



History of Hope Lutheran Church

II. Between Coward's and Mary's Creeks and north of Chigger Creek

The land on which Hope Lutheran Church is founded, lies in the present day city of Friendswood and was once inhabited by native Americans. Unlike the tribes in other parts of Texas, many of whom were agricultural and somewhat peaceful, the Karankawas were rather fierce nomads who scavenged for their food. Archeologists have found the remains of a Karankawa Indian village beside Clear Creek, about 8 miles from the present site of Friendswood, giving us good reason to think that they may have camped beside Chigger Creek on the plot on which the sanctuary of Hope Lutheran Church is now located. The tribe was roving around this area around 1200 AD.

The Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca encountered the Karankawas when he and his crew were shipwrecked on Galveston Island in 1528. Held captive by the Indians for eight years, he was able to survive by serving them as a trader and healer. Because of the reputation of the Karankawas as cannibals, one can assume the Spaniard was slow to accept an invitation to a potluck dinner.

Claimed by Spain, the land was opened for wider settlement in the early 1800's and Moses Austin made his application for a land grant to the Spanish Governor which was approved in 1821; he died before he could carry out his plan to settle 300 American families in Texas. His son, Stephen F. Austin was awarded grants covering the area in which Friendswood is located. This land was part of the Austin Colony which was parceled out via the grant made to John R. Williams in July 1824. We would recognize the names some of the other grantees such as John Dickinson, Thomas Choate and Warren D.C Hall, as their names now adorn area landmarks.

The area now known as Friendswood was included in a parcel referred to as the "John R. Williams or Sarah Mckissick League" eventually ended up being owned by millionaire J.C. League, a Galveston resident. The land lay between Coward's Creek, a branch of Clear Creek named after Needham Coward, another early settler in the area, and Mary's Creek, sometimes known as St. Mary's Creek.

This area lay north of Chigger Creek, so named by settlers passing through the area who were camped on the little stream and became so infested with chiggers as they passed through the timber that they could not sleep. Awake and alert when they were attacked by a savage band of Indians later that night, they were able to fight them off; credit for their lives was given to the chiggers and they gratefully named the stream Chigger Creek.

I. Introduction

The members of Hope Lutheran Church in Friendswood, Texas have been called by a Gracious Lord to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with one another, our community and the world. We joyfully acknowledge His guidance since the founding of our congregation in 1962 in leading us to pursue our mission: "Building a Reaching Community with Christ."

Building on Word and Sacraments, with the dedication and concern of our pastors, ministers, staff and membership - and with brick and mortar - we have provided programs, ministries and facilities and that have allowed us to consistently expand our outreach to those in need of the Gospel and to those in need of help from caring Christians. We have cared for one another and provided a church home where the Gospel is preached and the sacraments administered, where adults and children grow in their knowledge of the Lord, where we interact socially, and yes, a place where we also have fun.

We have grown from the eight families that first met as a mission church to a congregation of over 800 members today, one that has touched the lives of generations of Christian families over the past five decades.

As we offer our thanks and praise to our merciful God for fifty years of blessings to His church at Hope, we ask Him to lead us forward into the future, strengthening our resolve to continue to reach out with our time and treasures to share the saving Gospel of Christ to His world.

III. A Quaker Colony in Friendswood

Francis Jacob Brown was born to devout Quaker parents Ham and Eliza Brown on July 17, 1850 in Randolph, Indiana; Ham had joined with the Quakers in England before coming to America. Francis Jacob, or Frank as he would later be known, was a birthright member of Jericho Friends Meeting at Randolph and would continue in the Quaker faith throughout his life until his death in Friendswood, Texas on June 16, 1929.

Ham moved his family to Iowa by covered wagon. As a young man, Frank made his way to Kansas with his brother Edgar and settled near Emporia, where they established friendships with other Quaker families. During his stay in this area, Frank worked as a harvest hand, a hired hand for the Santa Fe Railroad, and buffalo hunter, all the while encountering and fighting wild Indians in the vicinity. He also participated in the Adobe Walls fight on June 27, 1874 where 28 frontiersmen fought off over 700 Comanche, Cheyenne and Kiowa Indians who were angry over the wholesale killing of buffalo by the white hunters.

Frank Brown and Mary Jane Allen, the daughter of Alfred and Nancy Allen were married on October 18, 1876 in the Fairview Quaker settlement near Halstead, Kansas. It was here that Frank claimed that the Lord showed him the plan for his life; he was to found a Quaker settlement and help build a church and school in a strange land.

Farming and stock raising occupied Frank and Mary and their growing family until his wanderlust overcame him and he traveled to the Quaker settlement in Estacado in the Panhandle of Texas before he decided to move with his family to California. Not liking the sand and heat of this region, Frank and Mary and their four children moved their family back to Kansas and then finally to the Quaker Colony in Estacado. After another move back to Kansas where Frank went into business and applied for a patent for pumps and gears for windmills, he heard from an acquaintance about the wonderful warm climate and strawberry country around Alvin, Texas.

Frank traveled to Alvin first and then telegraphed for his family to join them. Mary and the children arrived in Alvin on February 15, 1895 just after the biggest snow storm in the history of the Gulf Coast Country of Texas. They expected to see strawberries and orange blossoms but saw only piles of snow two and three feet deep.

Hoping to build his beautiful dream colony in the area, Frank and Mary would pack the children into the wagon, searching for a spot to buy a tract of land. His set out to look for his "Promised Land" and a place to build a house and start a Friends Settlement. They took trips with the Alistus Lewis family, sightseeing places like Old Virginia Point and camping on the bay.

He heard of a tract of virgin land with natural drainage near Clear Creek and set out with the Lewises one day to visit it. Their trail led through some very black waxy land, some timber and beautiful prairie. The piece of land for sale lay between Coward's and

Mary's Creeks. From a clearing in the oaks and pines, Frank decided that this was undoubtedly the land of his vision.

Frank immediately went to see J. C. League, the Galveston man who owned the land. After convincing Mr. League that he wanted the land to establish a Friends, or Quaker, Settlement. After explaining to Mr. League that William Penn was also a Quaker, a deal was struck.

