The Early Years: 1960 - 1982

In the 1960s Lutherans in Summit County worshipped at the old town Hall in Frisco, then at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Breckenridge with supply pastors from the Missouri Synod. In 1972, the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) agreed to send Richard Bansemer as a full-time pastor to establish a congregation. Bansemer, wife, Mary Ann and infant son Aaron arrived in November 1973. The following is a chronology of the early events in the life of Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church:

- November 1973 - Pastor Bansemer arrived to begin development work.
- January 1974 - Members of the soon to-be-congregation (referred to as Holy Cross Lutherans) traveled to Vail to worship with the closest sister congregation; become acquainted with a new service; and hear the LCA/Rocky Mountains Synod bishop preach. In February families met to dream dreams and make concrete plans for the establishment of Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church (LOTM).
- February 14, 1974 From minutes of a meeting of the Steering Committee - “The Steering Committee for the new congregation met on February 14, 1974 at the home of Pastor and Mrs. Richard Bansemer, 0103 Solomon’s Lane. The Rev. Howell Foster of the Division for mission in North America and the Rev. Bud Edstrom, assistant to the president of the Rocky Mountain Synod, were present as guests and leaders. The committee discussed at length the naming of the new congregation. After many ballots the name Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church as agreed upon by consensus. An amount of approximate $350.00 is available for worship services to be held at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Breckenridge. It was agreed to place $300 in a special account to be used as soon as a physical need for the new mission could be determined. Time for worship was set at 11:00AM with the possibility of adding an early service in May or June if desire was adequate.”
- March 31, 1974 - First worship service at the new Town Hall in Dillon Colorado.
- May 5, 1974 - Sunday School began and the charter of the congregation was opened.
- October 27, 1974 - The congregation formally organized with the Lutheran Church in America with 64 adult members and 10 children by 1975. Worship was held in the Dillon Town Hall from 1973 until June 7, 1980 when church services we held in a new facility.
- February 16, 1975 installed Pastor Bansemer
- May 16, 1975 - Congregation voted to employ Lutheran Laymen’s Movement for Stewardship as fund-raising consultants.
- November 14, 1975 - The first annual report listed 112 active members, a radio broadcast of portions of the weekly worship service and an involvement in improving community health service. A ministry at Copper Mountain was established, and the youth group, “A New Song”, joined with youth at Dillon Community Church for activities and aided with the Sunday amphitheater worship. A 1976 budget of $23,235 was approved.
- The first year’s Sunday School average 20 to 30 children and in 1976 five youth were confirmed. In 1976.
• Stewardship report identified needs for the new church building, set a 2-year building fund goal of $142,000, and turned to Lutheran Laymen’s league movement as consultants for fund raising.

• In 1978 Pastor Bansemer accepted a call to Virginia (his home) and Dean Bickel was installed in December of that year.

• 1978 - The sign identifying Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church was erected on the property at the corner of Highway 6 and Evergreen, and the groundbreaking worship service was held at the site on September 17, 1979. (An aside, Kari Reiquam was ordained 2 week prior in Aurora Colorado.)

• June 1, 1980 - The LOTM building was dedicated on June 1, 1980 (current fellowship hall). The celebration extended into the afternoon with an open house, organ recital on an instrument on loan from Wells Music in Denver, and a barbecue. (I believe a snowstorm prevented a Denver bell choir from participating.) In 1980 LOTM had 160 Baptized members.

• 1982 - Having seen the congregation into a church building, Dean and Robin Bickel left in 1982, their hard work completed.
A Developing Congregation and Evolving Theology - 1983 - 2006

Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church continued to grow in terms of number of members and financial support during this period of time. More significantly, however, was the evolution of theology during this period. Pastor Mayfield and the congregation studied and discussed the work of Marcus Borg, John Shelby Spong and other theologians exploring a “progressive” theology. Bible studies have been an important part of the ministry. In the mid 90’s Theological conferences were initiated, the first being held at Colorado College with Marcus Borg. In successive years, such progressive scholars as Marty Haugen and Susan Briehl, and Karen Armstrong stimulated our thinking with their presentations. Congregational leaders and Pastor Mayfield questioned sermons during Theo Talks; challenged ideas presented to them as children; discussed a variety of viewpoints during book discussions; and adopted a theological viewpoint that resulted in a mission and welcome statement in 1994 that did not sound their forefathers understanding of Lutheran identity. This dynamic period of growth and development attracted people from a variety of protestant traditions; Catholics, Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodist, were all attracted to this vision of a modern theology. In addition, during this period, the congregation pursued community engagement and social justice projects that would become an important part of the ministries of LOTM.

