



Bob Riggert
Youth, Education and
Stewardship
 515.576.7666
 bob.riggert@
 idwlcms.org

“A Venture of Faith”

“This is a venture of faith, and it appears that the Lord is blessing our undertaking.” This statement was made more than fifty years ago to the members of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, Des Moines. The “venture of faith” was the establishment of a Lutheran school in Des Moines.



In the late 1950s a group of parents began to dream of establishing a Lutheran elementary school. The realities that Mt. Olive was still a small (numerically and physically); relatively new, barely self-supporting congregation emphasized the faith venture. After two years of planning, the January 1960 Voters’ Meeting approved that a kindergarten class be offered in the fall of 1960 and that grades one and two be added in the fall of 1961. A special loan request of \$115,000 for building expansion for the school was made to the District Convention and approved in August 1960. Five kindergarten students met in the southeast corner of the church basement in the fall and the school had begun! Building began in the spring of 1961 and by November (with fall classes beginning at a neighboring church) classes were held in the new facility. Dedication was held on December 3, 1961.



In subsequent years as the school grew, classes were also held in the former church “kinderhaus” and in modular classrooms.

While most of the children initially came from the Mt. Olive congregation, sister congregations often encouraged enrollment in the Lutheran school and financially supported the attendance of children. In recent years the school has been a ministry partner with families of other denominations and a mission outreach to children of un-churched fami-

lies. At least 36 children have been received into God’s kingdom through baptism because of the ministry of the school.

The influence of Mt. Olive Lutheran School has also been a blessing to the church at-large as over 30 former students have become pastors or teachers in the Lutheran church and many others continue to serve as lay leaders in congregations.

The school serves children from preschool to grade 8. Little Lambs Preschool has been a ministry of the congregation since 1968. Over the years the enrollment of the school has fluctuated. The 2009-2010 enrollment included 93 students. Mt. Olive was one of the first District schools to receive National Lutheran School Accreditation in 2001 and that accreditation has been renewed through 2015. The school is also accredited by the Iowa Department of Education. The school has been progressive in adding technology to the curriculum and has been acclaimed for its music program.



Pastor Kendall Meyer, Principal Cory Emily, the staff, and members of Mt. Olive are extremely excited about the present and future ministry of the church and school. The venture of faith continues as the congregation voted in the fall of 2009 to build a million dollar addition including classrooms and a family ministry center. God-willing, construction will begin soon. As the only Lutheran school in Des Moines, Mt. Olive provides a special opportunity to children and families. In an increasingly secular culture, the truth of Jesus is taught and lived throughout the day in all subjects and settings. Mt. Olive Lutheran School has always been mindful of “go into the world” and continues to be a mission arm of the congregation into the community.

The venture of faith has been blessed as the faith of thousands of children and their families has been nurtured during the 50 years of the school’s ministry. Mt. Olive will celebrate the special anniversary on Sunday, June 6, 2010. To God alone be glory!

(Thanks to emeritus teacher Lois Schuman and emeritus principal Byron Bockelman for much of the historical facts)

