



Landscaping the new church

Much of the construction work was accomplished by members of the congregation. The plaques detailing the gifts and donors hang in the front narthex by the stairs to the balcony. However, “dead man’s curve” on Main Street is still there!

It is a tribute to the vision of the congregation and the inspiration of the pastor that such an ambitious project was not only conceived, but carried through to completion during the worst years of the Great Depression. And in 1939, when Pastor Huf left for other fields, the congregation saw him go with a genuine regret and a sense of great loss. St. Paul’s will always be indebted to Pastor Huf for his faith and courage, energy and discernment, vision and timely leadership.

The Rev. William T. Heil began his pastorate here on April 16, 1939. The world was in precarious times, but during Pastor Heil’s brief stay, membership increased and many new programs were instituted. Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941. When Pastor Heil left St. Paul’s in June of 1942, more than 30 sons and daughters of St. Paul’s were serving in various branches of the armed forces. Many older members of the congregation carry fond memories of Pastor Heil’s warm and caring pastoral manner.



Rev. William T. Heil



Rev. George A. Martin

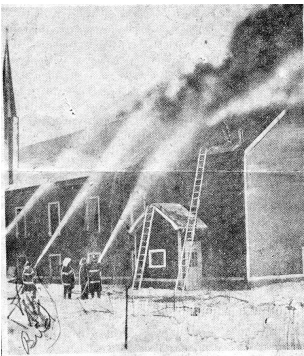
On October 24, 1942, the Rev. George A. Martin began his pastorate at St. Paul’s. The full force of the war was making itself felt, and increasing numbers of the young people of the congregation answered their country’s call. The congregation became actively involved in sending regular mailings as well as “care packages” to the servicemen and women. Some of these letters and the replies from overseas are in our archives. The names of all who served - including those who made the supreme sacrifice - are inscribed on the bronze plaques formerly located on the brick bulletin board in front of the Parish Hall.

With the end of the war and the return of the servicemen and women came lots of marriages, lots of babies, and the congregation continued to flourish. In 1947 St. Paul’s celebrated its 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with many special events. An Anniversary Booklet was distributed, containing the history of the congregation, compiled by Willard Dixon, which formed the basis for all subsequent histories, and many photographs both historical and current. We still don’t know where he found all his information or the pictures of some of the pastors from the 19<sup>th</sup> century! It is fascinating to leaf through and see the pictures of the various groups and organizations and what constituted “high fashion” in post-war Amherst!

A highlight of the Anniversary celebration was the installation of a new Moller pipe organ. This fine instrument has been added to and updated, and continues to provide accompaniment for worship.



1947 Moller Pipe Organ



Fighting the Parish Hall Fire 1950

Over the next years the congregation continued its slow but steady growth. However, early in 1950 a fire severely damaged the Parish Hall. It began when a child placed a coat over a faulty radiator and it caught fire. A child in the class alerted the teacher who quickly marched the children out of the building, and the fire department was called. Pastor Martin continued to preach over the mounting noise and confusion as the volunteer firemen and their equipment began to arrive. The frame structure was severely damaged by the fire, and the smoke and water added to the devastation. During the recent renovations, traces of this fire were evident. When the ceilings in the downstairs Parish Hall were torn out, the charred beams and sub-flooring could be seen. When the Parish Hall roof was recently replaced, old, charred wooden shingles were pulled off along with more recent asphalt shingle. While awaiting repairs, the Sunday School met in the old Eggertsville Hose Company building at Main &

Maynard.

Several pictures of volunteers fighting the Parish Hall fire hang in the new home of the Eggertsville Hose Company.

The congregation faced further adversity in the summer of 1952 when Pastor Martin was suddenly stricken with a heart attack and died. The loss of this gentle, scholarly man was felt by the whole community. The Church Council stepped in to provide leadership, aided by the Rev. Howard Lenhardt, as vacancy pastor.

As if the fire and the death of the pastor were not enough for the congregation to deal with, another challenge arose. A merger was proposed between St. Paul's and St. John Lutheran Church - then located on Hickory Street in Buffalo. The congregation was split. To some it seemed like an ideal solution to several pressing problems for both congregations. St. John wanted to move out of the city. St. Paul's was located in Amherst. St. Paul's was without a pastor. St. John had a pastor. But after considering all the various issues, the proposal was rejected.

