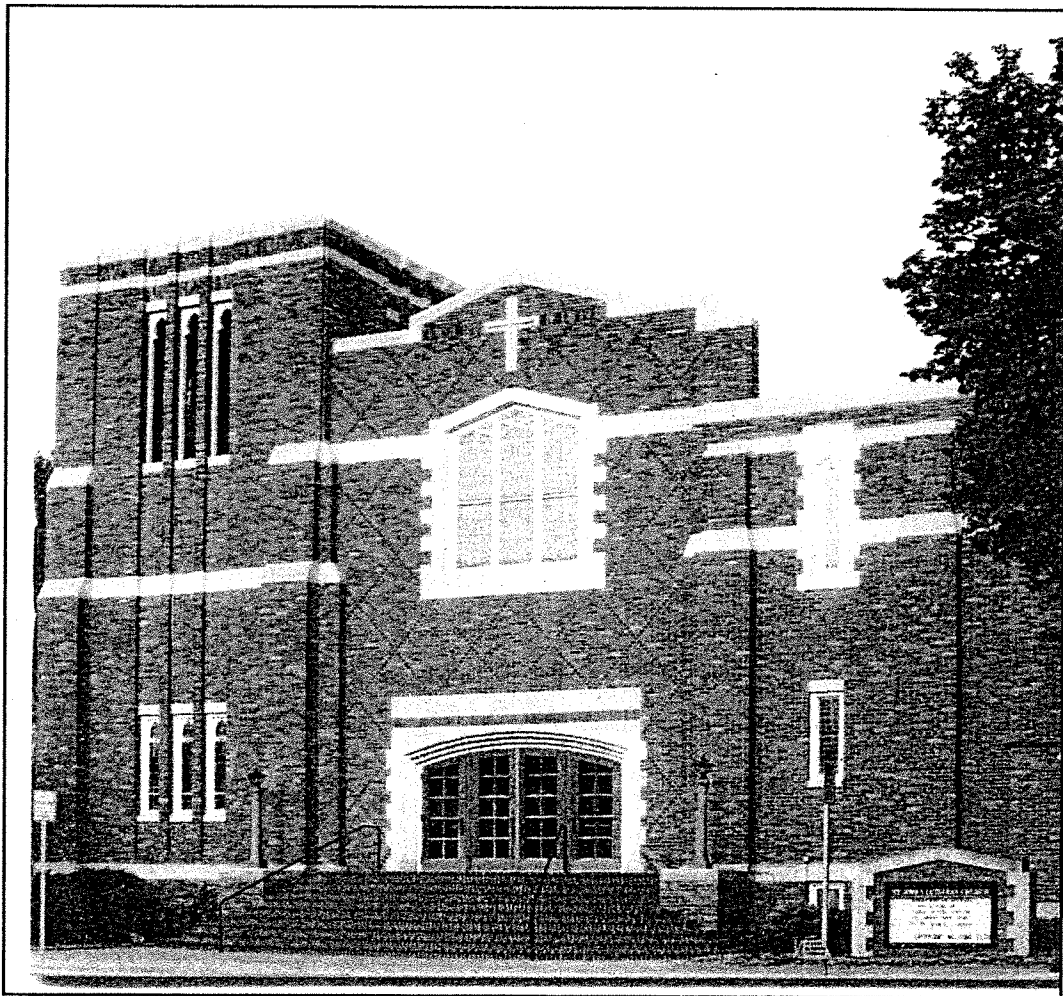


*St. John's Lutheran Church
Pastors' Responses to
Jamestown's 125 Celebration
June 29, 2008 – July 5, 2008*



*“For where two or three are gathered in my name,
There am I in the midst of them.”*

Matthew 18:20



Rev. James Keller
1960—1965 Senior Pastor
1953—1960 Associate Pastor

My father accepted the call to St. John's in 1921. He was called because he spoke both German and English with the hope of the church becoming an English parish. He served for 39 years and

was primarily responsible for the building of Jamestown Hospital, Crippled Children's Home, Dakota Nursing Home, and initially was involved with the creation of the Good Samaritan Society and not least of all the Lutheran Hospital and Home's Society which operated hospitals, in small communities, throughout the Midwest.

