



175th Anniversary Moment

“He who promised is faithful” (Heb 10.23)

A SYNOD IS BORN

At meetings held in Cleveland in 1845 and Fort Wayne in 1846, a group of Lutheran pastors discussed forming a synod that would be faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions. These pastors had been inspired in part by reading *Der Lutheraner*, a publication started by Rev. C. F. W. Walther, leader of the Saxon Lutherans in Perry County, MO. This publication helped unite confessional Lutherans scattered throughout the Midwest. Pastors at the Fort Wayne meeting produced a draft of a possible synodical constitution. A constitutional convention was called for April 24-26, 1847, in Chicago, with St. Paul’s (and its pastor August Selle) serving as the host congregation.

Pastors came to Chicago (which then had a population of only 20,000) from Missouri, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and New York, arriving by ship, horseback, and wagon. On the evening of the first day of the convention, the pastors met at the home of Pastor Selle to agree upon procedures. For the next two days, the delegates participated in worship, discussed the draft of the constitution, and took formal steps to create the “German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States”—what we now know as the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Rev. C. F. W. Walther was elected as the first president. It all took place at the small church on the corner of Ohio and LaSalle.

Sixteen congregations, served by twelve voting pastors, became original members of the synod. Ten additional pastors, including Pastor Selle, became advisory pastoral members of the synod. Pastor Selle was unable, however, to persuade the members of his own congregation to join the synod. A group of Reformed-leaning members found the new synod’s insistence on Lutheran theology and practice to be unacceptable. In another year, this rift would lead to a separation that would add the name “First” to our congregation.