CEF did not have enough money right at that point to pay out the mortgage to Mr. Hagel, but the \$40,000 lump-sum payment was made, and an arrangement was put in place for CEF to take over the rest of the debt by July 1986. On top of this, a loan of \$6,000 was immediately granted so the congregation could repay the members who had taken out that personal loan to pay the back taxes. Whew!

For sure, the anxiety—and publicity—these problems caused was unfortunate. The congregation and its pastor simply wanted to focus on worship, Bible study, outreach, and evangelism. Finance and administration were not much of an interest, nor a strength, of Our Saviour Lutheran Church in this part of its history. But these challenges spurred the congregation on to a healthier awareness of the importance of such matters. The church is definitely not “of” the world in terms of its priorities, joys, and goals. But it certainly does need to live “in” the world, even as it keeps its focus fixed on its Saviour.



*The first Easter in OSLC's new home (1981)*

Through six momentous years, Pastor Lassman helped our congregation grow in numbers and in faithfulness to our Saviour. In the middle of 1984, he accepted a call to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Chilliwack. He was greatly missed at Our Saviour for his boundless enthusiasm, his commitment to outreach and teaching, and his confidence that Christ would build His church. And the church continued to thrive throughout the next year without a pastor, when it was assisted by Pastor Kevin Cramm from Grace Lutheran Church in Port Alberni, who had taken over from Pastor Beiderwieden when he retired in 1983.

In December 1984, Our Saviour Lutheran Church celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. What an amazing decade it had been. It was fitting that the anniversary service featured two guest speakers. One was Rev. Edwin (Ed) Lehman, who began serving as the ABC District President in 1978, the same year that Our Saviour called and received its first full-time pastor.

The other speaker was Pastor Lassman, who had served so faithfully in that role. Thanks be to God! So many astonishing things had taken place in the first ten years of Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Parksville!

+ + +

*From those who were there*

Pastor Lassman recalls his first meeting with Pastor Beiderwieden, almost fifty years later:

Not long after moving into our nice rented house at 31 Ballenas Place, we pulled into our carport one day and noticed that a large car pulled in behind us. An elderly couple got out. The man asked if I was the new Lutheran pastor in Parksville. When I said yes, he said, “Oh good, we’ve been living together for forty years and we thought it was time to get married.” I don’t know what I said, but before I knew it, the man approached my wife Kathy, kissed her on the lips, then reached out his hand to give me a handshake while saying, “Hi, I’m Pastor Beiderwieden from Grace, Port Alberni.” That was Pastor Beiderwieden! He was a wonderful mentor for this young inexperienced pastor in a mission church. I am forever grateful for having known him and having his help. I am thankful for all the love and support that the members of Our Saviour gave to a young, new pastor fresh from the seminary.

Helga Becker remembers how joyful it was to join Our Saviour:

I moved from Prince Rupert to Bowser in the summer of 1980. At the time I was very busy running my own business, the Seacroft Resort in Bowser. I had limited time in the summer to attend church, but in the winter months I was able to come more often. When I started looking for a Lutheran church, Pastor Lassman invited me to come. On my first visit, there was Communion! I remember having to ask if I could have Communion, because I was not a member. But I enjoyed being here. After a year, I transferred my membership to OSLC.

Jutta Storey remembers sharing the “new” church building with the Chapel of the Pines funeral home:

I started a choir with 5 people, who just liked to sing. Initially we only had a Harmonium to accompany us. Sometimes it got moved from the chapel to the upstairs, which we had to access via the little room beside the kitchen. Once, a prepared corpse was lying on a stretcher in that room! Just the head was uncovered, but even so, none of the singers would go past it. No practice that night!

At least two church members found time to get involved as “extras” in a local movie shoot. As Pastor Lassman recalled, decades later:

One of my highlights was participating in a movie called *The Grey Fox*, filmed in 1982 at the old railroad station in Parksville, along with Chris Colibaba. Unfortunately, all my scenes as a reporter were deleted. I must have over-acted! The movie was very successful. It was based on the true story of Bill Miner, a fearless stage-coach robber in the Wild West. He was jailed for more than 30 years and, after his release, pulled

off a successful railroad heist and went on the lam in British Columbia. He was known as “The Grey Fox” and “The Gentleman Bandit.”

*What’s in a name?*

Pictures and documents show that several versions of the church’s name were in use for many years.

- Our **Savior** Lutheran Church (official incorporated name)
- Our **Saviour** Lutheran Church (everyday usage)
- Our **Savior’s** Lutheran Church (our church sign, for many years—*see below!*)

Finally, in 2023, the official name was Canadianized as Our Saviour Lutheran Church Parksville.



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## Chapter 4

### The Jurchen Years (1985-1996)



Pastor Arnold Jurchen came to Our Saviour Lutheran Church (OSLC) in July 1985 with his wife Tamara and their children, John, James, Sarah, and Peter. His enthusiasm and love for God's Word and the ministry infected young and old in the congregation as well as many people in the community. The family was very talented, each playing musical instruments, and they loved to sing. They bought a small farm in Errington which soon became a gathering place for picnics, parties, and other congregational events. Pastor Jurchen joined the Voluntary Fire Department in Errington. Apparently, he always tried to have one commitment in his life that was not directly related to church work but brought him into regular and significant contact with the wider community.

The whole Jurchen family was involved in activities at the church. Tamara taught Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. Initially, the entire family served as the music team, everyone singing and playing their own instruments. After a while, when she showed interest, Josey Palleson was the first non-family member to join the music team. Others soon followed, including Carrie Haakonson with her guitar. The singers and congregation alike appreciated the blend of new and contemporary worship music along with the traditional.



*The Jurchen family*

Pastor Jurchen remembers the first few Sundays when there were only about 25 people in worship and the four Jurchen children doubled the size of the Sunday School! This was an unusually low number, however, since the attendance had usually been around 50 at the time they moved into this new church. Attendance and participation in programs grew steadily over the next ten years. In the 1990s, average attendance at worship grew steadily, from 80 in 1991, to 90 in 1992, and between 100 and 105 over the next years. Pastor Jurchen remembers one



Christmas Eve candlelight service when the church was so full that many people had to stand. The next year, they wisely chose to add 2 more services on Christmas Eve—and welcomed a total of about 250 people that evening!

Along with numerical growth, Pastor Jurchen clearly saw the need for spiritual growth. He knew this was not something he could achieve by himself, so he devoted much time and energy into recruiting and nurturing a group of Elders. At first there was only one Elder, and he was only 28 years old! Within four years, a spiritually mature group of men was providing great support to the pastor and great leadership in the congregation.

It was important to provide plenty of opportunities for members to deepen their Christian faith and increase their Christian outreach. Back then, just like now, people came to OSLC from a wide range of backgrounds. Some were prairie people with lifelong experience in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and its conservative, strongly Biblical traditions. Some came from Europe and were more familiar with its more progressive “state churches.” Then as now, OSLC was the only Lutheran church in the area—so *everybody* had to be patient... adapt... and grow. Thankfully, Pastor Jurchen recognized the vital importance of relationships, and worked hard to build them so that the tremendous energy this diverse group of people brought into the congregation could be channeled in a shared, agreed-upon, Biblically grounded, and outreach-oriented direction.

Bible study was the key. Pastor Jurchen set a goal of having 75% of the church’s members involved in Bible study, and reinforced this goal on many occasions. As he wrote in one year’s Annual Report, “It is hoped that the study of the Word will continue to be central to the life of our church.”



*Bible study, 1996 (including J. Storey, H. Becker, K. & A. van Spronsen, J. Zutz, J. Palleson, K. Schab)*

And it was! In the last four years of Pastor Jurchen’s ministry, the total weekly Bible study attendance was between 106 and 140. More people attended these studies than worship! The pastor led three studies a week—on Sunday mornings, Tuesday mornings, and Wednesday evenings. Jutta Storey recalls that the pastor’s Tuesday morning studies were very intense—and deeply meaningful. One particular series, called “21<sup>st</sup> Century Discipleship,” which continued

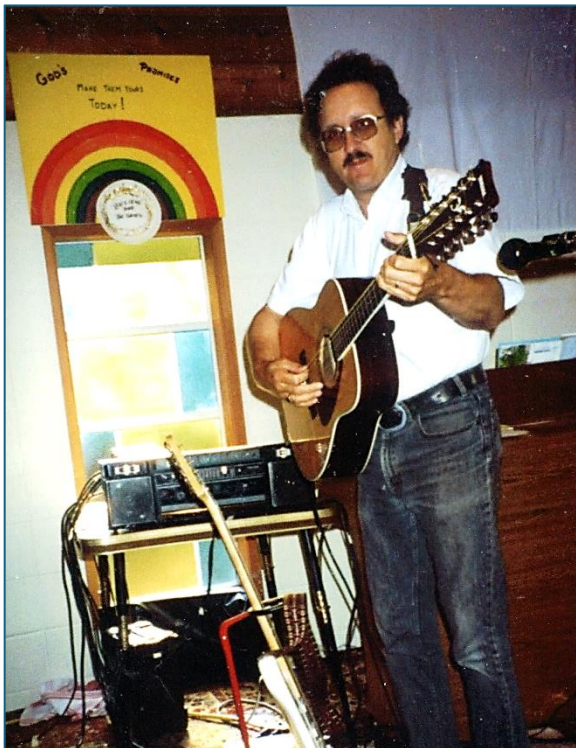
for several years, helped people translate our first-century Biblical faith into the contemporary world. But whatever the topic, Pastor Jurchen always opened each session with a time of singing that he led on his guitar. This not only brought people together, it also deepened their faith—and taught them songs that eventually lodged deeply in their hearts. Besides the groups the pastor led, some people also met regularly in home-based Bible study groups.

Pastor Jurchen’s teaching benefitted other people too besides OSLC’s regular members. Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton had a special student one year. He had graduated from seminary many years before and been serving as a college professor before he finally decided that maybe he did feel led to be a pastor after all. To give him some practical experience, he was sent here to learn from Pastor Jurchen for a few months. His name was Rev. Colin Liske, who ended up serving as pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Nanaimo for many years.

Also during these years, Pastor Jurchen mentored a young man named Clair Denniger, first in our Lutheran Christian faith as a whole, and then on a path that led Clair to the Edmonton seminary as a “mature student.” He graduated in 1999 and served several parishes in Lutheran Church-Canada before retiring and eventually resettling in Nanaimo.

For many years, a number of OSLC members traveled each year to Trinity Lutheran Church in Abbotsford, which was known far and wide for its excellent weekend-long “School of Evangelism” retreats. These were always outstanding and uplifting experiences, especially the year that Dr. Oswald Hoffman was the featured speaker. Together the congregation worked, laughed, cried, and served the Lord with gladness.

A new ministry idea Pastor Jurchen wanted to begin was “Stephen Ministry.” This was an intensive training program for laypeople that prepared them to provide compassionate and knowledgeable Christian care for others both inside and outside the congregation. The pastor



encouraged Carrie Haakonson to become a co-leader with him and take the extensive leadership training course. Unfortunately, this happened shortly before Pastor Jurchen accepted his next call and left OSLC. But Carrie began to lead the Stephen Ministry program anyway, with his encouragement, right on through the pastoral vacancy.

As the congregation grew in faith, it also began to grow significantly in numbers. So, in 1991, five years into his ministry here, Pastor Jurchen began to lead two worship services on Sunday mornings. One was traditional and included all the familiar hymns out of the *Lutheran Worship* hymnal that is still found in our pews. The other featured more contemporary songs and was accompanied by guitar and piano. For the first few years, the contemporary service began at 8:30 and the traditional service at 10:30.

But as attendance at the first service grew, the people who attended the second service said they would move to the earlier time and let the faster-growing contemporary service have the more popular later slot. This showed a great understanding of outreach.

For a while, an extra “mini service” was also offered on Wednesday evenings for people who for whatever reason could not attend on Sundays. All these services offered encouraging messages, lots of singing of favourite music, and wonderful fellowship. In addition, Gary Carlson and Jutta Storey often led scaled-down devotional services in a number of local seniors’ homes on Sunday afternoons. This practice continued for many years, sometimes alternating with other Protestant denominations who also took a turn in leading.

On Maundy Thursdays, Pastor Jurchen introduced OSLC to the tradition of the *seder* meal. This was a Christian version of the Passover meal that Jewish families have been eating together since the days of Moses. It ends, in Christian use, with a celebration of Holy Communion. Pastor Jurchen usually provided the roasted lamb from his own farm. The other necessary ingredients like unleavened bread, bitter herbs, etc. were contributed by other members. The church generally contributed the wine that was used in the Communion part of the meal, although once or twice the pastor apparently provided this too from the fruit of his own vines. On Easter mornings, an early sunrise service often took place at Parksville’s Community Beach, planned by Pastor Jurchen. Other congregations participated as well. After these sunrise services, coffee was enjoyed at OSLC before the main Easter Sunday worship service.

For a time, “as a mission congregation,” OSLC received the second largest operating subsidy in the entire ABC District and carried a very large building debt, as described in the previous chapter. Finances were a constant concern and ongoing subsidies from the wider church were essential. Thankfully, the ABC District offered strong and consistent support. And as the congregation grew and flourished both spiritually and numerically, its members’ stewardship also increased dramatically. At the start of Pastor Jurchen’s ministry here, offerings were a little more than \$24,000. Ten years later the congregation’s total income topped \$127,000—a five-fold increase! Already in the previous year, 1994, there was no need at all for any subsidy from the ABC District. Thanks be to God!

Our local LWML group was staying strong and its members were able to send numerous items to Canadian Lutheran World Relief. Quilt-making was a constant winter project, and “mite boxes” provided another opportunity to give in support of mission projects both here in Canada and overseas. The men’s breakfast had grown too, as a time of encouragement and refreshment for them. Brian Hagedorn got these breakfasts going, first at the Eagle Crest Golf course. After a while they also grew into men’s dinners that were often held at the church or his home.



