

A COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY OF OUR CHURCH AND SCHOOL



*Our GOD, Our HELP in Ages Past!
Our HOPE for Years to Come!*
Psalm 90

VILLAGE LUTHERAN CHURCH & THE CHAPEL SCHOOL
172 WHITE PLAINS ROAD
BRONXVILLE, NY 10708

Acknowledgements

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

We are so honored to have been entrusted with compiling this history for the 100th anniversary of the church and 70th anniversary of the school. The Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School have been very blessed over the years, a fact which became abundantly clear to us as we worked together on this project.

Thank you to all those who sat down with us to share your stories and memories about VLC and The Chapel School. Our community wouldn't be what it is today without the amazing men and women of faith that have dedicated their time and talents over the years. We appreciate all of you, and couldn't have done this without your input!

We would especially like to thank Pastor Hartwell, for his guidance and support of this project, and for writing the afterword, which concludes the history on such a powerful note and inspires us to do even more in the future.

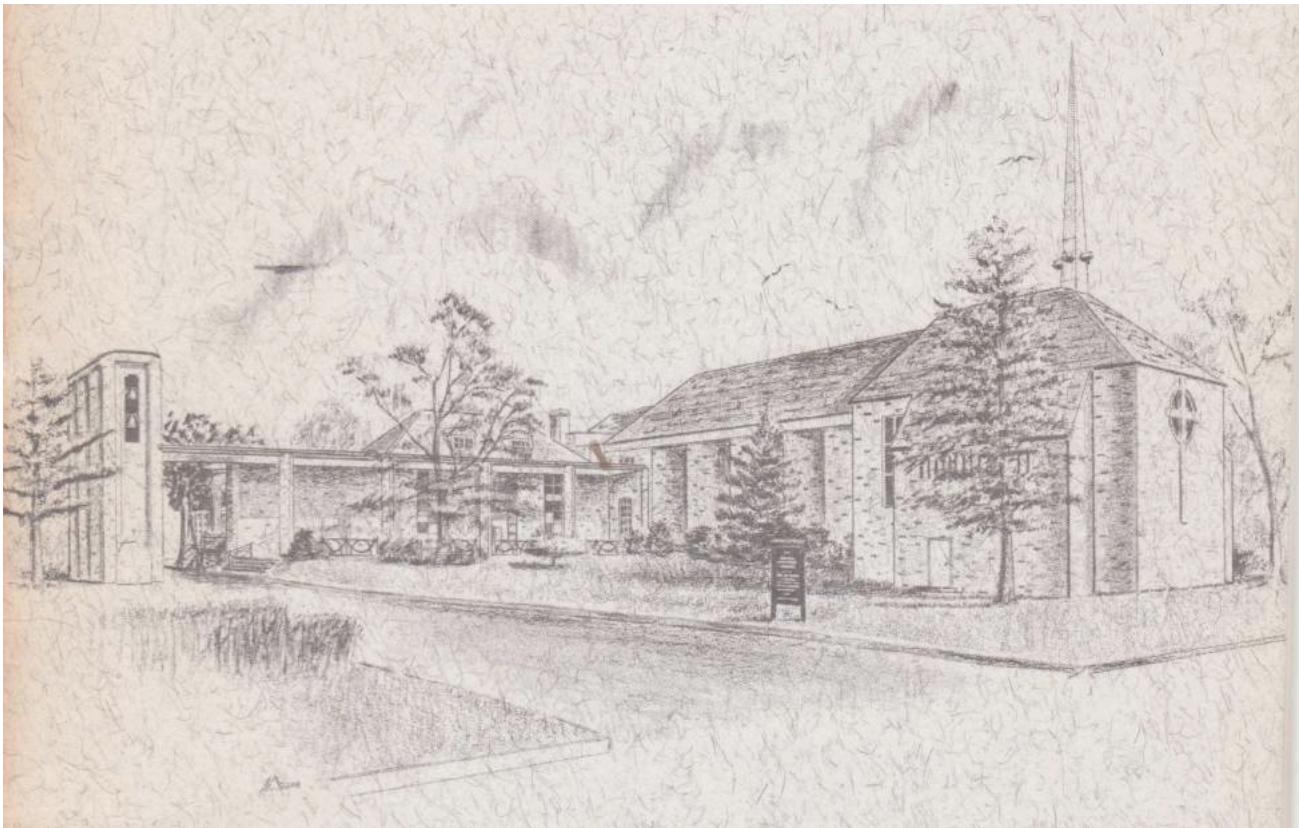
Yours in Christ,

Dick Forliano, Marcia Kollmann, George Pietarinen, Tricia McGinnis and Sarah McGinnis



Table of Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| PREFACE | 1 |
| THE CHURCH | 2 |
| Early Beginnings | 2 |
| The Halter Years (1941 – 1974) | 8 |
| The Zwerneemann Years (1974 – 2003)..... | 16 |
| The Hartwell Years (2003 – present) | 23 |
| THE MUSIC MINISTRY | 28 |
| THE CHAPEL SCHOOL..... | 32 |
| AFTERWORD..... | 39 |
| APPENDICES..... | 40 |
| Appendix 1: VLC Pastors and Staff..... | 40 |
| Appendix 2: TCS Administration | 43 |
| Appendix 3: VLC Congregational Presidents (1950 – present)..... | 44 |
| Appendix 4: Church and School Milestones | 45 |
| Appendix 5: Our Core Values..... | 49 |



PREFACE

William Faulkner once said, “The past is not dead. In fact it is not even past.” In a much more positive sense this same sentiment illuminating the heritage of the Southern Confederacy can be applied to the history of our Village Lutheran Church over the last century. God, working through men and women filled with the Holy Spirit, have made our church and school what they are today. Individuals have made tremendous sacrifices, made mistakes, yet overcame overwhelming odds and together have helped us, as a church, triumph over adversity, demographic change, severe economic downturns, and shifting cultural norms.

In compiling this history celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Village Lutheran Church and the 70th anniversary of The Chapel School, our overriding purpose has been to recount how we have labored together to fulfill the mission of the church,

TO KNOW, LIVE, AND SHARE THE LOVE OF CHRIST. *Under the blessing of God, the mission of Village Lutheran Church is a ministry of the Word and Sacraments. This ministry gives opportunities for mission, witness, nurture, fellowship, stewardship, and service. It focuses on the specific needs of individuals and groups within the congregation and extends to the church-at-large, the community, and the world! The Chapel School is an integral part of the congregation's ministry directed specifically to children. It provides a distinctive Christian education enabling children to evidence a Christian lifestyle and to achieve academic success. TO GOD ALONE BE GLORY.*

As we face the formidable challenges of the twenty-first century, it is important to keep in mind the theme for the anniversary year, “Our God, Our Help in Ages Past, Our Hope for Years to Come.” Put more simply, God has always been with us and will continue to help us fulfill our plans for the future.

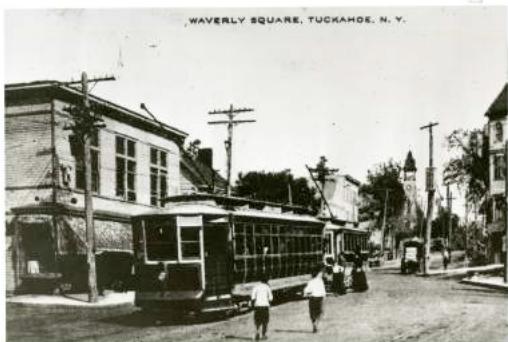
This book is dedicated to those people past and present who, filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith in God as their Father and Jesus Christ as their Savior, have lived out their baptismal calling in lives of service. These individuals have made the Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School the inspirational place of God that it is today. There is no way that we could list all the wonderful people who have contributed so much to the congregation and the school, and so we want to take this opportunity to apologize to anyone who has inadvertently been left out.

Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.¹ A church is more than a building, and VLC has shown this by being blessed with inspirational leadership and committed laity. For the past 100 years VLC has prospered because of both of these, and most importantly because of God's providence. This brief history will trace the growth of our church from its inception to the present day, and peer prayerfully into the future with faith.

THE CHURCH

Early Beginnings

In 1910 the Concordia Collegiate Institute, a Lutheran Boys' School, moved from Hawthorne, New York to Bronxville. Its mission was to continue to provide a pre-seminary education accompanied with a rigorous academic training for young men entering the ministry and other walks of life. A small band of German-speaking Lutherans had engaged the architect Edward L. Tilton, who co-designed the immigration station on Ellis Island, to design a campus along a fourteen-acre expanse of flat land next to the trolley tracks at the corner of White Plains Road and Tanglewylde Avenue.



For the next six years, students and faculty alike would board the trolley to attend church services in nearby Mount Vernon. But since attendance at this church involved an inconvenient trip, it seemed sensible to hold services on the campus.

Pastor F.D. Wilhelm was called to found a campus church. On September 20th, 1916, the Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church opened on the campus of Concordia and consisted of about 40 families. Anyone not intimately connected with the academic life of the school scarcely knew of the church's existence. "We were exclusive and we were German,"² said one of the charter members. Initially all services were "auf deutsche," in German.

¹ Matthew 18:20 (RSV)

² Charter member. *Our Church – 70th Anniversary*, 1986, pp. 5.

The World Outside Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1916

When the church opened its doors in 1916 on the Concordia campus, the world had been at war for over three years. As that year came to an end, Americans were deeply divided over whether to declare war on Germany. Germans were America's largest immigrant group. The congregants of the Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church traced their ethnic roots back to Germany and almost all spoke German. Many of their ancestral homes had severe shortages and people were starving because of the Allies' blockades of German and Austrian ports. Massive causalities were amassing in the trenches as chemical weapons such as tear and mustard gas were used by both sides.

The war clouds that would soon drag America into the conflict were on the horizon. However, at the start of 1917, the Eastchester community and the country in general were still in their last days of innocence, ignoring the problems of the world. President Wilson had based his Presidential campaign on keeping us out of the war.

The recently created village of Bronxville, with a growing population of a little more than 2,000, had become a suburban haven for the wealthy wishing to flee the congestion of New York City. The village was a prime example of a small, high prestige Westchester suburb with people living in architecturally significant homes.

Just north of Bronxville was a very different kind of community, the village of Tuckahoe in the town of Eastchester. Located on a piece of land a little more than half the size of Bronxville, Tuckahoe was the center of Eastchester government and industry for over half a century. Tuckahoe was inhabited by mostly working class people and some middle class. It posed a sharp contrast to its southern neighbor.

The unincorporated section of Eastchester was twice the size of the town's two villages. In contrast, by 1920 fewer people lived in this section of the town than in either Bronxville or Tuckahoe. Unlike the more heavily populated villages, this area consisted of farms, undeveloped land, emerging golf courses, and a scattering of neighborhoods. The Iselin family, owners of the New Rochelle Water Company, owned large portions of this unincorporated part of the town.



California Road, Eastchester

Within the town, people mostly traveled from one place to another either on foot, horseback or by horse-

drawn vehicle. Trolleys were also a convenient way of moving within the town and to surrounding communities. The train connected Eastchester and its two villages with New York City and other distant places. Gas stations were a novelty, and automobiles rare.

Yet underneath this appearance of rural serenity, life was changing rapidly. The transition from gaslight to electricity was almost complete. The telephone was replacing the telegraph as the quickest way to get in touch. Within a little more than a decade, 15 million Ford Model Ts rolled off the assembly line, lowering the price of a car to \$300. The automobile would soon replace the horse as the major form of transportation.

Changes Created by World War I



The most profound challenges facing the Concordia congregation came from the anti-German hysteria created by World War I. By early 1917, Germany had resumed unrestricted submarine warfare on American shipping. In February of that year, a telegram was intercepted which revealed that Germany had secretly promised to help Mexico reconquer Texas, California, and the Southwest in return for Mexico's support against the United States. President Wilson was forced to renege on his campaign pledge of keeping the United States out of war. In early April of 1917, the United States entered World War I.

The United States was totally unprepared for this conflict. The 19 months of war began in a blaze of patriotic unity. In this first modern industrial war, materials, money, and morale played as important a part as the fighting men themselves. During the war the nation was regulated from the top down including the details of dress, food, and conversation. In some parts of America, the teaching of German in the public schools was banned. By insisting on conformity, government placed enormous strains on an increasingly diverse society. The emotions stirred up in order to unite its people against the foreign enemy, the Germans – hatred, fear, suspicion, intolerance and mistrust of immigrant groups – forced German Americans to turn inward.