This still left St. Paul's with a damaged facility and without a Pastor. In 1953, the Rev. John L. Kinzel was called, and he was installed as Pastor on June 3, 1953. Within the first year of his pastorate, plans were laid for the rebuilding and repair of the Parish Hall and the construction of a new parsonage.



Rev. John L. Kinzel

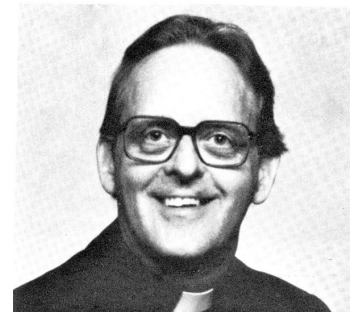
And other changes were coming as well. In 1954, for the first time in the history of the congregation, a woman, Mrs. Herbert (Alice) Hendler, was elected to the Church Council. In 1958 the new Service Book and Hymnal was introduced to the congregation. Pastor Kinzel's own deep interest in music and the hiring of William G. Sloan as Organist and Choirmaster continued an earnest commitment of the congregation to the quality of music in worship.

As the congregation continued to grow, so did the amount of paperwork necessary to keep things in order. It rapidly became apparent that, even with the help of volunteers, the pastor could not act as secretary and discharge his pastoral duties. A part-time secretarial position was created which later expanded to full-time. In 1962, the United Lutheran Church in America merged with several other Lutheran bodies in the United States and Canada to form the Lutheran Church in America. And St. Paul's celebrated its 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a building project that added the classrooms and kitchen on the rear of the Parish Hall, and the Fellowship Room, Pastor's office (now the Church Library), and Choir Room in the rear of the Church.



A vision to expand programming led to the call of an assistant pastor, the Rev. James Anderson in 1966. He concentrated on youth work, and the programs did expand. A community youth center called "The Place" met in the Parish Hall on Saturday nights, and soon became "the place" to go! But other factors came into play, and in the late Spring of 1967, Pastor Kinzel announced his resignation to accept a call to the Campus Ministry at the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia. His resignation, followed by that of Pastor Anderson, left St. Paul's once again without a pastor. The Rev. John Burke served as vice pastor for about six months until November, when a call was extended to the Rev. Carl G. Olin, Jr. The call was accepted, and with the new year, St. Paul's had a new pastor!

The years following Pastor Olin's arrival were characterized by a steady increase in membership, especially among youth and young adults. Awareness of this population and a desire to increase their involvement in the life of the congregation led to the appointment of youth representatives to the Council in 1970, with full voice but no vote since they were not elected. New York State law changed in the next year, allowing confirmed members to vote and hold office in the congregation.



Rev. Carl G. Olin, Jr.

As programs continued to expand, it became apparent that more staff was needed for youth and education. Qualifications were drawn up, applicants were interviewed, and in September, 1975, Ms Barbara Hoekstra was hired as our first Youth and Christian

Education Coordinator, followed by Mary Wolf. The position was “retired” in 1980 when St. Paul’s entered the Seminary Internship Program

1975 was important for another reason. At the Spring Congregational Meeting, a group of five “lay deacons” was approved. These people had gone through a special training program sponsored by the Synod the previous autumn, and had been assisting Pastor Olin since Advent. Liturgical Deacons were trained to assist at worship; Visiting Deacons were trained in visiting the sick and shut in at home or in hospitals, and Preaching Deacons received training in the preparation and presentation of sermons. Since 1975, dozens of members have taken part in this program.

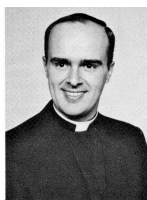
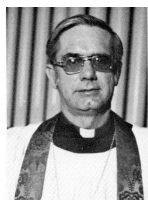
The nation’s Bicentennial was celebrated in 1976 with great fanfare. St. Paul’s celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup>



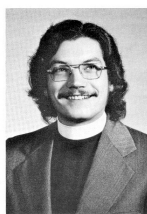
Anniversary a year later with a year of special programs and observances. Anniversary calendars, cookbooks, and pictorial directories were printed. An organ concert, strawberry festival, historical display, and senior member recognition brought current and past members together for fellowship and remembering. The year culminated with a festival worship on Reformation Sunday. Dr. Edward K. Perry, President of the Upper New York Synod preached. Pastor Kinzel returned to celebrate with us, as well as Bill Seibert, Jim Jerge, Gary Santmire, and many, many former members. A festive dinner at the Wick Center of Daemen

Clergy Participants in 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Worship

College concluded the day. Speakers included Julia Huf, widow of the Rev. Gustav K. Huf, who shared her memories of St. Paul’s in the 1930’s. As a special Anniversary Gift to itself, St. Paul’s purchased the Lutheran Book of Worship — the newly introduced worship book and hymnal for the Lutheran Church in America. Many of the copies still in our pew racks carry the bookplates that read, “Presented by St. Paul’s Lutheran Church 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fund 1827-1977.”



