



## 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Moment

“He who promised is faithful” (Heb 10.23)

### THE MINISTRY OF REV. LOUIS GROTHER: 1937–1949

Those who knew Rev. Louis Grother, the fifth pastor in the history of our congregation, describe him as a tireless worker with a pastor’s heart for people. He arrived as an assistant to Rev. Henry Kowert in 1937, became senior pastor at the time of Pastor Kowert’s death in 1944, and left First Saint Paul’s in 1949 when he accepted a call to Zion Lutheran Church in Kalamazoo, MI, where he served as pastor for 36 years. Pastor Grother was actually called three times to serve Zion Lutheran in Kalamazoo. His declination of the first two calls perhaps speaks to his reluctance to leave First Saint Paul’s, yet in the end he followed the Lord’s leading to Kalamazoo.

Pastor Grother came to First Saint Paul’s in 1937 after a delegation of members went to the Dean of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to seek a pastoral assistant. He served our congregation in a temporary position for a year before being called as associate pastor the following year. At his ordination and installation service, on June 5, 1938, his father—Rev. William Grother of Milwaukee—preached *one* of the sermons (the one in English), while his 84-year old grandfather—Rev. Gotthold Loeber—preached the German sermon. What made Pastor Grother’s ordination at First Saint Paul’s particularly appropriate was that his great-great-grandfather, Rev. H. H. Loeber, was a Saxon immigrant who had participated in the founding convention of the LCMS, hosted by First Saint Paul’s in 1847. Loeber had even preached on Jubilate Sunday of the convention.



*Pastor Louis Wm. Grother*

Rev. Grother, during his twelve years at First Saint Paul’s, not only served the members of the parish but also worked in a variety of outreach ministries. World War II brought many servicemen to Chicago for training at Great Lakes, Ft. Sheridan, or Navy Pier. Pastor Grother offered a warm welcome to those who came to First Saint Paul’s for spiritual care, in some cases even providing confirmation instruction. During the 1940’s Pastor Grother also served as chaplain to the nurses at Walther Memorial Hospital and as minister and religious advisor to the local YMCA. His outreach ministry also included a regular series of Christian radio broadcasts.

Two of our long-time members, John Chaveriat and Richard Eisenhardt, both received confirmation instruction and were confirmed by Pastor Grother. Richard Eisenhardt recalls how Pastor Grother, upon learning that Richard sang, connected him with music director Albert Beck, who gave him opportunities to sing in church. Pastor Grother always seemed to be “connecting” people to Christ and to each other. He was known as an avid letter-writer, corresponding with dozens of people on a regular basis, offering friendship and encouragement. This continued right up until his death in 2014, just days after turning 100 years old.