

**Brief History of  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Floradale, Ontario  
1852 - 1955**

*This was written up for the celebration  
of the centennial on August 14, 1955,  
by the pastor, Rev. Frank Malinsky*

A little over 100 years ago the land on which Floradale and its surrounding community now flourishes, was virgin soil, bush and swamp. When it was opened for settlement, people rushed in to establish new homes. They were of Irish, Scottish, English and, primarily, of German descent. Most of them were anxious to secure farms for themselves, but it was natural that business establishments would follow. While settlers at first made their requirements in homespuns, shoes, utensils and implements by hand, there were other requirements, especially flour and tools, which had to be brought into the settlement from "below" (previously settled areas to the south). Many a long, weary and dangerous trip was made afoot, on horseback or with crude cart over difficult trails and crooked roads. What was more natural, then, that business would follow the settlers? Where streams could be harnessed for waterpower, mills were established and the mills were followed by other crafts such as weaving, tanning, shoemaking, blacksmithing, wagon making, masonry, carpentry and storekeeping. That is how the village of Floradale was born.

Being God-fearing and intelligent, the settlers soon began to build schools and churches. Providing schools readily became the care of the elected political leaders in the communities. The religious needs, baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials and public and private teaching, was first offered to the settlers by pastors of the various denominations in the "lower" settlements. Their efforts and sacrifices were rewarded when the religious elements in the settlements organized congregations and built churches. That is how Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church came into being.

The opening chapter in the history of this congregation, unfortunately, will have to remain veiled in mystery. In spite of careful investigation, there is one fact that remains firmly established, namely, that an organization existed in 1852. (So, Trinity is actually 103 years old). The records of the congregation contain one page on which the name of the congregation and a list of 14 baptisms occur. The list is dated "West Woolwich, December 31, 1852". It is signed by Carl Theodore Laurenson, Evangelical Lutheran pastor. A second page from 1852 records two deaths from the same year.

After this brief flickering of light in the beginning of Trinity's life, the records were either discontinued or were lost in the shuffle of preachers that followed Laurenson. There is no record as to when the first church was built, a structure built of logs in the familiar fashion of those days and vividly remembered by at least one of Trinity's present-day members. There are no records of ministerial acts from 1851-1859. The reason, no doubt, is that changes of pastorates were frequent and that services were irregular and unsatisfactory. The type of pastors may have been such as described in "Grace and Blessing", (page 11): "By what means many of the so called preachers who served Lutheran congregations from 1830-

1850 got into the ministry is difficult to understand. Many were deficient in morals and loose in character. There was not much about them that could be praised. It is a well-known fact that many who passed as preachers in America were ex-lawyers or ex-school teachers who became "impossible over there." They tried to make a "go" of it in the new settlements and believed that a try at the ministry would provide an easy living."

Frequent changes in pastorates were due also to difficult conditions under which pastors had to serve. Traveling was a real hardship. Qualified pastors were few and far between. The settlers were a mixture of Lutherans and Reformed, whose spiritual wants were by no means always identical. People were naturally preoccupied with wresting a livelihood from the virgin soil under primitive conditions requiring long hours of labour. Often prolonged illnesses interfered with church going. The life of the young congregation at Floradale was, no doubt, often at low ebb.

Because of unsatisfactory service on the part of the available pastors, the congregation looked around for help. Some of the members somehow heard of the fine work done by pastors of the Missouri synod in the southern part of the province, and contact was made with Pastors Roeder and Sprengler of Delhi and Pastor Ernst of Eden, N. Y. These men visited the settlement at "Musselmannstaedt!" (one of the early names of Flora or Floradale) and the result of the visit was that a candidate of theology from the seminary at St. Louis, Missouri, Herman W.H. Wichmann, was called. He was installed on April 29, 1860, by Pastor E. Roeder of Delhi, Ontario. That was the beginning of new life for Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Pastor Wichmann could not serve long. He became ill in 1862 and was taken to his eternal home after he left Floradale in 1863, but not before he had been called to Elmira where he organized St. Paul's congregation in 1861. Pastor J. Adam Ernst served the two congregations from 1863-1873. Under his pastorate two other congregations were added to the parish, Salem (now a part of Elora) and Linwood. For this reason, the parish was separated from Elmira. The next three pastors (C.F.W. Brandt, H. Schroeder and J. C. Borth) served Floradale, Salem and Linwood. Under the pastorate of Rev. Borth, a new church was built in 1880. After his departure in 1881, Floradale was served from Elmira again, by Rev. John Frosch until 1895.

From 1896-1913 another threesome of pastors (Robert Vorberg, Emil Reuter and Rudolf Eifert, Sr.), lived in Floradale and served Linwood. Salem was disbanded under Pastor Vorberg. The last class was confirmed there in 1896. Under the pastorate of the next gentleman, the Rev. Rudolf A Eifert, Jr. (1914-1918), the parish of Elmira and Floradale was re-established. Regular services in Linwood ceased. Pastor Arthur H. Gallmeier served from 1918-1929, and the present pastorate (Rev. Frank Malinsky) began in April 1929. The congregation owned a parsonage next to the church for many years. It was sold to one of the members in 1945.

