

Suburban Life



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Century of service

St. Paul's Lutheran Church marks anniversary

By Louise Okrusky
staff writer

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN Church and school celebrate 100 years of worship and education in Farmington Hills. Unlike congregations who joined the exodus from cities to the suburbs in the last few decades, St. Paul's be-

gan in Farmington Hills.

"It should be noted this church and school have been in the same location for 100 years," said Rev. Ralph Unger, pastor since 1978.

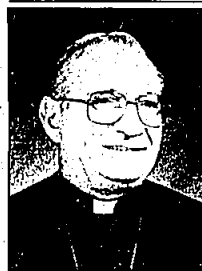
For many the anniversary celebration will be a homecoming. Once a month through May, special church services will be addressed by St. Paul's former pastors and others.

Speaking at the first service at 11 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 26, will be Dr. Ralph Bohlmann, president of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod. Bohlmann and Unger are members of the 1956 graduating class of Concordia in St. Louis, Mo.

Former organists return to play St. Paul's pipe organ before each special service. After the services,

members can reminisce together during a buffet dinner with teachers who worked in the school. Movies of the church and school groundbreaking and dedication, narrated by former pastor Walter Rutkowski, will be shown.

Rutkowski, who led the congregation for 28 years from 1948-78, is scheduled to speak during after service dinner on Feb. 23.



'There is the fact that it always had a Christian day school. It has been the main thrust in our work as a church.'

— Pastor Ralph Unger

IT BEGAN IN May 1892 when 23 men organized the German Evangelical Lutheran St. Paul's Church of Clarenceville, Township Farmington. That summer a 24-by-30-foot church was built on the edge of the woods. More than 1,000 people, a special choir and band arrived on a special train from Detroit to celebrate the church's dedication on Aug. 21, 1892.

From the beginning the church operated a school. "There is the fact that it always had a Christian day school," Unger said. "It has been the main thrust in our work as a church."

Classes met first in private homes, then in the middle aisle of the church. In January 1897, at their annual meeting, church members resolved to build a small school and asked every member to donate a tree to provide lumber. The school was used until a larger one room facility was built in 1909.

IT WAS THAT building in which Florine Woodcock of Farmington learned reading, writing and religion. A lifelong member of the congregation, she was baptized, confirmed and married in the old church. Her grandfather, Frederick Garchow, helped found the church. Her father, Elmer Garchow, was a member. Her son, Joel, now 33, briefly attended St. Paul's school.

Gentle humor colors her memories of the church and school in the 1930s.

"There was one teacher and one room. Everybody knew everybody else. When you went to church on Sunday, it was like old home week," she said.

In 1937 when she graduated from the eighth grade, the class consisted of herself and a cousin.

It may have been a small school but a few childhood traditions were observed. Its outhouse provided a natural target for pranks.

"In the five years I went to school there — the day after Halloween — you better not use the outhouse," she said.

Aided by the seventh and eighth grade boys, the teacher righted the tipped outhouse and provided unscheduled entertainment for the rest of the school.

More than 50 years later, the one-room school is just a memory. In the early 1950s a larger school was built.

Over the years, several additions have been added. But the needs and questions of childhood remain relatively unchanged.

Unger's taught the eight grades first hour religion class every morning since his arrival as pastor. By concentrating on the fundamentals of belief, he says he tries to help them relate religion to their daily lives.

"You'd think there would be changes, but they're still asking the basic questions: 'Where did we come from? Why are we here? What can our parents do to help us?'" he said.

IN ADDITION, the church helps support Lutheran High School West in Westland which 21 of its graduates attend.

Just as the school has grown, so has the congregation. In the 1940s, Pastor Ewald Steumpling led a small congregation in the old church.

