

July 3, 2009

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN ELGIN, ILLINOIS, WILL BEGIN ITS YEAR-LONG SESQUICENTENIAL CELEBRATION THIS FOURTH OF JULY WEEKEND

Elgin, IL – Beginning on Saturday, July 4, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran will open its Sesquicentennial celebration with both a church and a school float in Elgin's 2009 Fourth of July Parade. After the parade festivities, St. John's will host a Sesquicentennial Picnic, held on church grounds, open for all in the community to share this special day and reinforce the social bonds of Christian love. The Rev. Clifford "Hannibal" Frederich, pastor of St. John's, will guide the anniversary events throughout the year starting with the special anniversary focus for this Saturday evening and both Sunday morning worship services. It will be followed by a Potluck Dinner after the 10:30^{AM} Sunday service. Later this year, St. John's will have a special celebration of the Festival of St. John the Apostle (its namesake) in December and then in February 2010, celebrations continue with all services recalling the actual naming of the church in 1860. The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) Northern Illinois District (NID) President Daniel Gilbert will be the guest preacher that day.

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is celebrating One-Hundred and Fifty continuous years as one of Elgin's oldest institutions. The church was founded on July 4, 1859 by a group of German immigrants and farmers. In February 1860, this new congregation purchased a small frame building on the corner of Spring and Division Streets for \$550 as their temporal and spiritual home. Then in 1866, St. John's opened the first parochial day school in Elgin. Along with all the many obvious offerings of a school, one major plus for parents and the Elgin community was that St. John's was able to teach students to read, write and speak in English. During these early years, all the church services were primarily German-language based. As time progressed however, many of these former students and current congregation members wanted to have an English-language based church service installed along with the German service. In 1904, the Associate Pastor Rev. William J. Kowert began English services on Sunday evenings until 1920 when English became part of the morning services. It was not until 1952 that all German language services discontinued.

In 1875, the Rev. H. F. Fruechtenicht became pastor and served St. John's for 42 years, both as pastor for 33 years and later as assistant pastor for nine years. Within a year, St. John's made a decision to build a new and larger brick church on the northeast corner of Division and Spring Streets. This would further St. John's mission to its congregation and the community. Completed in January 1877, this new church would be able to accommodate 600 parishioners by 1888.

After the turn of the century, the Elgin community grew dramatically. With this growth, St. John's also grew to the limits of its four walls with over 400 member families. Once again, St. John's needed to expand. Construction of the current church building on the southeast corner of Spring and Dexter Streets began in 1910 and completed in 1912 at a cost of \$75,000. This new church, built in English Gothic style, was the creation of architects Postle and Fischer. Over the years, St. John's reconstruction phases happened in 1931, 1949 and 1971. The remodeling in 1949 increased her seating to 1000. In 1971, renovations cost \$300,000 and included an Ascending Savior mosaic, the Welcoming Christ wood altar carving and a marble sculpture of Da Vinci's Last Supper. The entire church was rewired and setup for worship service videotaping for shut-ins.

St. John's joined the LCMS in 1917 and later assisted in establishing two new Missouri Synod churches in Elgin: Good Shepard Lutheran in 1938 and Calvary Lutheran in 1956. St. John's purchased the former Rippberger Building, built in 1917 on the original site of St. John's 1877 church. It is now church offices and the San Juan Mission office.

The San Juan Mission, established five years ago through Circuit 5 of the NID of the LCMS, is an Elgin Area Hispanic Outreach Ministry. Pastor Carlos Catalan has served as San Juan's pastor from the beginning. San Juan holds worship services every Sunday at 1^{PM} in St. John's sanctuary. Over 60 members share in devotions, Bible classes, social events and Sunday School.

**About St. John's Lutheran Church and School
Building Friendship, Knowledge and Faith – Beginning With *THE WORD***

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Congregational Purpose:

- *To provide pastoral care for its members, to preach and teach the Word of God and administer the Sacraments, to preserve purity of doctrine, to exercise Christian love and fellowship, to provide for the Christian training of all and to extend the Kingdom of God at large.*

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and School Mission Statement:

- *Through Christian education, sons and daughters of this congregation, unchurched children, children of affiliated churches and children of other Christian denominations can receive and share the message of God's saving grace. It is the goal of St. John's to provide the best age appropriate education possible within the limits of God-given ability for a child's mental, physical, spiritual, social, emotional and moral development in order for each student to utilize his or her talents in a joy filled Christian life in a secular world.*

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Contact the Church Office for Information:

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