I returned to my home parish of St. John's in 1953 to be Assistant Pastor. This was the time of the post-World War II baby boom. We had 500 Sunday School children, 450 in Bible School, plus satellite Bible Schools in Millerton and Eldridge. Also, had the confirmation classes of 60 kids meeting every Saturday morning for 2 hours for 2 years. That is why I lost my hair at such a young age. At that time we also were serving the Millerton Church which is now at the Frontier Village. It was obvious we needed more classrooms so we proposed building a parish hall/chapel addition. Many members believed in pay as you go and were against it so we had a choice of building half or all. The vote was for all and the pastors were accused of rigging the vote which was not true.

When my father retired the congregation gave him the smaller, older parsonage if he would move it. So, then the first parsonage was moved to the empty lot. The remodeling was to take six weeks which became six months. We moved into the church basement with three small children using the church kitchen and sleeping on the floor of the nursery. In the fall we moved into the loft of the parish building using that kitchen...Dick Hall had his Sunday School class up there and gave us a 'bad' time because our girls left their dress-up clothes lying around which included some petticoats. My wife organized a junior choir that actually sang three-part music and several concerts. She also saw the need for a nursery and had to convince the old-timers that young children didn't have to sit through the church service. She also had the audacity to wear slacks to a church picnic....how times have changed!

After my father's retirement, Harris Sonnenberg accepted the associate pastor call. He became a friend and faithful partner.

St. John's has ordained many sons of the parish ... my brothers Paul & John and cousin Fred Sommars. Then later

the special occasion of four in one year and more since then.....what a blessing.

We feel good about our time with you and are sorry we cannot be with you at this time due to unexpected health issues. May God continue to bless the ministry of St. John's. We left St. John's in 1963 to serve Valley Lutheran Church in Denver and in 1970 Our Savior's in Greeley and finally, in 1980 Prince of Peace in Honolulu, retiring in 1990. We now spend half-time in Colorado and winters in Hawaii.

Finally, we want to honor the memory and ministry of Frankie Schmidt. She was my babysitter in the late 20's and became the first parish worker at St. John's. She was without a doubt, the most faithful and loyal servant of the church we have ever known.

Pastor James Keller



Rev. Harris Sonnenberg
1964 - 1966 Senior Pastor
1960—1964 Associate Pastor

Thank you for the invitation to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the City of Jamestown,. Unfortunately, we will not be attending.

St. John's and Jamestown have been a large part of our lives and we thank God for you and the memories we hold of those years. Our children were small when we left. With their families they have now given us eight grandchildren, the joy of our lives.

After we left Jamestown, I started a home mission in Wayzata, Mn., After four years there, I did two years of graduate work to be a hospital Chaplain. Those years prepared me for 26 + years as a Chaplain at Unity Hospital in Fridley, Mn.. I retired in December of 1998.

Carol and I recently celebrated our 50th year of marriage. Our health remains good with a hitch now and then.

We would love to renew acquaintances and share memories. Hopefully that will take place again.

God's continued blessing to each one of you.

Harris and Carol Sonnenberg



Rev. Darrel Gilbertson
1966-1970 Sr. Pastor
1964-1966 Associate Pastor

We will be in the Jamestown area this year but not until September/October. I want to stop past the church (wouldn't it be great if we happened there on a Sunday) and visit the Halls, Frankie Schmidt's grave, and see the new business center at Jamestown

College. The actual dates of this visit are in the planning stages. We may be making a presentation at Red Willow Ministries in Binford and that will lock in our timing.

In the meantime, may your ministry at St. John's Lutheran be abundantly blessed and our fondest memories and warmest wishes for the grandest celebration be assured.