(Afghans for CLWR, 1991)

The youth program was very active too, mostly led by parents but also with assistance at one point from Vicar Colin Liske. Doreen Hagedorn comments that even though she has filled many roles in the congregation over the years, her best memories come from the time she spent as a youth leader. Youth nights were held often, with up to 15 attending, some as friends who were new to the church. With a vast range of activities, devotions, and participation in the church life, the youth created super memories too! Young people were sent with the congregation's encouragement and support to Lutheran Church-Canada's National Youth Gatherings in 1992 in Saskatoon and in 1995 in Three Hills, Alberta. Pastor Jurchen attended with OSLC's youth and served as chaplain for the whole gathering in 1995.

Confirmation classes were offered on a regular basis, and one year, 7 youth were confirmed. For a congregation the size of OSLC, that was pretty amazing.

As mentioned above, there was a time early in Pastor Jurchen's ministry when Sunday School attendance could be counted on one hand. Usually though the Sunday School attendance was around 15-20 children who met in three classes.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) was constantly expanding during Pastor Jurchen's time at Our Saviour! The good-sized fellowship hall and especially the great outdoor playground in the open space and forest around the church were ideal to generate and support the amazing attendance! For years, OSLC had one of the largest VBS programs in Lutheran Church-Canada, with registrations routinely topping 150 and one year reaching 194! Between 40 and 50 percent of the children were unchurched—praise the Lord! Imagine the number of leaders and helpers who were needed to teach, assist, cook for, lead crafts for, prepare devotions for, and lead singing for such a huge group of children full of summer energy and desire for fun! It often took about 50 adults to make VBS happen. Donna McAskile recalls coming to church just a few days after their young family moved from Alberta into their Parksville home. At worship that Sunday, she heard that VBS staff still needed one more teacher. There she was, instantly recruited while her household was still in boxes, coming to VBS the very next day together with her son Evan! What a great picture of the enthusiastic, willing, and giving servant-hearts at OSLC!



*VBS Staff, 1991*

Compared to all the building-related changes and (sometimes) troubles of earlier times, there was not too much drama about the church's facilities during Pastor Jurchen's time. The fellowship hall provided an excellent large space for many activities, including great potlucks, after it was converted from being the parking garage of the Chapel of the Pines funeral home. Repairs throughout the building were made as needed.

When the roof started leaking at one point, Pastor Jurchen and Arie van Spronsen ended up crawling onto the roof to try and stop the rain from dripping onto the people in the pews. This was a congregation where there was always something for everyone to do!

Building on the years-long upsurge in interest in the Bible, Pastor Jurchen led a group on a trip to the Holy Land in February 1996—just before he left the congregation. Among the OSLC members who took part were Frank Liepe, Arie van Spronsen, Shelley Brown, and Helga Becker. Helga has fond memories of touring Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and many other special places that brought important Biblical scenes to life. But her most memorable event took place early one morning when she took a walk by herself through the Garden of Gethsemane. She heard singing in the background. She could picture in her mind what it must have been like when Jesus went there to pray—it was just so peaceful. This was a trip she will always remember!

Many people remember weddings, baptisms, and yes even funerals that took place during these busy, joyful, growth-filled years. But as Jutta Storey recalls, people who were there at the time will always remember most of all that Pastor Jurchen taught them the Word of God. In her words, “He showed us to dig, in faith, for that infinite treasure: GOD IS LOVE! GOD FORGIVES! God is in the salvage business!”

The Jurchen family’s departure in 1996 left a great void for the congregation. But by the grace of God and with the power of His Holy Spirit, the congregation continued to hold together in what they had been taught. It was a learning as well as a growing experience!—being knit together in love for Our Saviour and each other.



*Pastor Jurchen giving a hay-ride at a church picnic on his farm*

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### ***From those who were there***

One of Jutta Storey’s favourite memories teaching Sunday School was when she told the children about Jesus carrying our sins for us. She asked one of Helga Becker’s grandsons whether he would do the same for his brother. He answered, “That was okay for Jesus, but I would have to think about it.”

Pastor Jurchen’s great love for outreach shines through in this part of his “Annual Report” for 1991:

“My number one area of concern has to do with viewing our church and our task as mission. It is so easy to slip into an attitude that sees the church as existing for us. Yet, as a mission, we exist in order to reach out. The whole life of the congregation must radiate around our outreach into our community. Effective church growth comes from person-to-

person outreach, and it is only as each member dedicates him- or herself to this task, as well as to the integration of new members into the congregation, that we will be an effective mission congregation. Our Savior Lutheran Church was not established to be a safe haven for Lutherans, it was established to be a mission to the Parksville-Qualicum community.”

Pastor Jurchen remembers arriving early on VBS mornings so he could offer parents a cup of coffee while they were dropping off their kids. At first he used Styrofoam cups, but quickly realized that most people were just saying “thanks” and leaving. As soon as he switched to ceramic cups, people had to stick around for a visit! Some of these conversations led to unchurched people developing a relationship with him... and the congregation... and their Saviour.

Shelley Brown joined OSLC near the beginning of Pastor Jurchen’s ministry, in 1987. She remembers: I was very involved with the Farmers’ Market and Community in Errington, and that is where Pastor Jurchen lived at that time. Pastor Jurchen had joined the Volunteer Fire Department, where the two of us crossed paths occasionally. One day when we talked, he answered a few questions that I had, in a non-threatening manner. That impressed me, so I joined the congregation.

Roy and Carrie Haakonson were just starting to “return to church” when she brought her son to Sunday School at OSLC in 1990. Carrie remembers initially just planning to drop him off. But she was greeted by other women in the narthex, and welcomed to stay for the Sunday School opening, adult program, and worship service. She appreciated the warm welcome, the active participation of many families including the Jurchen family, and Pastor Jurchen’s very effective ministry. Roy didn’t attend with the family for some time, being a busy fisherman seven days a week. But when he did go with Carrie, he got a warm welcome hug from a man in the church, which he remembers felt “good” and encouraging! He wasn’t used to hugs except with family! He too was encouraged to stay and become a part of the church.

Kathy van Spronsen recalls that she and quite a few other members grew to love Bible study so much that when Pastor Jurchen left, they decided to keep them going on their own. Meetings were held weekly on Tuesday mornings on a rotating basis in various homes, including her own. Besides the time spent studying the Bible itself, these groups included singing, coffee, laughter, and plenty of time for enjoying everyone’s gift of conversation.

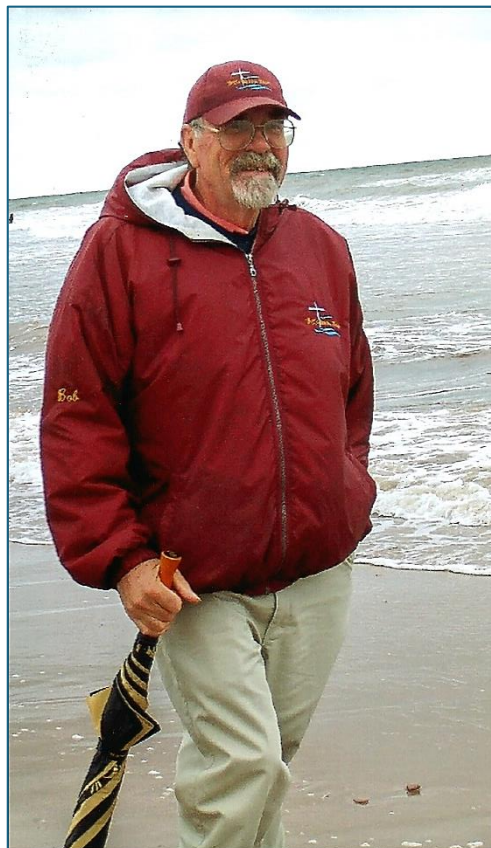
Kathy also remembers the joy of attending special Epiphany parties at Jutta Storey’s house. They always featured a real Christmas tree with real (burning!) wax candles that were both delightful and a little frightening. Even today, Jutta continues to love Epiphany, because her birthday lands on that day (January 6). Going all the way back to Pastor Jurchen’s time, she has always invited many friends over to celebrate—including Kathy and her husband Arie.

## Chapter 5

### The Koebernick Years (1998-2007)



Pastor Robert Koebernick (Pastor Bob) served us from February 1998 until October 2006. And clearly God arranged for him to do so, after leading us through a two-year vacancy. During that time we were served by Rev. Robert Hasselstrom as our vacancy pastor. He was a perfect musician and really enjoyed playing the organ that we had acquired some time previously. He was more of a traditional pastor than Pastor Jurchen had been, but served us faithfully during this long span of time that we were searching for a new pastor.



Then, after two years, a breakthrough! One of our members, Michelle Meservia, was a member of a touring Lutheran music group called Crew Ministries. They performed a concert in Dryden, Ontario, where Pastor Bob was serving as pastor of the local Lutheran congregation. Michelle was so inspired by meeting him that she sent a recommendation back to OSLC's call committee, which in turn recommended that the congregation should call Pastor Bob. Finding out, a while later, that Pastor Bob had accepted our call, led to a time of great rejoicing!

Pastor Bob was a tremendous "people person," a great motivator, and passionate about mission. His message in the 1998 annual report says, "People gathered around God's Word are the most important thing in our church ... People count, everyone, for we are precious in His sight." His wife Julie was a quieter person, who saw one of her roles as encouraging Pastor Bob to "take time" and hold himself back from working too much.

The year 1999 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Our Saviour Lutheran Church (OSLC). As part of that celebration, Shelley Brown, an artistically gifted member of the congregation, was encouraged by Church Council and Pastor Bob to design a stained-glass window for the church. After her design was approved, the artisan who was commissioned to do the work, Rolf Bernstein, encountered serious health issues. So the installation of the window was delayed slightly. But once it was finally installed, it truly enhanced our church. *(A description of the window and the significance of its features is included in a later chapter of this booklet.)*

#### Vacation Bible School

As noted in the previous chapter, OSLC had a long history of large summer Vacation Bible School (VBS) programs. During Pastor Bob's time, VBS here in Parksville was smaller than in previous years, but still drew a healthy daily attendance of 80 to 90 children, Grade 5

or younger. Besides the kids, over 45 volunteer workers from our congregation made this a most exciting and memorable week! The church was bustling both indoors and out. Even the forested area outside the church was used as a classroom! Children moved from one centre to the next throughout the morning sessions. Generally, about a third of the children came from unchurched families and learned here in our midst about Jesus and His love. Truly this was a wonderful outreach ministry to the people of Parksville—and to the next generation.

In addition, VBS was also offered to a number of other communities. The first new site was Lasqueti Island. It was a place that really needed the Gospel. In 1999, only a few kids from the island took part, but plans were made to return the next year and to offer VBS in several other small communities as well. Crew Ministries, a Lutheran Church Canada summer youth team, joined Gilles and our volunteers to offer leadership. So, in 2000, VBS was brought again to Lasqueti as well as to Tahsis, Bowser, Egmont, Hornby Island, Savary Island, Denman Island, and Texada Island. In that year's Annual Report to the congregation, Gilles noted that two of the 18 children in the Lasqueti camp were from Christian homes; the rest came from families of other beliefs including atheists, agnostics, Wiccans, Buddhists, and idol (goddess) worshippers. This opportunity to share through VBS in all these places, to all these children, was God given.

### **The BC Mission Boat**

In 1999, a new outreach ministry called “The BC Mission Boat” set sail. (*A fuller account of the Mission Boat is found in a later chapter in this booklet.*) The ministry began with Roy Haakonson, a member of OSLC who had been a commercial fisherman for many years and was also a marine pilot. He had travelled extensively up and down the remote coast of this province and was familiar with many isolated communities and their residents. He was motivated by these encounters to explore whether a summer outreach “mission” that was staffed by volunteers who would travel around by boat, would be welcome. When he shared the idea with Pastor Bob, it was met with great excitement.

So, Roy and Pastor Bob worked out a plan and encouraged OSCL to support an initial month-long trip. The pastor would be the overall leader, and Roy would be the captain. The company Roy worked for would provide the boat—the *Misty Moon*. The council and congregation agreed to give full support for this initial year, then review it to ensure it was worthy of continuing.

Well, God definitely had His hand in it! That month was so successful. A total of 22 ports were visited and over 400 people were helped when they visited the boat for fellowship. The trial was deemed a great success.



*The first BC Mission Boat crew aboard the Misty Moon, 2000 (Roy Haakonson is 4<sup>th</sup> from the left; his wife Carrie is in front of him)*



The volunteers had many opportunities to share friendship and faith in Jesus in the First Nations communities and homes of coastal dwellers. Because of all this, the Mission Boat was invited to return to many of these communities.

So, the BC Mission Boat Society was established in 1999 and developed as its own mission organization. It was formed with the mission to share the love of Jesus Christ along BC's isolated and remote coast in places that need to be accessed (at least in part) by water transportation. It added to its program after several years, to send teams out by land transportation and water taxi or ferries to some communities that were able to be accessed this way.

The Society's office and headquarters were located on our church building's second floor for quite a few years, until its Board made a decision to relocate the ministry to Courtenay in 2019. Before that, the teams were always welcomed and hosted in our church as they came to prepare and set off on their journeys.

Many of our church members were ongoing volunteers who took the lead in local planning, preparations, and promotion. Because a typical season involved more than 200 volunteers, who traveled from all over to be here (about 60% of them from Canada and 40% from the United States), there was always plenty of shuttling, welcoming, purchasing, supplying, and orienting to be done. Many OSLC members also travelled out with the crews and teams to the communities. Several served on the Board of Directors. For several



years, Bob Davis— *Exec. Dir. Marcus Huff (4<sup>th</sup> from left), “Captain Bob” Davis (4<sup>th</sup> from right), 2009* “Captain Bob”—was one of the Mission Boat's trusted captains!

Pastor Bob, on his part, was the Pastoral Advisor to the Society from its beginning until his death in 2006. He also served as Vice President on the Board of Directors from 2001 until 2006. He frequently travelled with the Mission Boat to meet and be with people. He brought passion, laughter, and learning to his ministry, and is remembered with respect and love for all these things and more.

