

## RELIGION



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church

### Catholics Began Worship Here In 1900

Today Eagle Lake has two Catholic churches but few of the people can remember how it was in the early 1900's, when there were scarcely a dozen Catholics here.

Most of these people came from Louisiana to work in a sugar mill, which was located at a small community called Lakeside, about two miles out of Eagle Lake.

The first priest, of whom the residents know, was Father Schenker, who came from Houston about a month. He set up an altar on the back of the Ward's home at Lakeside. Later, Father Schenker had Mass at Mrs. Cherry's whose residence was located in the eastern part of Eagle Lake.

Outstanding in the early days of the church is the story of Father Montreuil, an apostolic missionary.

A small white frame church was built in Eagle Lake in the eastern part of the town before 1900. Five acres of ground were given by Miss Darigan. This church was blown down September 3, 1900, when the hurricane hit Galveston so severely.

After this church was blown down, Mass was not said at Eagle Lake.

It was after this that Father

### Catholic Services Began In 1883

The first Catholic family moved into the new community in 1882 and in 1883 a priest from Freiburg began periodic services at that community. In 1899, John Labay and William Scholman contributed fifty acres of land on which the present St. Mary's Church, school and cemetery are located.

In 1899, the first parochial school was started and in 1897 the first church was erected with Father Louis P. Vietarius as pastor. The building was destroyed by the 1900 storm and was rebuilt.

In 1900 work was started on the present building when Father Heinze Broniaus was pastor.

The present pastor, the Rev. Henry Rolf came to St. Mary's in 1969 succeeding the Rev. Father Edmund Bily who had served as pastor of St. Mary's from 1947 to 1968.

Montreuil arrived, and built the red brick church, which was finished August, 1913. This is the church the congregation used until Christmas of 1949, when the new church was completed.

Father Montreuil completed the outside of the brick church, and donated the main altar. At this time his health failed, and he left for Canada. The Rev. Father A. W. Dider was on the date April 5, 1914.

Eagle Lake was then made a mission church, under the Menz parish. Father George Berberich was the first priest to come here from Menz. The records of the first communion class after Eagle Lake was under Menz was in 1917.

This red brick church was thirty-two years old, and too small for the congregation of Eagle Lake.

In 1948, Father A. W. Dider, and the committeemen started the erection of a new church.

This new church was dedicated on June 25, 1949.

The late Father A. W. Dider came to Eagle Lake in 1943. He had graduated from the Seminary at La Porte, and this was his first church.

Father Dider also supervised and did much of the planning and work for a new parish house and for parish halls at both churches, later named in his memory as Andrew Hall at Our Lady of Guadalupe and Dider Hall at Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Upon his death in January of 1964 he was succeeded here temporarily by Father Marion Atomanczyk who served until Father Edward Geiser's appointment to this church later.

A new building was begun in 1966 under the leadership of Rev. Neil Ellis. This two story brick building with basement was later stuccoed and served the church for 29 years. Property value was placed at \$35,000 with this auditorium and educational building. It became evident that a larger facility was needed and a building fund was originated in 1960 under the leadership of Pastor A. M. Brown.

The new facility at Prairie and Lake Avenue with all new furnishings and equipment was dedicated on January 29, 1966, with Dr. Forrest Fow, Executive Secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, guest speaker. The sanctuary has seating for 400 persons with overflow available in the balcony and adjoining educational building. The educational wing includes a fellowship hall and adequate educational facilities. The structure is brick with

that year, Father Geiser has continued to serve here as pastor for both Our Lady of Perpetual Help and Our Lady of Guadalupe Churches.

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### New Methodist Church Under Construction



Work is expected to be completed before the end of the year on this beautiful new church and educational facility for the United Methodist Church in Eagle Lake.

### Methodists Passed Centennial Year In 1972

On Sunday, May 13, 1972, Methodists of Eagle Lake celebrated one hundred years of Methodism, a milestone.

The Union Church was built in 1880 on Post Office Street, near the present A. H. Seasholm home. Mr. Lake, a Baptist, was the first Sunday School superintendent.

At the second meeting they voted to give \$200 toward the construction of the first Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which was then under construction.

From 1872 to 1913 Eagle Lake was part of the circuit including Alair, Rock Island and Chesterville.

Rev. Duke came to Eagle Lake in 1886. A new parsonage was built in 1897, and Rev. Duke was the first pastor to occupy it.