Rev. John Estrem
1967-1970 Associate Pastor



Confirmation Choir
 Pastor Gilbertson and I each taught a confirmation class and we decided we could get them all together to form a choir. We had a talented organist in Bill Kuhlman and his talented wife would serve as choir director. We filled the choir loft with almost 100

and we sang wonderful new exciting hymns and songs. One I especially liked was the Nicene Creed set to music. I think the students in that choir learned to love hymns, songs, liturgy and the fellowship that comes from singing praise and thanksgiving to God. This does more perhaps than any other lesson form could. Sometimes their singing led the congregation. They enjoyed that. Youth are important members of the Church.

**Raising money for the
 Lutheran Youth Gathering in New York.**

To raise the money for our youth trip we had the usual fund raisers and then a former member of the UND man's choir, Varsity Bards, said he thought we could get The Bards to come to Jamestown to perform a concert. We secured the high school auditorium and set up the date and time but an unpredicted North Dakota blizzard forced us to cancel. The high school couldn't fit us into their future schedule and so we decided to hold the concert in the

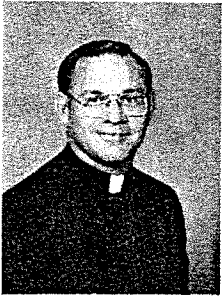
church. When the janitor was told the Varsity Bards would be performing in the church all he could do was cry out, "In the church! Ai! Yi! Yi!. In the church! In the church! Ai! Yi! Yi!." We did hold it in the church. It went well and we did raise a goodly sum of money. I have no idea what damage to the church he thought the Bards would do.

The German Aid

One of the classes we pastors taught each month was a women's Bible study from the magazine SCOPE. Each circle had a lesson leader and these women would all meet with the pastor before their monthly meeting to learn about the Bible study lesson. The German Aid never sent anyone so each month the pastor would go to their meeting and give the Bible study lesson. I would go to their meeting and give the Bible lesson. These elderly women had worked hard, raised children, endured drought, the Great Depression, war years, grief and hardships. They loved that which sustained them: Their Bible, their German Hymn book, their church, their pastors, their German culture and their sisters in faith. I enjoyed this once a month gathering. I think to belong to German Aid you needed to be at least 80 or 90 and I was in my early 30's. I enjoyed the way these elderly women would gather and conduct their business meeting in German with some English-German sounding words for things there weren't equivalent German words. They sang a couple of hymns from the German hymn books which they all brought. They would pray together the Lord's Prayer in German which I quickly decided after a meeting or two that I would learn the Lord's prayer in German. They liked the fact I prayed Our Lord's Prayer in German with them. I felt accepted by these wonderful elderly Christians whose German culture they loved and wished to preserve.

Grandma Keller's 95th birthday

To celebrate his mother's 95th birthday, WWA Keller had a birthday supper at his home and Pastor Gilbertson and his wife and Marilyn and I were all invited. The supper was lovely and then the cake was brought out. She blew the candles out and then he said, "Mother, would you sing us a hymn you learned as a girl in Germany?" She sang a hymn verse after verse. Then she quit. Pastor Keller then said, "You know more verses than that Mother." So she sang some more verses. I had kept count and I counted 12 verses which she knew from memorizing her catechism Bible verses and hymns in confirmation 80 years earlier. It pointed out to me the blessings of memorizing and how these words stay with us all our lives.



Rev. Richard R. Hutton
1975—1989 Sr. Pastor

It has been almost 20 years since we served you (leaving in 1989) and much has happened since that time, not only in our personal lives, but also in the life of the congregation and the Jamestown community. As God has “blessed us to be a blessing,” it is evident in our personal lives, the corporate life of the congregation, and the extended life of the community that the blessings of God continue to abound.