The church has been redecorated a number of times. The organ is the third to have been used in the services. It was equipped with an electrically driven blower two years ago. The interior was remodeled about 30 years ago. There is a record of 656 baptisms and 326 confirmations. The present membership is 69 communicants.

Last year we tried our hand at writing the history of the congregations in the Ontario District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Because of the nature of the project and the limitation of space we did not mention by names, the many laymen in the various congregations who did outstanding work in the Kingdom. In writing the history of the individual congregation, one is tempted to mention names of laymen who have been prominent in the course of its history. We have resisted this temptation for the reason that feelings are easily hurt. True greatness is not always recognized. It would hurt relatives and friends if one failed to mention the names of men and women because time has blanketed their names or their retiring nature kept them out of the limelight. Human beings may not always have been impressed by them, but God may have given them a prominent place in His book of remembrance because of their love and loyalty, the fervency of their prayers and the effectiveness of their testimony in the circle in which they moved. Suffice it is to say, that Trinity never lacked the love and loyalty for the church which, under God, made it possible for her to celebrate this anniversary.

While names will not be mentioned, it will be interesting to note that records show many names which reappear in the records of other congregations, such as the names of families who many years ago, moved to Carrick Township, Huron County and of those who in the "eighties" moved out west and those who in later years moved to Kitchener, Toronto and other large cities in the pursuit of work and of their professions. Based on conversations with various men and women well stricken with years, one still living, remembers the old log church; another, still living, remembers going to Trinity Sunday School as a little toddler; another, now departed, remembers handling the brick that went into the building of this present church in 1880; and another, also deceased, remembered that she and her husband often supplied the pastors with grain and hay for their horses, gratis. Others remember large families coming to church in huge sleighs or lumbering wagons and being in church regularly and on time. One, still living, tells of weddings and funerals delayed by the severity of snowstorms and impossible road conditions.

The register of births and confirmations shows that up to the year 1910, the Trinity congregation grew in a steady and healthy manner. Gradually, a change set in. The drift to the cities gained momentum. More and more of the farms were sold to non-Lutherans whose spiritual wants were supplied by their own organizations. Even business in the community was gradually going into the hands of non-Lutherans and so the membership dwindled by reason of fewer families available. Fortunately, a number of young families are supplying the congregation with new life and hope. What the future holds for Trinity is locked up in the treasure chest of God's knowledge. The thing for us to resolve on this occasion is to emulate the example and loyalty of those who in the past have laboured and sacrificed in order to leave us the heritage which we now enjoy. Let us try our best to use the talents we have, so as to hold and, with God's blessing, to extend the Kingdom of our Lord.

Besides the names on the present day roster of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, there are a surprising number of people who were served with Word and the Sacraments in the course of 103 years. You will possibly recognize a few. Here are their names –

Ahrence	Allemang	Allgeier	Atkinson	Augustin
Axt	Baetz or Betz	Baier or Beyer	Bailor	Bergman
Betzler	Bethke	Bird	Borth	Bowman
Braun	Breithaupt	Bretznow	Burr	Burrow or Buhrow
Campbell	Christman	Cole	Craemer	Dahmer
Eisenbach	Eix	Ernst	Fenton	Ferg
Foerster	Frommheld	Fry	Gabel	Gabriel
Gagstetter	Gallnick	Geib	Good	Grimm
Haeberle	Hahn	Halling	Hass	Hast
Heimbecher	Herr	Hertlein	Hoffman	Holzwarth
Huth	Kane	Keetley	Keller	Kermel
Ketzel	Kirchner	Knipfel	Koch	Koerber
Koopman	Korell	Kovel	Kovsky	Klifoth
Kreuther	Kreutziger	Kroeller	Kuechler	Lackebauer
Landes	Lasch	Lauer	Lauman	Leis
Louis	Ludwig	Luedeman	Manto	Maurer
McWhinney	Michel	Michelmichel	Muelhaus	Neckert or Noecker
Neuert	Norris	Oplaender	Orth	Oswald
Ott	Otterbein	Pfilzinger	Pflaum	Querin
Rahn	Reger	Reichert	Reis, Ries or Rice	Reist
Remus	Rhadall	Riedel	Riegelmann	Rominger
Rueggle	Ruppel	Sattler	Schade	Schedewitz
Scheifele	Scherr or Scherer	Schlegel	Schlotzhauer	Schmidt
Schoenheit	Schollen	Schuetz	Schultz	Schumacher
Seitz	Seitzinger	Slimmon	Snyder	Sohn
Spencer	Stahlbaum	Stange	Stier	Stroh
Stumpf	Theger	Umbach	Voelker	Vollweiler
Wagner	Weber	Wehnes	Weichel	Weidenhammer
Weismiller	Weltz	Wenzel	Wettlaufer	Wilken
Wille	Witter	Ziegler	Zilliax	Lorch
Giess	Scheuerman			

**SOLI DEO GLORIA!**

## 125th Anniversary Celebration

*The following paragraphs are excerpts from the bulletin printed for the 125th anniversary of Trinity Lutheran Church held on May 25, 1980.*

*They were written by Edna Ritter for inclusion in an Ontario District publication of the District Centennial in 1979*

“Under the guidance of the Reverend J.C. Borth, a new church building was erected in 1880. The old building, a log structure, was dismantled and a new brick structure was erected on the same site. At the time of the building, the congregation held worship services in the Mennonite church north of the village.