Always, as teams returned from their weeks in the communities they served, they brought back exciting and rewarding stories to share with our congregation, always giving glory to God! Our Saviour Lutheran Church is proud to have been the place where the BC Mission Boat Society took shape, and its home base for many years.

## New Outreach Opportunities – New Staff

The beginning and development of the BC Mission Boat ministry, and new VBS programs on nearby island communities, required a lot of extra work for Pastor Bob. Gilles Patenaude, a new church member and young family man, had become very involved in the congregation's work. So the congregation decided to call him to work part time as a "lay minister" alongside Pastor Bob. One of his first major initiatives was to provide VBS programs to quite a few other communities, some via the Mission Boat. Interestingly, this work also led to the re-establishment of Lutheran-led worship services on Hornby Island. As explained in chapter 1, Pastor Bill Doeling had led a small mission group there back in the late 1930s and early 1940s. This time, responsibility for the Hornby Island services were eventually handed over to Bethany Lutheran Church in Campbell River.



Kathy Bender, an active OSLC member and leader in the Mission Boat work (*photo on left*), was brought into an Outreach Worker position in 2003, primarily to work with the Mission Boat. This position was funded in full by a mission grant from the ABC District to our congregation, specifically for the BC Mission Boat Society. This grant continued for many years, so the Society could offer at least some year-round visits and support to communities that were primarily visited in the summers.

In 2005, OSLC also welcomed Marcus Huff as an intern from the Oswald Hoffman School of Christian Outreach (OHSCO) at Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota. Later interns came from this program too, including Josh Patterson and Anna Reinke. Students also came from the Director of Parish Services program (DPS) at Concordia University College of Edmonton, including Melissa McNeil. All of these interns worked both with the Mission Boat and our local church. The congregation and Mission Boat also hired a number of summer students who were supported by BC student employment grants. Many of them came from Concordia University in Edmonton to work with VBS, the OSLC office, and the Mission Boat.

## Congregational Life

Josey Palleson, one of OSLC's members, attended an orientation session for the newly popular worldwide "Alpha Course" in Christian faith and life. Very impressed, Josey recommended Alpha to Pastor Koebernick as an outreach ministry that OSLC ought to offer. With his encouragement, she took the Alpha leadership course, sought out many additional

volunteers, and led the program here in our congregation for 11 years, 2000-2011. The Alpha program became a tremendous blessing to many people both in this congregation and in the community. It didn't take long for more than 60 people to become involved in 4 separate classes. In each of them, people enjoyed shared meals that were prepared by volunteers, learned from clear Bible-based messages that were presented in videos, and were enriched by lively follow-up group discussions. A second course, called "Beta," offered further enrichment when it too was offered on several occasions. Quite a number of people came to faith, and some of them joined the congregation.

Many fellowship meals were appreciated! Pastor Bob renamed them as "Pot-Blessed Meals" (instead of Pot-Luck). Many summertime barbecues were held at the church. The youth group served some Sunday soup lunches as fundraisers. The church held annual salmon barbecue fundraisers to support the BC Mission Boat. Easter breakfasts and Advent suppers with fellowship were ongoing. Soup lunches accompanied special mid-day Bible studies in Lent. Many people still talk about the special "seder supper" that took place during Lent in 2003, when Pastor Bob continued the tradition Pastor Jurchen had initiated, showing the deep and



*Pastor Bob & Doreen Hagedorn, 2001 weekend retreat*

meaningful connections between the Jewish Passover and the Lord's Supper.

Other significant events to remember were a series of weekend-long congregational retreats that were held off-site and brought in notable speakers. The learning, dining, fellowship, and fun were outstanding! More than 40 people sometimes attended. A "Homebuilders Group" was established to focus on marriage enrichment. Ladies retreats were organized at places like Camp Homewood and Tofino. A "Women of Faith" conference offered fellowship and spiritual growth. An ongoing series of Christian music concerts at OSLC welcomed visiting artists such as Debbie Zepick, the Rawling Brothers, Crew Ministries, and Morning Star.

In these years, the Church Council set up various committees to bring planners and "do-ers" together. Included were committees for Visitation, Seniors Ministry, Sunday School, LWML (Lutheran Women's Mission League), Men's Group, Special Events, Sunday School, Bible Studies, Retreats, Vacation Bible School (kids camps), Youth, BC Mission Boat, Trustees

(property upkeep and development), and more. There was a committee or volunteer work for everyone to participate in, and this was encouraged. For this reason, there are too many folks to name individually, who contributed to all the opportunities and Christian ministry through their service.

The LWML continued its pattern of quilting for Canada Lutheran World Relief and sometimes also for local ministries. They maintained the “Cradle Roll” ministry for the families of infants and toddlers following their baptism, sending resources and encouragement to them on a regular basis.



*Ladies' Christmas Luncheon, 2004*

The Seniors committee provided home visitation for some, held Seniors lunches periodically, and helped with services in local seniors' care homes.

The youth group was very active throughout these years, with many fun local activities, Bible Studies, ski retreats (with other Vancouver Island churches), day-trips to Nanaimo, Victoria, and other places, and healthy delegations going to LCC-wide National Youth Gatherings. Our youth usually participated actively in worship services and served some Sunday lunches which helped them with raise money to support their programs.

The Trustees organized a number of projects to continue to make the church welcoming and a pleasant, well maintained church home – painting the exterior, improving the flooring, and having annual cleanup days. Of note is the special flooring pattern that a group of men installed in the fellowship hall in 2003, which remained until 2024. A large red cross was set into the tile as a reminder of our faith. Seeing the men's satisfaction with the completed project made it all the better! In the early 2000's, a comment in the Annual Report mentions that “Reg and Frank might almost take up residence in the church!” Behind that comment is deep appreciation for the terrific amount of time that Reg Coleman and Frank Liepe devoted to maintaining and improving the church property. As Reg noted recently, while reflecting back on those days, all he was doing

was offering back to the Lord the gifts that he had been given. The same can be said of all the people who gave of their talents and gifts, to the glory of God and His church.

In terms of outreach, OSLC enjoys an excellent location with high visibility from Island Highway! To capitalize on this, Pastor Bob suggested that a large cross could be erected on the lawn in front of the church as an invitation to the wider community. (Its story is found in a later chapter in this booklet.) Besides this, the congregation also started displaying during the Advent season a “larger than life” nativity scene, plus the illuminated Advent message signs that are still displayed today on the front yard, featuring the four words Hope, Love, Peace and Joy. At Easter, a rough and rugged wooden cross had for many years been placed in the sanctuary during Holy Week, adorned with flowers. Now this cross was often moved after Easter worship onto the front lawn as a witness to the risen Lord for all to see as they passed by.

Mary Parker found another way to attract positive attention to the church. She took the lead in planting beautiful rhododendrons in the front garden bed. Many of these rhododendrons had names that were associated with Biblical characters. Although she is no longer a church member, she is still especially fond of the brilliant red rhododendron that remains exactly where she planted it, in the front corner of the church. It is called “Monarch,” which Mary associates with the name of God. It is the first to bloom in the spring and blooms the longest!

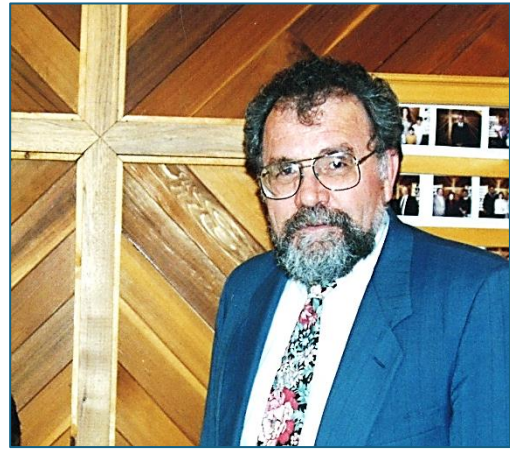
Being visible and welcoming to the community was important to Pastor Bob, who also was well known as a leader in the Oceanside Ministerial Association. A fun memory is when he walked in the Canada Day parade one year dressed as a clown, with children alongside, handing out candies and invitations to our upcoming VBS that year. Like Pastor Jurchen before him, Pastor Bob too led Easter Sunday sunrise services in the Parksville Community Park and heartily invited participants back to our church for Easter breakfast!

### **A Difficult Goodbye**

It was heartbreaking for everyone when Pastor Bob was diagnosed with cancer in 2005. He suffered through months of treatments before his Saviour called him home in September 2006. Church members remember being deeply touched by his dedication to his ministry on what turned out to be his last Sunday of service. He started that service like every other one, but due to the effects of his illness he did not have the strength to finish it. An Elder, Al Pastars, completed the service in the pastor’s stead.

Pastor Bob’s funeral deeply touched not only our church but also Parksville’s whole Christian community. To allow our congregation to mourn in peace, Parksville Fellowship Baptist Church sent many of its members to help in our kitchen, serve as parking lot attendants, and help in other ways at the funeral. They also loaned us several hundred chairs for the overflow crowd. Chairs were placed in the reception hall and every available space so that the funeral service taking place in the sanctuary could be viewed in multiple sections of the building by a closed-circuit simulcast. About 300 people attended.

Pastor Koebernick had a deep and energetic passion to share God's love with everyone. *Everyone!* He was unfailingly enthusiastic and had a wide range of interests. He shared God's grace with many hurting people and often found creative and deeply meaningful ways to show them the hope that is ours because of the dying and rising love of our Saviour, Jesus. Our Saviour Lutheran Church was so richly blessed to grow in numbers, in supportive ministry, and especially in outreach to so many people beyond our congregation, during this chapter of its life.



### **A Caring Interim (October 2006 - February 2007)**

While Pastor Bob was gravely ill, retired pastor Irwyn Pudrycki and his wife Donna agreed to move here from their home in Regina, Saskatchewan, for a period of time to help everyone through this difficult time. However, "Pastor Pud," as he liked to be known, had a teaching commitment at Lutheran Church-Canada's seminary in Odessa, Ukraine, that he needed to complete before moving here. And while he was there, Pastor Koebernick died.

Pastor Pud and Donna arrived as soon as they could, in October 2006. They gave the congregation the gift of a tremendously important five months of ministry, until February 2007. Very shortly after their arrival, the congregation experienced another sudden shock of grief when Pastor Bob's wife, Julie, died of a heart attack.

Thankfully, Pastor Pud came well-equipped with just the right personality, gifts, and experience that were needed to help OSLC through this time of tremendous suffering, sorrow, and grief. Donna did her part too by leading a course on grieving that was helpful to many. Quietly, she also reached out and became a comforting presence to many people. Though the time the two of them spent here was short, their presence and care were real gifts from God at a time when the congregation really needed a lift.

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### ***From those who were there***

Carol Carlson, remembering the early days of her and Gary's membership at Our Saviour:

We joined the church in a special way. In February 1998, Pastor Koebernick showed up at our front door and paid us a visit. We liked the church, we liked the pastor, we liked the services, so we became members and attended church from that point onwards. I did all church activities gladly and it seemed easy because there was a purpose to it. ... Our church provided abbreviated church services in Care Homes in and around Parksville in which I indirectly participated and provided encouragement to the residents. In several ways I grew at church. I benefited from a marriage partnership seminar led by Geoff and Susan Duncan and a grief counseling seminar led by Donna Pudrycki that gave me great insight in dealing with tragedy. The Alpha program organized by Josey Palleson taught me a great deal about my faith and also gave me an opportunity to practice my faith through serving.

Bob Davis had an interesting path to membership at OSLC. He remembers:

I first became involved with Our Saviour Lutheran Church through the Mission Boat. I went to a presentation by Kathy Bender, who was at the time the head of the Mission Boat project. I was impressed by the presentation. After, she came up to me and told me that someone had told her that I was a ship's captain. I admitted it. She asked if I was interested in helping out by captaining the boat. I said I would think about it. Then Pastor Bob heard that I was a ship's captain, and came to my home to speak about it. I said yes, I would do it. At that time I was still working, but I had time off so I did a trip. I went back to work for two weeks, then I returned and did another trip. Later in the year, Pastor Bob asked me to come to a church service. So I came and met other people involved in the Mission Boat. Then, I was invited to one of the Mission Boat Society general meetings. That winter, I joined the Mission Boat Society. Eventually, I served on the board. I was still attending another church in Qualicum, but gradually I got involved at Our Saviour too. I started working with the sound system on Sunday mornings. The death of Pastor Bob—and, shortly after, Julie—was devastating to our church. But when I became a member, while Pastor Pudrycki was serving here, it was one of my best times. I felt I belonged. And I like how Our Saviour has always stayed true to the Bible and its teaching.

Josey Palleson was very involved in many programs at OSLC for many years. But there was one special highlight!

A favourite memory – after thinking about the Alpha program, the personal relationships, and participating in so many capacities – was the Ladies Spa weekends. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, OSLC women held retreats each year in Camp Homewood and Tofino. Josey then felt led to host a “Ladies Spa weekend” at her waterfront home in Qualicum Beach, inviting all to come. The ladies were so appreciative, enriched in friendship, faith and love. She summarizes her service here in our congregation by saying that love is her strength: “I just love people!”

Shelley Brown too was very involved in all sorts of things that she remembered fondly, years later.

There was Sunday School, Youth Group and most of all Vacation Bible School!! Lots of work, but lots of fun! Fellowship with all the volunteers and all those children, for two weeks in the beginning! And the weeks before, all the organizing, choosing and preparing crafts and other entertainment, plus snacks and drinks, music and songs, and time-tables etc., not to mention the theme and the lessons! It was very nerve wracking sometimes, and lots of chaos, but in the end, with lots of prayers, it all came together with the Lord's guidance! It was worth the effort!

## Chapter 6

### The Tufts Years (2007-2013)



Our Saviour congregation welcomed Pastor Craig and Donna Tufts in May 2007. They recognized that they were called to share their gifts together in worship and congregational life.



