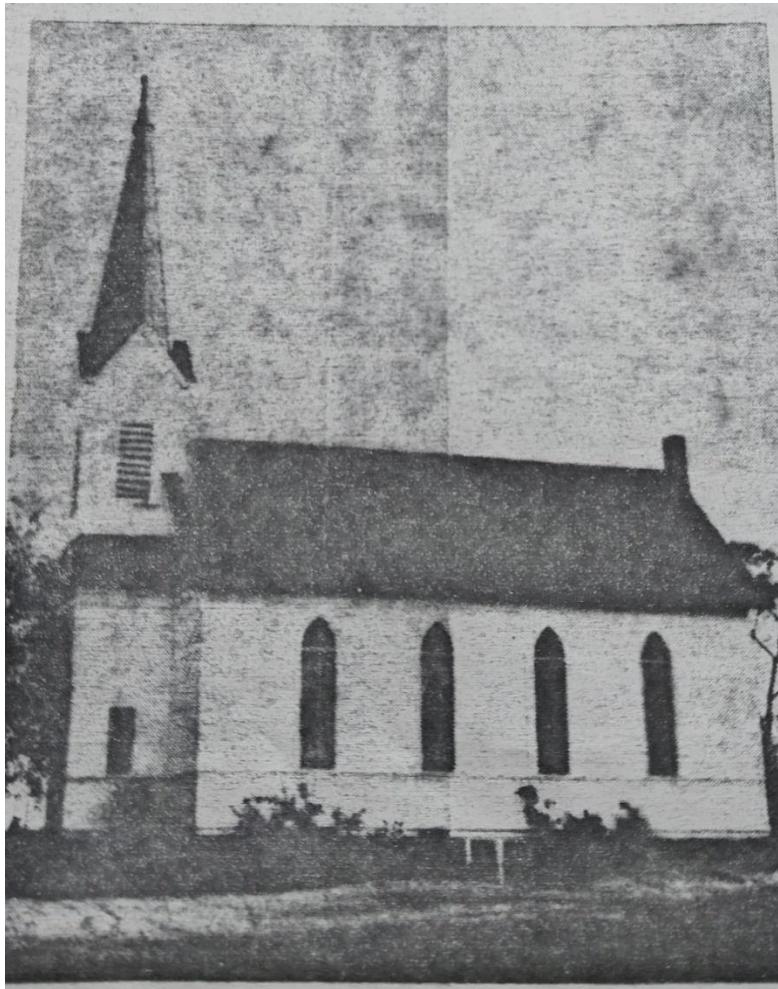


**History of
St. Jacobi Evangelical & Reformed Church**

Near Richfield, Wi.

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**For its 100th Anniversary Services
October 7, 1951**



(1951 church built in 1892)

To the glory of God, and to the devoted interest and sacrifices of our forefathers and past pastors, we dedicate this brief history of our St. Jacobi Congregation, to be distributed during its Centennial observance on October 7, 1951, and after.

St. Jacobi Evangelical and Reformed Congregation near Richfield, Wis., dates back to its organization meeting on May 2, 1851 in the home of Michael Bauer. Its first church record book calls it (literally translated from the German language) the German United Evangelical Protestant Congregation of St. Jacobus Church in Town Richfield.

Michael Bauer was chosen first president and John Kissinger as secretary. Other officers were John Bauer, John Boehner, Henry Melius; with Fred Ebling as treasurer. The name of the first pastor is not known, but the first children baptized in 1851 were Frederick Ebeling, Maria Jung, Jacob Held, Heinrich Herzog and John Geiss; while for 1852 the following were recorded as baptized: John Kissinger, Catherina Bauer, Catherina Biegler, Fred Reidenback, Catherine Bener, Andrew Hartleb, Appolina Mauer, Dorothy Eimerman and Elizabeth Held. The third year the name of Barbara Aulenbacher appeared among the baptized. And the first class to be confirmed (1853) were Andreas Messer, John Christian Schmidt, Catherina Ebling, Maria Schneider.

Other names in official and other charter records given us, which could be listed with the above officers, as charter members are: Andrew Zaun, Jacob Frank, George Zimmerman, John Dexheimer, John Messar, Fred Jung, Peter Reidenbach, Diter Jung, Widow Ebling, John Kissinger, Henry Ebling, John Maurer, John Kessel, Wm. Biegler, Michael Held, Henry Dexheimder, Peter Hartleb, Jacob Klippel, Jacob Maurer, Balthasar Ebling, Jacob Kurtz, John Lenhart, Conrad and John Eimerman, Philip Schneider, Ernst Schwamb, Gottlieb Geismer, Deider Ebling, Christian Ebling, Paul Ebling, Philip Stark, Gruen, Zoch and Becker. And a history of Washington county gives these additional names: Daniel Funk, Carl Bender, Adam Held, Carl Lohr, Jacob Kissling, John Borehent and John Stark.