The adjoining cemetery contains some very old grave markers dating back to 1860. It is recalled that some of the earlier markers were of wood. Time and weather have decayed them leaving many unmarked graves. The cemetery continues in use to the present time and meets all the current government regulations for the operation of such a burial place.

Improvements to the building have been made over the years, including such things as redecorating, installing electricity, oil heating, carpeting and new front doors to improve the entrance of the church. In 1962 or 1963, the exterior of the church was refinished with red “quick brick” stucco. At the same time, new windows were installed. The Sunday school room was enlarged and redecorated in 1975. For the current celebrations more touching up has been carried out both inside and out.

The minutes of the annual meetings are all recorded and remain intact with the congregation. They were written in the German language from 1860-1933 when English was first used.”

## Nostalgic Pages From The Past

*The notations following are drawn from the official record books and minutes of the congregation. They are recorded because of their importance, their interest, for their historical significance or because of the names mentioned.*

**1852** – The oldest page of the record book headed, “Tauf-Register fur Die Lutsr. Gemeinde zu West-Woolwich in Jahre 1852.” This is followed by 14 entries recording the baptisms of Dorothea Hahn, Bernerd Kroller, Maria Hast, Daniel and Christian Esch, Salmea Gros, Catharina Oswald, Barbara Gros, Henrich Schollen, Eva Braun, Johann Ott, Juliana Birl, Johanna Esch, Pauline Lorch and Peter Geib. On another page is recorded 2 deaths in 1852; Maria Durst, wife of Carl Lorch and Adam Ott, son of Adam Ott and his wife, Catharine Oswald. Both pages are signed by C. T. Laurensen.

**November 20, 1860** – Lewis Haeberle sold to trustees Jacob Borth and Valentine Esch, one acre of land for \$50 for a preacher’s dwelling, a meeting house and a burial ground.

**1861** – A freewill offering will be received to build a parsonage. Size 30’ by 26’, 1½ storey. Building committee is Jacob Esch, John Israel and Jacob Keller.

Floradale is called Leon at this time. It was also called Flora before taking the name of Floradale about 1865. Since the Salem congregation had no cemetery, they asked permission to bury in Trinity’s cemetery. Permission was granted but only if buried by our pastor or another Lutheran pastor.

**1864** – Pastor Ernst is serving Floradale and Elmira. Confirmation will alternate between the two churches.

**1879** – Under Rev. J.C. Borth, voted to build a new church building.

**1880** – Church built. Cornerstone laid June 13th, 1880 and dedication on November 7, 1880. Because painting was not finished, it was decided to have another service later. This took place on July 31, 1881. A detailed account of the building together with a list of donations is contained in the secretary’s book for 1885, written by Karl Soehner. Entire cost of the church and school was \$1159.41.

**1888** – New church organ costing \$185 was installed. Rev. Solomon B. Eix of Wallace Township (Kurtzville) took the service for dedication.

**1891** – Wood was \$2.80 per cord. Grave opening was \$1.25

**1904** – Moved that the buggy (property of the congregation) be painted. Amos Eby asked the members how much oats and hay they will donate to feed the horse for the pastor for the coming year, (horse also owned by the church.)

**1912** – Rev. Eifert Sr. did the caretaking at \$20 per year.

**June 17, 1916** – Emanuel Bowman sold to trustees George Class, Louis Schutz and Henry Schmidt, 1/3 acre of land for \$32 for an addition to the cemetery.

**1918**– Members are doing the caretaking.

**1922** – Souls 134; Communicant members 97; Sunday School 36; Baptized 3; Confirmed 10; Marriages 1; Burials 4.

**1930** – Church to be painted. 50th anniversary celebrated on October 5, 1930 (of building) and 75th anniversary of the organization of the congregation.

**1934** – First minutes recorded entirely in English. Receipts for 1933 were \$775.24 and expenses were \$743.74.

**1935** – A hearty vote of thanks was given by the congregation to Emanuel Soehner for the donation of collection plates. It was moved by Ananias Grosz, seconded by Emanuel Soehner, that we buy 6 new English hymn books.

**June 7, 1936, (special meeting)** – A special meeting was called to further discuss the installation of electric lights. It was moved by Emanuel Soehner, seconded by Albert Ritter, that if the congregation votes that the electric lights be installed, the money be raised by a special drive. On a motion by Ananias Grosz and seconded by Emanuel Soehner, the congregation voted by ballot on the “light question.” Nine voted in favour and 2 opposed, so the motion carried. A committee of three, Edgar Schmehl, Emanuel Soehner and Dan Bowman were appointed to canvas the congregation to find out how much money would be collected for this purpose.

**1936** – Edgar Schmehl and Norman Hoffer receive tenders and see that the lights are installed.

**1939** – The treasurer is authorized to purchase a complete set of envelopes for contributions for each communicant member.

**1942** – Regarding grave digging, the removing of surplus ground shall not be done for less than a charge of \$1. Moved by Ananias Grosz and seconded by Israel Lichty that the board approach the young men for hire for the pumping of the old organ.

**1943** – Moved by Milton Glebe and seconded by Ananias Grosz that the board experiment with 100 lbs of Alberta coal. Moved by George Mattusch and seconded by Israel Lichty that the organ be moved into the gallery and give it a trial for the pumpers. Moved by George Class and seconded by Ananias Grosz that the school bell be donated to St. Paul’s school, Elmira.

