

The Assistant Pastor

January, 1945

ANNUAL REPORT

This issue of the Assistant Pastor brings to you the minutes of the annual meetings of the congregations, the pastoral report for the year, and a brief discussion of the state of affairs in our congregations.

God has made us all builders in His kingdom. He has made us stewards of the affairs of the church. As your pastor and fellow steward I place before you the matters that are contained in this issue. I hope that you will remember as you read what is here written that I am your servant, not your ruler. In matters of the church the Word of God rules. No human being is ever set over our consciences or over our souls.

Your pastor is your servant, chosen by you to administer in your stead the affairs of the church that pertain to you. Among the most pleasant duties that your pastor performs are the preaching of the Gospel in the pulpit, in instruction classes, and at sick-beds. He takes great pleasure in being able to commend the people of his flock when they do well as stewards of the affairs of the church.

But it is just as much the duty of the pastor to call to the attention of his people their particular failings. We have done that frankly, though reluctantly, in this place. I sincerely hope that you will read these things that your pastor speaks of here sincerely and carefully. If what your pastor says is in accordance with God's Word, then you should follow his counsel, even though it may mean giving up things that you have done and should not do, or doing things wherein you have failed in the past.

For his own sins and failings your pastor is sincerely sorrowful. It is his constant prayer that God will help him to do better the things which you have chosen him to do in your behalf. For those things which have been accomplished in this parish during the past year he is sincerely grateful to God. May God help and bless these congregations and their pastor.

PASTORAL REPORT

	Saude	Jerico	Redeemer
Av. Attend. per Sun.	73(44%)	121(29%)	17
Baptized Members	165	419	15
Number of Services	53	51	47
Communicant			
Members	137	319	13
Average Communion			
Attendance for Year	2	1½	1

Total Attendance for

Year	272	496	16
Communion Services ...	5	5	3
Voting Members	58	136	3
Baptisms	7	5	1
Confirmations	3	6	0
Men and Women in			
Service	11	33	3
Marriages	0	1	0
Burials	2	2	0
Enrolled at Bethany			
College	3	1
Day School Enrollment	23		
Saturday School Enrollment	36		
High School Class Enrollment	27		

To the above record of the activities of your pastor may be added his attendance at meetings of three Ladies' Aids, his attendance at quarterly meetings of three congregations, pastoral and sick calls, correspondence and clerical work in connection with those in the service, attendance at the Synod meeting and pastoral conferences of our Synod, and attendance at frequent meetings of two Synodical Boards, the Home Mission Board, and the Finance Committee.

This is the record of our congregational life. It is as clear as figures can make it. It is worthy of our closest study. There are some things here which should please us greatly, and for which we owe God grateful thanks. There are other things that will make us bow our heads in shame, and which will cause us to offer our sincere Prayer to God that we may do better.

Church Attendance

The thing that strikes us first, as we read the record, is our church attendance. Attendance of members in all three congregations is shockingly, disgracefully, low. What is the reason? In many cases it is simply laziness. In other cases our people are too busy with their work (caring for earthly possessions), to attend to the needs of their souls.

God has told us in Holy Scriptures, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God." That makes it far from an indifferent matter whether or not you go to church. You need to go to church. You will starve your soul if you do not attend. Remember too that God has said, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." You may tell yourself that you know what Christianity is, and that it isn't necessary for you to be so regular at services. It is more than likely that

The Assistant Pastor

Published and edited by the pastor of the Jerico and Saude Lutheran churches, affiliated with the Norwegian Synod of the Synodical Conference.

Church Directory

N. S. Tjernagel, Pastor

SAUDE CONGREGATION

Trustees: Carl Swenumson, Juel Natvig, Martin Borlaug.
Treasurer: Odell Natvig.
Secretary: Arthur Anderson.
Cemetery Committee: Oscar Natvig, Henry Borlaug, N. S. Tjernagel.
Ladies' Aid: Miss Johanna Ellingson, president; Mrs. Tom Swenumson, secretary; Mrs. Ned Borlaug, treasurer.

JERICO CONGREGATION

Trustees: Selmar Aasen, Tom Roberson, Carl G. Johnson.
Secretary: Kenneth Fossen.
Treasurer: Ole J. Johnson.
Ladies' Aid: Mrs. Tom Roberson, president; Mrs. K. C. Johnson, secretary; Mrs. Edwin Johnson, treasurer.
Cemetery Committee: Mrs. Carl A. Knutson, Mrs. M. A. Robinson, Mrs. C. O. Vigdal.