So, on July 16, 1895 1538 acres of the original Williams/McKissick league in Galveston County, Texas became Friendswood.

IV. Here Come the Lutherans

As Friendswood continued to grow, a number of Lutheran families had also moved into the area; however, there was no Lutheran church in the vicinity and families had to travel into Houston to attend Mount Olive Lutheran Church or Zion Lutheran Church in Pasadena, two of the nearest congregations.

Meeting in the home of one of these families in the Fall of 1961, approximately 8 persons discussed the possibility of petitioning the Mission Board of the Texas District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) to consider a mission church for the area. A decision was made to petition the Mission Board and the group continued to plan for a new Lutheran church in Friendswood.

The Mission Board, under the direction of the President of the Texas District Carl Heckmann, responded by issuing a call to the Rev. Larry Rynearson of Dallas, Texas to work to establish an LCMS congregation in the Friendswood area. His call also included working to establish a second congregation in the Clear Lake area.

Pastor Rynearson accepted this call in September 1962 arrived with his wife and two children shortly thereafter. He immediately began work in Friendswood, contacting the families making the request of the Mission Board, knocking on doors of numerous residents and shaking hands and introducing himself to anyone he met at the local gas station, at the schools, shopping for groceries, and anyplace else he came into contact with people.

Since the congregation was not yet formed and there was no sanctuary in which to worship, Pastor Rynearson approached the Forest Park East Cemetery in Webster, Texas, about the use of their chapel for worship services. The first worship service in the chapel was held on November 18, 1962 at 8 AM with Sunday School at 9 AM; a graded Sunday School program was begun in December.

So, the Lutherans had come to Friendswood. They had no church building; they were not yet chartered as a congregation of the LCMS and they had no official name. But they were here and here they would remain for the next half a century, steadfastly proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.

V. Hope Lutheran Church of Friendswood, Texas

Let's Get Organized

The first organizational meeting of Hope Lutheran Church was held on January 6, 1963 with the purpose of adopting a constitution and electing officers. The proposed constitution was presented to the assembly by Skip Buettner, Chairman of the Constitution Committee; after discussion and numerous changes, a motion to adopt the constitution was passed.

Also adopted at this meeting was the slate of officers for the congregation as presented by Bob Fricke, Chairman of the Nominations Committee. The first group of officers of Hope Lutheran Church included:

President -----	Skip Buettner
Vice-President -----	Walter Sinclair
Secretary -----	Edwin Geissler
Treasurer/Financial Sec.-	Clare Kuiper

Members of the five boards were also elected at this meeting:

Board of Elders:	Oscar Dube, Chairman Bob Fricke Al Scarborough
Board of Stewardship:	Paul Janssen, Chairman Les Stolle Woody White
Board of Missions:	Bill Sauer, Chairman James Flowers Bill Struckmeyer
Board of Finance:	Clare Kuiper, Chairman Oscar Dube Bill Struckmeyer

Members present at the first organizational meeting and signing the minutes were:

Pastor Rynearson	Robert W. Fricke, Jr.	Albert L. Scarborough, Jr.
W. Sauer, Jr.	Claire B. Kuiper	Edwin Geissler
Paul Janssen	Les Stolle	Bill Struckmeyer
L.O. Dube	W.M. White	W. Sinclair
C.L. Dietrich	W.L. Buettner	

Hope would sign the Constitution of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in April 1963 and was accepted as a member of the Texas District of the LCMS.

We Need Land for a Church

Approximately 6 acres of land had been bought by the Mission Board of the Texas District, located at the current intersection of FM 518 and FM 528. This was to be the site of the new sanctuary for Hope.

It was felt by the members of Hope's Building and Planning Committee that this tract lay too close to what would become a very commercial site and the church would have no control over whatever structures were built there or whatever types of businesses that would be established.

At a special Voter's Meeting for Hope held on February 27, 1963, attended by the Rev. A.O. Rast and Mr. Hellbusch of the Mission Board of the Texas District, a special request was made of the Mission Board. The Chairman of Hope's Planning and Building Committee, Oscar Dube, stated that the congregation desired to make an even trade for 6 acres farther south of the intersection on FM 518 bordering Chigger Creek. Pastor Rast suggested that Hope write the Mission Board, giving all the details of the trade and make the request for a swap.

In response to Hope's request, the Mission Board approved the trade and Hope acquired 6 acres adjacent to Camp Manison, owned by Tom and Robin Manison. Hope was now free to plan construction of a new house of worship.

Let's Build a Church

Wasting no time, a contract was signed with Fleetwood Construction Company of Houston in December 1963 to build a new sanctuary on the newly traded-for parcel of land and would be located on FM 518. The roof line of the sanctuary was designed to rise skyward in a symbol of prayer, inspired by the 16th Century woodcut "Folded Hands" by Albrecht Dürer.

The initial construction would include a wing jutting southward from the sanctuary containing a small meeting room and an adjacent kitchen/meeting room, both connected to the sanctuary via a covered walkway. Another two-room wing jutting northward from the sanctuary would contain a small secretarial space and the pastor's office.

A groundbreaking ceremony was conducted by Pastor Rynearson shortly after the contract was signed. Total cost of this new construction would be the enormous sum of \$91,000.00.

The first service was held in the new sanctuary on August 30, 1964 and the structure was dedicated in a special dedication service on September 20, 1964. The Rev. A.O. Rast, Director of the Texas District Mission Board, spoke at the dedication service.

We're Here!

The Lutherans had arrived in Friendswood and had organized themselves to become Hope Lutheran Church. They now began to worship in a beautiful new sanctuary, thankful that God had given them the vision, courage and energy to begin a ministry in a community where no Lutheran church had existed.

While its founding families were predominantly Lutheran (and German) in background, people of all faiths were made to feel welcome; families previously belonging to many denominations began to arrive at this beautiful new house of worship, using The Lutheran Hymnal with its many yet unfamiliar hymns and its liturgical format for worship.