Contributions for a church building amounting to \$64.97 were made during 1851. Money for benevolences (Almosen) was also collected and appropriated. The first church was a log building, located at the present cemetery site. All material and labor for it were paid by June, 1852, yet leaving a balance of \$10.18. The interior was well equipped, having pulpit and pews, a space and benches for Sunday School, an organ on one side and on the other a fenced in enclosure for the church council. The church door was never locked; a large key about 6 to 8 inches long hung on the inside.

An interesting observation from the records is that for the 1869 the church treasurer's income was \$38.74 and expenses \$35.85, of which but \$6.00 were paid for a pastor's services, the Rev. G. Ebling. This was probably the arrangement – not having a full-time pastor – until 1870, when Rev. David Kurtz was hired for a year and the church's income was over one hundred dollars for the first time. From here on a stated salary was paid a minister, beginning with \$150, then \$200, with enough wood for fuel and allowance for traveling expense. Around 1881 a new barn was built, and in 1888 an addition to the parsonage, in what is the present church property. The present church was built in 1892, across from the parsonage. C. Reidenbach was the builder. The cost was \$2,095, which was paid for by the next annual meeting.

The following pastors served regularly, at the time indicated:

Rev. David Kurtz	1870
Rev. H. W. Meier	1871
Rev. J. R. F. Marten	1878
Rev. J. Fooker	1883
Rev. E. Hunger	1887
Rev. C. A. Misch	1888
Rev. John Heinrich	1896
Rev. O. Hille	1902
Rev. J. Symanski	1907
Rev. H. Mueller	1908
Rev. N. Sulzer	1910
Rev. Gustav Klein	1916
Rev. Paul Dietrich	1921
Rev. Paul Reichert	1927
Rev. Paul Kaiser	1931
Rev. Paul Wendt	1940
Rev. Andrew Mast	1941
Rev. Calvin Franz	1944

It might be of interest to mention the church presidents, and their time of office, which is as follows:

Michael Bauer, 1851; Andrew Zaun, 1853; Johan Messer, 1856; Michael Bauer, 1857; Heinrich Melius, 1858; Wilhelm Biegler, 1859; John Messer, 1860; John Boehner, 1866; Ernest Schwamb, 1867; Balthasar Ebling, 1868; Johan Eimermann, 1869; Adam Aulenbacher, 1871; John Borchent, 1881; Johan Schneider, 1885; Jacob Kisling, 1886; Heinrich Gruen, 1887; Jacob Kissling, 1890; John Borchent, 1891; Jacob Kissling, 1894; Jacob Eimerman, 1895; Jacob Hartleb, 1917; John Ebeling, 1930; Christ Frey, 1933; Robert Laubenheimer, 1941; Arthur Ebeling, 1946; and Arthur Aulenbacher since 1948.

Woman's Guild work was started in 1914 under the ministry of Rev. Sulzer, when a constitution was adopted and regular meetings held. Mrs. Carl Mayer was the first president, Mrs. Walter Eimermann, treasurer, and Mrs. Ludwig Hornig, secretary. This same year their beloved treasurer, Mrs. Eimermann, died, and Mrs. Jacob Schwamb was elected in her place. This year the Guild bought gasoline lights for the church. Ever since this organization the church women have supported the work of the congregation under the leadership of Guild members, adding improvements by corporate or private donations. In 1920 the interior of the sanctuary was redecorated; in 1923 the beautiful new windows were purchased; in 1926 electric lights were installed; and in 1941 the new carpeting was bought by the women. In 1946 during the pastorate of Rev. and Mrs. Frazn, the women's work, which had become dormant, was revived, and the first officers were Mary Jane Klumb, president; Anita Schwamb, vice president; Etta Schneider, secretary and Gertrude Anderson, treasurer. Mrs. Amanda Ebeling presented lovely assorted shrubbery for the church grounds. Since its revival the Women's Guild has been working toward building church social rooms and a kitchen, which is to be built this anniversary year. The present officers are: Tina Klumb, president; Amanda Ebeling, vice-president; Carol Aulenbacher, secretary; Helen Schlaefer, treasurer.