As I reflect on the fourteen years with you from 1976 to 1989, we saw the congregation grow, additional education and office space added to the ministry structure, a fire that led to redecorating of the sanctuary and the installation of stained glass windows, lots of children, and the grace of God abounding in the ministries of the congregation. There were German dinners, a trip to Israel, music and drama, and above all lots of wonderful worship. One issue that proved to be a great blessing, but was rather interesting at the time was the acquisition of a small piece of property just north of the church (a piece that I believe you no longer own, however): I remember a realtor calling and inquiring whether the congregation would be interested in purchasing the property (at a price comparable to what the bank had just paid for a similar property), but at that price the council wasn't interested. A few months later the price was lowered, and few months after that an auction sign was put on the front lawn of the property. After a conversation with a small group of members, who proceeded to raise an amount of money with which they could go to the auction, they bought the property, cleared it, graveled the lot and gave it to the church. Oh, my! Some were not sure this was legal. But, that small group only wanted to give a gift to the congregation—which turned out to be a blessing later. For I understand that the grocery store wanted to purchase that small parking area, and did so by expanding the parking on the west side of the church. It is amazing how the blessings of God are not always seen at a moment, but later become an amazing blessing.

Then, there were those good old-time blizzards! One of which I remember—as if it were just yesterday. The snow started falling on Saturday evening and worked itself into a full, raging blizzard by Sunday morning. Not wanting to cancel worship because of the radio broadcast, I skied to church, as did the organist and her husband, the Methodist Pastor and his wife walked from across the alley, and one other couple came to church that morning—that was the entire congregation for the day. We sat in the choir loft, pulled the microphones close, and sang our praises to God. We were blessed to be a blessing.

Over all the years and history of St. John's Lutheran Church the blessings of God have been abundant!

As you, together with the community celebrate Jamestown's 125th Anniversary, may the blessings of God continue to abound in your midst—in your personal lives, within the congregation, and the entire community.

Your friends in Christ,
Pastor Dick & Carolyn Hutton

“Hope your celebration goes well and you have a grand time.”



Rev. David Grant
1980—1984 Associate Pastor

Greetings from the Grants! Some of you may remember me as Pastor Dave, others Dave, still others will remember a young skinny blonde Associate Pastor nicknamed “Jello Head” (don't ask). I served as the Associate Pastor of St. John's from 1980-1983. We lived right

next door to the church in the big old parsonage with our two young children, a brown & white Springer Spaniel named “Samba” and a garden that forever needed weeding.

Yesterday marked the anniversary of my ordination on June 22, 1980, twenty-eight years ago as I prepared to serve my very first call in ministry, the call to St. John's. Can you believe that? Where does time go? That young skinny Associate Pastor is now a white-haired overweight Senior Pastor who looks back with fond memories of those years.

They were good years, years filled with many activities in ministry and many personal milestones. Jamestown was where our two biological children were born. Little Laura is now 27 and manages Rocco Altobelli, a large beauty salon and day spa in the Twin Cities. Baby Lucas is now 24 and is an accountant on his way to becoming a CPA. We also have two other adopted children from Brazil, son Paul is a sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps and daughter Jenny lives in the Twin Cities. We also have three grandchildren. Can you believe that!

We always look back at those years with joy and thanksgiving. There were many memorable youth activities, canoe voyages and a great trip to the ELCA Youth Gathering in San Antonio, Texas. We even managed to have approved by the church council the very first ever German Dinner to raise funds for the trip. (It was against the church's constitution.) We had great times at Red Willow

Rev. David Grant, Continued **19 80—1984 Associate Pastor**

Gatherings. Everyone knew when the St. John's kids had arrived, windows pulled down in the old brown school bus and "ghetto blaster" cranked up to the highest volume.

I regret that I will not be able to attend your community celebration. Our Synod Assembly is June 28th, re-scheduled due to the flooding in Iowa. In addition, Vacation Bible School starts on Sunday, June 29th. So this personal greeting by letter will have to do. Our heartiest congratulations to the community of Jamestown, ND on this the 125th anniversary of the community! If every young family still gets the same start in life as we did in Jamestown, the world will be a much better place. May God continue to build life, relationships, families and community there in Jamestown, a town that has a special place in our hearts. God bless you all!

Always Yours in Christ,
Rev. David & Deb Grant

P.S. Yes, I'm still a soccer fanatic. Only now, instead of playing, I watch it on cable.



Rev. Gordon Cavers
1986-1989 Associate Pastor

The People of Faith at St. John's Lutheran Church

We rejoice with you at this special time of celebration in the history of Jamestown and the life and ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church.