God judges you quite differently than you judge yourselves.

Christians go to church to worship God, and to learn His Word. If you feel no need for worshipping Him who gave you all that you have, and gave you His Son for your salvation, if you feel no desire to learn His Word more thoroughly, then there can be only one judgment; namely, that you are not a Christian.

Comparison of the attendance record in our churches with our total membership reveals the sad conclusion, that there must be many a one who holds membership in our churches, but is not a Christian at all. God forbid that you, dear reader, should be one of those who is despising God's Word, and are thereby rejecting Christ your Savior, and are bringing your soul to everlasting shame and torment in hell.

But the most grievous thought of all in the matter of our poor church attendance is the fact that many parents are systematically training their children to stay at home on Sundays. The wrath of God that will fall upon those who have thus stood in the way of the salvation of the souls of their children is something dreadful to contemplate.

Your pastor teaches your children the third commandment through Saturday school and confirmation instruction. What good does it do unless you make it possible for that child to go to church? One custom in many schools of our church is that a roll call is taken not only of the attendance of our children at their church school, but also of their attendance at church. We shall adopt that plan at Saturday school in the hope that it may improve the attendance of our children at church.

But in the end it is up to you. It will be your example that your child is most likely to follow. God help you to give it a good and worthy example.

Communion Attendance

The Pastoral Report for the year reveals another aspect of our congregational life which we should consider with concern. Our communion attendance shows a weakness among us that is related to our weakness as regards our church attendance. The

detailed figures for the year are as follows:

	Saude Jerico Redeemer		
Attended communion 5 times	1	1	0
Attended communion 4 times	5	4	0
Attended communion 3 times	17	50	2
Attended communion 2 times	58	123	1
Attended communion 1 time	35	79	8
Attended communion 0 times	14	40	2
In Service (no report received)	6	22	3

This is far from being a satisfactory report. It is very far from the record of the first Christians who felt their need for the Holy Sacrament once each week. It comes far from approaching the minimum spoken of by Luther, who said he could not see how anyone could consider himself a Christian and still receive communion less than four times a year.

Why were there fifty-six persons in the parish who did not commune at all last year? Why were there 122 people who were content to commune only once? We can think of only reason. All of us know that the purpose of the Lord's supper is to strengthen our faith in the forgiveness of sins. Those who were careless about their attendance must not have been aware of their sinfulness and of their need for the benefits of communion.

We do need this heaven-sent grace and mercy. So many things show how sinful and weak we are. Let us not neglect this blessing which God has given us. We need this soul-nourishment as much as our bodies need its daily bread.

However, unsatisfactory as the record of our communion attendance may be, there are certain things in it that are encouraging. Four years ago, 1940, there were 116 persons who did not commune at all. There were only half that many this past year. Four years ago no one received communion more than two times during the year. This year 78 persons communed oftener than twice. So we may take heart from the fact that there is a definite improvement. Let us hope it will continue. Many of the boys in service have sent home, as requested, cards on which their communion attendance is recorded. Those boys, who must go to church and to communion under adverse conditions, are putting us to shame. We hope their example will help us.

While we are confessing that we have been negligent in accepting the grace of the Lord's supper, let us not think of it as having been a duty we have failed to perform. No, it is rather a gift that is offered us that we have often failed to accept and receive.

When communion is announced, thoughts like this go through our minds, "Let me see,—yes, I went to communion last time; I don't need to go today."

You should rather think like this, "Have I sinned, is my faith strong?" The likelihood is that those questions will urge you to attend the communion announced, even though you did attend the last communion. Communion is celebrated so infrequently among us that we might well attend each communion announced. It would not be too often.

Attendance at Meetings

One of the strange things in our congregational life is the unwillingness of so many of the voting members of the congregation to accept their responsibility of attending the Annual Meetings of the congregation. This year the attendance was fairly

good compared to some years, but still less than one-fourth of the voters were present. God is surely not satisfied to have the affairs of His church attended to by so few. All of us should be sufficiently interested in the church to take part in its work, and to share in the decisions that are made at the meetings of the congregation.

The officers of the congregation are also a source of some disappointment at times. Meetings of the officers are not always attended as they should be. Frequently the officers show a lack of aggressiveness in going ahead and attending to things that the congregations have entrusted to their care. Repairs that should be made on the church properties are sometimes postponed too long. It has even happened that specific instructions given to the officers by the congregation have not been carried out at all.

