

ST. PETER'S BY THE LAKE LUTHERAN CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

St. Peter's by the Lake is a congregation situated in the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg and just a few kilometers from its centre. It was established to cater for English speaking Lutherans in these areas and has become a truly South African congregation with members from many different cultures and backgrounds. The Congregation has prayerfully sought its calling and defined its mission with the following words:



REMAIN IN CHRIST TO HELP HEAL AND GROW... Realizing that the Gospel is about healing and that every Christian should endeavour to grow spiritually, as well as to be an instrument in the healing and growth of others, this mission statement defines our personal challenge and our responsibility to others. In this way the congregation sees its calling as going beyond catering for Lutherans in our area.

St. Peter's is also a congregation that is very active in the community. A homeless project, which is a joint venture with the churches in our area, attracts over 100 less fortunate people to St. Peter's on a Wednesday, where they receive a food parcel, can see a doctor and a social worker and receive a hot meal. St. Peter's Child Care is a growing special foster care project that caters for orphans affected by HIV/Aids. It was started in this congregation and now networks with many others. It has established 7 homes with 26 children and is in the process of expanding. We are also involved in a project in Kenya, where a former member has established a mission hospital and a congregation.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW



Lutheran churches existed in Johannesburg, but the services were held in German or Swedish only. It was therefore decided in the late 1950's to establish an English speaking Lutheran Church, so that those Lutherans who had married English-speaking spouses, could attend services and their children attend Sunday School classes as well.

St. Peter's by the Lake Lutheran Church was established by "The Board of Trustees for Extension Work in Southern Africa" in co-operation with "The Lutheran World Federation" based in Geneva, Switzerland, who would lend the money required.

The first Pastor to be called from the U.S.A. was David Nelson with his wife and two small children. They lived in the house at 43 Lower Park Drive in Parkview, which was to become the home of St. Peter's.

The first service was held on 19 February 1961 in Parktown North, as "Ecclesiastical Rights" had not been granted to hold services in a house. The first service was well attended by 65 people, but subsequent services were rather poorly attended. Nevertheless they persevered in spite of the lack of support. It was decided by the "Board" to buy the property at 43 Lower Park Drive and when "Rights" had been granted the services were held in the lounge of the house. The property cost £7231, 3 shillings and 6 pence (R14, 462-35). This money was loaned from the Lutheran World Federation. The Nelsons continued to live in the house, and the furniture had to be cleared every week, to enable the services to take place. The first service took place in July 1961 and Sunday

School started on 5 November in the out buildings. The congregation was officially established on 10 December 1961. Pastor Nelson left in February 1965 and while a new Pastor was being sought, Pastor Carroll F. Ellertse, an American Lutheran Missionary minister held the fort for 16 months.

The second Pastor to answer the call was Earl L Anderson and under his guidance plans were laid to build a Church, an education block and an office block, which were all very much needed. The cost of the buildings amounted to approximately R72, 000-00. The Lutheran World Federation donated half of this money and the other half was to be paid by the congregation. This money was borrowed from the Lutheran World Federation and repaid in full within a few years.

On 1 September 1968 the Ground Breaking took place at which everyone present was able to dig one spade full of earth to cut the foundations of the church. A very moving dedication service took place on 27 July 1969 and was attended by many dignitaries. Sunday School tables and chairs, an alter rail, pulpit and lectern were built by three of the members over many months. Each family donated towards one hymnal and a church in the States shipped out some hymnals for our use. Small black hymnals were also donated. An organ was purchased, for R5, 700-00, which was originally built for the DRC. church in Bothaville, where it was first installed in 1920.

This 17 rank instrument was completely rebuilt by Mr. E. Fehrle and Co. by Christmas 1969. In rebuilding, the organ was redesigned and changed from a pneumatic action to an electric action.

In keeping with the name, St. Peter's, the baptismal font was to be a simple, unadorned rock. Early in 1969 the William Nicol highway was being rebuilt. A lot of blasting took place, scattering huge rocks. A rock was chosen and carted back to the church in Pastor's car. The paraments were made and embroidered by some of the W.O.S.P.S. (Women of St. Peters)

St. Peter's has been a full member of ELCSA (N-T) since 1984.

The building of the manse started in March 1988 and was completed in August 1988. The Werneckes were able to move in after dedication of the buildings in August 1988. In July 1989 the Garden of Remembrance was established and plaques commemorating those who have passed away are put up on the wall of the church.

At that time, one worship service was held on Sunday mornings with the occasional service in the evening.

Twice a year a church service was broadcast on radio by the S.A.B.C. Sunday School took place after the worship services. Adult Bible study took place in the lounge while the children were in class.

Pastors who succeeded Pastor Anderson were Pastor Neville B. Kretzmann (July 1970 – August 1976), Pastor Mark Hestenes (September 1976 – July 1983), Pastor Andreas Wernecke (February 1984 – June 2000) and our present Pastor Edwin B. Dedekind (November 2000).

CHANGES

St. Peter's has gone through many processes and changes in the last years. Originally being a mainly white suburb congregation it has come to represent the true demographics of South Africa. It is a congregation which represents many different cultures and backgrounds. In the last years we have tried to accommodate people who do not relate to the liturgical style of worship. St. Peter's now offers a liturgical service and a contemporary service with a worship team. These services offer people a choice and they can decide which style suites them. This has attracted younger members and a large proportion of the church goers are under 25.



CHALLENGES

The greatest challenge of St. Peter's by the Lake is to offer a spiritual home for people that live in a very demanding environment. Most people come to Johannesburg because of their careers and many just stay here for a short period of their lives. This means that we have great fluctuation of members and the core group of the congregation constantly changes. A main challenge at St. Peter's is to constantly find new people and encourage members to get involved.

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CURRENT SERVICE

TIMES: Sundays: 09:00am Liturgical Service with Children's Church
10:30am Contemporary Service with Children's
Holy Communion:
Liturgical Services: 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month
Contemporary Services: 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month
Children's Church parallel to every service
Youth Ministry on Friday evenings at 7pm and every Sunday afternoon