The faces of many come to mind as Phyllis and I think of time spent with you as Associate Pastor in the early years of our ministry, (1986-1989). It was a wonderful and important time of learning and growing as together with you, we shared and lived out the stories of God.

There is a smile in our hearts as we think of many of you, and especially the Shepherding Program, the Lay Sacramentarian Care-Givers, the Prayer ministry, as well as Bible Studies and Fellowship events planned and participated in. What a privilege also, to lead in worship and share from God's Word, and to see the Spirit of God touching and changing lives.

While we cannot be there in person, we celebrate with you, giving thanks and praise to God for the community of faith at St. John's and how God worked through you to help bless, shape and deepen our faith life and ministry.

We know God wants to continue to use St. John's in powerful ways, to bring the truth of the Gospel and the love of Jesus to your community and to the world. We pray each of you, will let Jesus draw you to him, work in and through you so you may know and experience all he holds for you.

Praise be to God for his Church and the awesome ways he blesses his people.

With gladness and thanksgiving.

Pastor Gordon and Phyllis Cavers



Rev. C. Jack Eichhorst
1990 - 1998 Senior Pastor

In the joy of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ it is a privilege to greet you as you celebrate the 125th anniversary of the city of Jamestown. Judy and I are grateful for the eight years we could be with you in the great little city of Jamestown.

As Paul wrote to the Philippians, so I say to you; "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (1:3-5).

St. John's Church has made great contributions to the community. God has used you to be a blessing to others. There is no doubt in my mind that the greatest contribution to Jamestown came in the long tenure of Rev. W.W. Keller.

His sacrificial service cast a long shadow in the church and in the city. He and his family served you through the hard challenges of the Depression and World War II. Such stellar ministry became a touchstone by which subsequent ministry would be measured.

A few days after I began serving as Senior Pastor on June 14, 1990, I made my first house call. Rev. Harold Vold took me to the home of Bertha Keller where I read to her the Bible in German and gave her communion from the chalice used by her husband. Now she seemed at peace. About 10 days later she went home to be with our Lord Jesus. Looking back on my own 8 year ministry I have fond recollections of teaching the Bible at every opportunity. If anything should mark Lutheran Christian life, it should be a focus on the Bible where we see Christ. Shortly after coming I was able to incorporate the "Walk Thru the Bible" program into our confirmation instruction. Then we called Pastor Kent Groethe as our third pastor, to focus on youth ministry. He, like me, was a certified "Walk Thru the Bible" teacher.

Rev. C. Jack Eichhorst, Continued **1990 - 1998 Senior Pastor**

All confirmands and their parents were required to study both the Old and the New Testaments in this program. In about seven years between 700 and 900 people took this study. Through it we reached members of other churches in the community. Both Kent and I also led seminars in North Dakota, Minnesota and other parts of the country. I've never forgotten how one mother went through the course five times and how a father came to experience new life in Christ. Teaching God's Word is a special privilege.

I also fondly recall the early morning Bible Studies with men. Leonard Haitch was a special person at these gatherings. When we had a brown bag day, we again - both men and women could meditate on the Word of God. An unusual opportunity came when on Tuesdays at noon, between 12-20 youth would come to the church for pizza, pop and time with the pastor. What treasured memories those are. When I did this at First Lutheran in Washburn years later, I was thrilled to have 25-40 young people in for Bible Study.

Another significant change took place when our Church Council meetings began with a 30-35 minute Bible Study and prayer time. Our meetings got shorter - and our focus on kingdom substance became sharper.

In my life I have had many thrills dealing with issues of ecumenism - matters pertaining to church unity. One of the most joyful came when St. James and St. John's sponsored the African Children's Choir two times. The impact on the community was electric. Four year old and 15 year old orphan children from Kenya and Uganda thrilled our hearts as they danced, played drums and sang in the Basilica of St. James. We thrilled to their music and witness to Christ. Indeed, we were one in the Spirit.