Juvenile Delinquency?

It happens very often that we have a beautiful wedding among us, the bride and groom come to church to have their marriage solemnized by their pastor rather than by a state official, they hear the Word of God which assures them of God's blessing upon the estate of marriage, and of God's promise to care for those who remain faithful in word and deed to His Word. Then, likely as not, the pastor encounters some one not connected with our church who says: "I hear you had a wedding out your way." The pastor answers, "Yes, it was a very beautiful wedding." And then he is asked, "When is the wedding dance going to be held?"

It seems to be taken for granted that there will be a wedding dance. Must there be? Must this shame continue among us? How can a bride and groom ask for the benediction of the church on their marriage, and then sponsor something that is so opposed to everything churchly and decent?

Wedding dances are no worse than other dances, it is true. But what is so dreadfully reprehensible about them is that while most dances are sponsored by people who make no pretense at Christianity, the wedding dance is sponsored by persons whom we had thought were Christians. Christians thus make themselves responsible for bringing the degrading temptation of the dance to Christian boys and girls. Another thing that makes the wedding dance so shameful is the fact that they are sponsored to celebrate an event that the Church itself has solemnized and blessed.

As your called pastor, and as the curate of your souls, I ask you here most earnestly and solemnly to put an end to this terrible thing among us. It must not continue.

I know of pastors who ask wedding couples who come to announce their wedding whether they intend to have a wedding dance. If they say yes he asks, and for good reasons, to be excused from the necessity of using God's Word to bless something which is so soon to be desecrated by a dance.

There have been instances where Christians who have sponsored dances in spite of the admonition of fellow Christians have been excommunicated from their congregation when they refused to repent their sin.

I hope neither course will become necessary, but that wedding dances will simply become a thing of the past among us without any further unpleasantness becoming necessary.

There is an astounding amount of immorality in our communities. Some of it is on record in our church books. The percentage of our marriages that are the result of and forced by conception before wedlock is too shockingly high to print. The facts have been given to the officers of your church. Much of it is caused by the modern dance, and the wretched dance halls where our children spend so much time. We call these things juvenile delinquency. We ought rather to call it adult delinquency and blame it on the parents who do not explain to their children how much they have to lose in dance halls; to parents who permit their children to go, at will, to these vicious halls. Do you love your children enough to shield them from these things?

ANNUAL MEETING

Jerico Congregation

The annual meeting of Jerico Lutheran Church was held in the church basement on January 18, 1945.

Meeting opened with Scripture reading by Rev. N. S. Tjernagel.

The Secretary's report was accepted as read. The Treasurer's report was accepted as read. The following officers were elected:

Secretary, Kenneth Fossen

Treasurer, Ole J. Johnson

Financial Secretary, Alvie Ellingson

Trustee, Dist. No. 3, Selmar Aasen

School Committee, Lloyd Roberson, Dist. No. 1

Elder, Dist. No. 1, Ole C. Johnson

Ushers, Merle Aasen and Duane Knutson

Alternates, Ronald Anderson and Calvin Johnson

Sexton, Thom Thompson and John A. Robinson

After the reading of the reports of the School Committee it was resolved to contribute at the rate of 10 cents per communicant to the equalization of delegates' expenses.

Resolved to buy 100 new hymn books of the kind now in use in our church.

Resolved to authorize an offering for the salary of the Assistant to the Pastor.

Resolved to postpone the bonus until a later date.

Resolved to leave it to the trustees to hire an assistant school teacher for Saturday School.

Motion made to adjourn.

Meeting closed with blessing.

Alfred N. Anderson, Secretary.

ANNUAL MEETING

Saude Congregation

The annual meeting of the Saude Lutheran Congregation was held on January 17, 1945. The meeting opened with devotion conducted by Rev. N. S. Tjernagel.

The Pastoral Report was read by Rev. Tjernagel. The minutes of the last annual meeting, and the minutes of meetings held on May 14th, October 6th, October 15th and December 24th were read and accepted. The Treasurer's report was read by M. G. Boleng and accepted. The Cemetery Committee's report was read by Oscar Natvig and accepted.