This came at the time when our congregation was still very much in the midst of recovering from the loss of Pastor Bob and Julie Koebernick, the year before. The Tufts' arrived after several months of interim ministry led by Pastor Irwin (Pud) Pudrycki, after Pastor Bob's death. Their daughter Heather moved with them and often participated with music when she was not away at university. Pastor Craig brought with him his puppets Bert and Ernie who helped to share faith messages (with Pastor's ventriloquism).

Throughout his time with us, Pastor Craig invited us to recognize our strengths and "grow forward" in thanksgiving, with the promises, guidance, and support of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his message in the 2007 Annual Report, he wrote:

I only can add my thanksgiving and appreciation to each one of you for how you have let your faith in Christ move you into action for him, in and beyond the activities of OSLC. [...] As we move further into 2008 and the generation of new memories and numbers, may all of us keep in mind the words of Hebrews 13:7: "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

Throughout the six years of his ministry here, until he and Donna left us in May 2013, Pastor Craig led us to receive the Lord's blessings with joy and share them through our church and community life. Of note were his sessions on sharing our faith, a series by Bill Hybel called "Just Walk Across The Room," sessions on welcoming and responding to very needy people who come to us seeking help, and a series on understanding our Christian faith alongside that of the Muslim faith.

Donna, a superb musician, introduced and led many new songs of praise and worship. She brought out the best in the choir, introducing new anthems, songs, and rhythms with enthusiasm. The choir then led the congregation to learn new songs too, many of which became familiar in



*Donna Tufts (centre), leading VBS music team, 2008*



our worship services and are still sung with joy today. Many singers participated in worship teams that led congregational music during our services. Choir members and their friends often went Christmas carolling to nursing homes and to seniors in their own homes. Donna even established a tradition of writing and directing an original new Christmas play each year! Each of these was performed during a special worship service in the Advent season, with children, youth, and adults participating.

Donna and Pastor Craig worked with the Council and capable volunteers to install a new sound system in our sanctuary. OSLC has always found within its members enough skilled and dedicated labour to do pretty much all of our renovations ourselves! We welcomed the donation of a new keyboard instrument—an electronic clavinova—which served our accompanists’ need to provide traditional organ sounds as well as more contemporary piano sounds. Another great benefit to this clavinova is that it can easily transpose our music to a lower pitch which is better suited to our congregation’s voices. Annette Tupper, Bonnie Matwick, Dave Lieffertz, and Donna Tufts did a great job of sharing the accompanist’s role. Sometimes the keyboard was supported and enhanced by people playing other instruments such as guitar, drums, violin, and flute.

A small group was formed to “vision” our church’s overall direction and specific goals. Out of this came a desire and plan to improve the sanctuary and chancel area, updating and enlarging it so that it would be easier for groups to participate in more forms of worship leadership. The sanctuary and hallways were newly carpeted, along with other improvements.

Next came the plans for our large 1.9 acre church property, which was already zoned to allow the future development of several residential properties on the north side. The property also included along its western side a large forested area which was terrific for Vacation Bible Schools and other outdoor opportunities. However, during these years, the city of Parksville had more need for housing lots and had made changes in its policy for taxing larger but undeveloped church properties. A focus group (and then also the congregation as a whole) considered several options, including a seniors’ housing development. Finally, everyone settled on a 3-step plan. Step 1 was to subdivide the northern part into three residential lots. The sale of these lots provided a good amount of money that could then be used for the other 2 parts of the plan. Step 2 was to redevelop the parking lot, which was paved and surrounded by attractive landscaping. Unfortunately, due to the high cost of these improvements, and the projected cost of the last part



*Proposed fellowship hall (at left), 2012*

of the plan, Step 3 was not completed as everyone had been hoping from the beginning. That step would have involved a larger and upgraded fellowship hall, which would have been built on the gravel area between the fellowship hall and the shed.

Throughout this time, the second floor of the church continued to be used by the Mission Boat for office and summer staff lodging until 2019 when the BC Mission Boat Society moved its headquarters to Courtenay.

The organizing of a set of six new “Service Teams” was a welcome and helpful development that was suggested by Al Pastars, who brought the idea from his and Vivian’s former church in Winnipeg. It engaged most of the congregation, organizing people to work in groups to support Sunday worship. The six teams each served for a month at a time, filling roles as ushers, sound system operators, coffee servers, church cleaners, Communion preparers, readers of the Bible lessons, and offering counters. This system relieved the few hardy and committed souls who had been so diligent in filling these roles, and created opportunities for many more people to get to know each other as they served together. Over the next years, some of these roles were eventually taken on by specialized groups (for example, sound-system operators) or part-time janitorial staff (weekly cleaning). But the service teams continue to this day to effectively offer Sunday hospitality, ushering, and coffee fellowship. Most of our members have always been willing to volunteer.

Vacation Bible School continued throughout these years, although the turnout was smaller than in the peak years of the 1990s. It usually welcomed around 30-40 children plus a similar number of volunteers. The children and families who took part really appreciated these programs, which always featured an exciting theme at the centre of all of the Bible lessons, music, crafts, and activities. As the Christian Education coordinator on Church Council, Donna Tufts led these weeks with the help of many hard-working, active volunteers. Sadly, 2012 was the last year that we were able to offer VBS.



*Pastor Craig & kids at VBS in the forest, 2008*

The Sunday School introduced a “one classroom” concept to meet the needs of the smaller group of children who now attended. Pastor Craig offered special classes so that children who wanted to receive Communion but were too young to be confirmed, could do so. The highlight at Christmas was the musical play that was written afresh each year by Donna Tufts and involved children, youth, and adults. It was performed during a Sunday morning service in Advent. Those plays were so well done!

A youth and family ministry group was facilitated by parents (Diane Floyd, Matt and Tammy Koebernick) and Pastor Craig and Donna. Rhonda Kelman coordinated an older girls' group for two seasons called "TAG" (Totally Awesome Girls). This supplemented the regular youth activities that were led by Pastor Craig and Donna, which were called "TAP" (Totally Awesome People). In 2012, Jessica Pixner, a young adult staffer with the BC Mission Boat, became our part time youth worker. Young people from many OSLC families appreciated the range and quality of the programs that were offered, and some of them brought their friends along with them.



*Gary Carlson & Rhonda Kelman: Valentines' Dinner, 2010*

These areas of children's ministry, youth ministry, and family ministry were areas in which the Tufts' gifts and leadership really shone. The flip-side to these strengths is that it became difficult for the congregation to continue some of these programs after they left. Welcoming new families and younger children became more of a challenge. Sunday School resources came to be organized by a group of volunteers and were used on those Sundays when children were in church. Several families moved away, and a number of people left our congregation at this point. However, Jessica Pixner continued to do great work with a smaller group of youth, and engaged with some of them on a 1:1 basis. Times were changing, but the church was still moving forward!

Adult enrichment and faith building programs during Pastor Craig's tenure included Bible studies and presentations on Christian issues and outreach. One such course was on evangelism, called "Just Walk Across the Room." A longer-term program was Alpha, which began during Pastor Koebernick's time and continued to meet weekly until 2011. It was led by Josey Palleson and involved a group of committed volunteers. Each week, the Alpha event included a supper meal, a video-led session with Nicky Gumbel (the founder of Alpha International), and much discussion. It greatly enriched many OSLC members and others from our community, some of whom came to faith and joined the church.

The outreach committee chose Christian social and faith ministries that we could support as a congregation, along with the overseas missions of Lutheran Church-Canada. Local ministries included Manna Ministries, the Salvation Army, Crossroads Crisis Pregnancy Centre, and Christmas hampers. Significant support was always offered to local friends in need. Yearly support was also given to Samaritan's Purse through its Operation Shoebox campaign before Christmas. During Lent, a 24-hour prayer vigil was initiated, which offered time for people to come to the church individually for prayer and meditation, offering prayers for our church, our community, and the world at large. Our tradition of neighbourhood barbecues began after the completion of the parking lot, which involved a lot of noisy construction. We decided to extend

an informal invitation to our neighbours to say, “Thanks for putting up with the commotion!” These neighbourhood welcome BBQ’s continued on a regular basis for several years.

Worship services in local nursing homes were shared with other local churches, usually led by Gary Carlson and Jutta Storey with other members participating. For two years, a number of OSLC members also participated in Qualicum Beach’s chili competition, where Pastor Craig’s personal recipe was held in high regard!

The BC Mission Boat Society’s office and gathering place continued to be at our church. As in Pastor Bob’s time, OSLC members were actively involved in supporting the BCMBS’s programs. Mission teams were welcomed on “Friendship Fridays” when they arrived, and supported with encouragement and a listening ear when they shared about their experiences after they returned. Pastor Craig continued Pastor Bob’s example of serving on the society’s Board of Directors for several years, even after he moved to Vernon in 2013. We were blessed to have the Mission Boat staff as active members of the congregation, including Kathy Bender, Marcus Huff, Jessica Pixner, and Rhonda Kelman. Some visiting teams, especially those from Concordia University and Concordia Lutheran Seminary (both of which are in Edmonton), appreciated the “comfortable pews” or even the floors in the sanctuary as sleeping space before they headed out to make their community visits!

Fellowship opportunities for men and women continued regularly. As a congregation, we appreciated regular potlucks, summer barbecues, and many fellowship gatherings. The annual Salmon Barbecue was a real highlight and a great fundraiser for the BC Mission Boat. We gathered together for Advent celebration evenings, Easter morning breakfasts, and other special events.

There were also smaller monthly men’s breakfast and dinner gatherings. One summer, a special “men’s retreat” was organized, with a small group enjoying a canoeing and camping trip to Amor Lake, north of Port McNeil.

The Ladies Spa weekends held at Josey Palleson’s beachside home continued for a total of 8 years—a time for being pampered, having great fellowship, and creating special memories!



The Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) ladies continued to meet for monthly Bible Studies with Pastor Craig, and took part in many service opportunities and fellowship. In 2012, they adopted a smaller and looser structure and ended their official affiliation with LWML-Canada. The quilting group that began many years earlier continued to meet weekly throughout the winter and spring seasons, sewing and tying quilts for Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR). They usually succeeded in providing up to 100 quilts each year! A few of these quilts were given to local charities, and one was raffled-off within the congregation, which supplied all the money needed for the shipping of all of the quilts to CLWR! We should note, too, that it wasn't only women who took part: Hilton Zutz was there every week, sewing the edges of all the quilts once they were tied and put together.

When Pastor Craig accepted a call to Vernon, B.C., in 2013, he and Donna were greatly missed for their gifts, creativity, and energy—especially in the areas of children's ministry, youth ministry, and family ministry. And yet it was still the people of the congregation who contributed the most to the day-to-day work of being God's people together in this place. As Pastor Craig wrote in one of his first Annual Report messages:

I can only add my thanksgiving and appreciation to each one of you for how you have let your faith in Christ move you into action for him, in and beyond the activities of OSLC. For those who have served behind the scenes: may Jesus, who sees all, confirm you in his value of your unnoticed actions of faith. For those who have served up front: may Jesus, who knows the particular challenges involved with this, confirm you in the gifts you have for serving in this way.

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*From those who were there*

Pastor Craig recalls arriving at such a challenging time in OSLC's history. Pastor Bob Koebnick had died the year before, and discussions were taking place about the BC Mission Boat Society and its future at OSLC. The Synod had recommended that OSLC have an interim pastor, but after only a few months, the congregation decided to call a permanent pastor. Pastor Tufts and his wife Donna accepted that call, thinking perhaps they would be here a relatively short time to help the congregation through this difficult time. They felt compelled to come... and stayed for 6 years. When he received a call to Vernon in 2011, he returned it, knowing that his time here at OSLC was not yet done. When they called him again two years later, he accepted. He believed his work here was complete.

Wendy Punter was OSLC's treasurer during this time. She was thrilled that the mortgage got paid off!! "I took over the books in December 2009. From the opening balances, I know that the congregation all contributed extra offerings to pay off the mortgage in 2009. I no longer have access to the area of the books of 2009 that show what had been paid in monthly mortgage payments, and then what was subsequently collected in the latter part of that year to clear the mortgage out. But I do know that during 2009 \$21,029 was paid in mortgage payments, and the debt was cleared. There were no further payments made for any debt after 2009!"

## Chapter 7

### The Rosnau Interim (2013–2014)



As soon as Pastor Craig Tufts announced that he had accepted a call to St. John's Lutheran Church in Vernon, starting in May 2013, our congregation started thinking ahead toward our next call. During this interim period, which stretched to about a year, we were blessed to have Pastor Bryan Rosnau in our congregation. He and Bev moved here from Regina after he retired from serving at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Regina. They came here following their daughter and her family, who had moved to Parksville earlier, and they quickly became active in our congregation. After Pastor Craig left, Pastor Bryan agreed to serve as interim pastor on a three-quarter-time basis. That arrangement lasted for a year, until Pastor Mark Smith accepted OSLC's call and moved here from Fort McMurray, Alberta.



*Pastor Bryan & Bev Rosnau*

So, despite this year-long pastoral vacancy, Our Saviour continued virtually all the usual aspects of congregational life, worship, and outreach. Our second annual "24 Hour Prayer Day" was held in November 2013 and was supported well by members, including youth, coming to the church for 2-hour periods over the 24-hour day to pray quietly, on their own and also following suggested prayers focusing on home, community, and global needs. Throughout this year, we also continued to assist local Christian ministries including the Salvation Army, Manna Homeless Society, and our own Christmas "tree of plenty" where we shared gifts and hampers with some congregation folks and community ministries.

The congregation enjoyed Pastor Bryan's sermons, especially one in which he dressed up like Martin Luther and delivered a sermon in the style Luther would have used. He offered an introduction to the Lutheran church for potential new members, and confirmation classes for young people. He was a great visitor too. His commitment was to follow up with new visitors to the church within the first week that they came to Sunday worship. In the memories he shared to help us prepare for this anniversary, Pastor Bryan said that "we recall the great fellowship we shared after each worship service, how important it was in developing caring, family-like bonds."

