

# 100 Years of Grace

## Grace Lutheran Church – 7th Decade (1978-1987)

Rev. Lewis C. Gerbhardt retired in 1982 after serving Grace Lutheran for 40 years. Rev. Gerbhardt was born in Holyoke, MA, and graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, MO. He was a vicar working at a mission in Raleigh, NC, when he received a call letter from Grace on Dec. 7, 1941 (Pearl Harbor Day). Grace congregation had a very tight budget and was not able to secure an older experienced pastor. With God's direction, he accepted the call and was ordained and installed by the Rev. George Trapp of Orlando on Jan. 18, 1942. During his service, Rev. Gerbhardt was instrumental in starting missions in Merritt Island, West Melbourne, Stuart, Ft. Pierce and Okeechobee. After retiring in 1982, he helped start yet another mission, Trinity Lutheran in Sebastian, and then served as their pastor. He also served as a substitute Preacher throughout the circuit until the age of 84. Pictured below is Pastor's last sermon at Grace before "retirement".



During the mid-1980s, Grace was facing extensive repairs on the 1950s church buildings, needing a larger sanctuary and more parking spaces. Plans were considered for a relocation project. Following the recommendation of the Long Range Planning Committee, September 8, 1985, the Voters' Assembly unanimously voted to buy a piece of land as a possible future church site. On January 10, 1986, 3.19 acres of land were purchased for \$70,000 at the corner of 12<sup>th</sup> Street and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue. Historically speaking, this site was only a few blocks from the Clemann's house at 1775 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue where Grace congregation first organized in 1917.