The following officers were elected:

Secretary, Arthur Anderson

Treasurer, Odel Natvig

Financial Secretary, Nelvin Hereid

Trustee, North District, Juel Natvig
Auditors, Ned Borlaug and Carlyle Natvig
Ushers (reelected), Carmen Miller, Oren Anderson, Harold Borlaug, Kenneth Natvig
Cemetery Committee (reelected), Oscar Natvig,
Rev. Tjernagel, Henry Borlaug
Elder, Ole N. Anderson

Resolved to authorize the pastor to announce an offering in September for the Christian Day School and Assistant Pastor's salary.

Resolved to ask the President of the congregation to confer with the Ladies' Aid in making plans for raising a fund to replace the Emma Munson Legacy.

Resolved to wait until the Easter service to decide whether or not to continue using the old English Hymnary or to adopt the new Synodical Hymn Book.

Resolved to pay the pastor \$75.00 a month for the coming year.

Meeting closed with prayer.

Fred. Steensland, Secretary.

THE SYNODICAL HYMN BOOK

At its annual meeting the Saude Congregation requested more information in regard to the matter of the new Synodical Hymn Book, and postponed action in the matter until its Easter service. The congregation requested that the pastor give more information in the matter.

If the question were to be asked, "Which is the better of the two hymn books, the old one or the new one?" I should be unable to answer. I could give my opinion, but that would only be an opinion. Whether the new book is an improvement over the old one will always be merely a matter of personal judgment.

However, there are certain facts in the matter, facts which are not open to dispute. I shall present them here and leave it to you to make your decision.

1) The Synodical Hymn Book is now the official hymn book of our Synod. It was prepared by a committee consisting of qualified men from our Synod and the other Synods with whom we affiliate. It is used at our Bethany College and in many of our congregations as well as the congregations of our sister synods.

2) If we adopt the new Synodical Hymn Book we will help strangers who come to our communities to feel at home in our churches.

3) In the same way we will help our own people who move to other communities to feel at home in churches of the Missouri Synod and the other Synods with whom we affiliate. Our own people have repeatedly told me that services they attend at Missouri Synod churches seem so different from ours. This will no longer be that case when we are all using the same hymn book.

4) The Synodical Conference, to which we belong, will be unified and made stronger by means of the use of a uniform hymn book.

5) Because our Synod is small we are unable to carry on an extensive printing of religious text books for Day Schools, Sunday Schools, and other

religious instruction. We must therefore use the literature of the Missouri Synod which prints the text books for religious instruction we use in our Christian Day School and Saturday School. Now a part of these materials is hymn study. The children have been memorizing these hymns as they are printed in the Saturday School lessons and Christmas programs. And those hymns are taken from the Synodical Hymn Book and, not from our old hymnary. A natural confusion will result for them from this. If we had our own literature we could use hymns out of our own hymn book, but we are too small a Synod to print our own literature, so our children must use the material available. It would be to their advantage, therefore, to adopt the new hymn book.

6) That there is a new hymn book does not mean that there is an entirely new set of hymns. It is true that some of the hymns in the old hymnary are not in the new book. But most of them are included; by far the greatest majority of them are there.

These are the facts as best I can present them. The choice must be yours. You should try to decide that which you think will be best for the church. If you think that the old hymnary is so much better than the new hymn book, that it outweighs the advantages for adopting the new book, then you should vote for the old book. I hope none of you will vote for the old book only because you happen to have one. That would be a selfish choice. When the tractor came along, horse-drawn farm implements became obsolete. You did not reject the tractor just because you happened to have horse-drawn equipment. Instead you recognized the advantages of the tractor and bought tractor implements. If the new hymn book will serve us better than the old one, and if it will be an advantage to the church, then we should adopt it and not let purely personal reasons stand in the way.

We wish to thank, most heartily, First Lieut. Nels J. Anderson of the U. S. Army Air Corps for the handsome gift of one hundred dollars which he sent home to be given to the general activities of his church. His contribution was allocated as follows: Bethany College, \$30.00; Home Missions, \$30.00; Saude Lutheran Church, \$20.00; Saude Lutheran School, \$20.00.

The Lutheran Sentinel, the official organ of the Norwegian Synod, should reach the homes of all the members of this parish. If you do not receive it, please let me know so I can send your name in.

The Redeemer Church Building Fund is growing beyond our best expectations. I have begun making calls on the members of the Saude and Jerico congregations to solicit contributions for this cause, and the response has been very gratifying. I hope to complete this work in the near future. I may say here that about \$400.00 was contributed by the first twenty persons visited. We need this congregation in New Hampton. There are more than twenty families of our faith living there, and they need this church.