Above all else, this new Lutheran church was a place: where one would steadfastly hear the Gospel of Christ preached each week and participate in the Eucharist; where their children could be baptized; where children and adults alike could learn more of the life of Jesus and ancient people of faith via Sunday School and Confirmation classes; and where all could share their faith, demonstrating and experiencing the care and concern for one another that Christ has shown for all people.

A Parsonage is Procured

Because Pastor Rynearson, his wife and two children had been living in a small apartment, it was felt that it would be advantageous for the pastor and the congregation to have him and his family closer to the church and in a more relaxed family atmosphere. In a special Voter's Meeting on July 24, 1963, permission was given for the Parsonage Committee to purchase a home in the Lori Woods subdivision; purchase price was \$20,000.00.

Yet More Space is Needed

Space for Sunday School and other church activities would continue to be a priority in this young congregation and would lead to further facilities expansion projects. To meet this growing need, several expansions to the original structure and the addition of several buildings would be completed over the next several years.

First was the parish hall/Sunday School classroom addition in 1966 which was connected to the original two-room wing extending southward from the sanctuary; it would provide meeting space, several additional classrooms and a nursery. This addition was constructed in a way that provided an enclosed courtyard with a small grassy area in the middle with covered walkway all around. Entrance to the area was achieved through a walkway from the parking lot and via a door from the narthex of the sanctuary. Cost of this addition was \$35,000.00.

A separate building would be constructed in 1968 to provide space for Boy Scout and other youth activities. The location of this building was south of the main structure toward Chigger Creek.

Additional space for Sunday School and a large general meeting area was gained in 1969 when the inner courtyard adjacent to the sanctuary was enclosed.

No Need to Call the Police

While knocking on doors when he first arrived in Friendswood, Pastor Rynearson knocked on the door of Mitch and Artha Wright. Mitch, a professional musician at that time, was also working part-time as a policeman in Friendswood and taking classes in law enforcement; in response to Pastor Rynearson's invitation, they became members of Hope (they remain members today).

Mitch would be appointed Chief of Police in 1964 and would remain in that position until his retirement in 1989. While Chief of Police, Mitch served several terms as President of Hope Lutheran Church and served on various boards and committees. Artha later served Hope as Office Secretary for Pastor Steinke.

VI. The Early Years

Worship

Prior to moving into the new sanctuary, a second Sunday morning worship was initiated on February 23, 1964 and was continued after the move due to the growing attendance. The congregation continued to use The Lutheran Hymnal as its liturgical and musical guide in the worship service; the book was first published by the Concordia Publishing House in 1941 and would be used at Hope until the 1980's.

Although an occasional guest speaker from the Texas District or from an area Lutheran church might preach, Pastor Rynearson faithfully occupied the pulpit each Sunday, becoming well known in the community for his brief, "to the point" sermons.

Music for the liturgy and hymn accompaniment was provided by organist Joanne Dube via the new Allen organ in the choir loft.

Sunday School

Due to the shortage of Sunday School classroom space in the new facility, a goodly amount of creativeness was called for to find places to hold classes for the growing number of young people. Outdoor classes were generally a hit with the kids but less so on rainy, sometimes cold, often oppressively hot Sundays in the Texas Gulf Coast region.

Tom and Robin Manison, Hope's neighbors and owners of Camp Manison would be of great help in providing Sunday School space in one or more of the camp's buildings. A novel approach to solving the space problem was the offer of the Manison's to allow use of one of the camp's parked school-type buses as a classroom. Glenda McDonald, one of the dedicated early teachers, would act as teacher/driver/conductor for a happy group of young people - a group that would continue to grow in number as fame of the unique classroom spread.

Ever resourceful, the congregation also utilized the activities room of the mayor's house for a high school Sunday School classroom on Sundays. Although not a member of Hope, Pastor Rynearson had used his friendship with Mayor Ralph Lowe to provide the space.

A Daughter Congregation

When Pastor Rynearson was called to Friendswood, the initial call document stated that he would attempt to establish a second Lutheran Church in the area. Although his primary responsibility would be to Hope, the congregation would assist in creating a new congregation in the Clear Lake area very close to the NASA space center.

A number of Hope families who would drive to Friendswood from the Clear Lake area each Sunday were encouraged to participate in the start up of the new congregation. On May 15, 1966, a groundbreaking service was held for Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Nassau Bay across from the space center.

A Retreat Center

Land was given to Hope by member Bill Walsh for a retreat center where church groups could meet for workshops, planning sessions, special presentations and other retreat activities. The retreat, named Shalom, was located between Alvin and Angleton, southwest of Hope. The intent was to provide a place away from home and work where church leaders from Hope and other congregations could focus on issues in a rural setting over a weekend. The Board of Directors of Shalom would also buy a house for these activities.

Some "Firsts" at Hope

As a new congregation, Hope would establish many "Firsts" during the early years of its existence. Some of these "Firsts" are:

- o First child baptized: Allen Dudley Catterson on January 27, 1963.
- o First Confirmation Class confirmed on June 6, 1963: Steve Buettner, Carol Kuiper and Murray Woods.
- o Ladies Guild organized on May 13, 1964.
- o Walther League organized September 10, 1964.
- o First Wedding at Hope on October 9, 1964: Faye Ellen Patterson and Bud Coleman.
- o First mid-week Bible Class on January 20, 1965 at the home of Betty Koenig.
- o First Vacation Bible School held June 28 through July 2, 1965.

A Director of Christian Education

Because of the continued growth in the number of young people at Hope, a decision was made to call a Director of Christian Education who would have responsibility for overseeing the Sunday School, confirmation and other youth education programs. He would also be responsible for organizing teen activities.

A call was issued to Steve Sonnenberg on January 11, 1970. He would travel to Friendswood with his wife and two children and be installed on May 24, 1970.

Pastor Ryneanson Accepts a Call

After laying the groundwork for a mission congregation in Friendswood where there had been no Lutheran presence and shepherding a fledgling church through its early years, Pastor Ryneanson accepted a call to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. He announced his acceptance of this call on September 20, 1970 and stated that he would be returning to the congregation which he had served his vicarage..

instruction in the Sacrament of the Altar such that they would begin to commune in the congregation two years before they were confirmed. It was felt that there was no meaningful reason to delay participation in communion and that there would be benefit to separating these two extremely important events in the Christian lives of young persons.