**1945** – Moved by Arthur Musselman and seconded by Albert Ritter that the board purchase a new and larger lawnmower. Moved by Israel Lichty and George Mattusch that the matter of buying new hymnals be presented to the congregation.

**1946** – Moved by Israel Lichty and seconded by Ananias Grosz that the board pay the pension of the minister which is 4% of his salary.

**March 3, 1946 (special meeting)** – Moved by Israel Lichty and seconded by Eph. Musselman that George Class be chairman. Moved by Eph. Musselman and seconded by Art Musselman that the parsonage and lot be disposed of in a legal manner. The motion carried, unanimously.

**June 30, 1946 (special meeting)** – Moved by C.H. Soehner and seconded by George Mattusch, that the parsonage is to be sold by public auction, subject to a reserve bid. Ballots were drawn to determine what the reserve bid should be and 15 ballots averaged out to \$2110. This was to guide the trustees what the voters of the congregation thought the property was worth. Sale to be July 12, 1946 at 8pm, terms 20% cash and balance in 30 days. Final price was \$2725 from Edgar Esch.

**1948** - Moved by C.H. Soehner and seconded by Ananias Grosz that the board act as a committee to translate the constitution and our pastor arrange a meeting for the same. The board was quite satisfied to have Edgar Esch continue on as caretaker at the present salary of \$75 annually. Moved by George Mattusch and seconded by George Class that the insurance on the building be raised to \$3000 and the contents at \$800. Also, the woodshed was to be insured at \$100 and the contents at \$50. Moved by George Mattusch and seconded by C.H. Soehner that a special offering for the building fund be held in June.

**March 26, 1948 (special meeting)** – About 45 minutes were spent in the study of a translation of the constitution of the congregation. It was decided that similar studies were to be conducted in subsequent meetings.

**January 2, 1949** – Fred Mueller and Edgar Esch were accepted as voting members. It was understood that we have a special building fund drive sometime in June, 1949.

**1950** – Moved that we charge \$15 for a cemetery plot for anyone who has not contributed to the church in 5 years. Grave digging is \$10 and \$5 more for a vault. Moved by Fred Mueller and seconded by Eph. Musselman that something be done about the benches!

**1951** – An organ pumping device will be looked into. Our congregation supports K-W Hospital for the furnishing of a chapel for daily services.

**1952** – Services on alternate Sundays.

**1953** – Edgar Esch is still caretaker at \$75. Secretary-Treasurer C.H. Soehner stated that the church enjoyed the best year ever in 1952. A total of \$2757.14 had been raised.

**1954** – The interior of the church was painted for \$455.

**1955** – A committee was appointed of Rev. Frank Malinsky, George Class, Ananias Grosz, Fred Mueller and Alfred Ritter to recognize our congregation's 100th anniversary.

**1957** – Ceiling paint had flaked off so it was repainted and the windows were refrosted.

**1958** – Mission goal was \$900.



**1959** – A new oil heating system was installed by Boehmers for \$1289.

**1960** – On a motion by C.H. Soehner and seconded by Ananias Grosz that we establish a cemetery fund for perpetual care as requested by the Department of Health.

**January 8, 1961** – A motion to remove the partitions between the pews in the centre.

**1962** – Outside of the church was refinished in “quick brick” stucco by J.E. Spears of Guelph for \$1500. New windows were installed by Bowman Wood Products for \$303. This was paid for from Emma Class legacy. A new roof was put on by Christian Weber for \$323.10.

**January 21, 1963** – Pastor Frank Malinsky retires from the full time ministry but promises to care for the congregation until another pastor is called.

**March 5, 1964 (special meeting)** – Motion by Fred Mueller and seconded by Roy Israel that this congregation is not in favour of the establishment of a Lutheran Church – Canada, independent of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Motion was lost 6-2 with one spoiled ballot.

**1966** – Pastor Malinsky is still caring for the congregation and it was decided by all present to ask him to carry on for another year. New front doors installed on the church by C.L. Martin for \$193.55.

**1967** – Treasurer Roy Israel reported \$10,740.17 in the Building and Repair Fund. It was decided to build a new cemetery driveway on west side from this fund. It was decided to sell the old wood stove to the highest bidder.

**1968** – Mrs. Laura (Soehner) Geisler retired as organist. Lorina Mueller becomes new organist.

**1970** – All non-members to pay \$100 for a single cemetery lot. Clarence Ritter is now caretaker of the church and cemetery at a salary of \$225.

**1972** – Pastor Malinsky announced that he would step down as pastor of the congregation at the end of August, which would mark 60 years in the ministry. William Ritter was elected elder to replace Ananias Grosz who had served as elder since 1930. There was a triple baptism at Trinity – Jamie Israel (son of Carl and Carolyn Israel); Wanda Israel (daughter of Frank and Carol Israel) and Jeffrey Israel (son of Paul and Janice Israel).

**January 5, 1973** – Arrangements are made with Rev. Ronald Reisdorf and the St. Paul’s, Elmira congregation to use the services of Rev. Reisdorf. The costs will be shared on a proportionate basis and services will be held weekly.