Some youth group highlights during this year were the Alpha study series, joining with other youth groups on a ski retreat and an outreach mission weekend, helping with the Sunday School story time, and participating in Sunday worship.

A BC Mission Boat land team was formed with members of our congregation visiting the community of Ehattesaht, near Zeballos. We continued to support the other teams that came here

for the Mission Boat, too, through Friday evening welcome events when they arrived for orientation and preparation. The annual salmon barbecue as a fundraiser for the Mission Boat continued to be a real success!

Anna Reincke was with us during this year as a full-year intern with the Mission Boat, adding her enthusiasm and gifts of ministry in our congregation. Marcus Huff returned to our area from the U.S. to serve as Interim Executive Director with the BC Mission Boat Society; later he was called to that position full time.

Kathy Bender, our long-time church member and Executive Director of the Society, suffered from terminal cancer and passed away in April 2014. During the later months of her illness, she received generous support from her church community, which was so necessary and so very much appreciated. She was a key person here in many ways, and is still greatly missed.

Along with others, Kathy was very involved in visitation and support, especially by helping bring together an organized and dedicated service team of caregivers that we called “LINKS”. (LINKS is an acronym for “Listening, Informing, Networking, showing Kindness & Supporting through transition.”) This was a group of volunteers who responded to help our members as they were experiencing challenging transitions of health, aging, and other crises where extra support was needed. It was envisioned to give immediate and short-term support while ongoing supports were being arranged from other sources such as family, friends, and community resources. However, as with most supportive caregiving, for some people who lacked support from their own families, the help that LINKS offered often tended to become ongoing. The LINKS program continued for a number of years but came to an end during the COVID years (2020-21).

This was the year of the “Circle the wagons” or “Use it before we lose it” fellowship and camping event in September, held on our church’s property. The church was preparing to sell some of its unused property, so it was timely that we enjoyed this event while we still had all the land! Some people brought their travel trailers to camp overnight; others came along in the daytime for recreational and fellowship events. These included golf, minigolf, a barbecue, a singalong campfire on the church parking lot, talent sharing, and even a pet parade!



*Helga Becker and other participants in the “pet parade”*

Beyond his pastoral commitments, Pastor Bryan often went fishing with Bill Stefiuk. He and Bev both loved hiking, even tackling Mt. Benson in Nanaimo. They continued to be active members and friends at Our Saviour after his service here as Interim Pastor. Then they moved to Australia for a year where he once again appreciated the opportunity to serve a congregation. The Rosnaus still loved this Island, but as it turned out family ties were stronger! So, when their daughter and family returned to Regina in 2018, they too headed back east to Saskatchewan.

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*From those who were there*

One of Pastor Bryan's fond memories, as the church's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary drew near:

I enjoyed partnering with Bob Davis and Bill Stefiuk—"the 3 B's"—to catch fish for the annual BC Mission Boat Society barbecue that OSLC hosted. One day, we caught our allotted six chinook, recorded them on our licenses (2 each), and motored back to the marina. Captain Bob left immediately to walk his dog, while Bill and I began cleaning the fish. A DFO (fisheries) officer approached and asked to see our licenses. Six fish in hand, only 4 recorded... Busted! Bill went into what seemed like an hour-long rant about having another fisherman on board who had to walk his dog, and how the Reverend Pastor Bryan (me!) would never break the law, and how the fish were going to feed a whole bunch of hungry people in the church, and, and.... Finally, the officer just shook his head and walked away. Bill and I concluded that the Lord must still love fishermen!



## Chapter 8

### The Smith Years (2014 – 2020)



Pastor Mark Smith and his wife Darlene arrived here in May of 2014 and served until June 2020. They came from Trinity Lutheran Church in Fort McMurray and were pleased to return to the west coast after living most of the earlier parts of their lives in Washington State. During Pastor Mark's six years in our midst, his kind, friendly, and caring personality went far in connecting with people through the church and individually.

Once a year during Advent, Darlene invited all the ladies of the church for tea at their home, which was always very enjoyable. She organized our 24 Hour Prayer Day together with Susan Duncan. The two of them set up a number of prayer stations and displays in the church where people could pray and for a range of concerns: individually, in their families and communities locally, and worldwide.



*Pastor Mark & Darlene Smith, May 2014*

The congregation continued to be active and busy with a full array of programs, gatherings and special events. Many of these were continuations of activities that began earlier in our congregation's history and continued to be deeply meaningful—things like Bible studies on Sunday mornings, men's breakfasts and dinners, ladies gatherings, an annual "spa" weekend at Josey Palleson's, special seasonal events, and weekly quilting in the winter-spring season. Sunday fellowship after worship services continued to be a welcoming gathering-time for everyone, including our guests, with serving teams looking after the snacks on a monthly rotation. Wendy Punter and Annette Tupper organized and led our choir, which was smaller now than in previous years but continued to sing for special services. Music teams continued to play a leadership role in many of our regular Sunday worship services.

Pastor Mark was very involved with outreach, together with an active committee. Starting in January 2015, for more than three years he and a dedicated group of congregation members ran a series called *LifeTree Café*. It opened every Monday evening at 7:00 pm in the gathering room and truly was open to all. Many contemporary topics were presented through video and followed by discussion. All of it offered a Christian perspective on a range of topics like health

issues, personal well-being, current social concerns, and the like. The gathering room was freshly decorated and furnished in the style of a coffee house, and always supplied with coffee, tea and popcorn. This program was promoted well throughout the community with posters and newspaper announcements, welcoming all to come. Many did!



*The LifeTree Café*

Another special outreach event was a concert called “Amazing Grace.” It was held on Sunday November 5, 2017, to celebrate 500 years since Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses onto the door of the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany. (That event actually took place on Oct. 31, 1517—but, close enough!) A poster that the church distributed throughout the community described the event, which was very well attended. The following notice was sent to the local paper:

On Sunday, Nov. 5 at 3 pm, Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Parksville is hosting “Amazing Grace,” a concert of Christian music celebrating 500 years of Reformation, featuring well-known local musicians. Both instrumental and vocal, the concert will offer an eclectic array of music from the classical, reformation, gospel, folk, and contemporary eras. Admission is by free will donations and all proceeds will benefit Manna Homeless Society in Oceanside. Everybody is welcome.

Pastor Smith also initiated a “Trunk and Treat” event at Halloween, when community invitations again brought families to the church for this fun event. People from the church treated them to some candy, served from the trunks (or hatchbacks) of their vehicles. Kids and families

also received a welcoming message to our church, and a message about God's love. This creative event was very well received and was repeated several years in a row.

Other outreach activities in this era of our church's life included:

- Quilting. Church members made quilts for CLWR.
- A changing monthly focus, with information and opportunity to support various Christian organizations such as Manna Ministries, Crossroads Pregnancy Crisis Centre, etc.
- Earth Day, April 22, a focus on stewardship of the earth and natural resources
- Participation in awareness and fundraisers for Crossroads Crisis Pregnancy Centre, Young Life, Manna Ministries, Operation Christmas Child
- Providing information to Welcome Wagon about the Christian churches in Parksville and area
- Ongoing support of the BC Mission Boat Society through OSLC's annual salmon barbecues and Oktoberfest meals
- Movie nights were continued too for a short time, inviting the congregation and community
- The Tree of Plenty project continued to collect donations before Christmas to support families with hampers of food and small gifts for their Christmas dinners.



*Community picnic, 2015*

The youth program was led throughout most of this time by Jessica Pixner. She also worked with the BC Mission Boat office and made many contributions to our church, especially in the areas of outreach and communication. With the youth, Jessica organized gatherings and events of many kinds, offered personal support outings with some individual youth, and involved them in community outreach projects such as delivering home-made, faith-filled Valentine cards around Parksville.

Sunday School continued to be offered during the worship service, and involved a small group of families. Some family events were held, both inviting families who were already well connected with us and reaching out to those whose children were baptized in our congregation.

Fun events included bowling, a Lego event and games night, all including messages of God’s love for us.

As noted in an earlier chapter, the LINKS support network of volunteers was developed in 2013, just before the Smiths arrived. It remained in place to respond as needed by people who were facing difficulties or transitions. Help was offered in terms of visitation, seeking supports that were already available, and helping with referrals to services. Quite often, rides and short-term meal support were offered. Some people who served in LINKS continued to be supportive caregivers even when people’s needs and circumstances changed. Pastor Mark and the Elders requested that this program also be extended to include longer-term visitation—an obvious and growing need. However, as the COVID pandemic arrived, this program also had to adapt, according to the protocols required. We continued to extend our hand of support as well as we could, often relying on Carol Zielke who was available at the church office to be the first one to respond.

Fortunately, we continued to have a strong base of workers and supporters alongside Pastor Mark, for the needs of this congregation. In March 2020, the COVID pandemic struck the world and we were certainly affected as a congregation. (*See the special chapter on this time, later in this booklet.*) The BC government prohibited public gatherings, including worship service, for awhile. So Pastor Mark began recording videos of the Sunday services. We had a faithful and skilled team who worked with Pastor Mark on this project, including Gary Zielke and Al Pastars. Emails were sent out weekly containing links to these recordings so people could participate—at least to some extent—in worship from their homes. Most of the congregation appreciated being able to hear the Word in this way. With some trial and error, we were able to maintain a sense of community. Another series of online devotions that Pastor Mark recorded, called “Pastor on the Road,” did a lot to help people still be fed and connected even though they could not be physically together.



*COVID rules: waiting, with proper spacing, for come in for Communion*

Another difficulty the congregation faced, earlier in Pastor Mark’s time, was the crisis in the ABC District. The immediate issue was the collapse of its Church Extension Fund (CEF), which had been such a tremendous help to Our Saviour over the years and had helped many congregations too become established through convenient and low-cost loans. But a series of bad management decisions going back to the 1990s eventually caught up with CEF and left it insolvent early in 2015. Because the ABC District itself owned the fund, it too went under creditor protection. Eventually, the whole structure of Lutheran Church-Canada ended up being

changed as a result of this chain of crises. Thankfully, OSLC was not directly involved in any of this on the congregational level. We had no congregational funds invested in CEF, and our mortgage with CEF had been paid off years earlier (as noted in the previous chapter). But a handful of OSLC’s members did have personal funds invested in CEF and suffered large financial losses. This was a very difficult time for them, emotionally and spiritually as well as financially.

Even before COVID struck, Pastor Mark had been planning his retirement for June 2020. So, a call committee began working with the ABC District around that time to define our congregation’s profile and needs, and start the process of calling the next pastor God would bring to our church.

Then, amid all the disruptions of COVID, it was suddenly time to say goodbye to Pastor Mark! He led his last service on June 21, 2020, which was our “Farewell with God’s Blessings” to him. Unfortunately, pandemic restrictions made it impossible for us to follow through on our heartfelt intention to say a fuller farewell to him and Darlene through a goodbye dinner and special event. He and Darlene moved back to Washington State and settled in Sequim as young retired folks. He served us well for six years and our congregation was blessed by his steady, gentle, patient, and loving ministry.

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### *From those who were there*

Looking back, Pastor Mark realizes that he received so much joy while serving OSLC. It was an honour for him and Darlene to serve here. He still misses the people and the contact he had with them. He remembers working hard to clarify and establish congregational goals and functions. It was not an easy time, since the congregation was experiencing a decline in giving. But establishing good, Gospel-centred goals really did help keep things on track—and moving ahead.

Brian Hagedorn appreciates the significance of the cell-phone booster tower that was installed on our church in 2020. It pays a significant annual fee to the congregation for its use. This steady annual income provides a good stream of funds that can be used for capital improvements and long-term repairs such as replacing the roof—without having to do special fundraising for those projects.

*(right Diane Floyd at the LifeTree café)*



## Chapter 9 The Chambers Years (2021 – present)



This chapter is a snapshot of our congregation right now, and the ministry of Pastor Steve Chambers. He and Brenda arrived just as the pandemic was starting to lift, in August 2021.

The congregation had already issued a couple of calls to prospective pastors during the earlier part of the pandemic, but neither of those pastors had been ready to move under those conditions. For a while, the call process went on hold. But then, when the dark cloud of COVID started to lift in the spring of 2021, the congregation felt it was ready to issue another call. Pastor Steve Chambers had re-entered parish ministry just before COVID began, after teaching for many years at Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton. When our call arrived at the end of May, the time seemed right for him and his wife Brenda too, to start a new ministry partnership here among us.

They brought with them a contagious energy and enthusiasm for ministry and mission. Pastor Steve's installation service on Sept. 12, 2022 was attended by 79 people. By historic standards that was not a large turnout, but coming out of COVID it was the biggest gathering many people had been at for a long time! Certainly it was a joyous time, featuring our Regional Pastor Rev. Rob Mohns as preacher and including pastors and guests from many of LCC's other congregations on the Island.

Pastor Steve quickly began Bible studies on Sunday and Wednesday mornings. The first few months were spent studying the call documents that lay out the relationship between the congregation and its pastor. Then it was on to the four "Advent Words." The two weekly classes split in the New Year, with Sundays focusing on Philippians and Wednesdays tackling the overall topic "Meet the Bible." Altogether, about 25 people took part each week. People had a lot of fun, as well as growing in their faith!

Fellowship teams were reorganized and the much-enjoyed coffee time after worship began again. With the addition of several new participants, Evelyn Kruger reorganized five teams to serve on a five-month rotation. Continuing the long-term pattern, each team was responsible for ushering, kitchen set up, clean up, and providing refreshments.



In the spring of 2022, partly as a response to the ongoing sense of isolation and lack of interaction that COVID had caused, Church Council asked Brenda Chambers to organize a Congregational Life Committee. This was a temporary committee at that point, aiming to fill a very specific need. The goal was to offer a range of special activities to bring the congregation together. The first committee members were Sylvia Armbruster, Donna Woodward, and Donna McAskile. Later, Kristen Juergensen joined them. A lovely Easter morning breakfast was first,



followed by a much-enjoyed games night. During the summer of 2022, the committee met and put together Welcome Bags for visiting children and adults. In the fall, the congregation took part in a welcome-back barbecue and a harvest potluck lunch as well as the popular games night. The year's activities concluded with Advent cookies and carols along with Brenda's hilarious games.

