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History of Holy Cross Lutheran Church of Kearney, Nebraska

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

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church

HISTORY OF HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF KEARNEY, NEBRASKA

On October 11, 1959, the Voter's Assembly of Zion Lutheran Church of Kearney adopted a resolution inviting the Mission Board of The Southern Nebraska District to consider the feasibility of a future mission congregation in the general vicinity of the Kearney State College campus and/or a Student Center for the students of the College.

The resolution was received so favorably by the Mission Board that they immediately started plans for a Student Center for the college students to be located near the campus and they also purchased property east of Twelfth Avenue between Thirty Third and Thirty Fifth streets as a site for a future mission church.

In January of 1962 a Mission Building Committee was elected from the voting membership of Zion Lutheran Church. Committee members were DeWayne Wolf, Chairman; William Leppin, Secretary; Ken Gregerson, Richard Griesse, Don Keiss, and Marvin Spitsnogle. Harold Summers was later elected to replace Marvin Spitsnogle who had moved to Lincoln. By August of 1962 the architectural firm of Hollis and Miller of Overland Park, Kansas was selected to start the plans for the proposed new Mission Church. In November authorization was granted by all concerned to proceed without further delay to finalize the plan and build such a church. Final plans and specifications were approved in February. Bids were received and the contract was let on March 19, 1964 to Central Contracting Corporation of Kearney for \$116,633. A Groundbreaking Service was held Sunday, April 12, at 9:30 a.m., with children from Zion pulling a plow around the outline of the proposed building. Some 220 children and 500 adults gathered for the Groundbreaking Service. Rev. Max E. Heinz and Rev. Donald E. Blume, pastors of Zion Lutheran Church, officiated at the service.

Construction proceeded without letup or mishap and the Cornerstone Laying Service was conducted Sunday, August 30, at 9:30 a.m., with Pastor Heinz officiating. Two hundred and twenty-two children of Zion placed new 1964 pennies in envelopes on which they wrote their name. These were then placed in the copper box along with other historical items and sealed into the cornerstone.

Dedication of the new Lutheran Mission Church was held on Sunday, January 31, 1965, at 2:30 p.m. with Rev. Heinz as Liturgist and the Rev. H. W. Niermann, President, Southern Nebraska District, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, as guest speaker. The building dedicated was the first stage of a proposed three stage building program and the final cost of \$153,000 included land, improvements, and furnishings. The first regular worship service was held on Sunday, February 7, at 9:30 a.m. with Rev. Heinz officiating. A Missionary-at-Large had been called to serve the congregation but the call was not accepted until a later date.

Pastor Donald G. Dannenberg was installed as the first minister of the Lutheran Mission Church on May 2, 1965, at 2:30 p.m.

On May 12, 1965, a meeting was held to organize a ladies' Guild, a service organization with Bible study to be a part of their program. Mrs. Carl Weber, Jr. served as the first President of the Guild. This group has been actively involved in the workings of the Church since that time.

The charter members chose the name Holy Cross Lutheran Church for their new church after the regular worship service on Sunday, June 20, 1965. This name is most appropriate because a large cross is the focal design feature in both the church interior and exterior.

The first organizational meeting of the charter members was held on Wednesday, July 7, 1965, at which time the Articles of Incorporation and the By-Laws were approved.

In May of 1967 Pastor Dannenberg accepted a call to another church and for a period of one year the pastoral duties of the congregation were provided by Rev. Eldor Meyer and Rev. Albert Trost.

The first confirmation class was received into Communion membership on September 17, 1967.

The Reverend Gary D. Fortkamp was installed as pastor on May 5, 1968 and has served the congregation since that time.

During the years from its beginning several groups have been organized to further the cause of the Church.

Two groups are serving the needs of the young people of the congregation. The TICs--Teens in Christ--was organized on August 24, 1969 with Scott Grone serving as its first President. The TICs serve the young people from the ninth to twelfth grades. The DOCs--Disciples of Christ--was organized on September 17, 1972 and its members are youngsters in the seventh and eighth grades. Mary Ann Glandt is their President. Both organizations meet twice a month.

A family fellowship night is held once a month to permit members of all ages to become better acquainted and to promote Christian ideals with social activities.

The Lutheran Laymen's League, an organization for the male members of the congregation was organized in August of 1970 with Richard Dier serving as its first President.

Holy Cross Lutheran Church has grown in membership from the original 112 charter members to 208 Communicant members. 28 adults and 23 children have been instructed in Lutheran doctrine and received into communicant membership in The Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod at Holy Cross through the Rite of Confirmation. Eight adults and 66 children have received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Future plans for Holy Cross include construction of a larger worship area and additional classrooms. The present worship area will then be used as a Fellowship Hall.