

The Beginning of Emmaus Lutheran Church; 50 Years Ago

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In early 1966, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Kansas District decided to establish a Lutheran congregation in Bonner Spring, Kansas, purchasing 24 acres of land towards this purpose.

On June 4, 1966, the district called Rev. Wilfred L Ziekert to serve as the Missionary Pastor for the prospective Bonner Springs Congregation. His mission was to gather local Lutherans together and form the congregation. He accepted the call on July 17 and within two weeks met with District officers in Bonner Springs to purchase a house that would serve as his family's home and his office as he went about reaching out to Lutherans in the area.

The Ziekert family moved into their Bonner Springs home on August 28, and Rev. Ziekert officially began his missionary duties on September 1. He began gathering Lutherans in the area and forming small Bible Study cells, using a small meeting room and study area he had constructed by a local carpenter in his basement.

On October 23, 1966, Rev. Ziekert was formally installed as the Missionary Pastor for Bonner Springs at Bethel Lutheran Church in Kansas City, Kansas. Two weeks later on November 3, 75 Lutherans met with him in a meeting room in The Inter-State Federal Savings and Loan in Bonner Spring to discuss the planned Bible Studies, and on January 22, 1967, he conducted the first worship service in the same room for 90 people.

This group became a formal Congregation on January 21, 1968, when 15 men signed the first constitution for Emmaus. Forty years later on July 17, 2008, the Emmaus and St. Martin Congregations merged to form Risen Savior Lutheran Church.

(The above information is extracted from a *Brief History*, dated November 28, 1968, by Rev. Ziegart and placed in the cornerstone of Emmaus Church in 1968.)