

Building A Church – A Snapshot in Time

My topic tonight is a trip down Memory Lane and sharing with you the history of my church, St. Timothy Lutheran Church in Menasha. St. Timothy's is a traditional ELCA Lutheran church built in a time quite different than today. At that time there were traditional churches: Lutheran, Roman Catholic, United Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Southern Baptist, United Church of Christ, Reformed Churches, Quaker, and Pentecostal. Today we have all of those churches and more, but some of the more traditional churches are seeing their membership dwindle while others are seeing newer mega churches grow in size with thousands in their membership. There are also many small very casual churches popping up. This talk is not about different religions, but rather is to give you a history of the construction of my church in a time much different than today, a time you may remember or heard about.

St. Timothy's looked forward to celebrating its 75th anniversary on March 11, 2020. I was involved with researching some of the history for our celebration. Most of my research came from the "Appleton Post Crescent". Let's look back to its beginning in August 1944 when Pastor Dwight Shelhart, missionary organizer for the Synod of the Northwest of the United Lutheran Church in America, began canvassing Menasha, hoping to find enough interest to establish another Lutheran Church in Menasha. I am going to tell you what was happening in those months and have separated the information into three sections – what was going on in the world,

what was going on in the United States and what was going on in Menasha during those months.

AND in September 1944 80 people gathered at the Masonic Hall for the initial meeting. Were you born yet? Do you remember what was going on in the world at that time? Or have you heard stories from your parents and older relatives about that time in our history?

Here's what was happening:

In The World: The U.S. was fighting in World War II. D-Day had been earlier that year on June 6. Franklin D.

Roosevelt (FDR) was President. The U.S. Government announced they were releasing most of the Army and Navy dentists back to private practice since the peak had been reached for dental work — "From now on it will be just odds and ends of work for them to do." In the Health field -- The cause of celiac disease (the intolerance to gluten) was discovered during the Dutch famine of 1944 when wheat was scarce.

In The United States: A popular song was, "You Always Hurt the One You Love" by The Mills Brothers. A young

Elizabeth Taylor starred in the movie, "National Velvet." Other famous movie stars included Lauren Bacall,

Ingrid Bergman, Betty Grable, Rita Hayworth, Jane Russell, and Lana Turner. People were reading The Glass

Menagerie by Tennessee Williams. "The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet" debuted on television. Technology —

IBM announced the first program-controlled calculator. Health Hans Asperger published his paper on Asperger Syndrome. He later said, "It seems that for success in science and art, a dash of autism is essential."

In Menasha: _____ Gas was being rationed. Boeing advertised locally for people to help build the B-29 Superfortress. Grove Clothing advertised young men's back to school shirts for a price of \$1.00 - \$3.50. A two-pound jar of peanut butter at the A & P cost eight cents. Football Coach Bill Finn (who succeeded Les Ansorge) put his Menasha Bluejays through a scrimmage. The Packers were getting ready to battle the Bears. Some of the local bowling teams were: Ciske Brothers, Kurv Inn, White Swan, Linsdau, Drucks Alleys, Menasha Woodenware, Club Tavern, Friendly Bar and Adler Brau. Admission to the

Sunday night Menasha Park Dance was twenty cents. Labor Day was a four-day celebration. -^mAND---St. Timothy's was becoming a reality!