But I also remember an event that shattered the community. The Senior Center faced closure because over a hundred thousand dollars had been embezzled. For a time the cause looked hopeless. Then various people came forward - but especially St. John's. A group of us, Pentecostals, Baptists, Catholics, and Lutherans met every Monday morning for six weeks. Shortly we had about \$180,000 - and the Senior Center was saved. That was a wonderful witness to the love of Christ and the unity of the churches.

So with thankful hearts we look back, thankful for the opportunity to preach Christ, not being ashamed of the Gospel, and to teach the Word of the Cross which is the power of God for all who are being saved.

Our hope and prayer is that St. John's will never be ashamed

of Christ and never give in to the fads that tempt the church in the name of relevance. I have seen such things as the "God is dead theology" and the utopian hope held forth in Marxist Communism. The "God is dead" theologians are now dead. And Communism has crumbled - but Christ is alive. Christ is risen.

Sincerely in Him,
Dr. C. Jack Eichhorst



Rev. Harold Vold **1990—1993 Associate Pastor**

Thank you for your May 2008 letter about Jamestown's 125th anniversary celebration and of St. John's participation in that event. We extend our regrets that we will not be able to attend your worship services on Sunday, June 29th, but we wish to greet you with this letter and extend our congratulations to the city and to your church.

I have many memories of Jamestown since 1948. My father accepted a call to serve the Montpelier-Ypsilanti parish when I was serving in the army from 1946-1948. So after my discharge I came to North Dakota to visit my family. Subsequently, I went to Concordia College and Luther Seminary to become a pastor. I served all of my ministry in North Dakota, the last four years which were at St. John's as Associate Pastor. We have many fond memories of ministry with you folks in the congregation and we made many friends in Jamestown. We were blessed by your partnership in the Gospel living those last years before my retirement in 1993.

We greet you with God's Word by the pen of St. Paul as he writes to the Church in Romans (12-13) "Let love be genuine, hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection, outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer, contribute to the needs of the saints, extend hospitality to strangers."

Best wishes to St. John's Church, God's people, as you work in His Kingdom for the good of all.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Harold and Eunice Vold



Rev. Douglas Opp
1997—2007 Associate Pastor

Congratulations on Jamestown's 125th Anniversary! Indeed, this milestone celebration gives us all reason to rejoice and give thanks to God for his never-ending blessings. My hope and prayer is for each of you to note the importance of the past 125 years as community resi-

dents and as members of the St. John's Lutheran faith community. May those cherished memories bring you much joy and happiness, as well as encourage you to eagerly anticipate the role you each will have in helping to make the next 125 years meaningful for generations to come.

The ten years the Opp family lived and played in the Jamestown community leave us with an abundance of fond memories. October of 1997 through October 2007, worshipping and partnering in ministry and mission together with you the St. John's Lutheran congregation, have been some of the most profound and delightful years of our lives. Julie, Jeremy, Josh, Danae and I have been graced forever and will always carry these invaluable memories of that wonderful decade near and dear to our hearts. The congregation and staff have blessed our lives in more ways than words could ever describe. Thank You! Thank you for being you and for embracing us as your pastor and pastor's family.

Sadly, we will not be able to worship with you on June 29th, but Danae and I do hope to join you on Sunday morning, July 6th. Julie will not be able to travel with us due to her teaching commitments. My home town of Glen Ullin, North Dakota, will also be celebrating their 125th Anniversary that same weekend, so the trip to North Dakota will thus be thoroughly enjoyable for Danae and me, enabling us to spend precious time with family and the great friends in Christ at St. John's.

Thanks again for the invitation to join you during this exciting and historic celebration.

The Lord bless you now and always,
Pastor Doug Opp



Rev. Luther Peterson
1998 — 2000 Interim Pastor

To the good and gracious people of St. John's Lutheran Church

May God's grace continue to bless and instruct you as you minister for

another 125 years within the Jamestown community. I am honored that you even extend invitation for my return after enjoying nearly two years among you as an "stand-in" type Sr. Pastor. Please greet Pastor Doug Opp and his family on my behalf and thank him for the good times we had sharing the ministry. My wife Bonnie and I have been putting this task off far beyond what is proper protocol because the simple truth of the matter is that: I DO NOT WANT TO WRITE TO YOU PEOPLE! We both in the worst way want to be present with you folks . . . Face to face. Like before. I want to sit across a table of good german food and better conversation. Like before. . . I want to stand before you serving at the table of our Lord where we each share eternal food and forgiveness.

