

## Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

Serving Our Savior Jesus Christ since 1890

# War Years



The year 1917 was of momentous significance to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. In 1917, the two south side Norwegian Lutheran churches merged, and Our Saviour's remained as the south side church. In 1917, the United States entered World War I as an associated power with France and Great Britain. This was no longer "Europe's War" but had become a war involving the United States. In 1917, the Lutheran pastors no longer served dual parishes either in Whatcom County or in the neighboring province of British Columbia.

Both the merger and the declaration of war came in April. On Good Friday, 1917, the Congress declared war on the Imperial German Government. Shortly thereafter, the Norwegian Danish Lutheran Church (the United Lutheran Synod) and Our Saviour's Lutheran Church (Norwegian Synod) merged with Our Saviour's the surviving church building and name, and the new synod was the Norwegian Lutheran. A third synod, the Hague, was also a part of the merger. The newly merged congregation began to worship in the church at 17th and McKenzie.

During the First World War, the members of the congregation bought Liberty bonds, did war work, wrapped bandages, knitted, and the other tasks that a nation at war requests of its citizens. In addition, the young men of the congregation entered the military service of the nation. By November of 1918, the Armistice was signed and the world entered upon the negotiations for a peace treaty. But the diplomats could do their thing and the people began to, as President Harding said, "Return to Normalcy!"

On October 27, 1941, Our Saviour's celebrated its 50th birthday--the Golden Jubilee! This was, indeed a festive occasion, as there were still parishioners alive who had been at the beginning of the church.

By December of 1941, the United States was at war. Again, as in World War I, the Church responded with contributions to the Red Cross and to other war-effort-related activities. The Ladies Aid made surgical bandages and knitted items for the Red Cross. The women also bought war bonds. It was interesting to note that the Ladies Aid held various fund-raising projects such as rummage sales and bake sales and the Ladies Aid used the proceeds from these fund-raising projects to buy war bonds. These bonds were cashed in 1950 and the funds were used in building the Educational Unit.

During the war years, the Red Cross established an emergency hospital in the basement of the old church. Fortunately, the unit was not used. Then, of course, there were those young men and women of the congregation who served in the armed forces. About fifty-six served and seven gave their lives. But the war did end in 1945, and the young people came back and the Church faced the future. The future that would be dominated by change not only was in store for the Church but for the nation as well.

(Excerpted from “*Centennial of Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church, Bellingham 1890-1990*” by Gordon Tweit and August Radke.)

The brass candelabra on the altar of Our Saviour’s are each engraved with the names of the fallen in World War II:

*“To Commemorate their  
sacrifice in World War II  
Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church”*

*Palmer H. Carlson  
Lloyd W. Paulson  
Harold R. Johnson  
Otto P. Bredal  
Emil S. Olsen, Jr.*

The refillable candles were replaced in July 2011 (first redisplayed on August 7, 2011) with memorial funds for Mary Fox and by private donation. During World War II, Mary (Lad) Fox was employed at Rohr Aircraft located in Chula Vista, CA. During this time, she worked at the USO club in San Diego as their newsletter reporter and assistant editor and was also on the committee which organized social events for the sailors when they were on liberty at the base in San Diego. She corresponded with many of the sailors while they were at sea since mail deliveries while at sea for many weeks was a vital therapy to those serving our country.

At Our Saviour’s, she served on the altar guild for many years and helped to make some of the many handmade paraments. (The paraments shown were given in memory of her husband, Archie Fox.)



Candelabra with original candles



Candelabra with new candles