Also in 1972, Hope's first Epiphany Tree Burning Service was held. Christmas trees of members were brought to the church in January and stacked in an open area on the church grounds. After a brief service recognizing the trees and other symbols of the birth of Jesus and his epiphany, the stack was set on fire and quickly consumed.

The ritual burning was short-lived after the Friendswood Fire Department ruled against such burning within the city limits. Future Epiphanies would see the members bring the trees to a collection area where they would then be taken to Galveston and be used to prevent beach and dune erosion.

Pastor Hobus Accepts a Call to Kansas

In May 1973, Pastor Hobus accepted a call to Redeemer Lutheran Church in Wichita, Kansas after having returned an earlier call to another congregation. The Hobus Family had inspired many in the congregation with their dedication to God's Church at Hope and with the example they set with their close family relationships. With sadness, the congregation accepted his request for a peaceful release.

Prior to Pastor Hobus' leaving for Wichita, Steve Sonnenberg, Hope's Director of Christian Education, had previously accepted a call to Faith Lutheran Church in Topeka, Kansas. Thus, Hope Lutheran Church of Friendswood, Texas would lose two of its valued ministers to the state of Kansas in just a few months.

Pastor Steinke Heads Hope's Call

The Rev. Dr. Peter L. Steinke accepted a call from Hope to fill the pastoral vacancy and was installed on November 11, 1973. A native New Yorker, Pastor Steinke was the executive director of Janus House, a program for emotionally disturbed children in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, when he accepted the call to Hope.

He and his wife, a native Texan, and their four young children moved into the parsonage initially but asked the congregation if they could buy their own home in the Sun Meadow subdivision on FM 528 west of Friendswood. The voters agreed and a monthly housing allotment was given the pastor; the parsonage was sold shortly afterward.

Following the tradition of his predecessors, Pastor Steinke was an engaging sermonizer and would have a book of his sermons published. His skills as a personal and family

VII. Forward to the Future

Welcome Pastor Hobus!

Working with our Vacancy Pastor Don Zimbrick, the Call Committee moved quickly to extend a call to Pastor Robert A. Hobus of Dallas on November 22, 1970. Pastor Hobus, a Midwesterner by birth, was working on a district/synodical program in the Dallas area to develop techniques for reaching out to apartment dwellers who had no church home; he had recently received his masters degree in counseling from Southern Methodist University.

Pastor Hobus enthusiastically accepted the call to the parish ministry at Hope in a fast growing suburban area near the NASA space center and was installed on January 24, 1971. Upon their arrival in Friendswood, he and his wife and their four sons moved into the parsonage in Lori Woods but moved into an apartment for a time while the parsonage was renovated to accommodate four active young boys.

Making the rapid transition from apartment ministry to a growing suburban parish, Pastor Hobus quickly established himself as a noteworthy preacher with a willingness to try new approaches to ministry, all with a wry sense of humor. During one sermon while speaking of God's righteousness that covers our sinfulness as a beautiful robe covers our ragged clothing, he began slowly to unbutton the upper part of his robe to reveal a most hideous, loud, multi-colored shirt that provided a great sermon illustration.

The Green Building

Seemingly ever in need of more space for a myriad of activities, the congregation decided to construct a multi-purpose activities building, one that was big enough for athletics such as basketball and volleyball. It would have a sizeable kitchen area and an upstairs meeting/class room for the youth. A bond program was established to pay for the construction and most of the bonds were bought by individual members of Hope.

It was decided to utilize members of the congregation with building skills to do most of the work. With the exception of a thunderstorm with heavy rains occurring during the pouring of the concrete slab, the construction went safely and uneventfully to completion. The outside corrugated siding was a friendly shade of green. Thus the structure would be referred to as the "Green Building" throughout its lifetime.

Several Innovations

In response to an LCMS recommendation to congregations, Hope conducted its first "early communion" class in 1972. In this practice, the rite of confirmation would continue to take place at the end of the eighth grade but young people would receive earlier

counselor would be put to good use in this still growing congregation.

Administrative Space is Sorely Needed

The church office and office of the pastor, created when the original sanctuary was erected, provided insufficient space for Hope's administrative needs, including that needed for additional staff.

The original wing jutting northward from the sanctuary was expanded to include a larger office for the pastor, a second office for vicar or minister of youth, a centralized reception/secretarial space, a large conference room and a work room housing copiers and other equipment. The new space was occupied in June 1976.

Vicars and a new Minister of Education

While Hope was not quite ready to add a second full-time pastor, it was felt that a vicar - a seminarian who had completed his third year of his seminary training - would be a useful addition to the staff. He could help with many pastoral tasks while gaining much needed experience in the pastoral ministry before returning to the seminary for his fourth and final year of classes.

Hope's first vicar was Bob Bjornstad from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and he began serving Hope in August 1975. Our second vicar was Paul Rowald, also from Concordia St. Louis, our first married vicar, and he began his vicarage at Hope in August 1976.

With a continuing focus on young people, Hope issued a call to Alan D. Gunderman to serve as Minister of Education, Evangelism and Youth. He was installed in that position in 1977 and would serve until 1981.

Chigger Creek Makes its Presence Known

After almost three days of continuous rainfall due to a tropical depression over the gulf coast in July 1979, the normally sleepy Chigger Creek awoke; it was normally a quiet, sleepy, bayou-type stream where the Hobus boys could catch an occasional catfish.

But now it overflowed its banks and marched toward the sanctuary and other church buildings. The water invaded the sanctuary several inches in depth, necessitating extensive cleanup and new carpeting. Some church records/documents stored in cardboard boxes were damaged by the rising water.

Numerous families in the congregation suffered more serious flooding to their homes when the other area creeks overflowed their banks. Some member homes in

Friendswood and some as far away as Houston suffered significant damage.

Pastor Steinke Accepts a Call

In February 1982, Pastor Steinke accepted a position as Director of Clergy Care with Lutheran Social Services of Texas. While his time at Hope was exceedingly beneficial to the congregation in all areas of his ministry at Hope, he had felt an on-going need to apply his skills in counseling to an area that increasingly needed pastoral ministry for pastors.