I still site you people for the response and participation in the Lenten dramas we did together. Remember how the average midweek attendance grew from 30 to 300 within five weeks? Thanks for making ministry fun. Please know that in lieu of being present with you . . . We celebrate as a family our son Andrew's graduation from Augsburg College. He receives his Masters in Business Administration the very hour of your worship service. Blessings overflow and I consider having been among you folks as family blessings as well.

God's speed and peace be with you.

Pastor Luther Peterson
From the town of colleges, cows, and contentment,
Northfield, MN



Rev. Dennis Ellingsen
2000—2008 Senior Pastor

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I want to start by saying, "Thank you 125th Celebration Committee for all the good work you did in planning for the city of Jamestown's 125th Anniversary Celebration. As a church we had many visitors who came to the city's celebration and who also worshiped with us. Many visitors appreciated all the work the committee did.

As my pastoral ministry draws to a close at St. John's Lutheran, I very much want to thank the community of faith for all your prayers, support and encouragement during these past eight years. I started on April 1, 2000 and I can't believe how quickly the time has flown by. August 31, 2008 is not far off. On September 1, 2008 I will be stepping into retirement and I will be your pastor no more. I am excited and a little apprehensive about what the future holds for Sandy and me.

I am also excited about the future of St. John's Lutheran. I know the best is yet to come for God's people in this faith community. God is leading you into the future and I am convinced you will continue to share the love of Christ in word and deed in the Jamestown area and beyond.

I leave the church with many good memories, I will not share them all, but I need to tell you of one that has become increasingly special. Every communion when I serve the bread and say, "The body of Christ, given for you," I know a divine exchange is taking place. At this time of giving and receiving you are not nameless people. The gift has your name on it. It is a powerful time together. I am going to miss this time of communion together.

Another strong memory I have is St. John's strong mission support. The church has been involved in missions to Ecuador and the Gulf that have been a blessing to those who went to give of their time and talent and a blessing to those who received.

But my best memories revolve around the people of the church. The church is healthy and there are many healthy families that are raising their children and grandchildren in the Lord. This is always a challenge. I will take this memory and many others with me.

God bless you as you live in, under and through the grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord and as you celebrate all that God has done for you.

In the strong name of Jesus,
 Pastor Dennis Ellingsen

Pastors/Dates of Service							
Year Began	Year End	Senior Pastors	# of years	Year Began	Year End	Associate Pastors	# of years
1884	1885	Pastor Maerz	1				
1885	1889	E. Haase	4				
1889	1890	A. Kuehn	1				
1891	1893	J. Alamsha	2				
1893	1895	E. Herman	2				
1898	1920	E. C. Hess	22				
1921	1960	W.W.A. Keller	39	1953	1960	James Keller	7
1960	1964	James Keller	4	1960	1964	Harris G. Sonnenberg	4
1964	1966	Harris G. Sonnenberg	2	1964	1966	Darrel Gilbertson	2
1966	1970	Darrel Gilbertson	4	1967	1970	John Estrem	3
1971	1975	A.L.C. Keller	4	1976	1980	Ronald Watrud	4
1975	1989	Richard Hutton	14	1980	1984	David Grant	4
1989	1990	Mark Strobel (interim)	1	1984	1986	Robert Berthold	2
1989	1990	Harold Vold (interim)	1	1986	1989	Gordon Cavers	3
1990	1998	C. Jack Eichhorst	8	1990	1993	Harold Vold	3
1998	2000	Luther Peterson (interim)	2	1991	1994	Kent Groethe	3
2000	2008	Dennis Ellingsen	8	1993	1997	Clifford Hoper	4
				1997	2007	Douglas Opp	10