

CELEBRATING  
**125**  
YEARS

**St. Paul's is Celebrating its  
125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
October 8, 2023**

**Confirmed in the Family!!**

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*  
Matthew 28:16-20

It's finally over. You've been in your robe for hours. You sat through a longer than usual church service. And now you're ready to take the robe off and get on with the rest of the day. But no! Now you must wait for the pictures to be taken. It's your Confirmation Day. And you have made your promises to God to be faithful and received your first communion. You are now a confirmed member of the family with the right to take communion.

The Great Commission calls us to make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them about the Christian faith. St. Paul's has been following this command since 1899 when Emil Fernand Max Mittwede, Annie Louise Mary Seibert, Henry August Paul Eckert, the first confirmation class, were confirmed on July 30, 1899. There have been years when there were no confirmands being confirmed, but there has always been instruction for the children with catechism classes and Sunday School.

When I was mentoring confirmands, I would ask them what they were confirming. After some additional questions, they came to understand they were confirming their baptism. At their baptism, their parents promised to raise them in the faith. The congregation also promises to support their parents and to provide a place for that instruction. The catechism class is the set time for instruction to ensure that they understand the tenets of the Lutheran church. With confirmation, they are now an adult member of the congregation responsible for their own spiritual development. They don't do this alone. Their parents, family, and the congregation still support them to help them in their spiritual development. Their confirmation is not the end of their spiritual development but the beginning of a lifelong journey walking with God.

Confirmation classes have been waiting for pictures to be taken at least since 1908. The earliest confirmation pictures we have are from 1908 and 1919. We have no pictures from 1919 until 1961. However, we do have almost a complete collection of confirmation pictures from 1961 through 2023.

I have heard many times over the years that a congregation is a family. The Parish Registers, which begin in 1899, record the births, baptisms, confirmations, weddings, and deaths of generations of our St. Paul's family. Our family history is written in these journals. And these confirmation pictures are our family pictures. Through them we can see parents, children, grandchildren and, in some cases, great-grandchildren of families that have been and/or are a part of the family at St. Paul's. For example, Pam Meadows' grandmother, Willie Johanna Rex, was confirmed on April 23, 1903. Her mother, Mary Jean Sittason, was confirmed on July 11, 1943. Ron Seibert's father, Ernest A. Seibert, was confirmed on April 13, 1924. There are other examples I can cite. In looking through the records, I have come to realize the extent of the family here at St. Paul's. Whether your family has been here since 1898 or recently joined the church, your family history becomes part of the St. Paul's family history.

As we approach our 125th Anniversary celebration, it would be nice to have a real Family Homecoming celebration. So, if you know someone who is no longer worshipping at St. Paul's, invite them to join us on October 8, 2023, so that we can celebrate with them the heritage we all share as family members of St. Paul's congregation.

Also, as part of the anniversary celebration, we would like to frame and display our family's confirmation photographs. If you would like to help in this effort, you may make a donation with a notation that the donation is for the Framing of the Confirmation Pictures.

*Beth Hornish and Ron Fritze*