In 1979, the congregation voted to enter the Internship Program of the Lutheran Church in America. Pastor Olin would serve as a “supervisor” for a seminary student as he or she learned first-hand about being a parish pastor. The position of Youth and Christian Education Coordinator was abolished to provide space and financial support for this new undertaking. In the Summer of 1980, Kevin Ogilvie came as our first intern. “Vicar Kevin” brought a vision of the wider church with him, and St. Paul’s continued in the internship program for five years, learning and teaching with each new intern. Interns at St. Paul’s



This was not St. Paul’s first experience with supporting seminarians. Seven “sons” and one “daughter” of St. Paul’s have entered the ordained ministry since 1960: the Rev. William Seibert, the Rev. Gary Santmire, the Rev. H. Paul Santmire, the Rev. James Jerge, the Rev. Larry Stiles and the Rev. Gene



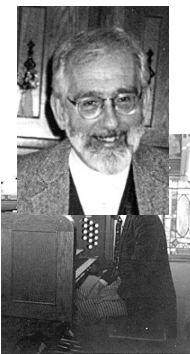
Ordained “sons” of St. Paul’s



Jerge, the Rev. Laura Daly, and the Rev. Paul Metzloff.

Through the internship program, we also became part of the ministry of the Rev. Kevin Ogilvie, the Rev. William Vanderslice, Nikolaus Bastian (no longer in the ordained ministry), the Rev. Kristian Baudler, and the Rev. Raymond Fitch.

When St. Paul’s withdrew from the internship program, the position of Youth and Christian Education Coordinator was revived. Linda Schriver filled that dual position for several years, then the responsibilities were divided and a Coordinator of Youth - Marilyn Rohl, and a Coordinator of Education - Robin Schara were hired.



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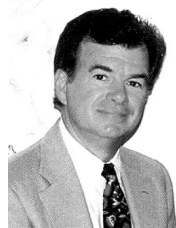
Robin was followed in that position by Michele Landes, Judi Gersic, John Mika and Adam Arends. These people have played key roles in keeping our youth and education programs healthy and vital.

In 1988, Mr. William G. Sloan retired after serving 31 years as Organist and Director of Music. Bill campaigned tirelessly to maintain and improve our pipe organ, overseeing two major rebuildings of the instrument over the years. He provided a consistently high standard for music for worship. Dr. Barbara Harbach, a noted



Barbara Harbach

performer and composer on the faculty at the State University of New York at Buffalo, succeeded to the position, and while here introduced us to a variety of musical styles. The choir learned many of Barbara's original compositions, and William G. Sloan Reformation Sunday 1991, premiered her "Luther Cantata," dedicated to Pastor Olin. The work was also performed the following June at the Upstate New York Synod Assembly. Barbara also began a concert series, "Musical



Paul H. Storfer

musicians to perform in our sanctuary. Following Barbara's move to the West Coast, Brian Hilton filled the position for about 18 months. Our current Organist and Director of Music is Paul Storfer — raised in this congregation, and a talented musician — who brings his own unique talents to the position.

Offering," which brought many fine local musicians to perform in our sanctuary. Following Barbara's move to the West Coast, Brian Hilton filled the position for about 18 months. Our current Organist and Director of Music is Paul Storfer — raised in this congregation, and a talented musician — who brings his own unique talents to the position.