A Texan Comes Home

Pastor Ralph W. Hobratschk, a native of Littlefield, Texas, accepted our call and was installed as pastor of Hope on January 16, 1983. A graduate of Concordia College in Austin, Pastor Hobratschk would be our first minister born in Texas and the first to attend Concordia in Austin.

At the time of his call to Hope, he was serving as Senior Pastor of Epiphany Lutheran Church in Lake Worth in southern Florida. He and his wife were expecting their first child when they arrived in Friendswood and would begin purchase of a home in the Sun Meadow subdivision.

He would continue in our tradition of liturgical worship at Hope and of enthusiastic, strongly Gospel focused, yet practical, sermons; as a musician and trumpet player, he would be an active participant in all musical aspects of worship. Pastor Hobratschk would also provide the vision and energy to accommodate continued growth of the congregation.

A New Worship Tradition

After using The Lutheran Hymnal to guide our liturgy and hymn singing since the founding of Hope in 1962, the congregation made a decision to look at the new Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW) as a potential replacement. The new hymnal was the product of years of joint effort by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada and first copyrighted in 1978.

After a group of members attended an area workshop featuring the new "Green" hymnal, it was decided to introduce the LBW to the congregation via a specially prepared booklet that illustrated the new worship settings and some of the new hymns. The new Green hymnal was adopted by Hope in 1985.

While transition to the new liturgies and music would take a bit of practice, the livelier

year and, after a year of vicarage at Faith Lutheran Church in Owasso, Oklahoma, they returned to St. Louis where he graduated. Their first call was to Hope in Friendswood. After a five year ministry at Hope, Pastor Lasch would accept a call as Senior Pastor to Concordia Lutheran Church in Eules, Texas.

A native of Missouri, Pastor Jon E. Petering accepted a call to Hope and would be installed and ordained here on July 2, 2006. After earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Missouri in 1992, he took a position in the St. Louis area and then transferred to Jackson, Tennessee where he became a manager for Hancock Fabrics. He met Sheri at Concordia Lutheran Church in Jackson and they were married in July 1966. After working in the Jackson area for several more years, they moved to St. Louis where he then entered Concordia Seminary. After his vicarage at Trinity Lutheran Church in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, he returned to St. Louis where he graduated from the seminary in May 2006. He and Sheri then moved to Houston with their lovely twin daughters Abigail and Emma. Pastor Petering remains an active, vital member of Hope's ministerial staff today.

Another Parcel of Land

A final purchase of an additional 2.4 acres of land from the former Camp Manison property in July 1999 would provide needed parking space for Hope. Robin Manison would later donate an 88 foot strip of land along Leisure Lane which brought the total land available to the congregation to approximately 9 acres.

A New House of Worship

In continuous use after its dedication in 1964 for worship services, meetings, classes, graduations and other special events, and after weathering hurricanes and floods, the original sanctuary of Hope would be replaced with a larger, more modern house of worship. The older structure would continue to be used for classrooms and offices.

Groundbreaking for a new 450 seat sanctuary was held on December 12, 1993. The location of the new building lay south of the old sanctuary toward Chigger Creek; the site would be raised by large amounts of fill, making the site elevation considerably higher than that of the older building that flooded 1979.

The design called for a high peaked roof structure supported by six primary beams; the largest pair of these beams would span 140 feet, joining at 38 feet at the apex. The east and south glass walls would allow views of trees and other outside greenery by the congregation. The altar and high pulpit would be centered at the front of the chancel with a large cross attached to the stone facade behind the altar. A moveable Baptismal font could be taken from the back of the sanctuary to the altar area when the sacrament of Baptism was to be administered.

worship settings and hymn harmonizations would energize the congregation; we would eventually utilize three of the new worship settings each month.

Later, the congregation would also adopt the worship supplement to the LBW titled With One Voice and would add three new worship settings and a number of new hymns for our Sunday services.

More Vicars Are Needed

It was decided to reinstate our vicarage program in order to provide ministerial assistance for Pastor Hobratschk and the congregation. The previous two vicars had served Hope faithfully and energetically and it was felt that the year spent at our church by a vicar would continue to be of great help to us and our synod.

The next five vicars were from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and were all married before arriving in Friendswood. Scott G. Sommerfeld began his vicarage in August 1985 and John A. Thieme would begin his stay in August 1986.

Daniel P. Thews would begin serving in August 1987 and William S. Geis would arrive in August 1988; David E. Laue began his vicarage in August 1989. The final vicar to serve at Hope, beginning in August 1990 was James R. Herrod, a student at Concordia Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Indiana.

Our Growth Requires an Associate Pastor

Significant growth in the number and types of ministries being offered to the membership and to the community pointed to the need for more full-time pastoral staff. Although of considerable help, the vicarage program did not provide the expertise and continuity needed to share responsibilities with the Senior Pastor.

On September 21, 1997, Pastor Scott W. Kirchoff, a graduate of Concordia Seminary in Ft. Wayne was installed during a special service at Hope. A native of Indiana, he served as an infantry officer in the U.S. Army before entering the seminary. He and his wife Sonja were married in 1993 and he graduated in 1995. Pastor Kirchoff's first call was to a dual pastorate at Redeemer Lutheran Church and Peace in Christ Lutheran Church in New Jersey. Their young son Gabriel was born in January 1997. After two years at Hope, Pastor Kirchoff accepted a call as Senior Pastor to St. John Lutheran Church in Athens, Texas.

Pastor Mark F. Lasch was ordained and installed at Hope on July 16, 2000. Although born in New York, his family was transferred to Texas when he was a young boy, qualifying Pastor Lasch to be called a native Texan. While a student at Concordia University in Austin, he met Catherine and they were married in June 1994; both graduated from Concordia in 1996. He entered Concordia Seminary in St. Louis that

The balcony/choir loft would be accessed by two stairways from the narthex; the upstairs would later be expanded to accommodate a growing music program. Strikingly beautiful stained glass windows would be added at the high point in the front of the church and at the rear in the choir loft; the latter was much larger than the front window and would be highly visible to those entering the church.

