



Metro Chicago

The Lutheran

5A

THE LUTHERAN ■ NOVEMBER 1998

United in Faith begins journey



UNITED IN FAITH, CHICAGO, Charter Sunday Service, July 12, 1998.

BY KAREN THOMPSON

Jesus sent his disciples out, two by two, to teach the word. He told them to take nothing with for their journey except a staff...no bread, no bag, no money in their belts.

—Mark 6:6b-13.

So began United in Faith's "journey of hope" as eight ELCA Lutheran churches on Chicago's northwest side began the prayerful, often painful, process of consolidation.

The congregations, Gladstone Park, Holy Communion, Medill, Nebo, Our Lord's, Our Savior's, Peace, and St. Andrew's friends of the New Church, are following Jesus' example. We said good-bye to our former pastors, left our buildings, and struggle to become *one* in our mission to reach our community with the good news.

The concept of consolidation was not new to us. Cooperation began a decade

ago among congregations known as the Northwest Lutheran Parish. The burden of aging structures, declining memberships, and changing neighborhoods made it impossible to move forward, to create vibrant ministries. During that transition time, we elected a leadership team, held many retreats, shared worship during Lent and Advent, and held joint confirmation for our youth.

William Faulkner once wrote, "A monument only says, 'At least I got this far,' while a footprint says, 'This is where I was when I moved again.'" Though difficult at first for some, our histories span more than a half century, the consensus of opinion was that we didn't want to be monuments, stopped, frozen, set in stone like a sculpture or a tombstone. We longed to be footprints, moving on, dynamic, inspired by our faith and equipped for the year 2000 with a vital social ministry outreach program in our community.

In January 1998 we voted to become

United in Faith. On Good Friday, we experienced the sorrow of death. On Easter Sunday, we rose again as more than 500 people packed the auditorium of Taft High School to celebrate the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ and a promise of new life. A miracle? Perhaps. Impossible? Many said so.

Metro Chicago Synod Bishop Kenneth Olsen presided at the Easter worship. He too felt the energy, the pride, the hope. "There is a tremendous amount of spirit here," he said. "I believe this church will become a leader in urban ministries." United in Faith is committed to the city, to putting teeth in the ELCA slogan "In the City for Good."

So what is this new church called United in Faith all about? At the moment we're a people of God struggling to let go. We pray, we talk, we often disagree. Jesus didn't make it easy for his disciples either. Some of those on

UNITED ► 30C

of Hispanic outreach, Division for Congregational Ministries, ELCA churchwide.

A record-setting number of worshippers turned out for the Holden ves-



pers service lead by 40 youth convo participants Friday evening. The youth made use of light and incense in the worship. A highlight was large cross decorated with long gold streamers that



the youth stretched from the chancel to the balcony. The Rev. Dan Thake is the group's coordinator.

Peace Chinese, Lombard, was welcomed as a new ELCA congregation, and Trinity, Elgin, received the parishioners of Our Saviors, Elgin, in a merger.

United in Faith, the unique church consolidation, culminated on April 12, 1998, was recognized on Saturday.

INSTALLED:

The Rev. Robert Klonowski was installed as associate to the bishop. Klonowski will minister primarily in the areas of stewardship and urban strategy for MCS.

ORDAINED:

Jane Rymut, called to Grace, Aurora, and Matthew Marohl, called to Grace, LeGrange, were ordained.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED:

- A resolution approving the Fund for Mission, a stewardship initiative that seeks to raise five million dollars in seed money for mission efforts and provide stewardship enrichment for congregations.
- A resolution on police accountability approving the appointment of a synod representative to the Coalition to End Police Torture and Brutality, a project of Citizens Alert.
- A resolution on equipping the saints to do justice, which includes establishing a synod-sponsored conference, "Do Justice: Equipping the Saints."
- A resolution seeking changes to the procedures for electing bishops that will be presented to the 1999 churchwide assembly.

- A resolution requesting the ELCA church council to direct the Division for Outreach to continue funding new and existing deaf ministries and to increase the funds allocated to deaf ministries to \$150,000.

- A resolution adopting 1999 salary guidelines for rostered persons in the synod.



ELECTED LAY MEMBERS

Cynthia Jurisson, Darlene Erickson, Gail Howard, Cassandra Chandler, Dorothy Stein, Josephine Schrader, Gretchen McDowell, Ivan Perez, Wm. Laddison Waldo, Douglas Felten, Richard Moen, George Zage, Robert Radtke, Raymond Bebee.

ELECTED CLERGY

Melody Beckman Eastman, Mary Anderson, Cynthia Hileman, Michele Robinson, Montgomery Johnson, Roger Schindel, Dayton Williams, Lawrence Clark, Roger Timm.

UNITED ► 30A

"the journey" think we're moving too fast, others think we're dragging our feet. But together in Christ we press on to share God's love.

Together we:

- Reach to God—with many forms of spiritually uplifting worship that celebrate God, renew faith, and change lives.
- Reach to grow—by inviting people of all ages, genders, and abilities, especially the unchurched, to the struggle and joy of growth in the Christian faith and life.
- Reach to serve—by providing a

place where all God's people, with diverse social, economic, racial, and cultural realities and needs, find comfort, care, and peace.

Our dreams are many. We look forward to building a community campus for the 21st century, to calling a pastoral team, to organizing community programming, and to "Making Christ Known" on Chicago's northwest side.

We are not alone on "the journey." We are blessed with the support of Bishop Olsen and Lutheran Brotherhood, which funds our truly inspiring team of facilitators from

Unbounded Grace who encourage us to make *bold* decisions for the future. We're thankful for our pastors, past and present, who keep us focused on our mission. We're appreciative of the prayers and hopes of our brothers and sisters in the Lutheran church that inspire us to be courageous.

Our journey will never end. God's people are a dynamic lot, always on the move. We are meant to move on, not dig in. It's basic to our nature as the great work given us in Matthew 28:19-20, a work that begins with the word *GO!*