The town of Eastchester and its two villages enthusiastically supported the war effort. In 1918 the entire population of the village of Tuckahoe turned out for a parade encouraging the buying of Liberty Bonds. The participants included the Red Cross, the Boy and Girl Scouts, school children, marching bands, workers, volunteer firemen, and local politicians. But this patriotic fervor had a down side that would force the members of the newly formed Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church to isolate themselves.



Parade in Tuckahoe supporting Liberty Bonds

By 1918 all German immigrants in the United States over the age of 14 had to register with the Post Office where they were fingerprinted and photographed. Individuals had to carry a certificate and could not change their residence without approval of the local Postmaster. Violations would be punishable by internment for the duration of the war. It would get worse.

A German clergyman in Mount Vernon was given the choice of prison or leaving the community because he refused to ring his church bell in celebration of an Allied victory. In Bronxville, a Mrs. Conrad was charged with disorderly conduct for uttering seditious comments in a candy shop. She was sentenced to six months in jail and a large fine.

By the late summer of 1918 as the American causalities mounted, the Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church felt its impact. Starting in September of that year, the church was no longer able to advertise its Sunday German-speaking service in the local paper, *The Eastchester Citizen - Bulletin*. The congregation worship services and other events continued to be publicized in the *Bronxville Review*. Two weeks later the Church was totally omitted from the paper. It would not be until after Armistice Day that Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church was able to advertise its services in the paper again.

The Early Years of the Church (1916 – 1941)

A charter member of the Church stated that at the time of World War I, "The people of Bronxville were suspicious of us. We spoke German and we had services in German."³ The church would experience little if any growth or improvement in its facilities in the first 25 years of its existence. There

³ Charter member. *Our Church – 70th Anniversary*, 1986, pp. 5.

were 40 families when it was founded and there were 40 families in 1941. Six different pastors served during those years.



Ladies Aid Society

Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church was blessed with a Ladies Aid Society that was the forerunner of many of our present ministries. The ladies of the society carried on all the work of the church except for those duties specifically reserved for clergy. They took care of the altar, procured an organ for the chapel, purchased gowns for the pastor and visited the sick. But that was not all. They also called on prospective members, started a building fund and contributed to charities each Christmas.

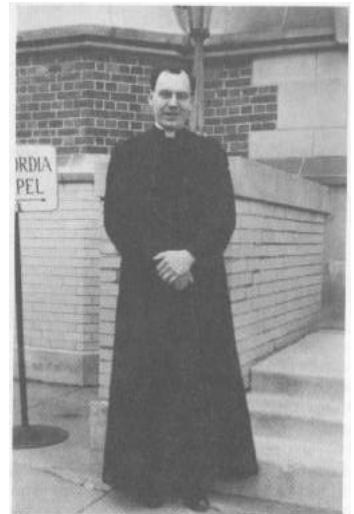
For the most part the church was isolated from the larger community and its growth was stagnant. Was this because suspicions from World War I still lingered? Did the mission of the pre-seminary school that prepared Lutheran ministers and called teachers create a committed but isolated congregation? The answers to these questions are most likely lost to the sands of time.

What we do know is that twentieth century problems of intolerance and ethnic tension were common after World War I. The intolerance of those days took many forms, including ugly flare-ups against any ethnic or religious group that was different. This was happening all over the nation.

By 1941 the viability of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church was in question. When Pastor Arthur Doege, also Concordia's president, left to volunteer as a military chaplain before World War II, the Reverend Howard Halter was called to lead the congregation.

Who was this man known as the founder of the present Village Lutheran Church? He was the first Missionary-at-Large of the Atlantic District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. Aside from being a missionary and a minister, he was an expert in advertising and promotion. But above all, he was a visionary.

Howard Luther Halter, from Cleveland, Ohio, graduated from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in 1930, during the Depression. At that time Halter chose not to take a call. He



Rev. Howard Halter

decided to go back to Lutherland, a resort in the Poconos operated by a group of Lutheran laymen, where he had previously worked as a recreational director. While there, he had a change of heart. During a Pastoral Conference being held there, he asked for an assignment. He received an offer from a Philadelphia congregation to develop a mission in a low-income area on the perimeter of the city. Six months later the mission chapel (the Chapel of St. John) was jammed each week!

It was during the summer program held there that Ellen Florence Roeder volunteered to head the art activities. Years later, in 1938, this young lady would become his wife.

In 1932, Halter accepted an offer from the Atlantic District to become its first Missionary-at -Large. This meant that he would be trained to open a mission, set up the necessary organizations and principles for running it, begin worship services, and help lead the new congregation to the point where a full-time pastor could be called. Halter did this very successfully at St. John's, Williston Park; Redeemer, Peekskill; and Church of the Resurrection, Flushing.

Halter was a man of vision, creativity, resourcefulness and deep faith in proclaiming the Gospel, who experienced many "firsts" in his ministry. His contribution to the formula for establishing new churches became standard operating procedure in the Synod. Years later, Pastor Zwernemann spoke of Pastor Halter, saying "His vision and foresight, his faith and hope were matched with his drive and determination."⁴

In October 1941, Pastor Halter was sent to Bronxville, NY.

It had been said that the Synod sent him to Concordia to close down the church. Having already established churches in four other communities, and having recently surveyed this area, he was well qualified to answer the question of why this church never grew. His conclusion was the church had no clearly defined goal, was divided, inactive, unknown, and unattractive. But where others saw failure, Halter, guided by the Holy Spirit, saw promise.

On October 15, 1941 following Pastor Halter's recommendation, the New York office of the Lutheran Church decided to open the existing chapel to the community, cease German services, and reach out to the community with the Gospel and Christian education. When the opportunity presented itself, the rather insular congregation would move off the campus. Within a few years, a new church building owned and operated independently from the College would be constructed.

⁴ Rev. Dr. James Zwernemann. Interview. *My Church* (Sept-Oct) 1976, pp. 8.

On December 6, a publication of the Synod read, "The valley in Bronxville is one of the natural centers of population in Westchester. We are fortunate to have a church here in such an important center. More than half of the Protestant population of this area has no church connection. What better challenge could a church ask for?"⁵ Halter rightly felt he could win the unchurched, stimulate the existing church, and successfully build in this community.

The Halter Years (1941 – 1974)

World War II (1941-1945)



Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941

On December 1, 1941, six days before the destruction of the Pacific fleet of the United States Navy at Pearl Harbor, Howard Halter started his active ministry. Despite the trauma posed by America's entry into World War II, Pastor Halter, an individual of tremendous vision, began to implement his plan. To counter the anti-German antipathy created by Nazi aggression, services in German were discontinued.

The name of the church was changed from Concordia

Evangelical Lutheran Church to Community Chapel. He continued his efforts to break down the concept of "private chapel," which had long been associated with the church at Concordia and encouraged participation in community affairs.

To display patriotism and dispel the notion that Lutherans were pro-Nazi, he urged participation in War Bond drives, the adoption of war orphans, and work at Servicemen's Centers. Pastor Halter involved himself personally in many activities on the local and even national level. He joined local clergy in collecting salvage materials for war factories. He took part in radio broadcasts over WFAS. He also showed movies to shut-ins at the House of Rest in Yonkers, Welfare Island and New Rochelle Hospital (today's Montefiore Sound Shore). Pastor also used his creative talents to produce extensive audio-visual education materials for the U.S. Armed Forces chaplains corp.

In addition, Pastor Halter enlisted the support of the Ladies Aid Society in reaching out to the community. The Society extended its works of charity to include the Eastchester Neighborhood Association, the major

⁵ *Our Church – 70th Anniversary*, 1986, pp. 15.

agency of social work in the community. They sponsored a cottage at Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry and participated in the Red Cross, the Westchester Cancer Committee, and the Union meeting of Bronxville Church women.



Leonard Mansion

The final part of his plan was to move the congregation off the campus and establish a new church owned and operated independently from the College. In early 1945 the Leonard Mansion was purchased across the street at 172 White Plains Road, giving the church room to grow. Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Church was renamed Community Chapel. Pastor Halter's visionary dream would become a reality. Remodeling followed, and on Easter Sunday, 1945, the first worship service was held in the sunroom of the mansion.

Florence Halter, the wife of the Pastor, played an important role in the architectural development of the church. Mrs. Halter was a talented artist, a designer, and an authority in church art and architecture. In October of 1942, while the congregation was still on the Concordia campus, she transformed the old science lecture room on the second floor of Concordia's administration building into an exquisite Gothic chapel. Later, after the church had moved across the street, Florence designed the altar railings, candlesticks, communion ware, processional cross and stained glass windows for the new sanctuary. All her contributions make the VLC a very special place.



Pastor and Florence Halter

At the end of World War II, New York State including New York City, Westchester County, and the community of Eastchester and its two villages, were at the top of the world. The New Deal and the war effort forced the ruling elite to accept long needed reforms. The post-war years began a period of unparalleled prosperity.

New York State had mass-produced war supplies for an American victory, and the Battle for the Atlantic was directed from federal offices in Manhattan. Suburbs like Westchester County were booming as

massive numbers of people left New York City. On the whole, single women, who were so much a part of the war effort, decided that marriage and children could come before careers, previously a novel cultural sentiment. The birth rate, which was recorded at an historic low in New York State in 1936, went from 13.8 children per 1000 women to 22.6 in 1947. "All my friends around me," a suburban housewife commented, "are having babies."⁶ The largest growth in Westchester County was in the unincorporated part of the town of Eastchester, which saw its population almost double between 1930 and 1950.

The Growth of the Village Lutheran Church and The Birth of The Chapel School (1946 to 1950)

There are times in history when visionaries along with their committed group of followers can seize the moment and do something quite extraordinary. Winston Churchill and America's founding fathers exemplified such leadership. On a local level, the Reverend Howard Halter was also such a person. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he and a committed group of followers created something quite wonderful: the Village Lutheran Church.

Pastor and members of the congregation would bring both long-time residents and new neighbors into the fold. Even before the end of World War II, a new chapel had been built in the former Leonard Mansion, across the street from Concordia. Just five years after the church had opened its doors, 293 people had passed through the new chapel, celebrating an intimate relationship with God. Additional services were added, until every Sunday as many as four services filled the small Leonard Mansion to capacity.



Worship service in the Leonard Mansion

Utilizing every inch of the small space, two Sunday school sessions were held concurrently with the church services.

⁶ Joel Swartz. "Top of the World." *The Empire State: A History of NY*. Ed. Milton M. Klein. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001, pp. 634.



Sunday School

Perhaps one reason why Sunday School enrollment was so great during these early years was because of Pastor's idea to provide a transportation service for Sunday School children. A few volunteers at church would serve as station wagon drivers each Sunday. The VLC was the only church in the area to offer this service. As Pastor Halter said, "The greatest missionary agent in this church is the automobile."⁷

At the same time, there was a need in the community for another nursery school. With Pastor Halter's guidance and unwavering support, a nursery school was opened in 1947 with 46 nursery children. Ruth Wohltjen was the director for the first several years. In the next decade Kindergarten and Grades 1-6 were added, in combined classes. The Chapel School had been born.

God blessed the ministry of the church and school in their early years with growth – in membership and enrollment. They were soon outgrowing their quarters; the Leonard Mansion was not big enough. Plans were made to expand the ministry by building the first sanctuary. It was completed in 1950, and at that time, the church chose as its name, the Village Lutheran Church. It was constructed entirely out of secondhand bricks salvaged from condemned tenements in New York City. According to Pastor Halter, these bricks in their original location had witnessed all the sins known to man. Here in their new place, these stones stood as building blocks in a church and became a glorious symbol of the Christian's triumph over sin and death.

Christmas, 1949

We have no picture of the first significant and dramatic service which we held here in the new church.

The steel strike kept the builder from completing the new church in time for Christmas. But we held our first Christmas Eve service in the unfinished structure anyway.

It was a moonlit night. And the moon shone brightly through the ironwork of the incomplete roof. The temperature was only 26 degrees, but the church was crowded.

Crude candlesticks made of pillars of brick along the walls held 50 three-foot tapers.

Cinderblocks, support[ing]... an oak door, served as the altar.

Instead of an organ, we had trumpeters to lead the singing.

In symbolic procession we presented the Christ Child with the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and dedicated ourselves anew to His service.

It was a service we shall never forget.

From "The Story of Our Church" (1953)

⁷ My Church (Sept) 1953, cover.

Post World War II: (1950 – 1973)

Along with continued growth in the 1950s, both church and school experienced some challenges. In 1956 a special task force was established to examine specific problems facing the congregation. The Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School were located in highly mobile, diverse communities composed of people from varied socio-economic groups. Almost a third lived five or more miles from the church, limiting their general participation. In typical communities in socially cohesive areas, young people remained in the community, but this region was not typical.