*(left: Games Night, 2022)*

As the first post-COVID year progressed, other new and continuing congregational activities started up again too. The men's fellowship meals that had been organized for many years by Brian Hagedorn once again offered fellowship and devotions at monthly Saturday breakfasts and Wednesday suppers. Lutheran Ladies Lunch continued meeting on the last Wednesday of the month at a chosen restaurant to share what was happening in their lives. A new Single Gals Club was started with the objective of getting to know each other better and sharing unique experiences in a supportive and safe environment. The Christmas Tree of Plenty ingathering of goods was changed into a Christmas Fund to help people within our congregation and our community.

Along with these activities and functions, the building and grounds continued to need ongoing attention. The landscaping was maintained by a group of volunteers on a weekly and monthly basis. Beyond this, a multi-year program of renovations was moved into high gear, organized by a small team led by Don Punter, Brian Hagedorn, and Ray LaSota, with many other helping hands contributing to the work. First, the bathrooms were completely updated in 2022. This same year, new kitchen countertops were installed, the cupboards were professionally painted, and a spiffy centre island was added. The fluorescent lighting in the fellowship hall was replaced with brighter and more efficient LEDs. A major clean up by congregational members decluttered and re-organized many areas of the church.

As the new year 2023 began, Pastor Steve offered a series of 8 illustrated talks on "Jesus & Archaeology." Invitations to other churches and the wider community drew together 45 to 50 people per week, including many of our own members. PowerPoint slides using pictures, maps, drawings, and artifacts shed light on the world in which Jesus lived. The pastor also introduced a similar, image-based format into his sermons, using PowerPoint for quite a few months for this purpose. These sermons were very well received, and he continues to offer this format from time

to time. A regular program of Bible studies continued on Sundays and Wednesdays throughout the year. Soup and bun lunches followed the Wednesday sessions during Lent. A series called “Growing in Faith” reinforced the essential teaching and practice of our faith and encouraged a few people to join the congregation.

For a while, it had been clear that some improvements could be made to the way the congregation organizes itself for its work. A committee had previously started drafting new Bylaws way back in 2015, and this task was taken up again with new vigour by a small committee that was led by Ron Woodward. This group worked hard throughout 2022 and came up with a simple and efficient structure that seems to be “right-sized” for our congregation. There are only 4 committees: Elders, Congregational Life, Outreach, and Properties. Elections to all these posts were held for the first time at the end of 2022, with everyone taking office on January 1, 2023. Based on the painful lessons the congregation learned back in the 1980s, leaders were sure this time to submit all the changes to all the right authorities for approval and ratification: not only OSLC’s own Voters Assembly, but also Lutheran Church-Canada and the Province of B.C. It is also worth noting that—along with these more substantial changes—the congregation also took the symbolic step of finally Canadianizing its formal name to “Our *Saviour* Lutheran Church”!

The Outreach Committee quickly got organized under Judy Dyke’s leadership, with Lois Edelenbos, Gord Tupper, and Eileen Hebert working beside her to discover ways to serve and welcome the wider community. They got started by helping with a tea at the local ORCA supportive housing complex. Next, the committee encouraged the congregation to offer servings of soup to others who were experiencing mental and physical health issues. A small bouquet ministry offered an uplifting gift of flowers to friends and neighbours. In May, all of the “first responders” agencies in Parksville and Qualicum Beach were treated to cookies and treats in an Appreciation Blitz that was very much appreciated. A neighbourhood BBQ in September was well attended. Winter visitors Bob and Marion Buie joined the committee too when they were in town, and helped to create a Prayer and Action Calendar for Advent. In the spring of 2024, Stuart Elliot and Mike Reinerth brought a further infusion of energy and ideas to this committee.



*2024 First Responders care packages*



The Congregational Life Committee continued to offer a rich menu of interesting and enjoyable events for the congregation. The activities from the previous year were expanded in



2023 to include a Ladies High Tea, Sundae Sunday, a pancake brunch, and a Christmas tree decorating party. *(At left: How did Santa sneak in there?)* Welcome Bags continued to be made as needed and were warmly received by visitors. A set of new and improved children's activity bags were created to be used by youngsters visiting our church. Sunday School leaflets were copied as needed, and Jutta Storey built a good relationship with a school-aged child who visited us regularly. Ladies enjoyed the Single Gals Club and Ladies Lunch which now rotated between a bag lunch at the church and a meal at one or another of the local restaurants (often Smitty's, Happy Jack's, or Aioli's).

Renovations slowed down a bit in 2023 but included repainting of the parking-lot markings and re-staining of the fence. Minor improvements were also made in the upstairs apartment. Plans were hatched to renovate the sacristy and repaint the shed.

Also, several men sprang into action when it became obvious apparent in the winter of 2023-2024 that the big wooden cross that had stood on the front lawn of the church since 2003 was developing an obvious and growing "list." We were sad to see it go, but a durable aluminum cross was quickly ordered to replace it, using money from the Memorial Fund. Fittingly, this new cross was dedicated to the glory of God as a witness to the community on Easter Sunday, March 31. *(See a special chapter about both of these crosses, later in this booklet.)*

Service Teams were blessed to see the addition of 10 new members in the last couple of years, replacing others who moved away, retired from the task, or passed away. Their responsibilities were revised with feedback from Pastor Steve. It was decided partway through 2023 to discontinue the use of paper plates, for ecological and economic reasons. All teams are kept aware of dietary restrictions and try to accommodate these while providing refreshments for coffee time after church.

Sadly, Doreen Hagedorn organized the final session of quilting in 2023. This had been an ongoing project for more than 30 years. However, when Canadian Lutheran World Relief discontinued their *We Care* program, it seemed wise for us to end our work as well. The final 41 quilts were dedicated in September. Most were distributed to the Haven Society, which supports two transition homes for women in Parksville and Qualicum Beach. One quilt was raffled off in the congregation, with the proceeds going to support Pastor Platz's wife Elizabeth in her fight against cancer.



After many years of organizing Men's Meals, Brian Hagedorn passed the torch to Mike and Wendy Reinert. They continue to offer one breakfast and one supper at the church, most months. Pastor Steve's devotions after each meal usually lead into a good discussion within the group of 8 to 12 men who usually attend.

Thankful for the service it received over the years from its own "vacancy pastors," OSLC supported Pastor Steve's service as vacancy pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Courtenay starting in October 2023. That congregation had not had its own pastor since 2020, and was thrilled to receive one in September 2024. Pastor Steve, and OSLC, were pretty happy too!

This current year, 2024, has been a busy time. In January, Pastor Steve presented a second series of talks about archaeology and our faith. This time the title was "Diggin' It", focusing on a remarkable early-Christian community in the city of Hippos, Israel, where Pastor Steve worked for 6 seasons. This series too was well received by members of the community and congregation. Regular Bible studies continued on Sunday and Wednesday mornings. The Outreach Committee printed hundreds of bookmarks and cards to be shared with the community, and again collected and distributed hundreds of cookies to First Responders. Highlights for the Congregational Life Committee, in addition to the regular monthly activities, were a special Valentines event that also honoured Eileen and Andy Pickard's recent wedding, and the June congregational picnic-BBQ at Rath Trevor Beach.



*Easter brunch 2024*

Within the building, this year's renovations have included new flooring in the kitchen, fellowship hall, sacristy, office, and family room. The narthex had been reorganized, painted, and nicely equipped with new furniture and lighting. The hallway and several other rooms have also been painted, and new doorframes and door handles have been installed throughout the building. Outside, volunteers under Claire Ashwell's leadership continue to keep the grounds weeded and trimmed.

Pastor Steve continues to lead regular Sunday and Wednesday Bible studies, always seeking topics that will help people deepen their faith and live it more confidently. He and the Elders recently distributed a Talents and Interests survey to help everyone to assess their strengths and gifts, and consider how they might participate more fully in the life of the congregation.

Now, as OSLC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary has been drawing near, the planning and preparation for this milestone event has been led by a small and dedicated committee: Evelin Kruger, Wendy Punter, and Brenda Chambers. Under their direction, sub-committees have sent out the publicity, organized the service, planned the banquet, constructed both a banner and a specially woven

hanging, decorated the hall and church, provided refreshments, arranged travel and accommodations for special guests, and looked after hundreds of other details.

This history book too has been a labour of love for those who worked with Pastor Steve (and Evelin Kruger) to dig through files, gather documents, scan pictures, pore over annual reports, interview current and former members and pastors, and write and rewrite these chapters. The goal has been twofold: first, to preserve some of the highlights of OSLC's rich and remarkable past; second, to encourage the congregation's current members to embrace the unknowable future with the same steady trust in God's abundant grace and mercy that has guided and sustained this congregation all the way along.

+++ To God be the glory! +++

Doreen and Brian Hagedorn reflect on their 32 years of membership at OSLC:

It is impossible to pull out just one memory or only one fulfilling experience! We have held pretty much every role and served in many capacities at Our Saviour. We ended up here at OSLC because it was the only Lutheran church in the area, and we've certainly had our share of hard times. But this is a great congregation. God has blessed us here in so many ways. We can always keep looking ahead to the future with trust and hope. We're excited to see what our Saviour is going to do in the next fifty years!



## Chapter 10

### The BC Mission Boat



The BC Mission Boat ministry was born, shaped, and nurtured for many years right here at Our Saviour Lutheran Church. Through all the seasons and many changes, it continues today with its *vision* of fostering “a thriving body of Christ within remote BC coastal First Nations communities.” To achieve that vision, its *mission* is “sharing Christ’s love and equipping communities to grow in faith.”

Back in 1999, congregation member and commercial fisherman, Roy Haakonson came up with an idea that quickly found Pastor Bob Koebernick’s full and enthusiastic support. They wanted to share the message and love of God with the people living in remote and isolated places along the northern BC coast. In the past, First Nations communities had been visited by mission boat programs and clergy from a number of Christian churches. But over the years, most of them had faded away. A few villages still had church buildings, but were they being used? Some coastal people lived in remote fishing camps, canneries, lighthouses, marinas, and the like. Did they have Christian support? Roy had seen many such communities in the decades he had spent travelled up and down the coast as a commercial fisherman. Pastor Bob had a great passion to share God’s love with everyone, to show them hope through the love of Jesus Christ, and to bring people along with him in this mission.

Roy and Pastor Bob felt God encouraging them in this plan, that a group of people from Canadian and American Lutheran churches would go out with a “mission boat” once again to bring the Gospel, Christian fellowship, and gentle friendship to the people in these communities. They envisioned sharing God’s love through children’s and youth activities and gatherings of many kinds on the boat and dock and in homes and communities. In the first year, they imagined travelling up and down the coast and stopping at as many places as they could. They anticipated that the boat would make a crew change each week, with new volunteers replacing those who had travelled the week before. This would become a “volunteer in mission” opportunity, coordinated by Our Saviour Lutheran Church, welcoming people from far and wide to come and take part.



*Pastor Bob (middle), with crew*

Roy recalls that the first step was to explain this “mission boat” vision and plan to OSLC’s Church Council and secure its approval for Pastor Bob’s involvement in this major program development alongside of his regular pastoral duties in the congregation. There was no request for congregational finances at this point, because the plan was for the full costs of each trip to be borne by the volunteers, each person paying their own portion of the expenses (or getting personal sponsorships). This approach was approved for the first year, with a review in the future after seeing how it worked. At the same time, the pair also approached the Alberta-BC District with a request for mission funding. They were told that this might be available after the initial year of exploration. What a blessing!

To get the mission moving, they needed to find both a boat and the funds to fuel it on its first mission-trip in the summer of 2000. At first, they proposed building a 72-foot long, purpose-built vessel, but soon realized that that would take more time and money than were available immediately. So, for this first year, Roy approached his boss and the owner of their fishing company about whether he knew of any fishing boat that might be available. God provided! His boss offered the use of the *Misty Moon*, an 80-foot-long wooden fishing boat with space for eight crew members, for the whole month of July. Answered prayers!

So, the plan moved swiftly ahead, each member of the crew paying their portion of the cost. Pastor Bob, Roy and Carrie Haakonson, and Hilton Zutz joined from our congregation for the full month, and four others joined each week. Roy was the captain for the full season. They left from French Creek, stopping and visiting coastal dwellers and First Nations communities along the way. At each stop, the crew shared friendship and hospitality through visits on the boat and dock. Pastor Bob later described it as a “coffee and cookies ministry”! Women from our

church and others nearby generously supplied large buckets of cookies. (Bob Davis remembers that on trips when he was captain, Julie Koebernick always made sure that there was a special supply of peanut butter cookies just for him!) The team prepared songs of faith to sing, messages to present, children’s stories to share, activities to lead, and potluck meals to invite people to. With no fixed schedule or set agenda, they connected as God would lead. The communities offered meeting places. Many people welcomed them into their homes, and encouraged them to come back next year! At the end of the month, stories and blessings were shared at Our Saviour. There was strong support for the BC Mission Boat to go out the next Year



*Kingcome (also known as Ukwunalis)*

That fall, the first newsletter from the BC Mission Boat organizers shared this report:

*Our inaugural voyage for the month of July 2000 visited communities along the British Columbia coast. We were truly blessed with meeting many wonderful people during our journey. We visited 22 ports in July and were blessed with a warm reception at each stop. We also welcomed over 200 people on board our boat the Misty Moon, and met just as many more during our shore visits. We look with anticipation to next summer's voyage to visit in person with everyone again. Our mission is "to show and bring the love of Christ, by a ship-based mission to the remote British Columbia coastal communities."*

Within two years, The BC Mission Boat Society (BCMBS) was formed and became a Listed Service Organization in Lutheran Church-Canada. It was given office space and the second-floor apartment of our church, initially sharing that space with some of our church's own programs as well. The invitation to participate in BCMBS went out far and wide through Lutheran Church-Canada publications, through the Lutheran Laymen's League (in the USA), and through newsletters. Pastor Bob and others became ambassadors for this exciting new project wherever they could connect in person too, at places like church conferences, the Vancouver Mission Festival, and in our local Christian churches.

