

Pilgrimage of Faith

St. Armands Key Lutheran Church is 49 years young in history, but already rich in heritage. Our ministry began as a Mission Church with seven interested couples and vacationers on Lido Beach. Dr. Hermann Siefkes was invited to minister to the Mission during the winter months of 1966-67. Services were held in the Lido Beach Casino. Attendance at the first service was 34. It was known as Lido Key Lutheran Church. In November 1967, a parsonage at 504 Boulevard of the Presidents was purchased for the Siefkes, and also served as an office for church administration.

St. Armands Key Lutheran Church was organized on Palm Sunday, April 7, 1968 at the Casino on Lido Beach. Dr. Gordon Huffman of the ALC officiated at the installation of Dr. Siefkes and the first Church Council. The text of his sermon was "Ye are the Light of the World." Sixty-two (62) members were received. Attendance was 143.

North Adams Drive would be the site for a new church building. The Blix family donated two lots on Ringling Boulevard and additional lots were purchased on Adams Drive. Plans for the church were approved and a groundbreaking service was held on August 4, 1968. Dedication of the new church was held on February 2, 1969 with 407 in attendance.

Pastor Siefkes retired in April 1969 and The Reverend Paul Disbro was installed as Pastor on November 2, 1969 and served through 1972. In 1973, The Reverend Jul Quello assumed leadership of a growing, vibrant church. The congregation purchased two lots on Ringling Boulevard extending our property to Washington Drive. Promissory notes were issued to members and the response was amazing. Not only was the building debt repaid, but also enough additional funds were received to enlarge the Sanctuary, add Ogram Fellowship Hall, and redecorate the interior and exterior of the church. Dedication of the renovation was held on February 25, 1976. From this date, we have been known as the "**Church of the Lighted Cross.**"

In June 1980, Pastor Quello resigned, and The Reverend William Nies was installed as Pastor on December 7, 1980. In 1988 the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was formed. Under Pastor Nies's able leadership, a major renovation/expansion building program was launched which included an enlarged sacristy, choir loft, music room, 63 Rank Allen organ, educational building, and Columbarium/Memorial Chapel.

Pastor Nies retired in April 1990, having served the congregation for 10 years and having completed 40 years of ministry.

On December 30, 1990, The Reverend Robert Zimmer was installed as Pastor. Through his leadership, Promissory Notes on church property were retired, the Washington Drive conference/guest house was purchased, and a contemporary worship service was formed.

On March 22, 1998 a worship celebration was held for the groundbreaking of a new sanctuary. Dedication of the new church facility was held on March 21, 1999.

Pastor Zimmer retired on June 30, 1999 and The Reverend Eric P. Wogen began his ministry at SAKLC on April 9, 2000 and was installed on July 9, 2000.

Under Pastor Wogen's leadership, a Meditation Garden was developed on the empty lots east of the sanctuary. A Health Ministry was formed and a Parish Nurse position was established. The congregation grew in membership and as a part of the 40th Anniversary celebration an Outreach Ministry partnership in the Newtown area was established. The neon cross on the steeple was lit again, and a new (Diane Bish Signature Series) Allen Renaissance Quantum Organ was installed. The windblown pipes and festival trumpets were added in 2008.

Pastor Wogen retired on June 30, 2008 after serving the congregation for 8 years and having completed over 40 years in the ministry.

The Reverend Mark A. Bernthal began his ministry at SAKLC on September 1, 2009 and was installed as pastor at SAKLC on October 18, 2009.

On December 8, 2011, the Church Council voted to approve a call for an intern from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, SC for a period of one year.

Seminarian Student, Ms. Marilyn Beyer, began her role as SAKLC's first Vicar on Sunday, July 1, 2012.

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary student, Aretha Ernst, from Suriname, shared a six-month internship between Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Venice and SAKLC. Her role of Seminarian began at SAKLC on September 1, 2012.

Our second Seminary Student, Vicar James Henricks, began his pastoral internship at SAKLC on July 8, 2013.

On Sunday, August 17, 2014, SAKLC welcomed Seminarian Student, Drew Ingram, our third pastoral intern, and his wife Leigh.

Seminarian Student, Kyle Bates, began his role as SAKLC's fourth Vicar on August 17, 2015. Kyle's wife, Andrea, also a Seminarian Student at Lenoir Rhyne/Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, served as the first pastoral intern at Faith Lutheran Church, our sister church in south Sarasota.

In June, 2016, Pastor Mark Bernthal notified the congregation that he had accepted a call to join a staff ministry team at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Vero Beach, Florida.

Under Pastor Mark's leadership, God's table is set and the Eucharist is celebrated every Sunday at both worship services. SAKLC teamed with our sister congregations of the Mid Gulf Conference to do a "Luther Build" with Habitat for Humanity, and in 2015, a major facility restoration/renovation project was completed that included new roofing and flooring, new storage closets in Fellowship Hall, along with many other improvements. The Foundation established a second account allowing donors to make perpetual offerings to the congregation's endowment fund. We were privileged to witness Pastor Bernthal's commitment to the church-wide Fund for Leaders, which provides for Seminarians of the future, through the Vicar program he initiated at SAKLC.

