

25th Anniversary of Pastor Schrenk in Office

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[Translator's Note: A report by Pastor Birnbach on the celebration in Glückstal, Kherson/Odessa which honored Pastor Martin Friedrich Schrenk on his 25 years in ministry. Comments in square brackets are those of the translator.]

[Begin Translation]

Transcript from a record of Pastor M[artin] F[riedrich] Schrenk: An extraction from the *Christlichen Volksboten*, 1888, No. 8, p. 362.

The Celebration of Pastor Schrenk's Years in Office as Pastor at Glückstal

On 09 July, it was 25 years since Pastor Schrenk was ordained into the ministry at Göppingen in Württemberg. He was permitted to preach the Reconciliation throughout his quarter century in the office. We can not let this day pass by without bringing to this honorable man our intimate and shared offering of thanks.

Some were asking beforehand: Is it even possible to celebrate a church festival with public worship during harvest time and on a work day? Although we dared not to arbitrarily change the day on which the man was ordained into office 25 years ago, we trusted that he would go along with it, and behold, we have not been frustrated in our expectation.

The festival committee, which met earlier in Glückstal, has worked together admirably in making preparations for the celebration, for which they are to be thanked. In preparation for this celebration, the church was nicely renovated inside and out, and the congregation did not spare any sacrifice although Glückstal did not find itself in a fortunate position due to several years of crop failures. In anticipation of the guests coming to the celebration from near and far, the facility was graciously prepared with festive decorations by the ladies of the congregation. The spacious church was most gloriously decorated with flowers and garlands and with Bible verses attached. The baptismal font was resplendent in its new dignified draping.

Six fellow pastors of the one celebrating his jubilee arrived the evening before: Pastor [Rudolf B.] Faltin from Kischinev, Pastor [Peter Gustav] Becker from Hoffnungstal, Pastor [Karl Heinrich Adalbert] Birnbach from Bergdorf, Pastor [Alfons Wilhelm] Meyer from Sarata, Pastor [Hermann August] Hänschke from Neu-Freudenthal, and Pastor Dr. Chodzki, at the time in Kischinev. Unfortunately, the Provost was prevented from coming due to health issues. Those pastors from Bessarabia, who were unable to attend, sent their words of blessing on the one celebrating his jubilee via telegraph.

With the first ringing in of the festival morning, the pastors came together in the lovely decorated parsonage and greeted their fellow brother in the ministry with the singing of the hymn: “Praise the Lord, O My Soul, etc.” (*Lobe den Herren, o meine Seele, etc.*), after which the church trustees and school teacher offered their words of blessing, on whose behalf teacher [Christian] Weiss from Glückstal gave a speech. Soon the members of the district office (*des Gebietsamts*), as well as the offices of mayors (*Schulzenämter*), from whose midst district secretary (*Gebietsschreiber*) [Johannes] Holzwarth stepped forward, greeted the one celebrating his jubilee. Then a new clergy gown (*Amtskleid*) was presented to the one celebrating his jubilee as a gift from the congregation and others also presented their special gifts as their expression of love and gratitude.

After this time of greetings, Pastor Becker read two well-wishing letters that were received. The first one was a praiseworthy and heartfelt writing from our honorable Provost who had wanted so much to be present personally at the celebration. The other one presented a very heartfelt greeting from the Lutheran congregation in Elisabeththal, Georgia [Caucasus] where Pastor Schrenk worked from 1861 to 1876, and it was an eloquent witness of the lasting blessing that the Lord, in reality, gave to his efforts.

At 10 AM, the church bells rang out the call to come to the dear house of God, which filled up quickly, to the very last spot, with those from the community gathering for the festival occasion. School teacher Weiss took it upon himself to rehearse several choral songs with the choral singers—is was obvious that the singers had put a lot of work into it. So, at the beginning of the worship service, the choir sang: “The Lord has done great things for us, etc.” (*Der Herr hatt Grosses an uns getan, etc.*), after which the congregation sang: “Wonderful King, etc.” (*Wunderbarer König, etc.*). On behalf of the Provost, Pastor Faltin gave the address for the one celebrating his jubilee based on the scripture readings from Jeremiah 1:7 and Psalm 103:1-2, and, at the end of his talk, read an appreciative and encouraging letter which had been sent by our honorable General-Superintendent Gaaland from Petersburg. With Pastor Schrenk kneeling, we presented our offerings of thanks and intercessions, and with the laying on of hands by the gathered pastors, Pastor Faltin carried out the blessing upon the honoree. After the song by the choir: “I Want to Praise the Lord Always” (*Ich will den Herren loben allerzeit*) and the singing of the hymn: “Walk in the Past Years, etc.” (*Tretet auf verflossene Jahre, etc.*), Pastor Schrenk continued the conversation with the watchword of the day as found in Jeremiah 20:7—a word of humble thanks and confident outlook, and knit it all together with prayer and a benediction.

Then Mrs. Schrenk invited the festival guests, as well as the members of the church council and the village to gather in the school hall for a meal, and we went there and were not a little surprised at the pleasant sight that met us there. It was simply lovely how the hall was decorated with Bible verses, which were cleverly designed to shine transparently in the evening and added exquisitely to the festive meal.

At 3 PM, a second worship service was held which was well attended and in which Pastors Hänschke and Meyer gave addresses. Pastor Becker pointed out, in his heartfelt closing remarks, the desirable effects of thankful and obedient hearts at this most worthwhile celebration, and then closed with fervent prayer.

At a post-celebration in the school house, some brought up subjects familiar to the community and important to the life of the community, namely, the bringing up and guidance of our not yet qualified for school children, as well as the further education of our youth. Pastor Schenk then pronounced a parting blessing on this lovely celebration.

Bergdorf

Pastor Birnbach

28 August, 1939

[End of Translation]