A congregation must reach out beyond its own walls to witness to God's power and love. St. Paul's reaches out in a variety of ways. In 1988, St. Paul's became a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and members have taken an active role in the church at large, serving on boards and committees at the Cluster, Conference, and Synodical levels. From 1986-2001 our parsonage was rented out for use as a "community residence," housing up to nine developmentally disabled adults in the process of learning skills needed for more independent living. And our facilities are used by a number of community groups, including Alcoholics Anonymous, Girl Scouts, the Eggertsville Community Organization, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and the Town of Amherst for voting at primary and general elections. Our Pantry Shelf provides non-perishable food on a rotating basis to three area Food Pantries. When Pastor Kevin Ogilvie took a call as a missionary in Madagascar in 1992, and through his stay there until 2005, St. Paul's managed a checking account which provided funds for special needs in his ministry -- food purchases during drought, medicines, milk for a children's day care program, books and supplies for seminarians, even bicycles for lay catechists to reach remote locations!

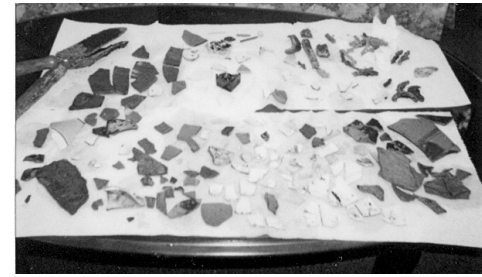
For many years, Pastor Olin was very visible and active in the Buffalo Area Council of Churches (now the Network of Religious Communities) Radio and TV Ministry, coordinating and appearing regularly on several of their broadcasts. For over 25 years he served on the Campus Ministry Staff at Canisius College, initiating a number of programs there, including their annual food collection and a foster grandparent program with several nearby senior residences. Locally, he served on the Advisory Board of the Amherst Senior Center. Pastor Olin was also active and visible in the Lutheran community. He served a term as Vice President of the Upper New York Synod, and was a long-time member of the Candidacy Committee — interviewing, assessing, and approving candidates for full-time service in the church. He served on the Boards of the Niagara Lutheran Home, Lutheran Association for the Developmentally Disabled, and Lutheran Ventures in Human Services, and was an elected representative to the Niagara Frontier Conference Council. His leadership in the congregation, community, and church at large was a key factor in expanding St. Paul's vision of its mission.

Pastor Olin retired in July, 1996, after serving St. Paul's for almost 29 years. His caring and energetic style of ministry made a significant impact on many people. He was then only the second pastor in the history of the congregation to retire from ministry here (the other being the Rev. George Schettler in 1932.) The congregation and community bade Pastor Olin and Beverly an emotional farewell with a worship service and banquet. At the worship service, Jeffrey Rohl, President of the Council, presented Pastor Olin with a framed copy of the resolution that had been adopted unanimously at the Congregational Meeting that May naming Pastor Olin the first "Pastor Emeritus" in the history of St. Paul's.

A new option for the vacancy was offered by Bishop Lee Miller — an "Intentional Interim Pastor." This

person, especially trained to work with congregations in transition, could provide stable leadership as the congregation went through the call process. The congregation, at the recommendation of the Council, approved this option and the Rev. Carl Onofrio was called to a twelve-month interim ministry here. Pastor Onofrio encouraged the congregation to draw upon its talented and capable lay leadership as it began to develop a vision for St. Paul's mission and ministry in the next millennium.

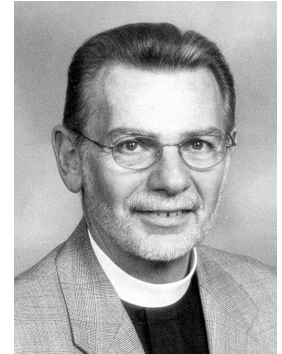
Rev. Carl



A Call Committee was appointed early in 1997, and they began to meet in anticipation of receiving the name of a candidate from Bishop Miller. In May, the Call Committee went to Lockport to hear a certain pastor conduct worship and to interview him as a candidate for the pastorate of St. Paul's. The following evening they met again and voted unanimously to recommend the candidate to the Council. The Council, also meeting that night, received the recommendation and also voted unanimously to invite the Rev. Richard G. Krogmann, Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Deerfield Beach, Florida, to meet and be met by the congregation and to conduct worship on June 8, 1997. A vote followed each worship service, and when the votes were tallied, an overwhelming majority of the congregation agreed with the Call Committee and Council. A call was extended to Pastor Krogmann and accepted. Pastor Krogmann began his work among us on September 1,

Rev. Richard G. Krogmann

1997 and was officially installed on October 19, 1997.