A dedication service of praise and thanksgiving to our Gracious and Merciful Lord was held on October 30, 1994.

A Program for Our Tiny Treasures

Building upon the groundwork laid by earlier kindergarten and play school programs started at Hope by members dedicated to early childhood development, Hope would initiate the Tiny Treasures Early Childhood Program in 2001. The goal of the program would be to offer a variety of learning and play experiences for children 18 months to 4 years of age in a caring Christian environment.

The program would be offered to children of members of the congregation and to children of non-members in the community at large. Our opening of the program to the community has proven to be an effective means of outreach and has resulted in numerous baptisms of children whose parents were greatly influenced by the Christian focus of teachers and staff. Enrollment would grow from 54 children and 10 teachers in 2001 to a current number of 121 children and 22 teachers.

In 2004, Tiny Treasures would move into the first floor of the new Center for Faith Development and a new playground would be added adjacent to the building in 2009. The program has been ably administered by Junelle Petersen and her staff since 2001.

Two of Hope's Sons Heed God's Call

While members of the staff at Hope, two sons of the congregation were moved by God's Spirit to enter the seminary and to become ordained ministers of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Jeffrey S. Doria served as Youth Minister at Hope for five years beginning in 1992 and earned his Bachelor of Arts in Education from the University of Houston during that time. Married to his wife Margaret while at Hope, they heeded God's call to ministry and Jeff entered Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in 1997. Graduating with the Master of Divinity degree on May 18, 2001, his first call was to Trinity Lutheran Church in Corpus Christi, Texas. Jeff chose Hope for his ordination into the Office of the Holy Ministry and his Rite of Ordination was held here on June 10, 2001.

Keith R. Weise served as Choir Director at Hope after his graduation from Sam

Houston State University in 1997 with a Bachelor of Music degree; he concurrently served as Band Director at an intermediate school in the Pasadena Independent School District. A member of Hope and living in Friendswood at this time, he married his wife Deanne. After prayerful consideration, they moved to St. Louis in 2001 and Keith entered Concordia Seminary there. Graduating in May 2005 with the Master of Divinity degree, their first call was to Immanuel Lutheran Church in Altenburg, Missouri. At his request, Keith was ordained by the Rite of Ordination into the Office of the Holy Ministry at Hope on June 12, 2005.

A New All-Purpose Education Building - For Young and Old

In keeping with the master facilities plan of the congregation, a new Center for Faith Development (CFD) would be built, completed in 2003. This modern two-story building would house classroom space on the lower floor for young children and rooms for adult Bible study.

The second story, reached by several stairways and an elevator, would provide space for confirmation classes, adult Bible classes, teen activity areas, several offices, a kitchenette and a large meeting room. The meeting room would be used for congregational meetings, dinners and celebrations for church members and presentations.

Hurricane Ike would cause a need for further modifications to the CFD. While the church offices and some classrooms were still resident in the original structure, Ike would damage these areas such that they would become unuseable; mildew and mold and further roof leaks were Ike's legacy.

A contractor was hired to modify the ground floor of the CFD to provide interim office space for the entire staff utilizing the space previously used by the three adult Bible study rooms. Three Sunday School/Bible Class rooms were added upstairs on the periphery of the large meeting room.

A Fond Farewell to Old Friends

Because of deteriorating conditions in the original sanctuary complex and in the Green Building that made them unsafe and, therefore, unuseable, the congregation voted to raze both structures and to add much-needed parking space.

A contract was signed in 2009 to completely remove both structures; only the concrete slab of the Green Building would remain and be used as a site for a playground while all elements of the original sanctuary would be removed.

Both structures had served the congregation well and many fond memories remain of weddings, confirmations, baptisms dinners, games and other family events.

VIII. A Half Century of Blessings - Hope Today

Our Heavenly Father, in His infinite wisdom, directed us to begin our ministry where we were needed and has guided us for a half century to select devoted and caring pastors and other ministers, to seek skilled staff members, to implement fruitful programs, to develop our lay leaders and teachers and to build facilities that would serve Him in reaching out with the Gospel of Christ.

Today, we acknowledge His grace and mercy in coming to this point in our history where we are equipped to minister to our members, the community and to the world. We ask His blessings upon us, that we may use these people and physical resources in the most effective way in continuing to build His Church.

Organization and Structure of Our Congregation

Hope Lutheran Church is governed by a Constitution which was established by the Voting Membership of the congregation; we are duly registered in the State of Texas as a Texas corporation.

Our Constitution declares the purpose of our congregation to be: proclaiming the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; gathering in worship of Almighty God; growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord; nurturing each other by giving witness to the joy within us; and seeking to extend justice and social acceptance for all.

Regular meetings of the Voting Membership are held annually with provision made for special meetings; the officers and other members of the Board of Directors are elected by the Voting Membership.

The Board of Directors is a policy governance board and is responsible for establishing policies that carry out the Vision and Mission of the congregation and is empowered to conduct the business of the congregation. The means of implementing these policies are the responsibility of the Senior Pastor and Staff.

The Final Phase of Our Building Program

In March 2011 a contract was signed to add the final facility to our multi-year building program, one that would provide a firm foundation for our next half-century in Building Reaching Community with Christ. This new facility would be built immediately contiguous and attached to the CFD.

A large Family Life Center would provide space for a large gymnasium for basketball, volleyball and other recreation activities. A fully equipped kitchen with storage area would also be housed in this center.

Attached to the Family Life Center is the Ministry Support Center which includes offices for all ministerial and administrative staffs, work space, conference room, kitchenette and several class rooms. A covered drive-through would provide all-weather access to the combined complex.

Our Pastors

Pastor Hobratschk has served as our Senior Pastor since his installation at Hope in 1983.

Pastor Petering has served as our Associate Pastor since his installation at Hope in 2006.