The overwhelming majority of young people raised in the church after graduation were not able to afford to live in Westchester and had to seek employment opportunities elsewhere. In addition, 15% of the members employed by corporations were transferred to other locations. School enrollment was half the Sunday School enrollment. The mobility of people within the community affected enrollment and membership.

The Church and School Respond

How did the Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School deal with these problems? The task force recommended that both the pastor and the congregation should act as missionaries to attract new members to the church and school. Pastor Halter continued to canvass the community door-to-door. Members of the congregation encouraged newly arrived neighbors to join the church. Membership began to grow.

Pastor Halter continued to build upon the “team ministry” he had begun in the previous years. Doris Voester had become the Director of Music for the church in 1943. With her musical skills and creative ideas for worship and ministry, she started choirs for children and adults. Perhaps one of the most unique features of the music program was the handbell choirs. The Round-the-Table Carol Sing was also established in 1954 and continues to this day. This traditional Christmas service highlighted the talented choirs and was attended by members, as well as many from the community.



Ruth Wohltjen

Other people had leadership roles with the large Sunday School program and Youth programs. In addition to being the Director of The Chapel School, Ruth Wohltjen also served as Sunday School Director and Director for Youth Activities in the early years. In 1957, Lois (Graesser) Meier was called to serve as Deaconess. She assisted Pastor Halter in



Lois Meier

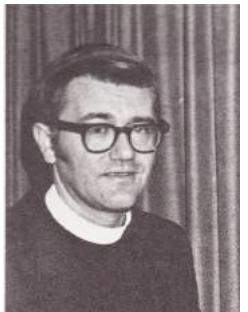
evangelism and sick calls, and was given many youth ministry responsibilities. Another valued team member was Otto Spurgat, who served as Sunday School Superintendent for several years. Mrs. Elizabeth Stein was a Sunday School teacher for 43 years. Other team players were the Church Secretary, Dorothy Allen (1958-1973) and Al and Marie Sudlow, who made a ministry of caring for the church properties for 23 years.



Peg Harbush

Marguerite "Peg" Harbush, VLC member and Kindergarten teacher at The Chapel School, also contributed greatly to the parish education program. She taught Sunday School classes, served as the primary department head and helped coordinate special visual aids. She assisted Pastor Halter by teaching the 7th grade confirmation class. Her most unique contribution was the establishment of a Sunday School class for children with special needs in 1968. This was very significant, since all of the families served by this ministry came from outside the congregation.

In 1959, David Toven was called to serve as a teaching minister in our congregation, and also as the principal of The Chapel School. Under his firm and caring leadership, the school would expand by moving to single classes and adding grades 7 and 8. He "wore many hats" as administrator, teacher, counselor, and spiritual mentor, along with Pastor Halter. Former students remember Principal Toven picking them up in the morning in a station wagon that also served as the school bus.



David Toven

Even though The Chapel School facilities were limited, the teaching staff led by David Toven was fully committed to Christian education. The school was like a big family, with dedicated teachers, small classes, and most importantly, Bible-based religious instruction that many former graduates still vividly recall.

Following Lois Graesser's marriage to Robert Meier (a Concordia professor), David Toven also assumed full responsibility for the church's youth ministry and many of the already existing programs. Youth could participate in the children's choirs, youth groups for the Pre-Teens (sixth graders), Confirmation classes, Junior Walther League (for ninth graders) and Senior Walther League (high school). Under David's leadership, many adults helped out with the overall youth program, which included opportunities for recreation, service, worship, education and fellowship.



Round-the-Table Carol Sing

During this period, Pastor Halter helped to establish many of the special traditions that the Village Lutheran Church still practices today: the Round-the-Table Carol Sing, the Pilgrimage to Bethlehem, Candlelight Christmas Eve Services, festival worship services at Easter, the Easter Breakfast, the Releasing of the Dove at Pentecost and the miniature white baptismal stoles made by women in the church.

He also had the creative idea of publishing our own magazine, *My Church*, which would inform and educate church members over the years, beginning in 1953. Church staff and volunteers were involved in the entire process of publishing it.

In June 1959, ground was broken to extend the front and rear of the existing sanctuary. When complete, the project would double the seating capacity of the church and greatly expand the chancel area. The addition at the rear provided extra office and classroom space, as well as a new kitchen and a new church parlor (Friendship Room).



My Church
February 1960

In January 1960, as the congregation of the Village Lutheran Church was preparing to temporarily vacate the church to allow for its enlargement, Pastor Halter delivered a reflective and prophetic message that still rings true today. In that message, Pastor gave thanks:

The Lord has bountifully dealt with us and has blessed us... The congregation has quadrupled in size since the day the church was built in faith, and a similar thing is going to happen again... The Lord has truly been with us in terms of guidance of youth. We have come a long way since we have occupied this building. I think in terms of glorifying God in the worship service through our music, we have made fabulous advances since we were back there in the little chapel next door, which no longer exists. I think that in terms of education, we have come a long way. The Chapel School is today a valid entity and a part of the church, which is contributing strength through the children.⁸

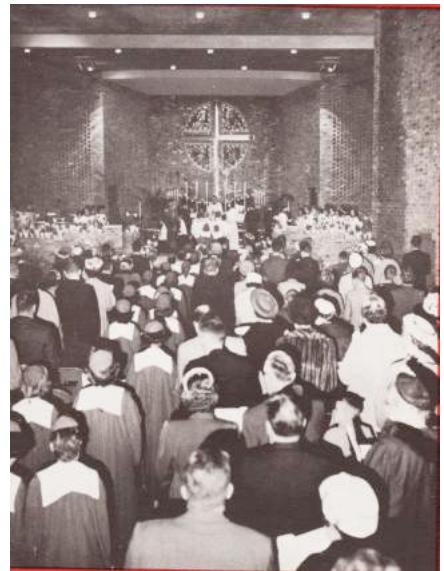
He went on to offer a warning for the future, "Size adds further problems, although it adds further opportunities... The congregation must continue to reach out beyond our own walls and bring the

⁸⁻¹¹ Rev. Howard Halter. "Historical Message." *Growing in God's Grace: The 75th Anniversary of Village Lutheran Church*. VLC, 1991, cassette.

blessings we have to others.”⁹ Pastor asked for a renewed spiritual campaign in which “we go out not for money but for the hearts and hands of people because an enlarged church is going to bring an enlarged opportunity.”¹⁰ He ends his message with, “We pray that the Lord will guide us and use us, that as we mature in faith, our lives become more valid for Him. May the precious gospel which has been preached in this pulpit ever follow us and go before us.”¹¹

The first service in the newly enlarged sanctuary was held on Easter Sunday 1960. What a joyous occasion it was! As Pastor Halter neared his retirement in early 1974, he wrote a letter to the Village Lutheran Church family, saying, “We have been party to a miracle during these past thirty-two years.... The Village [Lutheran] Church was born. The miracle is that so few accomplished so much with our limited resources. It was Christ’s miracle of the loaves and fishes all over again...”¹²

The enlarged sanctuary was a blessing to the congregation and The Chapel School, as well as Concordia College and the Atlantic District. All benefited from the enhanced worship space. This community use continues to this day.



Easter Sunday 1960

The Pre-Zwernemann Years

In the pre-1970s, the Eastchester/Bronxville/Tuckahoe community experienced its greatest growth and the population in the unincorporated section of the town almost doubled. America also was experiencing two decades of unbounded prosperity. But underneath the façade of wealth, people in our community, as well as the rest of the country, were experiencing new challenges.

The increasingly violent anti-war movement against involvement in the Vietnam conflict, along with the increased militancy of the once peaceful Civil Rights movement, had bitterly divided the nation as well as the local community. Established values were being challenged. The women’s rights movement changed sexual mores. A drug epidemic that had once been confined to the inner city was now spreading to the suburbs. Young people citing a generation gap challenged the values of their parents. Into this atmosphere came a new pastor who would provide an oasis of calm amid a sea of turbulence.

His name was James Zwernemann, or Pastor Z, as he was known by the church and school community.

¹² Rev. Howard Halter. *Our Church – 70th Anniversary*, 1986, pp. 56.

The Zwernemann Years (1974 – 2003)



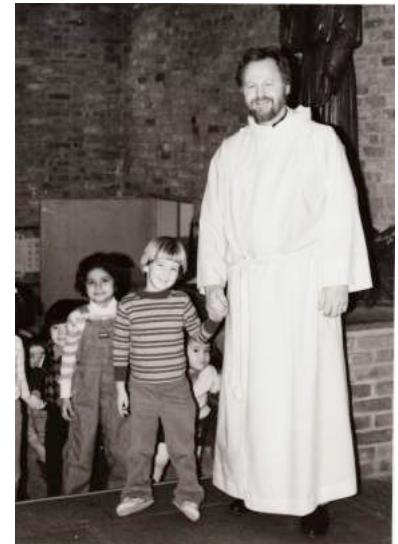
Pastor Zwernemann

Pastor Zwernemann was born in the southern Texas town of Brenham. In August of 1962 he was married to Eastchester native and VLC member Bonnie McGinnis at the Village Lutheran Church. The next year he served a vicarage at Saint Paul's Lutheran Church in the Tremont section of the Bronx. In 1964 he founded Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Warwick, New York, where he would serve as pastor until 1969. In that year, he returned to his home area to assume the pastorate of Christ Memorial Lutheran Church in Houston, TX.

After receiving a pastoral call in 1973, Jim Zwernemann was installed as pastor of the Village Lutheran Church on March 3, 1974. Jim brought his Texas style warmth, his delightful sense of humor, and his genuine compassion to the church, school and community. His sermon text and the theme for his ministry was 1 Corinthians 2:2, *“For I am determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”* He preached on this text once every year! Every Sunday his sermons emphasized how the truism in the Gospel could guide us through the storms of today.

Jim and Bonnie Zwernemann had five children: Jimmy, Kelly, John, Lori and Christina. Reaching out to families and focusing on family ministry became a major priority that continues to this day at the VLC. Jim has said that a major factor in his accepting the call to our church was the existence of a Christian Day school here – a vital mission and ministry for all of the congregation. He believed that it was important to strengthen the relationship between the church and the school.

Pastor Zwernemann had a charismatic and extraordinary way with people, but especially with children. He was an integral part of the Wednesday morning chapel services for the children at The Chapel School, as well as the chapels for the preschool children on other days of the week. He was a visible and active presence in the school. After the departure of David Toven in 1982, Pastor Zwernemann served as the Interim Principal for a year.



Pastor Z with preschoolers

New Ideas for Ministry and Fellowship

When Pastor Zwernemann started his ministry at the Village Lutheran Church in 1974, he brought new ideas for spiritual growth and outreach to the community.

He established a weekday morning Bible study, using a study of the lessons for the following Sunday as his topic each week. Class discussions often contributed material for his Sunday sermons.

The importance of this ongoing Bible study program can best be underscored by a story told by one of the senior members of the congregation. Helen Britz and her friends attended the Bible study (then on Thursday mornings). Pastor Zwernemann was scheduled for a Thursday class in New York City for an advanced degree and asked the group to move its meeting time to Wednesday morning. Helen and her friends went swimming on Wednesday morning and had to choose between Bible study and swimming. Helen dealt with this dilemma by asking her friends a somewhat rhetorical question, “Are we going to attend to our bodies or our souls?”¹³

In 1974, Pastor Zwernemann revived the German Christmas Service that Pastor Halter had stopped at the beginning of World War I. The following summer, he established the tradition of an informal worship service on the Great Porch.

Making the Village Lutheran Church more visible to the community was also one of Pastor Zwernemann’s priorities. The Oktoberfest, introduced in 1975 and held for several years, was the biggest fellowship event of the year. It served as an opportunity for so many of



Pastor Z at Oktoberfest

our members to work and play together in a real spirit of Christian love and “gemutlichkeit.” It was held on the same weekend as the Von Steuben Day Parade in New York City, to attract German bands. The Grotz, Hantscho, Harris, Hover, Meyer, and Schreiber families were some of the many prominent leaders, along with countless volunteers for this event. The Oktoberfest attracted thousands of people from the community; at least twenty families joined our church as a result of the Oktoberfest outreach.



German band at Oktoberfest

¹³ Helen Britz. Interview by VLC History Committee. February 5, 2016.

Pastor Zwernemann and Bonnie continued many of the fellowship events for the Couple's Club that Pastor Halter and Florence had started years before. These activities included a progressive dinner, clam bakes, and other social events.

