



175th Anniversary Moment

“He who promised is faithful” (Heb 10.23)

BANDING TOGETHER FOR THE FAITH

Young adults, new to a big city, benefit from the spiritual guidance and Christian fellowship of a local congregation. Church members become their “family of faith.” Throughout its history, First Saint Paul’s has emphasized—in various ways—bringing young adults together for fellowship, spiritual growth, and service. One fairly “recent” example of this is Pastor Delayne Pauling’s emphasis on “single adult” ministry during the 1980’s and 1990’s.

The roots of such programs, however, go deep in our history. At about the time Pastor Wunder arrived at First Saint Paul’s in 1851, the young men of the congregation came together to found the “Young Men’s Society of the First German Evangelical Lutheran Saint Paul’s Congregation in Chicago, Illinois.” The signatures of the original members are included on the following page. The constitution of this organization (as reprinted in Stella Wuerffel’s *City by the Sea*) notes that two of its main purposes were to “foster brotherly fellowship” to “help each other develop and grow spiritually.” The first objective, however, is to “support needy students who are preparing for the holy ministry.” Consequently, dues of “ten cents per month” were collected from each member. Each quarter, members chose a seminary student to receive the collected funds.

Monthly meetings were held “at 7:50 p.m. on the fourth Sunday of the month” in the home of one of the members. The group was designed for single men, although married men who regularly attended could be “honorary members.” After the meeting’s business was conducted, the members might “enjoy free Christian-brotherly conversation and discussion, or enjoy singing Christian songs.” They could also discuss some “informative or inspiring book” suggested by a member, provided that it did “not contain anything spiritually objectionable or contradict Lutheran doctrine.”

Although these protocols sound rigid to “modern” ears, they demonstrate the desire of these young men to unite around God’s Word and support each other in faith. The group also illustrates *lay people* taking ownership in their church and practicing the democracy of their new homeland.

Boll G Lindner

1. Oskar von Spenner
2. Valentin Lunge
3. Matthew Henrich
4. Wilhelm Dietrich
5. Wilhelm Subjunctive
6. Ernst von
7. Arben Dalke
8. Heinrich Prinsler
9. Heinrich Neumann
10. August Beyer
11. Christian Lerger
12. Christian Löber
13. Heinrich Kriest
14. August Lerger
15. Heinrich Zimmer
16. Adam Zimmer
17. Heinrich Schäfer
18. Wilhelm Fiffar
19. Christian Borchberg
20. Thomas Paulsen
21. Carl Schmidt
22. Louis Schmidt
23. Georg von Spenner
24. Hermann Schmidt
25. Heinrich Fuchs
26. August Zimmer
27. Heinrich Schmidt
28. Heinrich Borchberg
29. August Schmidt
30. August Schmidt
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50. August Schmidt

Reprinted image of the list of the original signers of the "Young Men's" organization, from Stella Wuerffel's City by the Sea.