Our Church Staff

Krista Beken	Director of Children's Ministries
Robin Groeper	Director of Youth Ministries
Debbie Hastly	Office Manager
Bruce Hunter	Facilities Manager
Katherine Kohn	Business Manager
Rita Henderson	Volunteer Coordinator
Junelle Petersen	Tiny Treasures Early Childhood Director
Stephanie Poyner	Director of Music

Worship

Weekly worship services include 8:00 AM and 11:00 AM services on Sunday morning and a mid-week service at 7:00 PM on Wednesdays. Mid-week Lenten services are held on Wednesday evenings throughout Lent, followed by evening services on Maunday Thursday and Good Friday.

Four morning worship services are held on Easter morning beginning with a Sunrise Service followed by services at 8:00 AM, 9:30 AM and 11:00 AM. Special worship services for celebrations that do not occur on Sunday or Wednesday such as Christmas and Thanksgiving are also held.

Hope adopted the new Lutheran Service Book (LSB) to replace the Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW) as a service guide and hymnal in 2008, while we continue to use *With One Voice*. The LSB uses some of the same liturgical settings as found in the LBW and our older TLH but introduces some newer elements and hymns.

Ministries

Hope has created and implemented a wide range of ministries for our congregation, from the youngest to the oldest and supports these ministries with staff and volunteers. Whatever the age group and whatever the activity fostered by the ministry - be it recreation, education, social interaction, music or service - the focus of all ministries is to build faith and to grow in knowledge of our Lord

Education Ministries

Faith Builders - Celebrates stages in a child's faith development, Parent/Child Class
Together with Jesus - Birth to 3 years, Parent/Child Class
Sunday School Crosstraining - Pre-K 3 to 5th Grade
Discipleship 101 - Weekly topics, Adults
Confirmation - 6th through 8th Grades
High School - 9th through 12th Grades
Women's Ministry - Selected topics/books
Men's Ministry - Selected topics/books
Friday Morning Bible Study - Selected topics/fellowship
Adult Bible Study - Today's Light Bible
The Search for God in the Postmodern World - Writings of contemporary thinkers

Music Ministries

Kindergarten Bells and Choir - Pre-K 4 through Kindergarten, Ring and Sing for Worship Services
Children's Choir - 1st through 5th Grades, Sing for Worship Services
Chimes and Bells - 1st through 5th Grades, Ring for Worship Services
Hope Bells - High School and Adults, Worship
Hope Brass - Students and Adults, Lead Worship Services
Hope Strings - Students and Adults, Lead Worship Services
Hope Woodwinds - Students and Adults, Lead Worship Services
Solo Performers - Students and Adults, Voice and instrumental in Worship Service

Children's Ministries

Vacation Bible School - New theme each year, 5 days in June
KFC & S.W.A.T - K through 5th Grade, Mid-week worship and fun
Tiny Treasures Mother's Day Out - 18 months through 2 years, Play and learn
Tiny Treasures Pre-School - 3 and 4 year olds, Provides readiness for school through learning and enrichment activities, Worship

Service Ministries

Altar Guild - Preparation for communion and provide altar paraments for Worship

evenings

Eastsiders - Adult Bible Study in leader's home
SIP Saints in Progress - Adult Bible Study in CFD on Monday mornings
Parents of Tweens and Teens - Sunday evenings in CFD

May God continue to bless our efforts as we strive to serve, teach, enlighten and share our faith.

Ushers - Assistance in Worship Service

Braille - Assemble worship materials and Bibles in Braille.

Greeters - Greets members and guests as they enter the sanctuary

Quilting "Knotty Ladies" - Prepare gift quilts for Graduates and Lutheran World Relief

Meals on Wheels - Deliver meals to the homebound

Hope's Urgent Response Team "HURT" - Crisis response team

Hope's Meal Ministry - Provide meals to families with newborn children and those having surgeries

Stephen Ministry - One-on-one Christian caregiving

Habitat for Humanity - Working to provide affordable housing for those in need

Hopefest - Fall festival and fundraiser for outreach projects and selected charities

Youth Ministries

I-Youth - Jr. High 6th through 8th grades, Wednesday evening study and fun

Sunday Morning Bible Study - Bible Study for high school students

Senior High Fellowship - High school social activities as scheduled

Brothers and Sisters in Christ B.A.S.I.C. - Bible Study and peer listening training for Senior High students

Women's and Men's Ministries

Men's Athletics - Softball as scheduled

Ladies Guild - Hope's Chapter of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, service projects and social activities

Small Group Ministries

Women's Studies - Study topics on Thursday evenings in CFD

Come as You Are - Friday evening Bible Study in leader's home

Friday Night Lights - Friday night Bible Studies for couples in CFD

M.O.M.S. Moms Offering Moms Support - Peer support for new mothers, Thursday evenings in CFD

FFFF Friday Fellowship, Faith, Food - Friday evening meditative Bible Study in leader's home

Friday Night Fruit Loops - Adult Bible Study in leader's home

Fruit of the Spirit - Tuesday morning Bible Study for retirees in leader's home

WOW Women of the Word - Selected Bible Topics in CFD Youth Area on Monday

IX. Our Senior Pastors

Hope Lutheran Church has been greatly blessed during the first fifty years of our ministry in that God has sent us gifted men to serve our congregation as Senior Pastors. He has sent us men of great faith that have been models of Christian behavior for us throughout their ministries. They have been men of vision, energy and kindness, each being able to deal with people and problems with patience and good humor.

Each of our Senior Pastors has an unfailing ability to help us apply God's Word to our lives through their sermons and teaching. They have adapted to the desires of the congregation in liturgy and music but have also led us to maintain a high quality in our worship services. For these and all other strengths and qualities so evident in these servants of the Word, we thank You Dear Lord.

The Rev. Larry W. Rynearson

Pastor Rynearson was born in Nebraska and attended high school for four years at St. John Academy in Winfield, Kansas; he attended the junior college there and he received his Associate of Arts Degree in 1951.

He then entered Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and graduated with the Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1956 after a year of vicarage at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The Bachelor of Divinity degree received by many early graduates from our seminaries would be recalled later by the schools who would then confer upon each of these graduates the Master of Divinity degree; this logical process grew from the fact that most students entering

His first call was to the Texas District of the LCMS where he was assigned to start a mission congregation in Walnut Hill, Texas. He was then sent to the Friendswood area in 1962 by the Mission Board of the Texas District to start a mission congregation there. He would arrive in Friendswood accompanied by his wife Marilyn and children Marty and Carol.