During Pastor Zwernemann's time, a Seniors Group for men and women was established. Prior to this time, there had only been a Women's Day Group and a Women's Evening Group. This new group met on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. Most of the time, different speakers were invited to come to present a topic for the program after the lunch. Helen Britz coordinated a trip for the group to the Westchester Dinner Theater for many years. The group, though smaller in number, still meets. One of their favorite programs is in December, when The Chapel School children sing their Christmas concert songs.

Pastor Z felt that the youth ministry was very important for the congregation. He taught the Confirmation Class and strongly supported the Sunday School program and Christmas Pageant each year. Under his leadership, Mike Weber joined the ministry team in 1974 as a Chapel School teacher and Minister of Youth for the congregation. Not only was youth ministry strengthened under his guidance, but Mr. Weber was also willing to use his additional talents and assumed responsibility for building and grounds supervision. One congregant recalled a feeling shared by many: "The youth counselors at the church were fine role models for my children during their teenage years."¹⁴ During Pastor's tenure, high school youth began attending the National Youth Gatherings, held every three years during July.

Pastor Martin Doering came to the VLC to serve in 1985 on the pastoral staff and as a youth leader. As part of his ministry, Pastor Doering used his musical gifts, playing guitar with the youth for worship and composing The Chapel School's first theme song, "The Master's Touch," in 1988. When Pastor Doering left in 1989, Pastor Zwernemann maintained a close relationship with Concordia College by having three pastors on their faculty serve our congregation as Adjunct Pastors. Donald Miesner, Cliff Peterson and Merlin Rehm would help by preaching, visiting the sick and shut-ins, and assisting with other duties at the VLC.



Pastor Doering playing guitar
with High School Choir

During Pastor Z's tenure, lay involvement and participation increased dramatically at the VLC. Areas which in the past were administered and carried out by the professional staff (witness, worship, and

¹⁴ Dorothy Schultz to VLC History Committee, February 3, 2016.

pastoral care) were now efficiently and effectively covered by volunteer members of the congregation. Lay readers, assisting ministers and communion assistants became involved in almost every worship service. Women were also engaged in almost every area of congregational concern and activity. In 1975, Peg Harbush, a longtime member and kindergarten teacher at The Chapel School, became the first woman to serve on the VLC Board of Trustees. Since that time, many more women have served in this capacity. VLC has been blessed to have outstanding congregational leadership over the years.

In 1989 the Johnson Columbarium was built as a final resting place for the cremains of church members and friends of the church and school. It was dedicated in January of 1990. Also during this time, active participation by young people as crucifers began under the direction of Robert Hess.

Pastor Zwernemann started the early first communion class in 1998. This "pilot" class was initially open to 6th-8th graders, and was taught by him. The students came to class each week with one parent or guardian; thus the whole family was involved with the learning process. In the early years of this program, the students' actual First Communion was celebrated during the Maundy Thursday service. In recent years, it has been held on a Sunday in Lent, after the four-week class and the Friday night "lock-in."



Pastor Z with Confirmation class circa 1982

Like Pastor Halter, Pastor Zwernemann held important positions in the Synod, the Atlantic District and on the Concordia College Board of Regents. Also visible in the community, Pastor served as Protestant Chaplain of the Eastchester Fire Department and as Pastoral Care Coordinator of the Jansen Memorial Hospice of Tuckahoe. In addition, he was on the Review Board of Lawrence Hospital, and a Board Member at the Wartburg Home, the New York City History Club and the New York Theological Seminary.

Pastor Zwernemann must have listened closely to Howard Halter's words issued in 1960: "Size adds further problems, although it adds further opportunities... The congregation must continue to reach out

beyond our own walls and bring the blessings we have to others.”¹⁵ Pastor Zwernemann reached out to people outside of the Lutheran Church, and at the end of his 29 years of ministry, church membership had greatly increased and had become more diverse.

The Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School

Deal with a Serious Problem as the 21st Century Approaches

While our ministry was growing and flourishing, the church was running more programs than the physical space of the building could support. Although previous attempts to build an education extension had not come to fruition, in 1997 the church did a needs assessment and, as had been noted in the past, our ministry was seriously in need of space. But meeting the challenge of creating more space would prove anything but simple. The next six years would bear this out.

Later that year the Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School leadership, with affirmation from the Voters’ Assembly, developed our current mission statement and a plan of action for construction of a new, three-story administration and education building, and the renovation and modernization of the church’s undercroft. At the time no one knew how many obstacles would have to be overcome in the next six years.

After countless meetings with the Bronxville Design Review and Planning Boards and surrounding neighbors, and a project that almost tripled in cost, the church was finally ready to break ground.

The next biggest challenge was actually building the new wing and keeping it on schedule and within budget. Thankfully, an incredibly dedicated churchman with a construction background, Andis Akerfelds, did a magnificent job of managing the project and met the building schedule within the established 8 million dollar budget for construction. In researching this history, Tim Elwell, the President of the Congregation at the time, was asked to describe the positive aspects of the Church that enabled us to successfully overcome what seemed to be insurmountable problems:

Faith in God that He would provide a group of unbelievably faithful church members and pastors whose dedication could never have been repaid. People like ...Pastor Zwernemann, Pastor Hartwell, and many other church members who went to countless hearings and meetings and remained with the church and the project through thick and thin. [Many] counted on wearing us

¹⁵ Rev. Howard Halter. “Historical Message.” *Growing in God’s Grace: The 75th Anniversary of Village Lutheran Church*. VLC, 1991, cassette.

down but with each challenge and new obstacle, the group's resolve only got stronger.¹⁶



New Building Dedication November 24, 2002

On November 24th, 2002 at a special 3 PM service, the church's new administration and education building was dedicated. This 30,000 square-foot building project included 15 classrooms, a middle school-sized gymnasium and a ministry suite of offices and meeting space. Special wonder and joy were experienced as the church and school realized an almost decade-long dream to build a new structure that would enable church and school growth. At that moment, Associate Pastor Hartwell commented, "Praise God for this miraculous moment in our ministry." James Dhyne, The Chapel School's Principal and VLC's Minister of Education placed the moment into its proper perspective, saying "In the past we were asked to imagine what we would need to grow. Now that imagination has become a reality and we could not be any more happy or more blessed."

The New Millennium

Serious problems existed long before the start of the new millennium. Over four decades earlier Pastor Howard Halter, commenting on a prior expansion of the church, had warned that "Size adds further problems, although it adds further opportunities."¹⁷ Paying off the debt from the new building expansion was just one of the problems. The impact of 2008, the worst financial downturn since the Great

¹⁶ Tim Elwell to VLC History Committee. February 1, 2016.

¹⁷ Rev. Howard Halter. "Historical Message." *Growing in God's Grace: The 75th Anniversary of Village Lutheran Church*. VLC, 1991, cassette.

Depression, made dealing with budgetary issues more difficult.

The religious climate in America was also changing dramatically. The twenty-first century has been a difficult time for organized religion in general. There continues to be a growing secularization of North American culture that devalues traditional church membership. This is demonstrated in a complacency among established members as more people in society espouse a reliance on themselves, not on God. More people are rejecting organized religion. Many traditional Christian denominations have experienced sharp declines in membership. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has seen its membership drop 12% in the past decade. Fortunately, membership in Village Lutheran Church has not experienced so sharp a decline.

It was noted as early as 1956 by a special task force that the Village Lutheran Church is located amid highly diverse communities composed of people from varied socio-economic groups. Then, and even more so now, members of the congregation employed by corporate America are being transferred. Young people raised in the church are not able to afford to live in Westchester after graduation. The two fastest growing ethnic groups, both in the town of Eastchester and in Westchester County, are Hispanics and Asians, the majority of whom are not Protestant.

Former Village Lutheran Church leader and Concordia College President Ralph Schultz placed the situation facing the Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School into perspective, saying:

There remains the spirit of adventure in both church and school. These are not the ‘good old days.’ They are more like the ‘good new days’ of the Apostle Paul. Our society is evolving and so have VLC and The Chapel School. We pray that the leadership of the congregation will sustain the ministry to which we have been called as we reach out in the unique ways that are hallmarks of our church and school.¹⁸

Pastor Hartwell, called as Senior Pastor in 2003, was tasked with leading the ministry in this modern era.

¹⁸ Ralph Schultz to VLC History Committee, February 19, 2016.

The Hartwell Years (2003 – present)



The Village Lutheran Church has been blessed with strong pastoral leadership. While many churches experience a succession of ministers and a vagueness of mission, we have retained our ministers for long periods. In addition, we have been able to adhere to our clear, simple, forceful mission statement: “TO KNOW, LIVE, AND SHARE THE LOVE OF CHRIST.” Robert Hartwell has wholeheartedly continued this pastoral leadership commitment throughout his tenure.

Pastor Hartwell grew up in Indiana, attending the Independent Christian Church. He became a Lutheran after meeting Sue Lunog, a Deaconess trained at Concordia University-Chicago, who became his wife in July of 1988.

In 1989, after Robert Hartwell received his Bachelor’s degree in communications and acquired extensive radio experience, he and Sue moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana and he began his studies at Concordia Theological Seminary. After a year of vicarage in Blue Earth, Minnesota, he completed his Masters of Divinity and received his first pastoral call to Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Hicksville, New York. In several short weeks, Rob and Sue Hartwell were blessed with the birth of their twin children, Alexander and Hannah, in July. After serving for five years there, Pastor Hartwell was called to the Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School as an Associate Pastor, to help create programs in the much-anticipated but long-delayed new educational building.

After Pastor Zwernemann’s retirement in 2003, Rev. Dr. Robert Hartwell was called as our Senior Pastor. He continued the congregation’s community minded, Word and Sacrament ministry, with new emphasis on administration and fundraising. These were necessities; as the church and school established many new programs and began a period of debt repayment for the sizable mortgage the church had taken on to build the education facility.

In the age of declining church attendance nationwide and growing Biblical illiteracy, and in a rapidly changing culture, Pastor Hartwell emphasized sound administration and a Biblically-grounded, welcoming, Gospel-centered ministry. His goal was to invite, equip, and celebrate all people by following our mission “TO KNOW, LIVE AND SHARE THE LOVE OF CHRIST.”

With a shared strategic leadership and vision, Principal James Dhyne and Pastor Hartwell have inspired the congregation and school to dedicate greater levels of service to church, children and community.

Since the expansion of the facilities, school enrollment has grown and the church and school space is in almost constant use by school, congregation, or community endeavors.

The Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School have become a true community center. On any given day or night, the building is filled with fellowship events, choir or music rehearsals, after school programs, athletic practices and games, Bible studies, yoga classes, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, a bereavement program for community young people, and other school, youth, and community events.

Under Pastor Hartwell's leadership, and with enhanced space, many programs were established or reintroduced. A Diaconate Program with training for deacons on-site has greatly enriched the church. Deacons support the ministry of the church with their participation and leadership roles in Bible studies, altar guild and other ministries.

For three years, Deacon Tim Elwell led an Alpha program, designed for members of the congregation as well as others who wished to explore unanswered questions about their faith. The Alpha program also included a weekend retreat where participants reaffirmed the presence of God in their lives.



Tim Elwell leading Alpha

Pastor Hartwell introduced the Village Voices monthly newsletter and Internet ministry presence with the church's website, email system and the availability of sermons on the web. All of these reach out to the members of the congregation and beyond.

During the Hartwell years, collaboration has been an emphasis. The church worked with others to create intentional partnerships. Notable advances include establishing a Lutheran Counseling Center on-site and partnering The Chapel School with Concordia College to create a professional development school. With Principal Dhyne, Pastor Hartwell created The Blue Ribbon Foundation, a separate not-for-profit foundation that supports the educational programs of The Chapel School and provides scholarship assistance. In the community, Pastor Hartwell also took a leadership role in starting the Bronxville, Tuckahoe, Eastchester Interfaith Council and encouraged the congregation's participation in the annual Holocaust Commemoration.

To Know, Live and Share the Love of Christ

Village Lutheran Church provides many opportunities for fostering spiritual growth and carrying out our mission statement TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST through worship and Bible Studies. Sunday

morning services, the Saturday evening service, and the monthly Prayer Service for Healing offer a variety of worship styles and music groups. Different kinds of Bible Studies, led by pastors, deacons, and laity at various times of the year, are offered on Wednesday mornings, Sunday mornings, week nights, or monthly Saturday mornings.

During the past few summers, a week-long Vacation Bible School has been held for children in Kindergarten – Grade 5. Many adults and youth work together to help make this a wonderful experience TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

Under Pastor Hartwell's leadership, the VLC has introduced new programs or reinvigorated existing ones. To honor Robert Hess after his tragic death in 1995, Pastor Hartwell established the Robert Hess Memorial Order of Saint Philip Achievement Award in 1999. This award is given to a graduating high school senior each year. Pastor also encouraged the youth to take a greater role in worship. Joy Elwell began a new Parish Health Ministry in 2002 offering health fairs, flu shots, and other activities during the year to encourage healthy life styles.