**1973** – It was decided that a new constitution should be drawn up since the old one was still written in German. Carpet was installed on the church floor and the Sunday school room was paneled and cupboards installed.

**1974** – The constitution was rewritten.

**1975** – The new constitution was adopted at the annual meeting. More improvements were made as the gallery floor was leveled. The Sunday school room was enlarged with a built in washroom. Water pipes were laid from the old parsonage and a payment of \$25 yearly is to be made to Amos Weber for the water. Mrs. Freda Reisdorf (pastor's wife) becomes organist. Carl Israel becomes congregational chairman after the death of his father, Roy Israel.

**1977** – Paul Wagner becomes groundskeeper, Pastor Reisdorf indicates that he is taking a new call and will be leaving his joint charge. Rev. Mervin Huras is the new pastor.

**1978** – A storage shed was built at the rear of the building to enclose the oil tank and to store the lawn mower. New front steps and a sidewalk are built. Mrs. Archie (Patricia) Israel becomes the first female voting member. Valerie Snider is now the organist. Trinity was the recipient of altar cloths from a congregation in Chatham who had purchased new ones. Trinity donated the organ to a congregation in Howick Township. Archie and Frank Israel took over as groundskeepers from Paul Wagner.

**1979** – As part of Ontario District centennial celebrations, Trinity receives a plaque from the District for having been one of the original charter members. Plans are being made to celebrate 125 years as an organized congregation in 1980. The Malinsky Scholarship Fund is established at St. Paul's, Elmira, with Trinity participating jointly. Paul Ritter takes over as treasurer of the congregation.

**May 25, 1980** – The congregation celebrates its 125th anniversary with the Rev. Dr. Albin Stanfel, president of the Ontario District, as guest speaker.

God moved members, former members and friends to donate a variety of gifts to the congregation in honour of the celebrations. Some were memorials; others were specified gifts and also gifts of money were given to help with expenses in connection with the celebration. A new set of red hymnals was purchased, a new, clergy side chair and 2 chairs for the entrance were purchased. An oak lectern was given, as was a pulpit Bible, pastor's liturgy book and a memorial book to record the gifts and memorials.

Projects carried out from the general anniversary fund included re-silvering the communion ware, new fall flower arrangements, re-upholstering the communion kneeling bench and the electronic organ was cleaned and repaired.

Touch up painting was done to the pews, interior and exterior of the church and the front doors were sanded and re-stained. The entranceway was wallpapered and painted and new flower beds were made.

The specified gifts included – a used electronic organ was gifted, a new sign and signpost was purchased, a church anniversary banner was made by some members of the Sunday school, the altar brassware was refinished, a new, spring silk flower arrangement was purchased, a Canadian flag and Christian flag were received from St. Paul's, Elmira, red altar cloth and pulpit and lectern cloths were purchased and two guest register books and a pen.

Members of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church also donated \$125 each to Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Catharines and to the Ontario District for mission projects in honour of the occasion.

**1981** – The anniversary fund residue was used to purchase a ceiling fan, materials for a book display case and for a cabinet to store the altar cloths.

**1982** – Carolyn Israel becomes organist. The average attendance for 49 regular services is 33. A winter silk flower arrangement was purchased. A portion of the funds from the Perceda Hoffer estate was used to purchase 2 new, oak flower stands. A letter was sent out to all members indicating the concern of declining finances.

**1983** – Arthur Ritter retires after 15 years of service as secretary for the church board, however, he still looks after cemetery information. Rosemeri Ritter becomes congregational secretary. On a motion at the annual meeting, we began the practice of singing hymn #441 (We Give Thee but Thine Own) at the time of collection. A gift of a telex cassette copier and tape eraser was given to St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Elmira for their 125th anniversary from Trinity. A new roof was also put on the church.

**1984** – Former pastor, Dr. Frank Malinsky, died at the age of 94. Aluminum soffits, fascia, etc., were completed on the exterior of the church building. Two windows were installed in the Sunday school room. It was suggested by the Ontario government to include cremation plots in our cemetery sites. It was decided to designate these plots and a new cemetery fee schedule was approved at this time also.

**1985** – Oak communion rail made by Arthur Ritter was installed at the front of the church. Cheryl Huras (daughter of Pastor Huras), takes over as caretaker of the church.

**1987** – Rosemeri Ritter and daughters take over as caretakers. A central vacuum cleaning system is installed. A new riding lawn mower is purchased. Communion ware is re-silvered.

**1988** – In May, Arthur Ritter attends the constituting convention of the Lutheran Church – Canada in Winnipeg and Trinity is received into membership of the LCC at this time. The congregation also participated for the first time in the Church Extension Fund. This fund is used to help finance other congregational projects within the district.

The railing in front of the first centre pew was removed, having been in place for many, many years. The interior of the church was painted, the front doors on the church were recovered with aluminum and new red carpeting was installed as improvement projects.

On November 27, 1988, the congregation celebrated fifty years of the existence and social work of the Trinity Ladies Sewing Circle. The following comments are from the bulletin at this service –

“The sewing circle was originally organized in 1938 under the name of the Floradale sewing circle. No doubt this represented the fact that almost from the beginning, non-Lutherans also took part.

At first, the circle met twice monthly and elected officers each year. More recently the meetings were much less frequent and the officers were elected for two year periods. The circle also used the name of “Ladies' Aid” at times and in 1949 they also joined the Lutheran Women's Missionary League.

