

Cross View's Beginning and First Decade

1968-1978

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.



It takes a lot of guts and prayer to start a church. That's how Wayne Hellbusch and other original members of Cross View remember it.

The year was 1967. Wayne and his wife Sharon had just moved to Edina when they learned of a new church starting up on the western border of the city. It was called West Edina Lutheran Mission. Rev. Bernard Becker was installed as the pastor on October 6, 1968. The very next Sunday, eighty people took part in the first official worship service, which was held in the Creek Valley Elementary School gymnasium. On that day, they thanked God for the strong faith that had brought them together. They sang hymns. And they talked about growth and envisioned a future Church building on a 16-acre parcel a half-mile west of the school.

"We were a very cohesive group. Very tight knit and very loyal, and we hung together for many, many years," Wayne said.

From those humble beginnings, the church congregation continued to grow despite a recession that slowed the pace of development in Edina for several years. In early 1969, membership adopted the name Cross View Lutheran Church and elected the first church officers. Charter Sunday was held on February 9, 1969, when 114 people were received as charter members.

The congregation broke ground on a new church building in the fall of 1969 on the 15-acre parcel where Cross View sits today (some of the acreage was later sold off to fund expansion plans). That property had been purchased in 1967 when the Minnesota South District recognized the need for an additional church in western Edina.

It was an exciting time for the young congregation, and it required tenacity, resourcefulness—and answered prayer—to see the work through. Cross View's District leaders and Concordia University provided crucial support in the early years. Members pulled information from public utility companies about new families moving into nearby neighborhoods. A church ambassador group would 'bake and take' pumpkin bread and other treats to the newly arriving families, knocking on doors to recruit new members.

The congregation continued to grow. In 1974, Cross View installed the church's second pastor, Rev. Rudolph Haak. Several years later, Rev. Ray Halm turned down several other opportunities to join Cross View as pastor in 1978, and he brought a new level of confidence and excitement to the congregation. Although the early years were challenging, Cross View members worked together and prayed together and held strong to God's mission—just as we do today.



Clockwise from above left:
first Confirmation class (1969),
Charter Sunday service at
Creek Valley Elementary (1969),
groundbreaking (1969), Sunday
School Christmas program (1972),
building model (1969), first
worship in new building (1970).