Many people, current and former members of Hope, today remember that they first met Pastor Rynearson when they answered a knock on the door of their home only to be invited to a church service being held in the chapel at the Forest Park East cemetery. While at Hope, he would also serve for four years on the Texas District Board for the Walther League.

After serving as Senior Pastor at Hope from 1962 to 1970, Pastor Rynearson accepted a call to the congregation at which he served as vicar, only this time he would arrive as the Senior Pastor.

Pastor Rynearson is retired from active ministry and resides in Glenwood Springs,

Colorado where he and his wife Laurel tour the area in an off-road vehicle, taking family and friends on excursions when they visit. Laurel is an avid hiker and serves as a naturalist in the White River National Forest. He is also compiling a book about the 92 mountain passes in Colorado.

The Rev. Dr. Robert A. Hobus

Pastor Hobus was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin on April 11, 1924 and attended Lutheran Schools there as a young boy. He attended Concordia College in Milwaukee and graduated from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in 1949, earning a Master of Divinity degree. While working on a program in the Dallas area to develop techniques for outreach to apartment areas, he earned a Master's Degree in Counseling from Southern Methodist University.

After accepting the call to Hope, he arrived in Friendswood with his wife Alice nee Jacobsmeyer and their four sons. Always amused but tolerant and caring of his sons Paul, David, Steven and Michael, the Hobus household was always a fun place to visit. He loved the outdoors and spent many happy hours hunting, fishing, gardening and bird watching, most of the time with the boys.

He also loved to read books, journals and magazines, especially the Smithsonian and flying magazines. He took great pride in receiving the Doctor of Ministry degree at age 62 and insisted that Alice and the boys address him as Doctor Hobus for an appropriate length of time.

Pastor Hobus was called to join his Savior on Saturday, November 29, 2008, with his family at his side. Hope was blessed by his zeal to share his faith which was so evident in his sermons. We thank God for his time with us at Hope.

The Rev. Dr. Peter L. Steinke

Pastor Steinke was born in Glen Cove, New York, son of the Rev. Arthur Steinke, an LCMS pastor. He attended Concordia College in Bronxville, New York and graduated from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, receiving the Master of Divinity Degree; brothers Paul and Alan are also pastors in the LCMS. He would serve his year of vicarage at Grace Lutheran Church in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

His first call was to serve as Missionary-at-Large to a small church in Chester, Virginia; while there he received a Master's Degree in Education from Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. He would later receive the Doctor of Religion Degree from the Chicago Theological Seminary.

Married to the former Kelly Wagner of Houston, Texas, they would arrive in Friendswood with their four young children - Rene', Tim, Krista and Matt

his life: the Gospel of Christ, his family and work: the German word for the latter is Arbeit and woulused by his father when rousing the young Hobratchk clan for a days work on their farm in Littlefield.

An enthusiastic musician and trumpeter, the congregation adapted to having him sprint to the choir loft after the benediction and accompanying the organist and other musicians in a rousing rendition of the closing hymn.

Pastor Hobratchk has served as President, Vice-President and Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Friendswood Independent School District, President and other positions on the Board of Directors of the Rotary Club of Friendswood and was named a Paul Harris Fellow of that organization. He has also served as President and Chairman of the Board of Friendswood Nutrition Center, Inc. and on the Board of Directors of the Friendswood Counseling Center.

Today Pastor Hobratchk serves as a Vice-President of the Texas District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. He has served as Secretary of the Texas District, a member of the Concordia Council of Concordia College in Austin and in a host of other church positions.

We are truly blessed that Pastor Hobratchk serves our congregation as pastor, preacher, teacher, counselor, administrator, mentor and in countless other ways and that God has given him the intellect, the energy and will to also serve his community and church at the district and synodical level.

An energetic preacher, Pastor Steinke was known to write out his sermons in longhand and would have published a book of his sermons titled "Preaching the Theology of the Cross."

An avid baseball fan, he would also coach the boys' Little League teams and may be the only Lutheran Pastor in Friendswood to ever be asked to vacate the dugout in response to a vocal, yet certainly evangelical, dispute over a close call on the field. The team also won the league championship that same year. Wife Kelly is an artist of note and has taught painting and design in schools in the Austin, Texas area.

After leaving Hope to accept a call to Lutheran Social Services of the South as Director of Clergy Care, the family moved to Austin where Pastor Steinke and Kelly now reside. He is now a church consultant and has initiated three programs: Bridge Builders, Healthy Congregations and New Visions.

Pastor Steinke received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Concordia College, Bronxville, New York in 2005 and was awarded the Honorary Doctor of Letters from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in 2009.

The Rev. Ralph W. Hobratchk

Pastor Hobratchk was born in Littlefield, Texas in the cotton growing region of the Texas Panhandle. He attended Concordia Lutheran College in Austin, Texas, receiving the Associate of Arts degree in 1969; he then graduated from Concordia Senior College in Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1971 with the Bachelor of Arts degree.

He graduated from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis where he received the Master of Divinity degree in 1976. His vicarage took him to the Campus Ministry at the University of Florida in Gainesville where he opted for a second year as the Campus Pastor there.

His first call would take him back to Florida where he would serve as Senior Pastor at Epiphany Lutheran Church in Lake Worth, Florida in from 1976 through 1982. He accepted our call to Hope in 1982 currently serves here as Senior Pastor.

A gifted baseball player for the Concordia College Stags in Austin, he continued to play at the seminary; he and close friend Pastor Robert Preece of Zion Lutheran Church in Dallas were teammates and still greet each other with their team nicknames when they visit. After his call to Florida, he played in the Cuban-American League of Palm Beach County as the token Lutheran Pastor.

Pastor Hobratchk married Lynn Ann nee Maas in 1980 and they have two children, Kasi Leigh Culwell and John Hobratchk and one grandson Tristan Wayne, also a promising young baseballer.

As he consistently demonstrates each day at Hope, he has three primary passions in