What was happening in the congregation itself, to support this new mission? Many people were very involved in prayer, helping with all the tasks of preparing the boat supplies and food, helping with newsletters and promotional mail-outs, welcoming volunteers, and offering transportation. They hosted visiting teams with meals and sometimes billets in homes or sleeping space at the church. The Friday welcome sessions when teams arrived became known as "Friendship Fridays." Our pastors and congregation members joined the ongoing series of mission crews as they were able. Our congregation raised funds through salmon barbecues and other means to offer support to the mission. Some people served on the Board of Directors. Pastor Bob served as Pastoral Advisor and Vice-President from 2000 to 2007. Pastor Craig Tufts also served on the Board for many years.



*BCMBS volunteers, 2004: Front row: Gary Bender, Carrie Haakonson, Roy Haakonson, unknown  
Back row: Hilton Zutz, Kathy Bender, Jackie Skidmore, Pastor Bob, Will Steck, unknown*

Each year, the boat was sent off with a commissioning and blessing at the French Creek Harbour, which friends and congregation members were themselves blessed to attend. The mission was meaningful to the whole congregation as they listened to the stories that were told and retold after a crew had made a new round of visits to what were gradually becoming familiar communities. Lives were encouraged and changed, both for the volunteers and for the people who lived in all those far-flung places.

Between 2002 and 2012, the *Tyee J* replaced the *Misty Moon* and another vessel that had been used in 2001. Several experienced mariners agreed to volunteer each year to skipper the boat. Our beloved church member Bob Davis (Captain Bob) served in this role for many years. Initially, the boat sailed not only along the relatively sheltered eastern side of Vancouver Island but also up and around Cape Scott to the much wilder West Coast. That route in particular sometimes brought challenging weather and stormy seas, but the ship was always well piloted by capable seamen.



*Aboard the Tyee J: Captain Harold, Kathy Bender, Pastor Craig*

Many years later, Captain Bob reflected back on everything he has been part of at OSLC and said, “My favourite memories are serving on the Mission Boat. So many wonderful people. Everyone involved from the staff to the teams to the communities – wonderful people! *Lots of great memories!*”

The mission took a big step forward in 2002 when the Alberta-BC District provided a generous annual outreach grant of \$50,000 to the BCMBS, through the congregation. The purpose of this grant was to support an outreach worker who would coordinate and support each year’s teams, visit alongside those teams in the summer months, and maintain community support for the program during the year. This really helped the program go forward. The grant continued in full for several years while the Society was developing other sources of funding and support. The onboard mission crew, land-team volunteers, community supporters, and partnering congregations contributed liberally. Funding came in from grants and donations from congregations, private organizations and foundations, and a large and widely distributed community of mission-minded people. Now in its 24<sup>th</sup> year, the BC Mission Boat Society

continues to rely on financial support from many churches, organizations, and individuals.

Kathy Bender from Our Saviour Lutheran Church was hired as BCMBS's very first outreach worker in 2002. She continued with zeal to develop and coordinate the program until she needed to resign in 2007 due to her struggle with cancer. Kathy poured her heart and soul into her calling, working closely with each community, with Pastor Bob and the dedicated Board of Directors, the people of OSLC, and the wider supporting community. As the work continued to thrive, the Mission Boat office came to be staffed not only by Kathy as part-time Program Director and Outreach worker, but also by a part-time office support worker and two student workers.

Up and down the coast, the work of the organization was growing too as the number of requests for visits to coastal First Nations communities expanded. Every visit was preceded by communication between BCMBS staff and two key people on the other end: a Christian contact and a Band administrator. It was critical to establish a good understanding and receive a community's welcome before each visit – and all these initiatives were met with positive response!



*Building relationships: 2 crew + 2 friends aboard the Tyee J*

Within a few years, “land teams” were also organized, as more and more groups came in from churches across Canada and the US. They were often a mix of youth and adults from a local congregation that heard about the mission and became excited to join it. Some schools, notably Concordia University College of Alberta and Concordia Lutheran Seminary, sent teams for several—or many—years in a row. One year, Concordia University sponsored a “reverse trip” in which residents from Klemtu flew to



Edmonton and experienced a taste of life in the big city, as guests of the Christians who had come and spent time in their community.

Crews and land teams alike were always given detailed orientation on the communities they would visit, the opportunities they could provide, cross cultural expectations, and communication skills. They were asked to prepare programs and supply materials for kids' camps, adult gatherings and Bible studies, shared meals and hospitality, singing together, outdoor games, and a lot of visiting. They were encouraged to enter each community with openness, prayer, and flexibility in their attitude and approach. The Society offered 6 to 8 weeks of boat ministry each summer, and sometimes up to 17 land teams both during the summer and at different times throughout the year.

Beginning in 2005, interns from the "Director of Parish Services" program at Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota, were welcomed to serve for several months. The first was Marcus Huff, who was followed by Josh Patterson and Anna Reinke. When Kathy Bender became ill in 2007, Marcus returned to the role of Executive Director and contributed his passion for mission until 2016 when he accepted a call to serve in his home state of Michigan. From 2016 to 2023, Rhonda Kelman, who had served for more than ten years as a team volunteer and leader as well as a contracted summer student, brought her devotion to the Mission Boat into the position of Executive Director.



*Friends & crew at Gilford Island, 2004.*

*(Captain Bob is kneeling, front row. Kathy Bender, 4<sup>th</sup> from right, back row)*

In 2012, a difficult but strategic decision was made that the Society would no longer operate its own boat. Instead, the focus shifted toward more land teams and community visits. Several communities had already been benefitting from visits during the year, in addition to the summertime boat-based visits. These places would continue to be reached by BC Ferries, water taxis, and other vessels. It seemed wise to focus on these somewhat more accessible communities

and discontinue visits to others that were farther away, both because of the high cost of season-long boat charters and fuel, and the increasing need to travel year-round. Instead of spending so many days travelling, teams that could reach target communities by road were able to spend a lot more time in those communities, sharing programs and visiting.

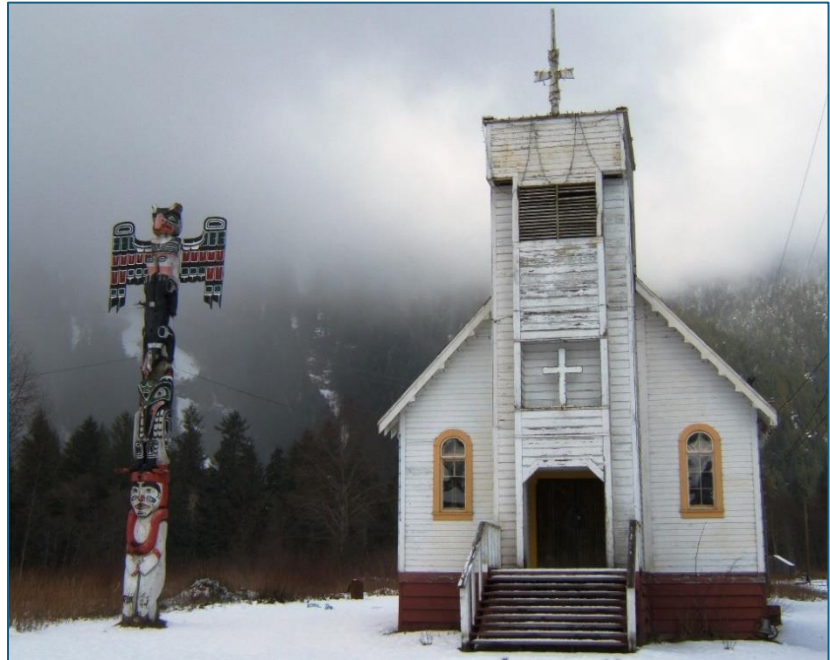
In 2019, the BCMBS moved its office north from Our Saviour to Faith Lutheran Church in Courtenay. This community offered better jumping-off points for the staff and land teams to reach the four communities they were regularly visiting, including connections with BC Ferries and water taxis. The office remained there at Faith until 2023, when it moved another step north to Bethany Lutheran Church in Campbell River—for the same reasons it had initially moved from Parksville.

During the COVID pandemic (2020-2021), due to the risk of disease transmission, it was not possible to bring in any teams at all. Instead, the program staff, executive director, and seasonal staff offered prayer and support, and sent out materials such as resources, activity ideas, and care packages. They kept in touch through the internet and visited in person whenever friends from the communities were in Campbell River or Vancouver (such as for medical reasons). Newsletters and prayer letters continued to be sent out regularly to all the supporters across the continent, and to the villages. It was an exciting day when COVID restrictions finally relaxed enough that the outreach staff could again make visits! If you'd like to read about the opportunities for outreach and encouragement during this time, go to the story on the website,



Today, the vision of the BC Mission Boat Society continues to aim to raise up leaders in local communities, “sharing Christ's love and equipping communities to grow in faith.” Currently, Julie Klassen is serving as Interim Director of BCMBS while also continuing to serve in her ongoing role as Ministry Director and Office Administrator. The main communities where work continues are Kyuquot, Ehattesaht/Zeballos, Klemtu, and Kingcome. However, since the COVID pandemic ended, there have been just enough teams each year to visit each of these four communities as regularly as anyone would like. Julie and others have continued to stay in touch and follow up on these communities as much as possible. One good meeting-place that has emerged is the North Island Indigenous Games, which is like a large camping week for several communities to come together on the northern part of Vancouver Island. BCMBS staff and volunteers have found that these Games provide an excellent opportunity to continue building and maintaining relationships with people from many communities.

It is hoped that in future, God willing, more of the communities that were part of the initial years' mission but have not been visited for a while, could again be served with BCMBS' Gospel ministry. May we join together in prayer for more teams to come forward and for God to raise up people to serve through the BCMBS. Looking ahead to 2025, the Mission Boat invites and welcomes people to join community visits and land teams and to be part of their support community through prayer, donations and receiving their online newsletters and prayer letters. Current information continues to be available online at:



*St. George Anglican Church, Kingcome*

Our Saviour Lutheran congregation has really missed hosting the BC Mission Boat Society in our church. It was 'birthed' here 24 years ago. However, we pray that our Saviour will continue to bless this mission in the future just as He so faithfully has in the past.

Email: [info@bcmissionboat.org](mailto:info@bcmissionboat.org) Phone: 1-250-871-8311

Mailing Address: **201 Birch Street Campbell River, BC V9W 2S4**

Interim Executive Director: Julie Klassen

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### ***In His Own Words***

As described above, it is not a stretch to say that Roy Haakonson was the founder, humanly speaking, of the Mission Boat ministry. Here is what he had to say about all of that, as he looked back from the vantage point of 2024:

The Lord's work needed to be done and that work was to be led by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit showed us to trust in the Lord, then led us to the will and purpose of our Saviour Jesus Christ in spreading the Good News to remote communities by a Mission Boat.

She was beautiful, according to Pastor Bob!—an 80-foot wooden dragger built in 1952, with an 8-person bunkhouse and a top house. The humble joy I feel when I think back, with one small church and one small congregation taking on an 80-foot Mission Boat that was filled with missionaries and facing so many unimaginable, difficult, and dangerous obstacles. It was overwhelming to us but not to our God. At the worst, it was still great. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the Pilot.

Not all of Our Saviour's flock who worked so hard supporting this great mission got to enjoy the songs of praise and fellowship on deck, in the galley, on the dock, or on the beach. But we sang the Gospel for everyone and I am so thankful to our Lord for them all. We will forever give thanks to our God—for sending His Son Jesus, for giving us the Holy Spirit, for leading us to trust in Him as a faithful and loving God, and for enabling us to become 'The Little Church that Did'.

## Chapter 11 The Stained Glass Window



In 1998, in preparation for Our Saviour's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Pastor Bob Koebnick and the Church Council commissioned Shelley Brown, a member of the congregation, to design a colourful stained glass window to be installed at the back of the church. She presented this design to the congregation as a gift. The beautiful piece of art that it led to was installed in 1999 in time for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and has delighted members and visitors ever since. Shelley Brown, the designer, prayed much about the Biblical images and ideas that ought to be included in the glass picture. In July 2024, Heinz Sperber interviewed Shelley and this is what she said was included in the design.

- Looking at the picture from top to bottom, covering all is the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Ghost as symbolized by the three inter-locking circles. Within the three circles is the cross by which God remembers our misdeeds no more.
- God sends all peoples hope of salvation indicated by an olive leaf which is delivered by a white dove symbolic of the Holy Spirit.
- Our deliverer is Jesus Christ standing in the middle of the picture and central to Christian faith. Jesus' hand is outstretched and welcomes all who are in need of hope.
- He is standing by the gate, which Jesus is ready to open to those who are willing to enter.
- Jesus is standing on the road which leads from earth to Heaven and to eternal salvation and He will teach us how we may walk it.



- Jesus' face is obscured so that regardless of race all of us can feel we can be part of His family. Jesus is dressed humbly and wears simple shoes to remind us to humble ourselves before God.

In all of this, Shelley took her inspiration from Psalm 25:4-5: "Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour."

The next step was taken on by master craftsman Rolf Bernstein of Port Alberni, who has since gone to be with the Lord. He selected the colours for each feature of the picture. Each element of the design was cut from a single piece of glass. Individual pieces were then attached together to form rectangular panels using molten lead. These panels were then assembled into wooden frames to give them strength. Finally, these framed panels were installed and mounted into the opening at the back of the church's nave.

