

M ARKING TIME AT REDEEMER – 1931-1935, by Diana Rankin

This is the sixth in a series of articles about Redeemer's history gleaned from *The Redeemer Record* archives and placed in the context of what else was happening in the world, the nation, Minnesota, and the City of St. Paul. The original intent had been to cover one decade each month, but as Redeemer grew from only 5 members to over 1,100 in 40 years, monthly issues of the Record included more and more information about what was happening in the congregation. So for a few months I'll be covering only 5 years. As we get into the decades contained in our collective memory, we'll speed things up a bit.

During the years 1931 through 1935, the *Redeemer Record* frequently refers to "hard times." The Great Depression had a decided impact on everything – except the continued growth in membership and Sunday School enrollment.

1931

- *The Star-Spangled Banner* was adopted as the national anthem. Construction of the Empire State Building was completed. There were food riots in U.S. cities, including the Twin Cities.
- The hottest day ever recorded at the Minnesota State Fair was 104 degrees on September 10, 1931. General Mills introduced Bisquick.
- *In January, Redeemer's membership – after "pruning of our lists" – numbered 1,150.*
- *"Despite the 'hard times' the church managed to cover all its budgeted expenses [in 1930], including the full synodical apportionment and \$450 to the Twin City Mission treasury, with a little to spare. Our total budget was \$26,677.40." The congregation also paid off \$7,500 on the church debt.*
- *In January Pastor Paul Lindemann adopted new clerical vestments – a cassock, surplice, and stole. "Besides being historically justifiable, it adds life and color to the service and eliminates the unsuitable drab black." By September he had one stole in each of the liturgical colors.*
- *The deacons and a representative from each church organization formed a central committee to coordinate charities and prevent duplication.*
- *In October the Ladies Aid Society celebrated its 40th anniversary.*
- *It was decided that, instead of buying a book and candy for each of the Sunday School children at Christmas, the money would provide "relief work among the poor." In addition, the congregation provided holiday dinners and enough food for 1 week, toys, and winter clothing for 66 families.*

1932

- Adolf Hitler, an immigrant from Austria, received German citizenship.
- The U.S. Health Service initiated what became known as the Tuskegee Syphilis Study. Franklin D. Roosevelt defeated Herbert Hoover in the 1932 presidential campaign. For the first time in its history, a Democrat carried Minnesota.
- *In March it was decided to close Redeemer Church Home because of "a very decided and persistent drop in patronage due to economic conditions. The prevailing depression has so pronouncedly cut the influx of out-of-town girls into the city that our hospice was operating at a steady loss." The congregation then used it for meeting and office space and Sunday School.*
- *The June and July and the August and September issues of the Record were combined "for the sake of economy during these times of financial stress."*
- *In October, new lights were "suspended from the cross-beams of the church." These were a gift from the Ladies' Aid. The November Record notes that now it was possible to "hold our evening services in more than the equivalent of moonlight."*

- ***On November 16th, the Men's Club gave a "Hard-Time Party." Tickets were 25 cents each or 2 for 49 cents. The menu was a "sauerkraut spread" with the appropriate trimmings. People were encouraged to wear old clothes.***
- ***Pastor Lindemann returned 10% of his salary to the congregation to assist with finances.***

1933

- German President Von Hindenburg named Adolf Hitler as Chancellor.
- The Great Depression reached its lowest point; 13-15 million Americans were unemployed and nearly half of the banks had failed. President Roosevelt created the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Securities and Exchange Commission. The Civilian Conservation Corps was established and Prohibition (the 18th Amendment) was repealed.
- The first sit-down strike in U.S. history took place at the Hormel Packing plant in Austin, Minnesota.
- ***In January the Record was redesigned to be less expensive to print. Total membership at the beginning of the year was 1,202.***
- ***Again, despite financial distress, the congregation was able to meet its 1932 synodical apportionment for missions and benevolences in 1932 and reduce the debt to \$39,000.***
- ***It was necessary to hold 2 services on Palm Sunday because of the crowds. A regular service was held at 8 a.m. and the confirmation service at 10:45 a.m.***
- ***Redeemer was paying 6% on its church debt. The leadership urged members to invest their savings (such as they were) of \$50 and up at 4% with the church. These investments would then be used to pay off the 6% and 5% notes.***
- ***Members who had the means were urged to hire jobless members for home improvement and other projects.***
- ***The congregation called Rev. Herbert Lindemann, Pastor Paul Lindemann's son, as assistant pastor.***
- ***Church attendance continued to grow; in September a Matins service at 8:15 a.m. was added. Sunday School was at 9:30, the regular service at 10:45, and an evening service at 7:45 p.m.***
- ***The church office was officially moved from "the vestry room" and parsonage to the parish house at 307 Dale Street.***
- ***The Cotta Guild presented a communion rail and kneeling cushions.***
- ***In October, Arthur Kunz – Leilani Drake's father – was received into membership.***

1934

- Hitler became commander-in-chief of the German armed forces and declared himself *Führer*.
- In 1933 and '34 drought and dust storms created devastation throughout the U.S. According to the U.S. Weather Bureau, the storm on May 9-10, 1934 in Minnesota "was probably the most severe of its kind ever experienced. Much seed was uncovered or blown out ... as much as 90 percent was reported lost." Teamsters Local 574 gained national attention when it organized 3 major strikes against trucking firms in Minneapolis.
- ***In February, Redeemer took changed the congregation's name from "The English Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer of St. Paul, Minnesota" to "The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer of St. Paul, Minnesota." The reason for the change? As Pastor Lindemann put it in the Record, "English" is superfluous and "a Lutheran church is, of course, 'evangelical.'"***
- ***In November a children's choir of 40 singers was organized and the Ladies Aid provided vestments.***
- ***In December, the Cotta Guild disbanded. There was no longer a need for a separate organization for young girls as the Walther League expanded its programs.***
- ***The congregation succeeded in reducing the original 1922 debt of \$72,000 to \$38,000.***

1935

- Hitler created a new German air force – the Luftwaffe – under Hermann Goering. FDR ordered the establishment of a national gold vault at Fort Knox, Kentucky and signed legislation creating the Works Progress Administration and the Social Security Act.
- *The January Record commemorated Redeemer's 45th anniversary. A festival service on January 13th occurred during a heavy snowstorm, yet attendance was still 1,600.*
- *In February, the congregation consisted of 1,325 members with more than 600 enrolled in Sunday School and 57 teachers. More than 300 confirmed youth and adults were enrolled in the Bible Class.*
- *Maxine Peterson, who became Maxine Pierre, our church secretary for many years, was confirmed.*
- *The June/July Record reported that the congregation voted to use a processional cross.*
- *The Christmas Service, traditionally held Christmas Day at dawn, was moved to 11 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Another service was held on Christmas Day at 10:45 a.m. and the Children's Christmas Service at 4 p.m. A Christmas Carol service was held on December 22nd at 7:45 p.m.*

Something to think about: What from Redeemer's first 45 years do we still practice 80 years later? Is it time for some changes? If yes, what would you change if you could?