St. Jacobi Congregation joined the Evangelical and Reformed denomination in 1938 and adopted a new constitution conforming to this. During 1940 a new furnace was installed at a cost of \$430. The use of German language for worship was voted out in 1943.

Under the ministry of the present pastor, which began in 1944, the church continued its advance. It joined the Ministers' Retirement Annuity Fund. Voluntary pledging and bringing of church dues instead of assessing and collecting were introduced. Vacation Bible School and youth work were introduced. Voting age of church members was

lowered to 16. The Sunday worship bulletin was used regularly. In 1945 the church exterior was painted at a cost of \$345. The denominational Apportionment Budget was raised and overpaid for the first time, and has been paid in full ever since.

1946 marked the 95th Anniversary of the church's life, so its history was studied and anniversary services held. As a special project the Messenger, denominational church paper, was sent into every home. The tenure of church offices was limited to two terms. The Sunday School was at its best with 40 members. The congregation had a mind to work and looked and planned toward its 100th Anniversary.

Part of St. Jacobi's interest and life has been music. This expressed itself naturally in choir singing, and church organists, who have contributed faithfully to worship services. For many years Mrs. Herman Schlaefter was church organist, and Mrs. Merlin Gerken the choir leader and organist. At present the church has a good adult choir, several vocal soloists, and four organists: Mrs. Merlin Gerken, Mrs. Harry Kloth, Mrs. Herman Schlaefter and Mrs. Herbert Winter. All four are members and leaders in the choir.

Together with the usual ups and downs of a small country church this congregation has stood firm against all attacks of evil from within or without and even moved forward steadfastly. It numbers about 125 confirmed members. A recent goal has been systematic care of the church cemetery, with a constant drive for a trust fund for perpetual care. This job is far from realized and remains a challenge for the future. The cemetery is under the care of the church council. Plans for building a modern church basement were approved last year, but halted by war demands. The improvement of the highway past the church brought improvement of church grounds and parking place.

The historic evergreens on the north border were cut down. As a climax to this forward movement and to fulfill a great need the brothers George and Art Ebeling made St. Jacobi a gift on one half acre of land around the church yard. Hereby was fulfilled the word of the Lord to Israel, in His command to expand. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; space not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." (Isaiah 54:2-3)

The members of St. Jacobi Church Council this memorable year are: Art Aulenbacher, president; Carl Kurtz, vice-president; Chester Meyer, secretary; Howard Klumb, treasurer; and deacons Mrs. Amanda Ebeling, Philip Laubenheimer and Merlin Gerken. They also served as centennial committee together with the following Women's Guild members: Mrs. Tina Klumb, Mrs. George Ebeling, Mrs. Henry Schneider and Mrs. Herbert Winter. Mr. and Mrs. George Mayer have had charge of our Sunday School these many years, serving faithfully as superintendent and secretary-treasurer. Carl Kurtz, Merlin Gerken and Howard Klumb compose the Cemetery Committee. For our United Yourt Fellowship Carolyn Kloth serves as secretary-treasurer.

With praise and thanksgiving to the God of the Old and New Covenant for His great faithfulness to St. Jacobi members, past, present and future, the present pastor offers this tribute to "My Church" by Dr. William Boddy as our expression of love for St. Jacobi Church near Richfield, Wis.

We dedicate this history, and ourselves anew, to My Church –

"Before I was born, My Church gave to my parents ideals of life and love that made my home a place of strength and beauty.

"In helpless infancy My Church joined my parents in consecrating me to Christ and in baptizing me in His Name.

"My Church enriched my childhood with the Romance and Religion and the lessons of life that have been woven into the texture of my soul. Sometimes I seem to have forgotten and then, when else I might surrender to foolish and futile ideals of life, the truths My Church taught become radiant, insistent and inescapable.

"In the stress and storms of adolescence My Church heard the surge of my soul and she guided my footsteps by lifting my eyes toward the stars.

"When first my heart knew the strange awakenings of love, My Church taught me to chasten and spiritualize my affections; She sanctified my marriage and blessed my home.

“When my heart was seamed with sorry, and I thought the sun could never shine again, My Church drew me to the Friend of all the weary and whispered to me the hope of another morning, eternal and tearless.

“When my steps have slipped and I have known the bitterness of sin, My Church has believed in me and wooingly she has called me back to live within the heights of myself.

“Now have come the children dearer to me than life itself, and My Church is helping me to train them for all joyous and clean and Christly living.

“My Church calls me to her heart. She asks my service and my loyalty. She has a right to ask for it! I will help her to do for others what she has done for me. In this place in which I live, I will help her keep aflame and aloft the torch of a living faith.”