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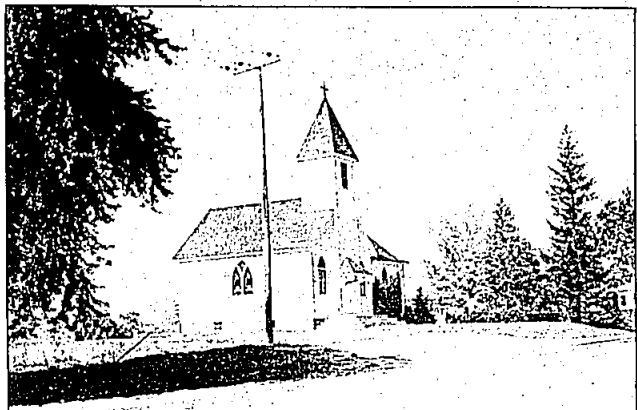


PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

The original St. Paul's Church was built at the edge of a woods. More than 1,000 people, including a special choir and a band, arrived to

celebrate the church's dedication on Aug. 21, 1892.

Author was Jackie's aide in Kennedy White House

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

MEETING LETITIA Baldrige for the first time, you might expect that the one-time White House social secretary and author of best-selling books on manners, would be stuffy, or formal or, heaven forbid, perfect.

But Baldrige, breezing into the Birmingham office of The Economist for her appointed interview, is anything but hard to get to know. She's down to earth — one might even say old-shoe comfortable.

Besides writing about manners, Baldrige has also published fiction. In 1989, two of her books were published — one "The Complete Guide to the New Manners for the '90s" and the other, a romantic novel about a widow with "background."

A Boston blue blood — who finds love for a second time. Baldrige, on a book tour promoting "Public Affairs, Private Relations," which has just gone into a Fawcett paperback, said, "It's a cheerful tale. It was written right before the recession."

During President John Kennedy's administration, Baldrige was chief of staff for Jackie Kennedy, as well as being the social secretary. She also advised four subsequent First Ladies.

IN THE NOVEL, she uses her White House experience. "I threw in the White House State dinner," she said. "I follow it from beginning to end." The reader learns how to behave — and how not to behave — at such a dinner, as part of the story.

"It's a woman's book," Baldrige declared (although men also may enjoy her glibly, inside story that tells about the super-rich). "There's a lot of me in the book," she admitted.

Like the heroine of her book, who runs a public relations/marketing agency, "For 20-30 years I had an agency in Chicago and New York," she said. Baldrige and her husband of 28 years, real estate developer Robert Hollenstetter, moved back to Washington two years ago. "I'm working full time. I have a newspaper column, 'BSVP,' and lecture all across the country to corporations on manners."

Although her main character, Marika Wentworth, is from Boston, Baldrige said, "I come from Omaha, Neb., New York, I spent 11 years abroad, five years in Chicago and 11 years in Washington. I come from everywhere."



STEVE CANTRELL/staff photographer

Letitia Baldrige, onetime White House social secretary and author of best selling books, is anything but hard to get to know. She's down to earth in her approach to people and manners.

"I'm not 41, rich, thin and beautiful" (all traits that describe her story's heroine), she said. Baldrige, who is tall, was wearing a loose dress that covers a few extra pounds.

Asked to define the difference between manners and etiquette, Baldrige said, "Etiquette is a part of manners. Manners means relationships. Good manners means good relationships. Etiquette is proscribed behavior." During a dinner party, one could observe the proper etiquette and still have bad manners, she pointed out.

CONTINUING, EASILY, to talk about a favorite subject, she said, "Manners are your character, your heart. Manners are being considerate of the other person. Etiquette is just doing the right thing at the right time."

Baldrige mentioned that some manners and etiquette are part of her book. The heroine runs "a proper funeral" after her father dies. In one

instance an obnoxious woman changes place cards, to suit herself, at a formal dinner.

Many things in the book happened to her in real life, she said. "The butler getting drunk, the fight in the kitchen" are a sequence (which the heroine neatly handles, without other guests being aware of any problem) actually took place.

At a formal dinner party, the rules of etiquette call for the host, hostess and guests to talk to the person on their right during the first course, then to the person on their left for the second course, and so on as each course changes, she explained.

"Spread the charn around," Baldrige said. "In America I've noticed an increasing lack of self confidence among dinner partners, and husbands and wives ask to sit together. The whole thing about a dinner party is meeting new people."

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