Sunday, June 26, 2016, was Pastor Mark Bernthal's last Sunday at SAKLC. A celebration to honor Pastor Bernthal's ministry and the gifts he brought to SAKLC during his seven year tenure was held immediately following worship.

Our congregation is blessed by lay people with a "friendly spirit," who have the will to work, and who share in ministry with each other.

So our Pilgrimage of Faith keeps going on and on as we lift high our Lighted Cross, and commit ourselves

**To Celebrate God's love
And
Share His love with the Community
And the World.**

Stepping Stones of Faith

July 1966	American Missions, Minneapolis, approved action for Mission Church on Lido Key
Dec. 18, 1966	Dr. Hermann Siefkes conducted the first 1 st winter service in Lido Beach Casino. Attendance was 35
Fall 1967	Dr. Siefkes returned. Steering committee organized.
Oct. 8, 1967	Articles of Incorporation for Lido Key Lutheran Church were signed
Nov. 1967	Purchased first parsonage at 504 Boulevard of the Presidents
Feb. 18, 1968	Lots on Adams purchased -- Blix family donated lots 3 & 4 on 11/10/68.
April 6, 1968	An Organizational Meeting was held at St. Armands Palmer Bank
April 7, 1968	Installation of Dr. Siefkes at Lido Beach Casino. Congregation accepted name of St. Armands Key Lutheran Church, receiving 62 members, installed Charter members and first Church Council.
August 4, 1968	Ground Breaking Service at new property on Adams Drive
Nov. 3, 1968	First Annual Meeting of Congregation
January, 1969	Final Service in Lido Beach Casino
Feb. 2, 1969	Dedication of the new church building. 407 were present
April 6, 1969	Pastor Siefkes completes his Ministry.
May-Nov. 1969	Interim Ministry of the Reverend Theo Lynn
Nov. 2, 1969	The Reverend Paul Disbro was installed.
Sept. 30, 1972	Pastor Disbro completes ministry.
Oct. '72-Feb. '73	Interim ministry of The Reverend Theo Lynn
Feb. 4, 1973	The Reverend Jul Quello was installed
Nov. 18, 1973	Congregation purchased two (2) lots on Ringling Boulevard
1975	Entire debt of ALC Mission Board of Missions was paid off
Feb. 25, 1976	Renovation of Sanctuary & new Ogram Fellowship Hall Dedication
Jan. 1978	Church steeple was blown down
June 1980	Pastor Quello completes his ministry
June –Dec. 1980	David Olson Interim Ministry
Dec. 7, 1980	The Reverend William Nies Installation Service

Oct. 22, 1989	Dedication & Renovation/Expansion. New organ, choir loft, music room, Sunday school classrooms, multi-purpose room, and Columbarium.
April 22, 1990	Pastor Nies completes his Ministry
April 23-Dec. 1990	Dr. Herbert Mayer Interim Ministry
Dec. 30, 1990	The Reverend Robert Zimmer Installation Service
Oct. 1991	Church Constitution was ratified to conform to the ELCA Constitution. All Promissory Notes were retired.
Dec. 1994	House on Washington Drive purchased to be used as a Conference/Guest House
Feb. 26, 1995	The Reverend David McCoy was called as Associate Pastor
March 22, 1998	Ground Breaking for new Sanctuary & 30 th Anniversary Celebration
Sept. 30, 1998	Pastor McCoy leaves to assume another call
March 22, 1999	Dedication of the present Church Sanctuary
June 30, 1999	Pastor Zimmer completes his Ministry
June-Dec. 1999	The Reverend Dr. Lavern Franzen Interim Ministry
Jan-April 2000	The Reverend Dr. Priit Rebane Interim Ministry
April 9, 2000	The Reverend Eric P. Wogen begins Ministry
July 9, 2000	Pastor Wogen's Installation Service
April 6, 2008	40 th Anniversary --- One Service
June 30, 2008	Pastor Wogen completes his Ministry
July 13, 2008	The Reverend Dr. Mark Hillmer Interim Ministry
Sept. 1, 2009	The Reverend Mark A. Bernthal begins his Ministry
Oct. 18, 2009	Pastor Bernthal's Installation Service
July 1, 2012	Vicar Marilyn Beyer begins one-year Internship
Sept. 1, 2012	Seminarian Aretha Ernst begins three-month Internship
July 8, 2013	Vicar James Henricks begins one-year Internship
August 17, 2014	Vicar Drew Ingram begins one-year Internship

August 17, 2015 Vicar Kyle Bates begins one-year Internship

June 30, 2016 Pastor Bernthal completes his Ministry

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!