

Personal Biography Compiled For Pastor Mel's Retirement Service

February 26, 2006



Pastor Mel Murray was born July 25, 1936. He was baptized at Trinity Lutheran Church, Crown Point, Indiana, U.S.A. in August of that year. He daily rejoices in his Christian Baptism and the Grace of a Loving and Merciful God!

He attended a public high school in Lowell, Indiana. In 1954 he enrolled at Concordia Junior College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, graduating with an Associate of Arts Degree in 1957.

Concordia Senior College began for him in the fall of 1957; in 1959 he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree.

Next was Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. He graduated in 1962, with a Bachelor of Divinity Degree, then upgraded to a Master of Divinity Degree.

His vicarage or internship was at Historic St Paul's, Kitchener, Ontario, under the tutelage of the Rev. Pastor Arthur Eissfeldt, his bishop for vicarage. He became very close to Pastor Eissfeldt, who later came to St. John's, Pembroke, Ontario, where he performed the marriage service of Pastor Mel and Lorna on August, 1961

Pastor Mel's first parish was a three-point parish in the Ottawa Valley, ordained and installed on July 15, 1962. (Augsburg, Eganville, and Golden Lake, also called "Germanicus") This was a very large parish, 385 Confirmed Members plus children. Very active parish. Three ladies groups a month. Three youth groups a month. Two Men's clubs a month. Three Church Councils a month. Three congregational meetings, twice a year. Three Sunday School Teachers training a month. Three Lenten Services during the week during Lent. Four Easter Services every Easter. Many Baptisms, many weddings and funerals. (Ask him sometime to explain why the OPP visited the parsonage next door to the Germanicus Church early on an Easter Sunday Morning, an event well-witnessed on the beautiful sunny morning by the worshippers coming to Church.)

In 1966 Pastor Mel accepted the call to Pastor at Resurrection Lutheran Church in St. Catharines, Ontario. He also served Trinity Lutheran Church in Virgil (Niagara-on-the-Lake) until Resurrection grew in size. We started with 38 confirmed members, mostly a gift from Christ Lutheran Church, and before we built Resurrection's first church (modern architecture - seating in the round - bright colours!) between the two campuses of the fledgling Brock University at that time, we had over a

hundred people in week in worship in a gym of a public school. Pastor Mel was appointed Lutheran Contact Pastor to the Brock Lutheran Students and the St. Catharines General Ministerium appointed him Protestant Chaplain to Brock. So it was a "town-gown ministry."

In 1970 he accepted the call to Faith Lutheran Church in Middle Lake, Saskatchewan, a large congregation just east of Saskatoon. At Middle Lake, Pastor Mel was also Chaplain to the Lutheran Senior Citizen's Home, Housing Units and Nursing Care residents. At the same time Pastor Mel was also Padre Mel, serving as Chaplain 2 days a week for 7 years at the Canadian Forces Station (Air Element) at Dana, Saskatchewan. He became a supplementary of the Canadian Forces and also did cadet chaplaincy at Penhold, Alberta. Somewhere he has a picture of himself in Canadian Forces Uniform, rank of Captain.

Pastor Mel in Saskatchewan, in Middle Lake and Saskatoon, served on a number of boards and had a number of positions. He was a director of the Saskatchewan Special Care Homes organisation. He was Circuit Counsellor on two different occasions. He became 2nd Vice-President, then 1st Vice-President of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan District of LCMS, then of LC-C when the changeover happened. Thus he was on the Board of Directors of the District.

In the Middle Lake portion of his ministry, he set some kind of record for the number of times his car slid off the road in the Saskatchewan winters. The Canadian Forces Base (Part of the Radar Pine Tree Line) was 35.2 miles from Middle Lake, and he only had 35 minutes to make it on a Sunday Morning. Usually he made it. Always carried a survival kit. Like all westerners he became an avid curler.

It was 1975 when he accepted the Call to Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Saskatoon. Growth was so rapid we had to build a new church within 3 1/2 years of his coming to Holy Cross. Attendance went from 70 a week to 170 a week in 2 1/2 years, and the congregation built a remarkable, architecturally sound modern church, in the round, designed for audio-video presentations. He was appointed by the City of Saskatoon as Chaplain of the City for one year. One of his personally proudest achievements was the establishing and putting on daily devotions on a telephone dial-in ministry call "I Have Good News for You on This Day." He implement the ministry right after he got to Saskatoon and had over 150,000 call-ins, thus putting Holy Cross Lutheran Church "on the map" in Saskatoon.

To the present: In 1989 Pastor Mel on August 26, was installed as Pastor of Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Aurora. He actually started preaching in July of that year. This coming summer July 2006 would have been 17 years of Pastoral Ministry here. Early on, Pastor also was Vacancy Pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Bradford, serving there and here three years. Their remuneration for pastoral services helped our congregation with our very, very difficult financial struggle over the years. Pastor Mel rejoices that God has given our wonderful congregation a New Day, and more and more people who lovingly support our Mission and Ministry. Praise God! *smile*

This has been his longest Pastorate. He finds himself feeling so close and so filled with love to the people of Christ Congregation, who worked with him for the Lord through many ups and downs, and after November 1997, mostly "ups"! *smile* Together we declared this a brand-new Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church on January 1, 2000, the beginning of a new Millennium. It is his intention to continue to be a member of Christ Lutheran Church, serving also as an Elder of the Congregation in the future, and perhaps with the congregation's blessing editing a monthly parish newsletter called Christ-Lights.

Pastor Mel thanks God for the Christian Faith, for God's Love for each and everyone of us in Jesus Christ, and the opportunity and great Blessing to be a Pastor in Jesus' Church. He will continue to live in the Grace of God and in the Forgiveness of sins for which Jesus died and rose again!