Robert Hess

In December 2004, Ralph Palumbo established a new outreach ministry on Saturday evenings, the monthly Good News Coffee House. He had a dream to give Christian musicians from around the region the opportunity to spread the Gospel through their unique talents. His wife, Nelly Palumbo, continues to run the Coffee House on the second Saturday of the month with assistance from Charlie Eisenberg, Terry Vidal, deacons and other lay volunteers.

Opportunities TO LIVE AND SHARE THE LOVE OF CHRIST at the church and school also abound. People of all ages, old and young, reach out and help others in many ways. For example, we feed the hungry at the Mount Vernon Soup Kitchen (formerly Sacred Heart Soup Kitchen) by providing and serving the food on a regular basis throughout the year. We bring canned goods and nonperishable food for the Blessings Basket program. We give tutoring support at Nodine Hill in Yonkers, and we have a prayer shawl ministry for the sick.

At holiday times, we participate in many special projects. At Christmas, we donate gifts for seafarers and underprivileged kids, and during the spring we provide Easter baskets for many needy children.

Our newly established "Wheelies" program is an outreach ministry to residents at the Wartburg Home in Mount Vernon. On designated Sunday mornings, members of our church go and help move wheelchair-bound residents to the worship service at The Wartburg Chapel – United Lutheran Church. We worship

with them and then take them back to their rooms. We also hold a monthly Protestant service at The Fountains at RiverVue Assisted Living in Tuckahoe.

The Chapel School has its own many traditions of SHARING THE LOVE OF CHRIST. The families, faculty and staff support needy families at Christmas with the “Adopt a Family” project, which was first introduced in the church by Jean Murrer and Andrea Collins twenty years ago. The offerings from the Wednesday morning chapel services are given to monthly recipients. In October the “Make a Difference Day” fair sponsors activities and projects to support the community. Students also make quilts for Lutheran World Relief to send to people in need all around the world.

Since the completion of the new building in 2002, the size of the faculty and staff has expanded (tripling to almost 100 in 2016), many new programs have been instituted for the ministry of the church and school, and a multi-million dollar budget has been approved. Pastor Hartwell and the ministry team have drafted core values, policies and procedures focused on sound financial management, both in operations and in the emerging Development Office. Fundraising, so crucial to supporting the mission of the church and school, has become a priority. Strategic planning and the resulting Capital Campaigns have been instituted to pay down the debt and bring much needed improvements. Development events, such as the annual Gathering of Friends Gala Auction and the Harvest Home, have been held. The Halter Legacy Circle, started in October 2006 by Development Director Kevin Cook and Pastor Hartwell, encourages estate planning to benefit a newly created church endowment.

In addition, the church and school have emphasized the importance of health and physical activity for members in recent years. In December 2006, Pastor Hartwell announced his “Skinny on Sacrifice” health and fundraising challenge. His weight loss program raised a significant amount of money and involved members of the congregation with Nutrisystem and pursuing healthier life styles. Successful completion of Pastor Hartwell’s challenge gained national attention on New Year’s Eve 2007 in an NBC interview.



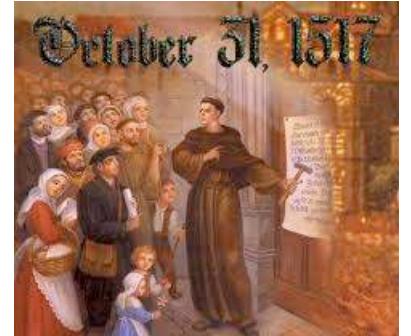
Years later, Pastor Hartwell set up a charity license with the New York Road Runners and the New York City Marathon. As the founder and coach/captain of Team Chapel, he ran with 4 others in the November 2011 New York City Marathon to fund scholarships for students in The Chapel School. Thousands of dollars have been raised through this event every year since then. Pastor also helped establish Team Chapel Arts in March 2014. The runners in this half marathon raise money to support the arts programs of The Chapel School.

Like his predecessors, Pastor Hartwell has been an active leader in the Atlantic District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and in the community. He has served as a vice president and is currently the elected Secretary for the District. He is on several community boards, including The Lutheran Care Network. With an earned doctorate and an MBA in entrepreneurial leadership and innovative practice, Pastor Hartwell is currently learning conversational Spanish in order to better share the Gospel and provide bilingual workshop opportunities in the church and school.

Ever since Robert Hartwell arrived at the Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School, his good spirits, humor, compassion, humility, dedication and generosity have been inspirational to our community. His leadership continues to guide us through very trying times and into the future.

Hope for the Future

Almost 500 years ago, on October 31, 1517, Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the cathedral door in Wittenberg, forever changing world history. On October 30, 2016, the Village Lutheran Church will officially mark its 100th anniversary with one combined special worship service. Today, as in Luther's time, we also face many challenges. The 2008 economic downturn has made it harder for Americans to make ends meet. The stay-at-home parent is becoming an anomaly. Most children no longer play in the streets, and parents transport their children from one activity to another. Family structures are diverse and complex, and all are in need of the support of a Christian community.



The most serious problem that America faces today is a problem of the soul. There is a growing secularization in American society. In 2009, the late critic Christopher Hitchings published the best selling book, *God Is Not Great*, arguing how religion poisons everything. More and more people are moving away from their churches and temples. Some use the tepid excuse, "I am spiritual but not religious."

When Howard Halter became our pastor in 1941, the United States had just entered World War II, an armed conflict that threatened our very existence as a nation. When James Zwerneemann became our pastor in 1974, our community and country were reeling from anti-war protests, the Watergate Scandal, the resignation of the President, heightened racial tensions, and a polarized electorate. Although the challenges are different today, Pastor Hartwell and his ministry team face a similarly turbulent world, a world that needs the love of Christ.

In the midst of all this, our once-small church, started in 1916 on the campus of Concordia College, continues to provide a spiritual anchor for people who want TO KNOW, LIVE, AND SHARE THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

THE MUSIC MINISTRY

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. (Colossians 3:16)



Doris Voester

The vitality and growth of the Village Lutheran Church in the past century is directly related to its outstanding leadership in the areas of worship and music.

Pastor Halter found the right person at precisely the right time to be a partner in ministry. Under the direction of Doris Voester, the music program would be equal to that offered at the other churches in Bronxville.

Doris Voester's first contact with our church was made when she was asked to accompany a violinist who was performing at a congregational dinner, which Pastor

Halter held shortly after his assignment to this area. Pastor was immediately impressed with Doris' musical ability, as well as her outstanding personal qualities. Although she was then serving as organist and choir director at a church in Mount Vernon, he asked her to "remember us" if she were interested in changing her job. Perhaps Doris was also impressed with our energetic new pastor and no doubt she was intrigued, too, by the challenge and excitement of growing a new church. Two years later she became our first bona fide organist and potential music director (for at that time, the church had no music program).

One may speculate that a combination of faith, courage, and vision, led Doris to leave her excellent position in an established church (where she had more singers in her choirs, than we had people in our whole congregation!) and begin again, facing the handicaps and hardships (not the least among them, an electronic organ) of a new mission church.

Doris, an accomplished pianist, organist, and choir director, saw the possibilities for growth and service here and wanted to take part in realizing them. As soon as she came, she organized the Girls' Choir with 18 girls. Doris would expand the music program over the years to include the Chancel Choir, the Cecilian

Choir (these 12 members sing and also ring), and the Boys' Choir. Perhaps one of the most unique features of our music program, however, would be our handbell choirs. No other church in Westchester County had them at that time.

Doris organized a group of 7 girls to be the Concert Bell Choir (the Village Bell Ringers). In addition to playing for our church, they would perform in the community at other churches and for other special musical events. As the ringers grew in ability and quality of performance, the demand for their appearances became greater and greater. This would be the nucleus of what would be a long succession of English handbell choirs with a reputation of excellence that would extend far beyond the borders of Bronxville.

Music is an integral part of ministry. Many worshipers were first attracted to this church because of the beauty, variety, and originality of our music program.



VLC Handbell Choir

Many who were first members of the choir later became members of the church. Many of our youth came because of their involvement with the choirs.

One of the special traditions which Doris started was the Round-the-Table Carol Sing, which she brought from her native England for our Christmas holiday worship. She also originated an Outdoor Community

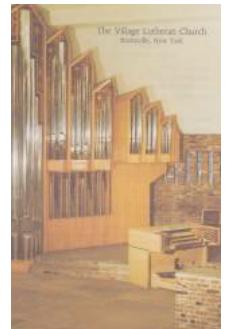
Carol Sing, an annual event on the lawn of the church. Both of these musical events drew many members, as well as people from the entire community.



Ralph Schultz When Doris Voester retired in 1967, Ralph Schultz became the Minister of Music. Those were the days of vibrant interest in music for the church. The adult choir grew to forty singers, the high school choir numbered eighteen, and the children's choir was about sixty! The worship services were supported by these choirs and a

group of instrumentalists (church members) led by Edith Fischer, Alan Meyer and the Schultz family – Deb, Steven, Timothy, and David.

After becoming President of Concordia, Ralph was also the congregational president for a year. During those years, the voting body decided to install a new pipe organ, and with the help of James Brauer, that challenge was completed. Custom designed and manufactured by the Berkshire Organ Company in West Springfield, MA, the new pipe organ was dedicated on October 30, 1983, and named The Howard L. Halter Memorial Organ.



The Village Lutheran Church is fortunate to have as its closest neighbor and partner Concordia College, which has shared with us the faculty of its top quality music program as well as many of its graduates. These men and women have been well equipped to be leaders in church music both here and in the wider community.



Gerry Coleman

During the 1980s, the congregation was blessed with Concordia musicians like Gerry Coleman and Jim Brauer, to serve as ministers of music and continue the musical legacy of excellence at VLC. Hymns written by Gerry Coleman (The Lamb), as well as Ralph and Dorothy Schultz (Love in Christ), have been published in Lutheran hymnals. In 1987, Robert Hess took over the position and dedicated himself

to work in many areas of church life. One of Bob's most exciting achievements was to spearhead the drive to install the magnificent Trompeta Real on the antiphonal organ at the back of the sanctuary. This new organ stop became part of our 75th anniversary celebrations (1991-92) and was officially dedicated at the end of the anniversary year.



Jim Brauer

After experiencing the tragic loss of Bob's death in 1995, the church music program continued to carry out its important mission through the efforts of resident musicians Tim Schultz, Deborah Cook and Marcia Kollmann. In 1996, Deborah Reiss was brought in to join the team and has served as the Minister of Music up to the present time.

Deb Reiss is the principal organist and oversees the music program and worship life of the congregation. As Chancel Choir director, she has seen the size of the group diminish, but she has been blessed with a strong core of dedicated singers to offer their gifts in worship. A recent innovation has been to invite college students to enhance the choir and develop leadership skills through the Young Choral Artist program, a paid internship for college singers.



Debbie Cook

Many other people have been an important part of the music ministry team. The Cherub Choir (Sunday School children in preschool – gr. 2) has been led by Holly Schulze, Deanne Schultz and Betty Geiling, and our current director is Hannah Geiling. Debbie Cook served for 23 years (1980-2003) as Director of the Youth Choir (grade 3-8) and 25 years (1980-2005) as director of the Village Bells. She also directed a handbell choir for the upper grades at The Chapel School in the early 1980s.

When Debbie Cook moved away, George Heath became the Youth Choir Director and Deb Reiss took over the handbells. George also re-established the High School Choir and formed a Brass Ensemble. To round out the music staff, we have been blessed to have many Associate Organists. These include: Concordia students, such as Larry Arnold, Scott Sadlo and John Buckel; a gifted Chapel School student named James (Jimmy) Feddeck, who has gone on to a professional career in conducting; and Julie Taylor, wife of our former Associate Pastor Deric Taylor. Marcia Kollmann and Kevin Warnken are currently serving in this capacity.

In 2001 Jim and Susan Burkee organized a contemporary worship group. (Jim was a history professor at Concordia at that time.) They called it Faith Walk and prepared monthly worship services. After the Burkees moved to Wisconsin, Deb became the director of that group as well. The group currently helps to lead a blended service about 4 times during the year.

