

Cross View's Fourth Decade

1999-2008

Transitions, Growth, and Blessings



In each issue of the Clarion from October to February, we will look back at Cross View's journey from our humble beginnings to our development and growth into the Church we are today.

Cross View rang in a new year and a new millennium by hosting 24 homeless people from central Minneapolis at the church for a week in early January 2000. Members continued to band together in support of myriad service and social activities. There was a family retreat at Camp Okoboji in Iowa, and a youth trip to Nenana, Alaska, for fellowship with the Athabascan Indians.

On the night of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on America, Pastor Gerry Coleman held a special prayer service for the community. There was strong turnout at the event, and Cross View members turned to God for direction and healing. In November, members poured themselves into the planning and preparation for the annual Thanksgiving event at Trinity First Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, and there was a record turnout for the event that year.

In spring 2002, Pastor Coleman accepted a call to Concordia College, Bronxville, NY. Before leaving Cross View, he led a Bible class examining the Muslim world and its traditions. When Associate Pastor Bode took a call to St. John's, Buffalo, MN, Palmer Ruschke stepped in as interim pastor. Forty-one candidates were considered in the process of calling Cross View's next senior pastor.

In August 2002, a traveling choir from the University of Pretoria, South Africa, performed at Cross View for a concert and celebration that attracted an overflow crowd. New entry doors to the narthex were installed in the fall that were designed by Cross View member and architect Terry Helland.

In November of 2003, children's ministry began rehearsals for *The Christmas Locket*—an original play written by Cross View's Audrey Duensing—while the senior youth staged a jubilant production of the musical *Godspell*. At the same time, the call committee and members of the congregation met with three finalists for the senior pastor role at Cross View. Each was strong, but one stood out. He was a young pastor from Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Lakewood, Colorado—Steve Wheeler.

On February 29, 2004, Pastor Wheeler was installed as Cross View's senior pastor. A few weeks later, in a presentation marking Cross View's 35th Anniversary as a church, long-time member Jean Johnson told the congregation: "The Lord has richly blessed us in the past, and we pray that His blessing will remain with us as we all enthusiastically welcome Pastor Wheeler and his family to Cross View."

That same year, Cross View leaders and their counterparts from St. Luke's Lutheran Church in St. Louis Park explored the pros and cons of a potential merger of the two churches. Following weeks of prayerful consideration, the merger was ultimately rejected by a vote. In the following months, a new sound system was installed at Cross View, and a new worship schedule was introduced that retained the traditional worship service every Sunday but also included a new, contemporary worship service format during the late service on alternate Sundays. Annual events such as the SWANS Valentine Dinner, Maundy Thursday Seder meal, Christian Art Festival, Advent Reflections, and Children's Nativity continued to provide social events for members and outreach into the community.

In 2007 Lyle Heggemeier, Director of Adult Ministries, accepted a call from Faith Lutheran Church near Rochester, New York; Paul Emch retired after 55 years of musical ministry that included 12 as Cross View's organist; and Christine Eid joined Cross View as the Director of the Children's Ministry.

The Easter 2008 'drive by' re-enactment of The Final Days of Jesus in the Cross View parking lot drew strong community turnout and coverage from community media outlets. Later in the year, a garden and plaza seating area was dedicated to honor the memory of beloved Cross View member Jean Johnson. At the end of 2008, Cross View had grown to baptized members.



Top to Bottom: Final Days of Jesus (2003), *Godspell* (2003), Installation of Steve Wheeler (2004), Children's Nativity (2008), Trinity First Thanksgiving Meal (2008).