Early in 1998, the Council began to work on new Vision and Mission Statements for the congregation. A steering committee was formed to look into badly-needed renovations to the buildings. At the congregational meeting that May a resolution was adopted unanimously to contract with the ELCA Resident Stewardship Services to conduct a capital improvements campaign in the Fall. Meetings and forums were held; suggestions and dreams came from the members. **"Building Together!"** was the name chosen for this project, and the congregation pledged \$270,000 toward making it happen. The steering committee and architect went to work, developing a project that would incorporate the most necessary improvements as well as some of the dreams. Ground was broken in September, 2000. Phase One of **"Building Together!"** included asbestos abatement, new copper sheathing for the steeple, new flooring and heating in several Sunday School areas, a new boiler and boiler room, new lavatories on the upper and lower levels of the Parish Hall, a handicap lift, renovations to the back narthex, and the narthex hallway - a large addition across the front of the Parish Hall that would provide access to the handicap lift, parish mailboxes, a hospitality center and fellowship space, and a new and expanded access to the sanctuary. Phase One was largely completed by Fall, 2001, and the congregation and community have certainly benefitted from these improvements! Phase Two, in the parsonage yard included new administrative offices on the ground floor and two classrooms above.

In 2004 extensive renovations were undertaken in the Parish Hall and kitchen. Some of the funding for this came from gifts in honor of Pastor Krogmann's 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination which we celebrated in September, 2004.



In the summer of 2005 we undertook a total renovation of the parking lot. New drainage systems were laid, and in the process, some fascinating bits of our history were uncovered. The digging uncovered the old stone foundations of the church from 1879 (or earlier?) and the 1897 parsonage. But the most exciting things came to light in the east driveway when they uncovered a hand-dug, stone-lined cistern. It had not been filled in, but just capped with a 6-inch thick slab of limestone. It would have served the parsonage which, before the fire, Old Parsonage Cistern discovered in 2005 in East Driveway

was located on the northeast corner of the property. But even more exciting was the clay that had been uncovered adjacent to the cistern! It was stained black, and, wondering if that might have been ash and soot from the 1879 fire, we found shards of pottery and scraps of wood, leather, and even

bone. We had found where the debris from the burned parsonage had been dumped! A weekend of digging uncovered many more bits and pieces of stuff, and some of what was uncovered was put on display for several weeks, then added to our cache of historical realia.

Some artifacts dug up from the 1879 fire debris



Other growth, equally if not more significant, also took place! St. Paul's members developed a program called "GIFTS" - Growing In Faith Together Spiritually. GIFTS is a special time of spiritual, personal, and social growth through prayer and self-discovery which began through the prayerful dedication of nine people who attended a program called "Mission" at a local Roman Catholic church and wanted to offer a similar outreach to Lutherans. After a year-long process of rewriting and refinement, GIFTS was first offered in March 1999. A program that began with just nine spirit-filled, enthusiastic people has touched well over 100!

Spending a week together building faith has also built friendships which have helped to bond the congregation in the Holy Spirit. Lives were changed as participants renew their commitment to God. This spiritual renewal awakened a strong desire in people to continue their faith journey. GIFTS encouraged participants to find new ways to use their gifts and talents in the congregation and community. As a result, prayer groups and Bible studies formed, participation in congregational ministries increased, and the Evangelism and Outreach committee was reestablished.

In the Spring of 2005 Pastor Krogmann announced that he would be retiring before the end of the year. A Call Committee was elected in May, and the Synod-led program review took place in June so that the search process could begin. We said our farewells to Pastor Krogmann and Pat the first week in September, and wished them Godspeed as they moved to their new home in Tennessee. Pastor Krogmann's solid preaching of God's Word, his capable leadership through the capital campaigns and renovation programs, and most of all, his sincere pastoral care for the people of God, gave St. Paul's a solid footing as it moved into the new millennium.

Pastor Charles "Chick" Biegner (retired) served as Vice Pastor during the vacancy. He already was known to many in the congregation, and people quickly found that his blunt style and Brooklyn accent covered a warm and caring heart. He challenged us to look forward in ministry, and to take a more active role in caring for our neighbors in need. His special interest – the Medical Center at Resurrection Lutheran Church, which he had helped to develop during his pastorate there – was already well known to this congregation, but now the connection became more personal. Lenten offerings and Bake Sale funds were earmarked for this purpose.

Rev.



Charles G. Biegner

And while he was with us, Pastor Biegner was able to fulfill a long-time ambition and published "A Short History of the Lutheran Church in Western New York," sales of which have raised over \$11,000 for the Medical Center!