Those who have worshiped here will know some of the long-lasting musical traditions which are unique to the VLC, especially the Round-the-Table Carol Sing and the Tenebrae service on Good Friday (with complete darkness, singing of “Were You There,” and tolling of the bell 33 times at the end). The informal summer services on the Great Porch, with favorite hymns chosen by the congregation, were started by Pastor Zwernemann in 1974. Members today continue to enjoy worshiping amid the beauty of God's creation.

The church music program also helps create a bond between the VLC and The Chapel School. TCS students, as well as their families, are welcome to participate in VLC musical groups. There is a natural fit for the students because George Heath is the Music Teacher for grade 3-8 and directs the Band, the Select Choir, and the Prep Choir. Kate Marino, the music teacher for preschool through grade 2, is also an active member of the church music program and provides another strong connection.

TCS choirs have established a more recent tradition of participating in VLC worship services. These

special services include: Lessons and Carols as part of our midweek Advent services; one Wednesday evening Lenten service (usually the last Wednesday before Holy Week), and Lutheran Schools Sunday in March. An added blessing is that many school families are able to attend!

Music is a wonderful way to get people of all ages involved in our mission to "know, live, and share the love of Christ." May God continue to bless our efforts to worship and serve Him through music. *Soli deo Gloria!*

THE CHAPEL SCHOOL

Historically, Lutherans have emphasized parochial education. In fact, in the early days of settlement in the United States, they formulated the goal: "No church without a school." The Chapel School was the first church-related preschool and Kindergarten in Westchester County.

In 1947, there was a need for another nursery school in the community, because all the local nursery schools were filled. Barbara Duncan and Muriel Doyle, who each had 2 little girls, called on Pastor Halter and explained their problem. His answer was: "Here I am to fulfill any real need the community has. If we need another nursery school, we will have it. I have the space...let's get about it."¹⁹

They purchased the necessary equipment, advertised the opening day, hired 4 teachers and waited for a response. They didn't have long to wait. With over 40 children and a great deal of enthusiasm, plus the unwavering support and cooperation of Pastor Halter, the nursery school was established. Ruth Wohltjen was the Director for the first several years. Kindergarten and Grades 1-6, in combined classes, would later be added. A spirit of cooperation existed between teachers and parents.

Peg Harbush, who joined the faculty as a Kindergarten teacher, helped Pastor Halter develop the religion curriculum, as well as a quality program which was so important to the parents of the congregation and community.

Peg had more teacher education students from Concordia College observe and share in her classroom activities than any other teacher in the Atlantic District. Prior to Concordia NY's four-year program becoming a reality, a visit to The Chapel School and Peg's Kindergarten classroom was part of the agenda for many teacher education students before they moved on to



David Toven with Peg Harbush

¹⁹ Howard Halter, qtd. in letter from Muriel E. Doyle. September 1967. In *My Church* (Nov) 1967. pp. 9-19.

Concordia Seward or Concordia River Forest. Not only was Peg a wonderful teacher, but she also assisted with many administrative tasks and served as Acting Principal until David Toven's arrival in 1959. Peg Harbush was the first recipient of The Chapel School Award in 1987 for her 28 years of service and dedication to the school and its children.

From 1959-1982, Mr. David Toven served as principal and teacher. During his tenure, the school expanded by moving to single classes and adding Grades 7 and 8. To support the growing enrollment, all common space on our property was utilized, and classrooms in Concordia's Stein Hall were rented. Even the church parlor (The Friendship Room) was used as a classroom for a period of time.



David Toven, Lois Bayer and Pastor Z

During those years, The Chapel School was like a big family, with many dedicated teachers, small classes and most importantly, Bible-based religious instruction and Christian values. Many of the outstanding teachers were wives of Concordia College professors. There was an intimate atmosphere in the "old facility." After all, there were no hallways or lunchroom. Classes were in the undercroft (now the Multi-Purpose Room), the education annex and the rooms in Leonard Mansion.



Sharon Finster with
3rd Grade quilt

The Chapel School was blessed when Sharon (Osenberg) Peterson Finster joined the faculty part-time in 1980 as librarian, and then full-time in 1982. Over the course of her 36-year tenure, Mrs. Finster would build up and grow the school library into one of the finest children's libraries in the Lutheran education system. She would instill a love of reading and enjoyment of stories in students of all ages. She would also make quilts with the 3rd Grade classes, most of which would be donated to Lutheran

World Relief. Mrs. Finster would encourage The Chapel School students, faculty, and staff to have HEARTS TO LOVE AND HANDS TO SERVE.

Many exceptional teachers at The Chapel School brought experience and stability during those years, in a caring and nurturing Christian environment for the students. Peg Harbush, Joan Deery, Willie Miesner, Marie Springer, Dorothy Schultz, Carol Aufdemberge, Sam Maschke and Norma Noble were just some of the familiar faces.

After Mr. Toven's departure, The Chapel School had two interim principals: Rev. Dr. James Zwernemann (1982-1983) and Dr. Fred Meyer, a professor of education at Concordia College (1983-1984).

Mr. Scott Helming took over as principal in 1984. Under his leadership, The Chapel School continued to deal with fundamental issues that public schools, both then and now, fail to address. One former graduate of The Chapel School, who transferred from the public school system, states that even now, decades later, he still remembers the school addressing important questions like "Why we are here?" and "What is the importance of life?" Most importantly, Christian values were always exemplified, not merely taught.



Scott Helming

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, school enrollment fluctuated, and Grades 7 and 8 were temporarily closed. When Mr. Helming left in 1991, Mrs. Dorothy Schultz, The Chapel School's longtime Kindergarten teacher, became interim principal for one year.



Dorothy Schultz with her Kindergarten class

The Care Program was started in 1987 to accommodate parents who needed supervision for their children before, during and/or after school hours. Over the years, The Chapel School has also offered a Summer Program with many kinds of educational and fun opportunities.

In 1992, Mr. Richard Rath became the principal and introduced the concept of an ungraded middle school (UMS) to the 5th and 6th graders. Soon Grades 7 and 8 were added again. In the meantime, the need for double classes in the lower grades became apparent, the sports program grew and several middle school sports teams began to enjoy success. The Chapel School received National Lutheran Schools Accreditation in 1998.

The increased enrollment made use of every available space, and plans for a second building addition could no longer be avoided. Mr. Rath spent countless hours seeking financial assistance, making assessments and providing suggestions in the early stages.

Following Mr. Rath's retirement in 1999, the call for principal was extended to Mr. Jim Dhyne. Under his leadership for the next 17 years, The Chapel School would become known for both Christian ethos and academic excellence.

1999 was a critical time for The Chapel School. The decision had already been made to construct the new building. However, it would be three more years of meetings, final approvals, demolition and construction before the new building was completed. Growing the enrollment for the school was essential. To help raise academic standards, Principal Dhyne tightened admission standards and updated the application process, including a screening test for Kindergarten through Grade 8. After two years of low enrollment, the process led to years of continued growth.

During Mr. Dhyne's tenure as principal, the Kindergarten was changed to a full-day program. As the years progressed, an additional class at each grade level was added. Many new sections of the 3- and 4-year-olds preschool classes were offered. The Middle School was departmentalized, which greatly enhanced creativity and accountability.

Mr. Dhyne brought new ideas to the school, including Worker of the Week, the Accelerated Reader Program, and the Peace Education Program. The Chapel Charger online newsletter became an important part of communication. Uniforms for students and a hot-lunch program were introduced. The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) has grown to be a strong ally of the school and the students. Parent volunteers have been a tremendous help.

During the construction of the new building, Mr. Dhyne worked with Pastor Hartwell to temporarily relocate the school, prepare students and faculty for the move into the new facility, and raise needed funds to help offset construction costs and ensure financial stability. He also worked strategically to grow the school, doubling the classes in all elementary and middle school grades.



Michael Schultz, Michelle Tween
and Jim Dhyne

Much needed assistance was given to Mr. Dhyne when Mr. Michael Schultz (Athletic Director and teacher at TCS) was appointed Assistant Principal and Middle School Administrator in 1999. Administrative assistance at the growing preschool was also needed. Molly Nagel became the Preschool Director in 2000, a role which Abbey Kumar took over in 2011. Michelle Tween has served as Preschool Director since 2012, and has been a vital part of The Chapel School's administrative team.

Under the leadership of Mr. Dhyne, student enrollment has steadily increased, creating a need for more teachers to manage the double classes in K-8. Those dedicated and caring teachers and teacher aides (now numbering about 50) help create the nurturing environment at The Chapel School. Several of the

teachers are Concordia graduates.

A full-time Guidance Counselor was added to the staff in 2013. For students with special needs, the Bronxville school system provides The Chapel School students with an I.E.P. resource teacher on-site for speech and occupational therapy.

Mr. Dhyne has also overseen the accreditation process. The school is fully accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, and also has National Lutheran Schools Accreditation (both in 2004 and 2012). In the spring of 2001, as a result of Pastor Hartwell's dissertation work at NY Theological Seminary, The Chapel School became a Professional Development School for Concordia College.

With the new building and additional space came the ability to offer new programs and extra-curricular activities. The athletic programs, under the direction of Michael Schultz, have blossomed and flourished. The number of students involved in these programs has increased dramatically, along with the number of parent and teacher volunteers.



2016 Girls Basketball

The Chapel School Fine Arts programs have been a great asset. Under the direction of George Heath, the



The Chapel School Select Choir at Princeton

members of the Select Choir (for Grades 4-8, by audition) have been wonderful ambassadors for The Chapel School. The students have sung at many events in the community for various occasions, and for 10 years they have sung the National Anthem at Shea Stadium/Citi Field. The Prep Choir (for students in Grades 2-3) is now in its third year. The band program has also grown over the years, and The Chapel School now has four bands, including beginner to advanced musicians.

Under the direction of George Heath and Kate (Porter) Marino, The Chapel School drama program has come to involve many students and parent helpers. For five years now, the students have performed spring musicals: *Annie*, *Oklahoma*, *The Music Man*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *The Wizard of Oz*.



Guys and Dolls at The Chapel School

Service Learning is another essential part of what makes The Chapel School so special. Students and teachers participate in two Midnight Runs a year. All of the students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 bring in items, and then the older students help make the sandwiches and pack up the food items. The teachers “do the run” in New York City that evening. Students also participate in a “Make a Difference Day” in October, and parents and students have helped at the Mount Vernon Soup Kitchen (formerly the Sacred Heart Soup Kitchen).

What Makes The Chapel School A Special Place?

The Chapel School strives for academic excellence in a caring and nurturing Christian environment. It has dedicated teachers, small class sizes, and a wonderfully diverse student body. There is also a strong service learning program, an excellent fine arts programs, an inclusive athletics program, a rigorous writing program, a flexible and engaging CARE program for all students, and Spanish instruction for Preschool through Grade 8. Keeping the students current with computers, programs and other technology has also been important, evidenced by the inclusion of SMARTboards in every classroom. Christian values are reinforced and practiced every day. Each class helps lead a Wednesday morning chapel service during the course of the school year.

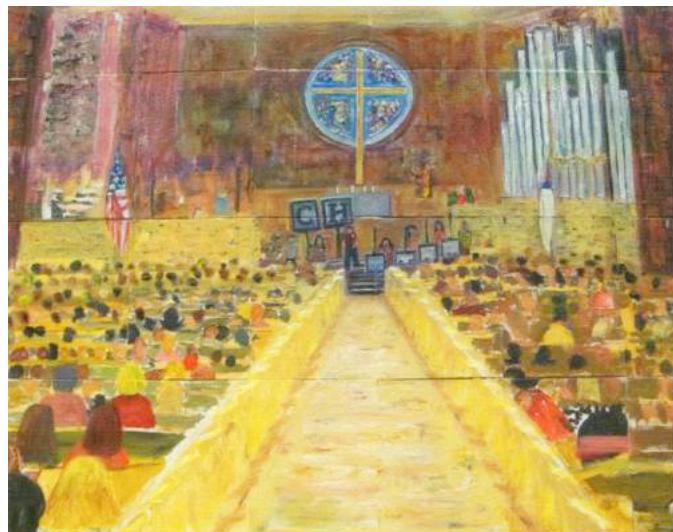
The Chapel Middle School has a unique positive discipline program, science and computer labs, an accelerated math program, and a three-year cycle of trips to Washington, DC; Philadelphia; and Boston.

In 2016, The Chapel School was voted **Best Preschool** and **Best Private School** in *Westchester Magazine's* annual “Best of Westchester Reader’s Ballot.”

A hallmark of Mr. Dhyne’s tenure was the creation of the Blue Ribbon Foundation, a separate not-for-profit foundation. He has been instrumental in the overall fundraising efforts for the church and school. In

addition to several campaigns, he helped start the annual Gathering of Friends Gala Auction and the Golf Outing in 2001, both opportunities for church and school families to come together.