Over the years, good minutes and financial records have been kept. There are some gaps, but by and large one could write a full story of the circle from these books.

Of course much fellowship was gained from the circle meetings, but there were also other purposes to the circle. They made money! Some of this was used to purchase memorial wreaths, some for sick and shut-in flowers and cards, and some for Christmas gifts for pastors. However, much of the proceeds of their work went into mission projects. The list is not all-inclusive, but over the years the group has given to worthy projects such as: Finnish relief, the Red Cross, Sick Children's Hospital, the Sunshine Home, the Lutheran Hour, special offerings to Synod, the CNIB, the Mentally Handicapped, Cancer Fund, Bible Society, Lutherwood, World Relief, Medical Missions, the Deaf Institute, Reid Woods Home, Concordia Seminary and the Braille Workers. In addition, they have also regularly contributed to the mission fund of the church as well as purchasing specific items for Trinity church and contributing to its general fund.

As is most often the case in Christian Churches, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran can be thankful that a women's group has existed for more than 50 years. We thank and praise God as we remember those who were responsible for this group in the early years and for those who have maintained it to this day."

While this celebration recognized the achievements of the women of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, due to changing social times with more women working away from home and with such a small congregational base, in fact, the 1980's marked the end of the ladies' sewing circle group.

**1989** – Rev. Mervin Huras preached his farewell sermon the last Sunday of January. We were very grateful for the assistance of supply pastors from then until September, when our new pastor, Richard Frey, was installed. In the spring, John Otto and family were our guests, speaking on Canadian Lutheran World Relief. Everyone enjoyed the presentation of slides and a generous gift of money was given towards this cause.

**May 27, 1990** – The 135th anniversary was celebrated. Rev. Robert Morley was guest speaker. A pot luck dinner followed the service in the Sunday school room. Our anniversary projects included purchasing 2 banners for the interior walls and a gift of money was given to Christ Elementary School. At this celebration, our congregation also presented Frieda Fink with a gift to recognize her many years of secretarial service to Trinity and St. Paul's, Elmira. The time of the morning service changed to 9:15am in May, 1990.

**1991** – The Sunday school picnic, after many years of being held at the Moorefield Community Park, changed its location to the Percy Soehner cottage outside of Floradale. Carl Mueller initiated discussion about the uncomfortable, straight backed, hard pews. A new sign and sign post were erected at the front, right corner of the church.

In December, Pastor Mervin Huras died and his wish had been to be buried at Floradale. He and his wife Barbara had been given cemetery lots as farewell gifts when he had left as Trinity's pastor in 1989.

**1992** -The first advent wreath is purchased to be used at Christmas time this year.

**1993** – The mission goal exceeds \$6000. The communion ware is repaired and re-silvered. In October, all monies in the cemetery's perpetual care fund left our treasurer's hands to be established as a newly named Care and Maintenance fund now in the hands of the provincial government. The brassware is refinished. The cemetery policy and rates are revised. In June, Horst and Eugenie Schultz brought their message about Lutheran Bible Translators and their work in Papua, New Guinea.

"It is planned to have an open meeting, possibly on a Sunday morning after church, when we can get input from the younger members as well as the older ones, about the future of our church."

**1994** – On the 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month following the service, the pastor opened an informal discussion in regards to his message and received questions. This was discontinued in 1995.

The last burials to be conducted from Trinity's building took place in 1994, with Arthur Musselman being called to his heavenly rest in early January and his wife, Edna, following him to meet her Lord in late February. Other members, who died in subsequent years, were given Christian burial from St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Elmira.

**1995** – Average attendance is 20.7 at regular services.

**1996** – In June a new cemetery policy and new fees are put in place.

**1997** – There was discussion by members regarding having the option of the common cup or individual cups for communion, due in part to the concern regarding the arrival of newly infectious diseases such as AIDS.

A new individual cup, communion set is purchased and donated to the congregation by a couple from the congregation. A new fence is installed to enclose the cemetery area.

**1998** - The treasurer, Paul Ritter, notes that the mission givings are taking a definite downturn. Average attendance for regular services is 17.2. A committee was established to meet and answer the question "Future of Trinity –What is it?"

On August 8, 1998, after many years with no marriages, David W. Ritter married Jennifer A. Young. This was the last wedding to take place at Trinity Lutheran Church, Floradale. Not even two months earlier, on June 21, 1998, Jennifer, the bride to be, was confirmed, becoming the last person to be confirmed at Trinity.

**1999** – Caretaking is now shared among members and families taking turns for the summer months, while the Paul Ritter family cleans over the winters. The annual picnic moves to the home of Carl and Charlotte Mueller. A new lawn trimmer is purchased to help in maintaining the cemetery grounds. Trinity members participated with other local Mennonite churches in the Foodgrains project held in the immediate Floradale area. Money raised is used to help disadvantaged people in other areas.

**2001** – At the annual Christmas social, food items were collected to be given to the Woolwich Community Services Christmas drive in Elmira. Arthur Ritter was called out of this life and unto his Lord

on December 20, 2001 at the age of 66, becoming the last death in the congregation's history. Not four weeks earlier, Edna Ritter, Arthur's mother, was also called to her eternal home.

