

## History of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

In late 1965, the mission-minded people of Summit County planted the idea of a new Lutheran Church in Hudson. The American Lutheran, Lutheran Church in America and Missouri Synods agreed the new church should follow the Missouri Synod since it owned 14 acres of property on Ravenna Street in Hudson. By the summer of 1966, the Ohio District Mission Board issued a call for a pastor, and Rev. Robert M. Raabe answered the call to come and establish a new congregation in Hudson.

By early fall, weekly Bible studies and planning sessions were underway. This group selected the name Gloria Dei Lutheran Church because they felt that it was being "born" to the glory of God. The first full Sunday service took place on October 30, 1966 at Evamere School. Worship supplies were gathered from many sources: 37 tattered hymnals from St. James, Cleveland; Communionware from Our Redeemer, Solon; an altar cross, Lutheran Church of the Covenant; flower vases, St. John's, South Euclid; a portable altar and lectern made at the Cleveland Boys School on Hines Hill Road; and paraments, hand sewn by women of the new church. At the end of the year Pastor Raabe wrote: 'We had made a BEGINNING, humble though it was, and the promises of God seemed certain as we pointed toward the future.'

In January 1967, Charter membership Sunday, 69 communicants officially became members of Gloria Dei, and by the following year they had broken ground on the first of the three-phase building project. The first unit included a chapel, offices, and a fellowship hall and Sunday school space in the basement. By December 1968, the cornerstone of the building was laid. Throughout the construction process many volunteers were used in order to keep costs down; much of the interior -finishing work and landscaping was done by groups of men, women and teens. The members also continued to work on increasing membership and community outreach projects.

After a little more than two and a half years of meeting at Evamere, the membership had sprouted to 180 baptized members, and had a place they could call God's home. On May 4, 1969 over 400 attended the Gloria Dei celebration Service of Entry and Dedication; Praise and Thanksgiving.

Over the next few years, the congregation experienced steady growth and continued to expand its programs including: a women's guild focusing on community outreach as well as internal projects; a couples' and a men's club for fellowship, study and evangelism; Bible studies; vacation Bible school; adult and children's choirs, and mission and social outreach. By 1974, Gloria Dei had become a vibrant worshipping and working church.

On February 16, 1975 Pastor Ronald E. Duer was installed as the congregation's new head Pastor. Under his leadership, Gloria Dei reached the 100-family mark by its 1977 ten year anniversary. With the firm establishment of Gloria Dei within the Hudson community, a missional emphasis became its integral focus, sending financial support to several local and world organizations, hosting needs drives for shelters and outreach organizations, and involvement in the local community.

The \$500,000 second phase wing was dedicated in 1988, doubling the size of the church and allowing space for a preschool. With the continuing increase in membership, the size of the staff increased as well to include: Director of Christian Education, Music Director, Preschool Director, Teachers, Teachers' aides, Deaconess, Youth Director and Office Administrator.

As we celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> year, our membership has increased to a total baptized membership of 543. With Reverend Wayne Koenig leading us, we continue our mission of: *Gathering People to Christ, Building Believers in Christ, Serving the World as Christ.*