After Jim Dhyne's retirement in 2016, Mr. Michael Schultz accepted the called to be the next principal. As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of The Chapel School in the new academic year, he will bring a great understanding of our history and many new ideas and plans for the future. Mr. Schultz says, "When I consider this next chapter for TCS and working with our wonderful faculty, staff, and new leadership team, I am so encouraged by the seemingly limitless possibilities God has set before us as we continue to help the children and families entrusted to our care 'To Know, Live and Share the Love of Christ.'"²⁰



The oil on canvas painting to the left earned The Art and Architecture Award for "Best Community Ecclesiastical Art" in 2013 from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF).

The painting, created by Village Lutheran Church member and The Chapel School (TCS) parent Eric Bennett, depicts a weekly Wednesday morning chapel service, a longstanding tradition of the church and school.

Mr. Bennett created the painting with the help of TCS students as a part of the Gathering of Friends Gala Auction in 2011. It was purchased by donors and gifted back to the school, and now hangs in the reception area to welcome all visitors to the campus. Pastor Hartwell later worked with Mr. Bennett to submit the piece to LCEF for its annual contest.

Members of the judging committee praised the piece, saying, "The style is highly personal and engaging," and the "Project demonstrates the teaching opportunity that community affords."

What a perfect illustration of the blessings of our close-knit church and school community!

"Chapel School Artwork Receives Recognition." *The Charger* Vol. 7, Issue 1 (Winter 2013): pp.4.

²⁰ Michael Schultz. The Chapel School, Development Office. News release, July 6, 2016.

AFTERWORD



In the 16th century, Isaac Watts wrote the lyrics of a popular hymn. The text speaks of God's leading in times past and His providence and mercy today.

“God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.”

The words of this hymn beautifully summarize our thankfulness at the tremendous way that God, working through men and women filled with the Holy Spirit, has made our church and school what it is today. Truly, God has been our help for both church and school over so many years. Yet God is also leading us today. We continue to place our hope in Him. The same Holy Spirit that inspired and strengthened and led our church and school over the past century is filling us today. Together we move forward in faith.

Our hymnal puts it very well with the following poignant and beautiful prayer:

Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.¹

Let us journey on together and see what exciting opportunities for congregation, children and community that await as we live out our mission “To Know, Live and Share the Love of Christ!”

Rev. Dr. Robert Hartwell

Senior Pastor

Fall 2016

¹*Lutheran Service Book*. Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Pub. House, 2006. pp. 311.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: VLC Pastors and Staff

Pastors

- F.P. Wilhelm (1916-1918)
Otto Sieker (1918-1932)
Paul Heckel (1932-1932)
Herman J. Rippe (1932-1933)
William J. Wiltenberg (1933-1940)
Arthur Doege (1940-1941)
Howard L. Halter (1941-1974)
James C. Zwernemann (1974-2003)
Robert E. Hartwell (2003- present)



Howard and Florence Halter



James and Bonnie Zwernemann



Robert and Sue Hartwell



Roy Minnix and Deric Taylor



Scott Geminn, Morris Mayer and
Robert Hartwell

Associate Pastors

- Martin Doering (1985-1989)
Robert Hartwell (1998-2003)
Deric Taylor (2003-2010)
Campus Pastor Roy Minnix III (2010-2013)
Scott Geminn (2014-present)
SMP* Pastor Morris Mayer (2014-present)

*The Specific Ministry Pastor program is a distance education program leading to ordination, which allows in-place seminary training.

Assistant Pastors

Darrel Helmers (1949-1951)

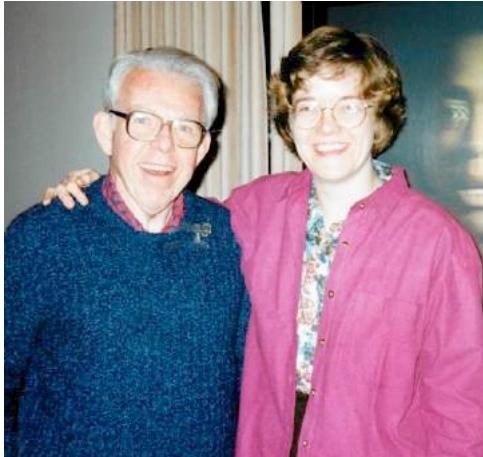
Norman Temme (1959-1973)



Merlin and Lois Rehm



Leroy Leach



Clifford and Sharon Peterson

Adjunct Pastors

Carl F. Weidmann (1950-1970)

Paul Gabbert (1950-1970)

Paul Gassmann (1976-1981)

Donald Miesner (1989-2001)

Merlin Rehm (1989-1998)

Clifford Peterson (1989-2003)

Allen Kebschull (1998-2006)

Deric Taylor (1998-2003)

Ronald Jones (2000-2001)

Gerald Coleman (2002-2006)

Thomas Sluberski (2002-present)

Scott Ashmon (2003-2005)

Leroy Leach (2014-present)

Deaconesses

Lois (Graesser) Meier (1957-1960)



Scott Geminn, Robert Hartwell and Thomas Sluberski



Donald Meisner

Ministers of Music

Doris Voester (1943-1967), *Director of Music*

Ralph Schultz (1967-1978)

Gerald Coleman (1978-1982)

James Brauer (1981-1987)

Robert Hess (1987-1995)

Timothy Schultz (1995-1996)

Deborah Reiss (1996-present)



Kate (Porter) Marino and George Heath



Deborah Reiss



Timothy Schultz



Kevin Warnken



Marcia Kollmann

Deacons

Anders Strindberg (2007-2009)

Timothy Elwell (2008-2014)

Carol Pfizenmaier (2008-2012)

Wendy (Haddad) Krolides (2008-present)

Ann Terenzio (2008-2012)

Victor Terenzio (2008-present)

Faith Forliano (2010-present)

Morris Mayer (2010-2012)

Betty Roberts (2010-present)

Joan Condon (2012-present)

Rosemarie Gustafson (2013-present)

Chuck Horvath (2014-present)



Rosemarie Gustafson, Joan Condon and Betty Roberts



Faith Forliano



Wendy (Haddad) Krolides



Morris Mayer and Charles Horvath

Appendix 2: TCS Administration



Richard Rath

The Chapel School Principals

Ruth Wohltjen (1947-1956), *Director*

Marguerite "Peg" Harbush (1947-1957), *Assistant Principal*

Emlyn Elias (1956-1957), *Acting Principal*

Marguerite "Peg" Harbush (1957-1959), *Acting Principal*

David Toven (1959-1982)

Rev. Dr. James C. Zwernemann (1982-1983), *Interim Principal*

Dr. Fred Meyer (1983-1984), *Interim Principal*

Scott Helming (1984-1991)

Dorothy Schultz (1991-1992), *Interim Principal*

Richard Rath (1992-1999)

James Dhyne (1999-2016)

Michael Schultz (1999-2016), *Assistant Principal*

Michael Schultz (2016-Present)



James Dhyne with
"Principals for a Day" students



Michael Schultz

Preschool Early Childhood Directors

Ruth Wohltjen (1947-1954)

Martha Wagner (1954-1955)

Dorothy Bohl (1959-1966)

Beverly Schlecht (1966-1971)

Lou Weber (1975-1977)

Molly Nagel (2000-2011)

Abbey Kumar (2011-2012)

Michelle Tween (2012-Present)



Molly Nagel



Michelle Tween

Appendix 3: VLC Congregational Presidents (1950 – present)

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| William Heise (1950) | Ralph Schultz (1980-1981) |
| Henry Swertfeger (1951-1952) | Donald Miesner (1981-1983) |
| Clarence Hintz (1953-1954) | George Grotz (1983-1984) |
| Arnold Sward (1955-1956) | Hans Hover (1984-1985) |
| John Larsen (1957-1959) | Fred Meyer (1985-1986) |
| Arnold Sward (1960-1961) | Merlin Rehm (1986-1988) |
| Otto Spurgat (1961-1962) | Hans Hover (1988-1989) |
| Donald Bohl (1962-1963) | Ted Patrou (1990-1992) |
| Arnold Sward (1963-1964) | Robert Meier (1993) |
| Henry Wyman (1965-1966) | Susan O'Connell (1994-1996) |
| Louis Fischer (1966-1967) | Tim Schultz (1997-1998) |
| Arnold Sward (1968-1969) | Tim Elwell (1998-2003) |
| Henry Wyman (1969-1974) | Grant Geiling (2003-2007) |
| Louis Fischer (1974-1976) | George Pietarinen (2007-2011) |
| Richard Allen (1976-1978) | Lou Albano (2011-2015) |
| Clifford Peterson (1978-1980) | Chris Gleason (2015-present) |