Early in 2006, we were saddened to hear that Pastor Olin had been diagnosed with advanced cancer. And it was with deep sorrow that we learned of his death on February 26, 2006. His 28½ years of ministry here left a deep and abiding imprint on this congregation and community. We thank God for the life and ministry of Carl Olin! April 29, 2006 a Memorial Service for Pastor Olin took place here at St. Paul's. Bishop Marie Jerge brought greetings and thanks from the Synod and from the ELCA. The Rev. Kevin Ogilvie preached, and many of Pastor Olin's colleagues and friends took part in the service. The sanctuary was filled to overflowing. The Olin Family donated a color portrait of Pastor Olin to the congregation, which now hangs in the Fellowship Room – always one of his favorite spots!

In May of that year, the Call Committee and Council voted to present a pastoral candidate to the congregation. June 24-25, 2006, Pastor Dan Hoffman and his wife Debbie came to meet to people of St. Paul's. Pastor Hoffman conducted worship and preached on Sunday morning, and at the congregational meeting following, the congregation voted to extend a Call to Pastor Hoffman to serve as our Pastor. On Sunday, September 17, 2006, Pastor Hoffman began his ministry at St. Paul's, and he was officially installed on the following Saturday. Pastor Hoffman previously served congregations in Olean, Portville and Geneva NY.

Rev. Daniel E.



Pastor Hoffman was active in teaching ministry in the congregation as well as the Conference. His commitment to making liturgical options available led the congregation to offer Morning and Evening Prayer as well as a contemporary-style service of Holy Communion on Sunday .

Pastor Hoffman shepherded the congregation through some difficult times, including the suicide of a member and the serious injury, lengthy hospitalization and death of a young man in the congregation. Since he had served previously as Dean in the Southwestern and Genesee-Fingerlakes Conferences, he was asked to serve as Interim Dean of this Conference, guiding a number of area congregations in difficult circumstances when then Dean, Pastor John Scarafia, was disabled for several months by surgery and rehab. During his four and a half years with us, Pastor Hoffman challenged us to re-think our mission and be more intentional about it.

Pastor Hoffman reluctantly submitted his resignation in February, 2011, but has continued to serve his Lord, providing leadership in congregations in the Niagara Frontier and Southwestern Conferences of the Synod and accepting a Call to serve Trinity Lutheran Church in East Amherst.

In the year following Pastor Hoffman's resignation, Pastor Steve Biegner served as Transitional Pastoral Leader, providing pastoral care, and arranging for worship leadership, while also functioning as "Lead Servant" for Lutheran Charities, Lutheran Campus Pastor, and a practicing pastoral counselor! Through Pastor Steve we shared a vision for the Grace School at Ile a Vache in Haiti. Backpacks for students were sewn; medical supplies were collected, and money was raised to provide solar power to the school which was installed in the fall of 2012.

Early in 2012 renovations were begun in the worship space at St. Paul's and in the "Olin House" – the new home for Lutheran Campus Ministry. New carpeting, refinished wooden floors, new paint on the walls and ceiling, and new wainscoting refreshed the church. Extensive repairs were made to the kitchen, bedrooms and bathrooms at the "Olin House," paving the way for the Peer Ministers (college students working with and for Lutheran Campus Ministry) to live there in intentional Christian community. These were funded by the generous gift of a family in the congregation.

In April, 2012, Pastor Alan Anderson began to serve as Intentional Interim Pastor at St. Paul's. He had previously served at Zion Lutheran Church in Frewsburg NY. He served the congregation through the end of August, 2013 and his gentle, caring ways brought a new spirit to St. Paul's.

Rev. Alan Anderson

In June, 2013 the congregation voted to Call Pastor Steve Biegner to a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time ministry, the remainder of his time to be spent with Lutheran Campus Ministry. He began his service with us on Sept. 8, 2013 as St. Paul's participated in the ELCA's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary "God's Work, Our Hands" project, packing 8800 meals for the WNY Food Bank! Empowering People with the Good News of Jesus Christ becomes the new theme for the mission of St. Paul's.



This community, this congregation, and this world have changed in many ways since 1827, but God's mission for the Church and the Lord of the Church remain the same. Empowered by that Gospel for service in the present, St. Paul's celebrates its past and anticipates its future!

Mary E. Wolf

revised, 2013