**2002** – In February, Bible studies were begun. Average attendance at regular services is 16.3.

**2003** – A joint Christmas Day service was held at Trinity with St. Paul's members present. It was very successful with a very good attendance.

**2004** – Annual meeting report dated March 12, 2004, "the conversation then returned to the topic of the future of our congregation. Paul Ritter indicated that he did not like to see the resources depleted just to keep the church going. It was also commented that everyone seems hesitant to be the one to make the initial motion to close the church. Pastor Frey mentioned that in 2005, we would celebrate our 150th anniversary and maybe that could be combined with closing 'by going out with a bang.' The general feeling, more than in the past, is that the days are numbered at Floradale. It was decided to hold a full congregational meeting on a Sunday morning after Easter to discuss the feelings of everyone about the future of the congregation and the building."

**April 25, 2004 (special meeting)** – A congregational meeting was held after church service to determine if the general feeling of the members was that the time had come to consider whether Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church should continue, or disband and close the doors. It was noted that our income has not kept up with expenses in the past two years, we have a very small group of volunteers, the furnace is very old and may need replacing and we are not easily able to meet the needs of the families in the congregation with young children.

The conversation turned to the topic of the cemetery and various options were discussed that might work regarding the cemetery.

A motion was made by Archie Israel and seconded by Frank Israel, "that the time has come to close Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church." A vote by ballot was taken and the outcome was 14-1 in favour of closure.

Due to the length of the meeting it was decided to continue the discussions about the final service and closing date at a later time after we had time to adjust to this monumental decision about closing the church.

**May 9, 2004** – Double baptism of Chase D. Ritter, son of David and Jennifer Ritter, and Danika M. Atkinson, daughter of Kelly (nee Ritter) and Jeffrey Atkinson.

**June 6, 2004** – Baptism of Carlee N. Mueller, daughter of Frances Mueller and granddaughter of Carl and Charlotte Mueller. This was the last baptism to take place at Trinity Lutheran Church, Floradale.

**June 27, 2004 (special meeting)** – A meeting was held after church service to decide on the closing date and final service. Carl Israel read some comments from a communication he had received from the District office regarding the closing of a church. It mentioned that a closing can be an emotionally

involved and saddening event, but that we should focus on giving God thanks for the many years of active congregational life. There was a lot of discussion about topics related to the closing of the church.

Paul Ritter made the following motion - "that the church related contents be donated to a mission church or a church within our district." The motion was seconded by Carolyn Israel and the motion carried.

After more discussion on the final closing date, the following motion was made by Ken Girling and seconded by Archie Israel, "that the final service/closing date of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church is on October 17, 2004." The motion carried.

**July 4, 2004** – Final church picnic at the home of Carl and Charlotte Mueller.

**July 30, 2004** – A meeting was held by the executive - Carl Israel, Paul Ritter, and Rosemeri Ritter and they were joined by Archie and Patricia Israel and Carolyn Israel. The purpose was to try and bring forth concise options with regard to the final service to take back to the congregation. Discussion was about the time of service, guest pastor, bulletins, special music, and committees for historical information, food, photographs and memorabilia and decorating. Lists of articles were drawn up to be offered first, to St. Paul's, Elmira and then to the District. There was further discussion about demolition costs for the dismantling of the building. There was also brief discussion about the cemetery and it was decided that another meeting was necessary to come up with concrete budgetary figures in order to approach St. Paul's to see if they would be interested in taking over the cemetery.

**August 5, 2004** – Another meeting was held by the same group as above to review the current cemetery pricing policy and come up with budgetary figures about the cost of operating the cemetery. There was discussion about setting up an endowment fund that would accompany the ownership of the cemetery. The possibility of also donating an amount of about \$7,122.54 from the cemetery fund was discussed.

**August 22, 2004 (special meeting)** – A meeting was held after church to bring forth the recommendations made by the executive committee to the membership. The following motions were made and approved by the membership –

Moved by Paul Ritter and seconded by Patricia Israel, "that the final service on October 17, 2004, be held at 9:15am and include communion."

Moved by Archie Israel and seconded by Frank Israel, "that Pastor Frey lead the service, and be assisted by the District president, Pastor Maleske, as determined between the two of them."

Paul Ritter clarified his motion about sacramental items – "to donate sacramental items to a mission or church within the District, but that St. Paul's, Elmira (as a church within our District) have first dibs on claiming any articles that they desired."

Moved by Archie Israel and seconded by Frank Israel, "that we get another bid on demolishing the building."

Moved by Paul Ritter and seconded by Patricia Israel, “that the following offer be presented to St. Paul’s, Elmira, - budgetary figures on income/operating costs for the cemetery; an endowment fund to be established with a goal of \$35,000; several people from Trinity will sit on the cemetery board with St. Paul’s to assist; the current Trinity cemetery fund of about \$7,123 (at Bank of Montreal) is to be donated to St. Paul’s also.”

The membership also approved of the executive’s decisions about the bulletins, special music, historical, photograph & memorabilia and decorating committees. It was also decided at this meeting that any non-sacramental items of the church be open to active members through a silent auction/bid tender box procedure. This bid process is to be open from September 5th to October 10, 2004. The cemetery committee representatives from Trinity are to be Carl Israel, Paul and Rosemeri Ritter and Archie and Patricia Israel.