Two of the church's members at that time, Arie Van Spronsen and his grandson Kerry Meservia, were responsible for the woodwork and installation. Considerable skill (and a lot of calculating!) was required in the installation of the framed panels due to the heavy weight of leaded glass. To protect the beautiful stained glass window from vandalism, a protective plastic covering was installed on the outer side of the window. Church members paid for the cost of the window.

*(Below: Arie and Kerry installing sections of the window)*



## Chapter 12

### Our Saviour's Cross



Our Saviour Lutheran Church has the blessing of high visibility, being located on the busiest street in the Parksville area. In 2003 Pastor Bob Koebernick suggested that the church ought to take advantage of its superior location and place a large cross in a visible location on the lawn in front of the church. The Church Council agreed, and the current summer student Heidi Nelson, from Innisfail, Alberta, was encouraged to manage the project.



A large timber, 12 inches square and 25 feet long, had been laying beside the shed for many years. It formed the vertical post of the cross. The horizontal bar was made of similar wood. Heidi persuaded Ross Schmidt and Hilton Zutz to handle the heavy work of moving the massive timber, constructing the cross, digging the hole, and sinking the cross into the ground.



Before the cross was lowered into the ground many members cast rocks into the hole. Each rock was a physical representation of that person's heartache, which now resided under the cross, so to speak. Heidi recalls that the project brought the people of the congregation closer to each other. The task of moving the heavy timber from the shed located in the back of the church, to the lawn in the front, reminded her of the pain which Our Saviour experienced when He carried the cross for His own crucifixion.



The first cross lasted until 2023, when the natural process of rot completely destroyed the underground section of the timber. It was so rotten that a quick tug with Ray LaSota's pickup truck was all it took for him and Don Punter to pull it down. Monies donated by faithful members to the memorial fund were used, with Church Council's authorization, to pay for a new cross. The Council approved Don Punter's design for the cross, which was patterned after the old one, and Don and Ray LaSota arranged for it to be constructed out of aluminum and powder-coated for durability. Don Punter, Michael Reinerth, Gord Tupper, Rob Ashwell, and Brian Hagedorn set the new cross in the same location in front of the church in March 2024. Right after Easter Sunday worship, on a bright sunny day, Pastor Steve Chambers dedicated the new cross on

March 31, 2024 with these words: "The Lord Almighty bless this cross as a witness to our faith, an invitation to all who pass by, and a sign of hope to the world."



*Dedication of new cross, Easter Sunday 2024*

May the cross stand there in front of our church for many more years, as unshaken as the strength of God's Word and as the conviction of our faith in that Word.



## Chapter 13

### The Church during COVID (2020 -2021)



In the spring of 2020, COVID struck the world. On March 18, it was declared a national emergency. Everywhere, governmental policies were strict. People could not meet in person indoors, except for people living in the same home. Schools, restaurants and businesses were closed for months before being allowed to reopen, gradually and cautiously. A small number of organizations that were considered to be essential services were permitted to remain open but were monitored for safe protocols. Even outdoors, safe distancing meant staying 6 feet apart, so no hugs! Wearing masks was required. Hospital and care home visits did not begin to occur until after vaccinations began to become widely available in the middle of 2021, and there were still tight restrictions. Before it was understood that the virus spread primarily through the air, many people sanitized everything they brought into their homes. When ill, people were required to go to a public health centre to be tested for COVID. Health authorities followed up on everyone who tested positive and those who had been in close contact with them. Work, business, meetings, and gatherings of all kinds shifted onto online platforms such as Zoom. Or they were simply cancelled, leaving people isolated! Depression and fatigue were common.

*Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; He lifts His voice, the earth melts.  
The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. (Psalm 46:6-7)*

Our Saviour Lutheran Church was affected in every way! Worship services at the church and all gatherings were prohibited from the spring of 2020 until September. Every person, organization, and business in the province was required to follow the protocols set by the Ministry of Health. We lived by Dr. Bonnie Henry's weekly announcements. When we began gathering again in September, everyone registered their attendance so they could be contacted later if it turned out that someone who had been present tested positive for COVID.



*Don Punter ushering communicants into the hall*

Pastor Mark had already announced before the pandemic began that he would be retiring in June 2020 and moving back to Washington State. From March to June, he continued to serve our congregation with online services, visits by phone, and hospital visits following the required protocols for clergy. He made house calls too, visiting outdoors as needed. One day he bought ice cream treats and shared them with a parishioner on her birthday and also with a

senior couple, talking through the living room window! After Pastor Chambers's arrival in August 2021, he and our secretary Carol Zielke continued to work together in the church

building. On reflection, it was all so well done, thanks to the efforts of the whole team that shared its skills and commitment to make these huge adjustments a success. We give thanks to our Lord, and to each of the participants!

How to maintain weekly worship services in such a context? Beginning right away in March 2020, our Elders and a team of capable and dedicated people worked with Pastor Mark to prepare and provide worship services “online” through the internet. We were fortunate that most people in 2020 had computers and internet access. Many gathered at their computers on Sunday mornings at 10:00 to participate. Others watched a recording of the same service at a later time during the week. Some informal communication during the week continued through a “Our Saviour Lutheran Connect” Facebook site and of course, through phone calls with one another.

Our Council Chair during this time, Al Pastars, describes the process well:

Pastor Mark set up videos of the spoken word so that we could follow along online. When he had moved in June, Andy Pickard faithfully served to share the message in the online services. Pastor Mark and then Andy, music team, readers, Gary Zielke and I set up a schedule and recorded a full service every week using just a few people at a time in the sanctuary to keep distances and Covid protocols. This involved using two days a week to record, another day to edit the segments together and place them on our website for the congregants on Sundays. Gary Zielke and I would spend hours on both of our computers at home. With some trial and error, we were able to maintain a sense of community.

At Our Saviour, several people became very ill with the disease and a few were hospitalized. We were not able to respond to one another’s needs for support and friendship during such times in many of the usual ways. Recoveries varied and some people struggled for weeks. One of our longest-term members, Tim Colibaba, died in January 2022 after suffering from COVID and other health complications. We were not able to conduct funerals and other special events.



*Communion setup in the Fellowship Hall*

In the midst of it all, we prayed for God to guide us and supply our needs—individually and as a church. He was with us faithfully, personally, and as a congregation. A small group met outdoors for Bible Study. Some created fellowship through a shared Bible reading plan that was arranged through our Facebook site and emails. Some kept phone calls going—and this was especially important because so many felt isolated and cut-off. Judy Dyke arranged for most OSLC members and friends to receive a check-in phone call every month, or more often, and made most of the calls herself. A prayer chain continued to be active, with Yvonne Landry coordinating. Friends and helping hands assisted people who were quarantined through grocery pickups and meal assistance, delivering and dropping everything off at the front door.



*2 meter spacing, and masks—at all times!*

After Pastor Mark left in June 2021, Pastor Kevin Platz from Port Alberni agreed to serve as our Vacancy Pastor. When regulations eased to some extent that summer, he came to the church periodically to serve Communion to small groups on Sunday afternoons. Carol Zielke, our office administrator, was a key person in organizing these services and worked with Pastor Platz and the Elders to prepare the Lord’s Supper “Covid-style.” As she recalls:

This is how I prepared Communion once we began meeting in the Fellowship Hall with Pastor Platz in August of 2020. Communion was offered every second week, once handwashing, social distancing, and masks were established as the hygiene standards. Along with the labelled individual portions of wine and juice, I made up snack baggies containing wafers and gluten-free wafers. All of this was done in a carefully sterilized environment, in mask and gloves.

By reservation, people filed in at the far end of the Fellowship Hall in groups of eight, so that including Pastor Platz and Lorne Dyke, his assistant, there were no more than 10 people in the room at a time. Everyone wore masks, removing them briefly to receive the Communion elements before leaving through the opposite door. Don Punter would then usher in the next group.

Once vaccines were implemented, we were able to again worship on Sunday mornings, but still by reservation and following social distancing rules (no physical contact, wearing masks, and no singing except by worship leaders who stood behind plexiglass shields). At first, it was important to know that everyone who entered had received vaccinations. Each person lined up along the front walk, keeping 2 metres apart according to lines that were painted on the sidewalk. Everyone had to sign in when they entered. Phew! But—we did all this without a Covid case affecting any of us who regularly worshipped!

We were immensely thankful to Pastor Platz making this commitment to celebrate Communion with us for more than a full year, until Pastor Steve's arrival. This was especially moving to our congregation, knowing that his wife Elizabeth was very sick with cancer.

Meanwhile, the call committee continued to meet as needed. After consideration by Church Council, its recommendations were brought to the congregation who voted for the pastor to whom we would then extend a divine call. There were some periods when it was not possible to hold a call meeting, or even seemed appropriate for extending a call. Still, we extended two calls during Covid which were returned (declined).

Finally, Pastor Chambers received and accepted our call in June 2021. Just before he and Brenda arrived, we returned to a more normal pattern of worship and congregational life, still continuing to practice all the necessary COVID protocols. Masks continued to be worn, hands were sanitized, distance was maintained, and singing was limited. The addition of a regular weekly newsletter called *Friday Fragments* kept everyone informed and gradually increased the congregation's sense of togetherness, after a year and a half of unusual—indeed, unprecedented—separation from one another as the body of Christ.

Despite all the adjustments, interruptions, and hardships COVID brought, we continued to be so deeply blessed in so many ways by our gracious God. How thankful we are for His guidance, direction, and unfailing provision throughout this time.



	Baptized members	Comm. members	Avg worship ATT	Sunday School	Adult Bible Study		VBS	Total contributions	Source of data	Subsidy	Mortgage balance	Year-end surplus/deficit	
Note: numbers in bold are gleaned from OSLC's 2010 Annual Report, which includes a comprehensive table up until that year.													
Not all the numbers there match with the (official) "Statistical Reports" to the District Office. But because this table includes a lot of information that is otherwise missing, and seems to have used consistent methodology, its numbers are being used here, for the most part. Also note that "Total Contributions" follow this table only up to 1991. Starting in 1992, numbers from the "Statistical Reports" are used wherever they are available. The method of reporting income varies a bit from year to year in the congregation's own "Annual Reports," but seems to be more consistent in the "Statistical Reports."													
1978	74	56	38	11	9			\$ 5,617	from 2010 table				
1979	62	48	39	9	8			\$ 7,791	from 2010 table				
1980	83	66	40	18	16			\$ 13,192	from 2010 table		\$ 183,850		
1981	93	73	50	21	18			\$ 24,496	from 2010 table		\$ 183,850		
1982	99	81	51	26	30			\$ 22,043	from 2010 table		\$ 183,850		
1983	110	88	54	18	27			\$ 26,087	from 2010 table		\$ 183,850		
1984											\$ 183,850		
1985	114	86	42	18	33			\$ 24,132	stat report		\$ 186,000		
1986	107	76	43	27	50		62	\$ 42,794	from 2010 table				
1987	109	86	52	27	66		105	\$ 47,001	from 2010 table				
1988	116	100	57	28	66		120	\$ 50,272	from 2010 table				
1989	122	111	65	30	53		121	\$ 56,954	from 2010 table				
1990	133	118	70	32	98		148	\$ 62,268	from 2010 table				
1991	141	125	80	39	58		149	\$ 92,329	from 2010 table				
1992	160	133	90	39	130		174	\$ 109,952	stat report	\$ 15,000		\$ -	
1993	149	125	93	38	140		143	\$ 113,325	stat report	\$ 5,000		\$ -	
1994	152	120	109	40	128		136	\$ 117,578	stat report	\$ -		\$ 3,660	
1995	170	129	112	41	106		192	\$ 127,430	stat report			\$ 17,003	
1996	147	116	85	22	42		170	\$ 110,166	stat report			\$ 2,078	
1997	126	105	57	10	5		150	\$ 100,438	stat report			\$ 18,977	
1998	146	103	91	16	16		106	\$ 129,523	stat report		\$ 169,069	-\$ 25,855	
1999	165	131	98	12	36		78	\$ 114,443	stat report		\$ 154,003	-\$ 2,710	
2000	179	141	105	25	80		94	\$ 145,196	stat report		\$ 142,000	-\$ 963	
2001	165	136	99	10	85		82	\$ 141,801	stat report			-\$ 9,525	
2002	159	132	98	10	54		80	\$ 152,526	stat report			\$ 8,469	
2003	147	133	98	15	36		84	\$ 142,999	stat report			-\$ 3,551	
2004	150	135	103	8	30		92	\$ 139,983	stat report		\$ 105,345	-\$ 2,996	
2005	152	145	89	13	55		85	\$ 144,862	stat report		\$ 89,371	\$ 7,618	
2006	157	142	92	12	47		94	\$ 150,276	stat report		\$ 72,600	\$ 8,549	
2007	148	137	86	4			55	\$ 142,487	annual rpt		\$ 54,770	\$ 4,539	
2008	138	123	79	6	28		30	\$ 139,253	annual rpt			-\$ 9,021	
2009	142	131	73	7				\$ 139,452	from 2010 table		\$ -	-\$ 4,964	
2010	143	128	76	13			24	\$ 140,116	stat report			\$ 11,069	
2011	137	123	77	12			24	\$ 137,915	stat report			\$ 5,204	
2012							26	\$ 136,817	annual rpt			-\$ 3,863	
2013								\$ 150,551	annual rpt			\$ 10,385	
2014								\$ 142,457	annual rpt				
2015								\$ 111,050	(to Oct 31 only)				
2016		74	69		11			\$ 127,886	stat report			\$ 8,327	
2017		74	65		11			\$ 125,509	stat report			\$ 3,107	
2018	84	78	65		15			\$ 132,387	stat report			\$ 8,195	
2019	84	78	65		13			\$ 138,400	stat report			\$ 1,320	
2020	72	63	46	(COVID)	4			\$ 136,078	stat report			\$ 8,871	
2021	83	80	42		16			\$ 151,421	stat report			\$ 36,552	
2022	72	72	44		10			\$ 200,629	annual rpt			\$ 3,392	
2023	71	71	50		13			\$ 212,927	stat report			-\$ 1,896	incl \$9,610 pension payout