Rev. J. M. Lewis came in 1897. In 1899 the present Colly Memorial Methodist Church was built, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Colly.

Rev. K. R. Hemphill came in 1899, and the church was dedicated on January 14, 1940 by Bishop A. Frank Smith.

Rev. G. A. Schulze came to Eagle Lake in 1941. Under his leadership what was then the Educational Building (now the Fellowship Hall) was built and dedicated July 20, 1943.

Rev. J. W. Griffin came in 1944. During his pastorate he worked with the youth and volunteered to teach an elective course on religion in the Eagle Lake High School.

In 1949 the Mary Martha Sunday School class presented the Gothic pulpit set to the church. That same year the Sunshine Class presented the Hammond organ and chimes.

Rev. O. E. Linstrum, the pastor at that time, gave the

prayer of dedication in accepting these two fine additions to the church's facilities.

Rev. D. Rhea Allison came to Colly Memorial in 1960. More Sunday School rooms were needed and under his leadership this problem was partially solved with the building of three new Sunday School rooms.

Rev. Charles Walton came in 1966. He worked hard to get new pews for the church, but these were not actually installed until some years later.

Rev. Leslie E. McDaniel worked very hard as a preacher and pastor during his stay in Eagle Lake. Soon after his arrival the parsonage (then at the corner of State and Lake) was redecorated.

In 1960 the pews and seat cushions were bought and installed when Rev. Boyd Harris served the church. The pews are solid red oak, and the foam rubber cushions are upholstered in red.

Rev. Russell Moon who came in 1962, recommended the building of a new

parsonage and construction was begun during his stay.

Rev. Homer Weimer was the first pastor to live in the new parsonage, which was completed in December 1965.

Rev. Windel Bell, then came as pastor in 1966.

The Rev. David Edgar, present pastor, succeeded Rev. Bell here in 1973 and under his leadership the construction of a new church is in progress and should be completed before the end of this bi-centennial year.

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### Mission Church Founded In 1937

The Eagle Lake Mission Church began with a fast revival conducted by the Revs. Emil and Selma Burger in 1937. Later services were held upstairs in the Beckman building.

Mr. and Mrs. Winn Poole built the church at the present location, 310 Prairie, in the early 1940's. Later the parsonage was added and in the past ten years the educational and social rooms have been added.

Mr. and Mrs. Burger have pastored the church since its origin thirty-nine years ago.

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### Grace Lutheran Church



### Lutherans Observed 40th Anniversary

On Sunday, November 2, Grace Lutheran Church in Eagle Lake observed the 40th anniversary of its organization.

Pastor Karl Roth first began to hold preaching services in Eagle Lake back in 1936, which is the first known activity by the Lutheran Church in this community.

Pastor Roth lived in Sublime at the time and continued working here until he left that community in 1943. Work was carried on sporadically by other ministers as they passed through town, but nothing more was done on a regular basis for many years.

In 1932 Pastor W. A. Flashmeier of Columbus met with a few individuals who were interested in starting a congregation here. Services were held in the private homes on

weekdays as Pastor Flashmeier had regularly scheduled services on Sundays in Columbus, Wallis, Menz, and New Salsau. Soon services were held in the City Hall and then in 1935 they began to worship in the Presbyterian Church. On July 5, 1935 Grace Lutheran Church was formally organized.

On July 30, 1939 Pastor G. Wolf was installed as pastor of the Lutheran Church in Eagle Lake. He was the first Lutheran minister to live in this community. In 1943 he accepted the call to also be the pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church of Columbus and, in 1944, he moved to that community.

Pastor Wolf remained as pastor of this church as well. August 5, 1961 was an important day in the life of Grace Lutheran Church as it was on this day that the present sanctuary was dedicated. This was the first church that the Lutherans could call their "own". After having used the Presbyterian Sanctuary for several years, the congregation also worshipped in the old Eagle Lake Methodist Edu-

cation Building. From 1939 until 1951 the Lutheran Church building their home. In 1951 they were finally able to construct their own building, using lumber from the old Methodist church in Columbus.

In 1956 The Rev. Walter Miller was called as the first full-time pastor of Grace Lutheran Church. It was during his ministry here that an education unit was added on to the sanctuary. Pastor Miller was followed here by Pastor Wayne Langrebe (1960-1963), Pastor Milroy Gregor (1963-1967), Pastor Dennis

Engler (1967-1970) and Pastor Charles Meyer (1970 to his departure this year).

The church is without a pastor.

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