**September 1, 2004** – Representatives of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Elmira and Trinity reviewed the sacramental articles that were available to them. St. Paul’s accepted the following – 2 banners, 2 flower stands, green and white pastor’s stoles, old German style hymn board, hymn books and pew Bibles, large picture in the gallery, lectern and lamp, wooden chair in pastor’s room, old wooden crucifix, old wooden collection plates and green velvet collection plates, pastor’s chair, receiving plate for collections and the shepherd’s staffs from Sunday School programs.

A proposal was made to representatives of St. Paul’s about taking over the cemetery. They will have to review the information and give an answer at a later date after they review the information.

The following articles were accepted by the District later the same week – altar and pulpit, altar cloths, baptismal font, brass bookstand, candle ware and cross, brass collection plates and brass flower vases, candle snuffer, 55-cup coffee perk, communion kneeling bench, communion rail, common cup communion set, the individual communion cup set is to go to a mission church, 2 flags, lectern stand in entranceway, lectionary book, pigeonhole mailbox, organ and bench, pews (whatever is left after members have the option to purchase), side chair, wooden tables and stacking chairs and the coat rack in entranceway.

Old records, certificates and photographs and old books will go to archives at St. Paul’s or the District office.



## In Summary

While the preceding statistical type of information outlines specific events, everyone who has ever set foot inside the doors of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church will take away his own feelings and memories of the experience. Whether one attended a baptismal service, a wedding, a confirmation, a funeral, an evening candlelit children's Christmas program or whether the pastor's sermon held special meaning on a certain occasion, each of our hearts has been touched in an individual way and that will linger forever.

As well, a lot has been said about the building. We all know that behind every charge there are dedicated and committed people. Our congregation walked quietly and humbly with God in the community. We worshipped in the format of regular and special Sunday services, Sunday school instruction for the children, picnics, socials and Bible study.

To the best of our ability using the generous bequests and weekly offerings, we have contributed over \$158,000 in the past 24 years alone to funds and projects including:

Canadian Lutheran World Relief	Church Extension Fund
Christ Lutheran School	Concordia Theological Seminary
Elmira & District Association for Community Living	Lutheran Church Mission Work
Lutheran Laymen's League	Lutherwood
Malinsky Scholarship Fund – St. Paul's, Elmira	Mary's Place – Kitchener – Christmas project
Ontario District – seed money	Woolwich Community Services – Elmira – Christmas project
Lutheran Hour	Braille Workers Fund – St. Paul's, Elmira

As we travelled through more than 150 years of recordings to present this summary, our response could only be, "How good God has been to us!" Not every congregation attains such a landmark, but by the grace of God, we have.

The gospel of salvation has been faithfully proclaimed by ministers and laypersons of the congregation to our forefathers, and through our forefathers to us. Thus we are the beneficiaries of many, many years of God's grace provided by our heavenly Father that we might always believe in His name.

**Historical Committee – Patricia Israel and Rosemeri Ritter  
October 17, 2004.**

## Membership List - October 17, 2004

Archibald, Gladys	Atkinson, Kelly, Danika	Bolender, Ed
Bolender, Gladys	Bolender, James and Marion	Card, Patricia
Fach, William and Pearl	Girling, Jeffrey	Girling, Ken and Kathryn
Girling, Karrylynn	Israel, Archie and Patricia	Israel, Carl and Carolyn
Israel, Frank and Carol	Israel, Janice	Israel, Jeffrey
Israel, Mark	Israel, Paul	Israel, Reta
Israel, Wanda	Knight, Betty	Mayberry, Heather, Tyler
McTavish, David and Dianne	McTavish, Douglas	McTavish, Ron and Bernice
McTavish, Shelley	McTavish, Tracey	Mueller, Carl
Mueller, Frances, Carlee	Mueller, Darrin	Musselman, Earl
Noonan, Barbara	Ritter, David and Jennifer, Jade, Chase	Ritter, Paul and Rosemeri
Ritter, William	Utter, Pat	Israel, Charity

## Officers and Other Servants of the Lord - 2004

- Chairman – Carl Israel (1975-2004)
- Treasurer – Paul Ritter (1980-2004)
- Secretary – Rosemeri Ritter (1983-2004)
- Organist – Carolyn Israel (1982-2004)
- Groundskeepers – Frank and Archie Israel (1978 – 2004)
- Elders – Archie Israel, Carl Mueller, Frank Israel
- Trustees – Ken Girling, Patricia Israel and William Ritter
- Auditors – Bernice McTavish and Carolyn Israel

## Pastors of Trinity Lutheran Church

1860 – 1863 Herman W. H. Wichmann  
1863 – 1873 Johann Adam Ernst  
1873 – 1877 C. F. W. Brandt  
1877 – 1878 H. Schroeder  
1878 – 1881 J. C. Borth  
1882 – 1895 John Frosch  
1895 – 1903 Robert Vorberg  
1903 – 1906 Emil Reuter  
1906 – 1914 Reinhard Eifert  
1914 – 1918 Rudolf A. Eifert  
1918 – 1929 Arthur H. Gallmeier  
1929 – 1972 Frank Malinsky  
1972 – 1977 Ronald Reisdorf  
1977 – 1989 Mervin D. Huras  
1989 – 2004 Richard A. Frey