Grant Geiling



Chris Gleason and Lou Albano

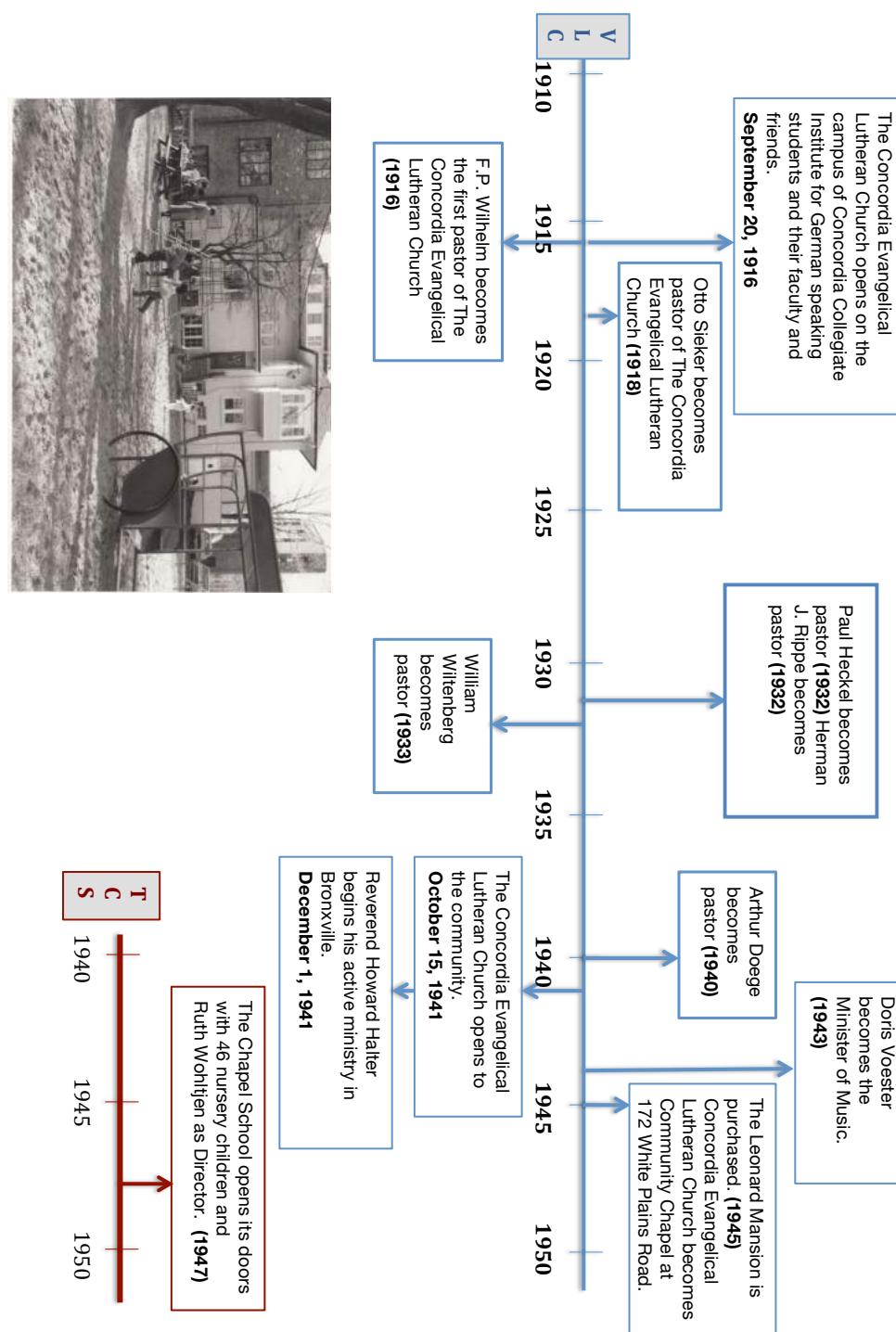


George Pietarinen

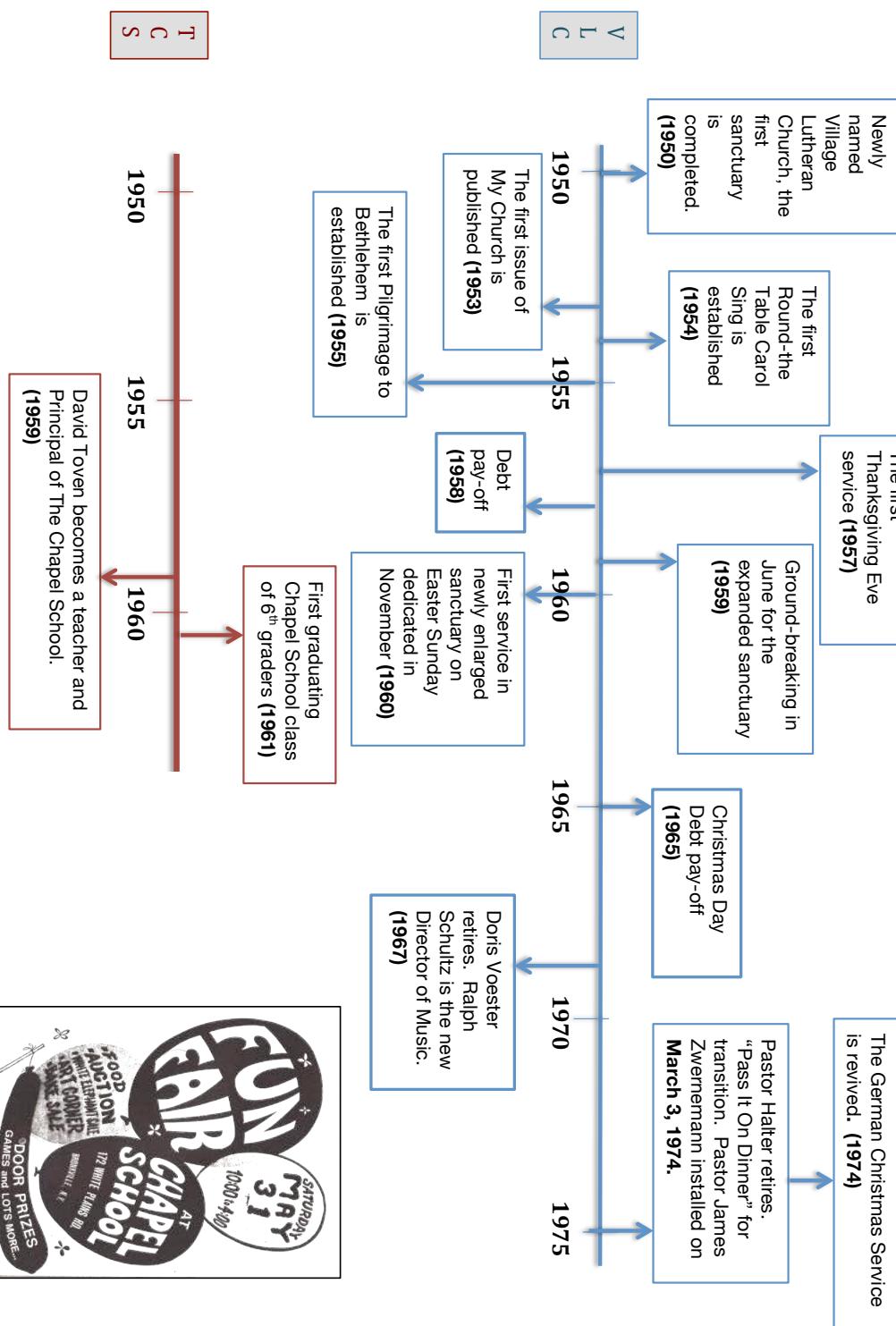


Tim Elwell

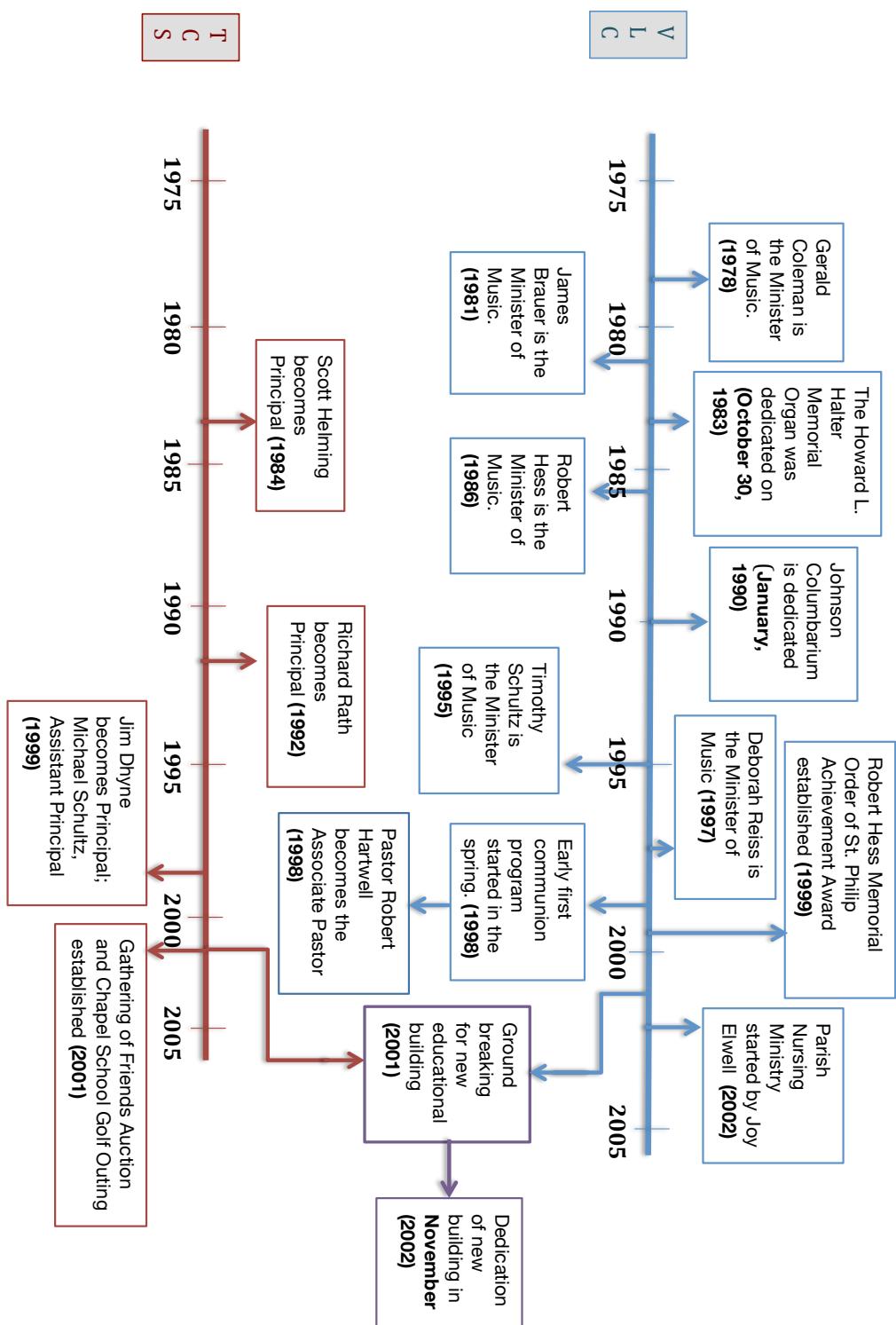
Our Beginning... Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School 1910 - 1950



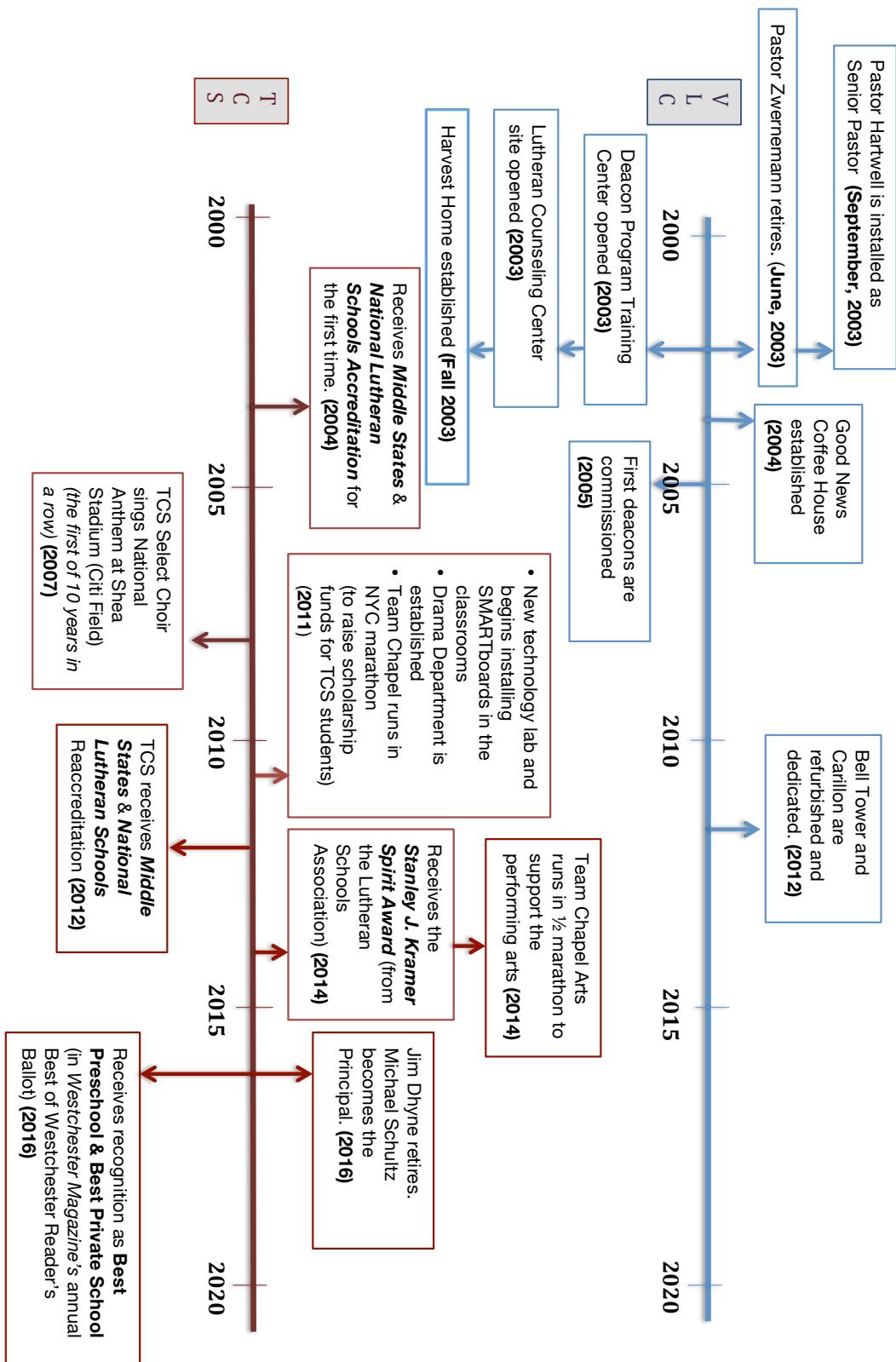
Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School 1950 - 1975



Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School 1975 - 2002



Village Lutheran Church and The Chapel School 2003 - present



Appendix 5: Our Core Values

our
core values



Faith Values

- We value the lost coming to faith and the faithful strengthened through the Word and the Sacraments.
- We value our Lutheran heritage of grace alone, faith alone and scripture alone.

Life Values

- We value high quality worship in diverse forms.
- We value high quality Christian education and relevant preaching.
- We value faithful stewardship of time, talents and financial resources.
- We value lay leadership in ministry, especially the service of women.
- We value the care of body, mind and spirit.
- We value social justice and helping others.

Community Values

- We value our strong commitment to the communities we serve: the Bronx, Southern Connecticut, Upper Manhattan and lower Westchester County.
- We value our partnership with the Atlantic District staff and with the congregations, schools and ministries that the District serves.
- We value our partnership with Concordia College as an institution and with the students, faculty and staff.

VILLAGE LUTHERAN CHURCH
914-337-0207
www.VLC-NY.org

THE CHAPEL SCHOOL
914-337-3202
www.TheChapelSchool.org
