Half-century in our building -- You don’t have to look far to find TV documentaries, magazine and newspaper articles and online commentaries about the violently historic, turbulent, famous and infamous events that were packed into 12 months -- half a century ago -- that made up 1968, unlike any year in our lifetime.

Add to that mix our own SOC church home. Exactly 50 years ago this spring, ground was broken on our own present day house of worship, with dedication of the new building here at 5801 coming in November of ’68.

Over the next few months of this year, I will occasionally mention a few bits of history pertaining to that year, and some of the events and people leading up to that year – and after.

For starters, did you know that the acting pastor of our congregation, when it was first organized way back in 1924, was once the poet laureate of the state of Maine? And that he was the author of a handful of books, including two hardbound publications of poetry? Rev. Wilhelm Pettersen was also a professor at Augsburg College in Minneapolis for 25 years.

And another amazing fact about our congregation: Current active members Greg and Karen Flatten and Harding Hanson have direct links to the approximately 70 charter members of the first, 1st Lutheran Church unit incorporated in that founding year of ’24 – now only six years short of 100 years ago! Mr. and Mrs. Albert Flatten, and Mr. and Mrs. J. I. Zahringer (on Harding’s maternal side) are their ancestors. And Spirit of Christ member Lorraine Keiran traces her Ascension membership back to the very earliest days of that historic SLP church.

And you may be interested to know, according to our church records, 1st English Lutheran Church was the first Lutheran Church in the Park to formally organize and incorporate, the first to build a permanent structure to be dedicated, and the first “to survive as a permanent congregation. It was the first Lutheran church to have a full time resident pastor.”

More to come on this topic in future Views, but a big piece of our current SOC picture, of course, came from the important melding of members from Ascension Lutheran – marking another anniversary – 10 years ago. The history of the former Ascension congregation is an interesting and varied one. At different times, the ministry that ultimately became Ascension was known as the North Side Sunday School Union, the North Side Community Church, the North Side Lutheran Church, and Westwood Lutheran Church.

Long-time member passes -- And now comes word of the passing of Jack Reay, another long-time member of Ascension, and eventually, SOC. More on his obituary and arrangements as they become available. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends at this difficult time.

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