



Can you put together a brief history of Living Word?

This question came at our recent Building Committee meeting. It's a great question, because knowing the history of an organization can help you come to a greater understanding of where it is now and how it got there. So, here goes:

Living Word was chartered as a congregation of the Missouri Synod (LC-MS) in 2004, so we haven't been around all that long. Our history does go back just a little further, though. Living Word was actually formed by the joining together of two other LC-MS congregations: Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran located in New London, and New Life Lutheran located in Spicer.

Shepherd of the Hills began life as Redeemer Lutheran Chapel in 1977 - a daughter congregation of Redeemer Lutheran in Willmar. It was formed by Redeemer members who lived in Spicer and New London. It was chartered as a separate congregation taking the name of Shepherd of the Hills in 1981. Shepherd had purchased the New London Covenant Church's old building on Ash Street to worship in. (That building now houses the Ash Street Apartments.)

By the late 1990's Rev. Paul Biegner, the Redeemer pastor who was instrumental in helping Shepherd of the Hills get started, had become the Mission executive at the Minnesota North District LC-MS of which Living Word is a part. Pastor Biegner was always looking for ways to reach more people for Jesus and felt that Shepherd had grown to the point where it was able to plant a daughter church in Spicer much like Redeemer had planted Shepherd.

A group of members from Shepherd caught that vision and planted a congregation chartered as New Life Lutheran Church. New Life began worship in the annex of The Agape' Coffee House (now Lake Affect Coffee) on Main Street in New London. It soon found a home in Spicer in a building next to the Spicer Library that had previously been home to Larry's Power Equipment. Just as Pastor Biegner had served both Redeemer and Redeemer Chapel, Pastor David served both mother and daughter congregations of Shepherd and New Life.

As a result of the expansion of Highway 23 from a 2-lane to a 4-lane road through Spicer, the building New Life was renting needed to be torn down or moved (It is now the Krupke Chiropractic building near the Country Stop). At that point some folks at the North District suggested that we bring New Life and Shepherd together at a location between New London and Spicer. They even offered to buy us land for that to happen.

Unfortunately, the District had apparently made some bad investments with that money and no longer had it available to purchase land when we got to that point. District then suggested we could buy land with the proceeds from selling the Shepherd building. The Shepherd building was sold and, after an extensive search for land, the 6+ acres Living Word sits on was purchased from Charlie Koch.

Living Word rented office and worship space in the Prairie Meadows Learning Center in Spicer until we had sufficient funds to erect a multi-purpose building on our land in 2012. MANY members helped take our current building from ground-breaking in May all the way to "move-in" in September!

After ten years in this multi-purpose building, we have been blessed to have our mortgage down to a level where we are able to begin planning for Phase 2 of the building: A dedicated sanctuary!

That's a brief "nuts and bolts" of our history. But more important is the purpose behind the nuts and bolts: Reaching more and more people with the truth of the Gospel of Jesus and the hope, peace and joy that Gospel brings! As we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and seek and follow His guidance, we will continue to do that in greater numbers!

Thanks for asking,
Pastor David

Send your questions to pastor@livingwordlutheran.net