- 1983 - Sue and Rich Mayfield with daughters Miranda and Molly arrived in March 1983. Their son Ian was born in Summit County.
- October, 1984 - An observance of the 10th anniversary of LOTM allowed Richard Bansemer to return in October as our preacher.
- May 31, 1987 - LOTM celebrated the united ELCA Rocky Mountain Synod in Denver on May 31, 1987. LOTM was present with our church banner and members of the choir joined the very large state choir.
- January 1, 1988 - The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was founded. The ELCA is a result of a merger among The American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC) (which had earlier withdrawn from the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod after 1975). The three churches agreed to unite in 1982. They formed a 70-member Commission for a New Lutheran Church, which planned the merger. The plan was approved by church conventions in 1986, and the ELCA constituting convention was held April 30-May 3, 1987, in Columbus, Ohio, with the church actually beginning operations on January 1, 1988. The Rocky Mountain Synod is one of 65 synods that came into existence when the ELCA came into being. The territory of the Rocky Mountain Synod, ELCA, closely follows what had been the LCA Rocky Mountain Synod which included Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and El Paso, TX. The ALC Central District Territory had covered the states of Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri. (Rocky Mountain Synod website)
- January 1, 1988 - The Rocky Mountain Synod came into existence at the same time as the ELCA. The word synod comes from a Greek word meaning "to travel a common road—to walk together." The congregations, the people, and the ministries in this expansive geographical region of the Rocky Mountains—this is synod. We walk a common road—together—as the Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- May 6, 1990 - As the congregation grew, it became apparent that a new sanctuary was needed, along with more classrooms, nursery space and a fellowship hall. It is interesting to note that
at one time, the congregation considered building a spiritual retreat center either in the lower level of the sanctuary or as a separate building with individual rooms, showers, etc. Although this did not come to pass, the new sanctuary building was dedicated on May 6, 1990 in a service of dedication. Participating in the service were Pastor Richard Mayfield and musicians including Robert Lane, Larry Hill, John Gohl, Dina McCormick, Guy Peterson, Margaret Peterson, Ray Tolman, Judy Tolman, Brian Hanly and Organist and Adult Choir Director Karen Reifsteck-Vander Kooi. During construction the congregation worshipped at Dillon Valley Elementary School.

- In the 1990s Council retreats were held at the Bly Ranch in Evergreen for several years as were confirmation class retreats. Retreats at St. Benedict’s Monastery in Snowmass and St. Malo’s, Allenspark have encouraged spiritual growth and formation.

- In the 1990s funds were raised to establish a memorial garden. Many members of the church provided gifts for the garden and the purchase of the sculpture that now resides in that garden. A mission endowment fund was established in 1992. Operated by a separate board, the purpose of the mission endowment fund is to provide for mission work beyond the operational budget of the congregation.

- November 1996 - Along with the need for more space came the need for more staff. Kari Reiquam and husband, Brian Austill and daughters Siri and Annelise arrived from Hawaii in November of 1996.

- Sandy Olson was called as Associate in Ministry in 1999.

- On October 17, 1999, the Lord of the Mountains congregation celebrated 25 years of Ministry. Attending the celebration was Rev. Bansemer, Rev. Dean Bickel, Rev. Richard Mayfield, Rev. Kari Reiquam, Rev. Henry Kircher, Director of Music Sandy Olson, Administrator Kathy Rada, Organist Karen Peterson, and a number of other folks who assisted with organizing the celebration. Six new families were welcomed into the congregation on that day as well: Holston-Green, Carestia, Cook, Phillips, McLaren and Campbell families.

- The lower level of the sanctuary was finished in 2001. This additional space allowed LOTM to be more hospitable to the community by offering the space to groups needing a place to meet.

- During this time period and consistent with the welcome statement, Lord of the Mountains welcomed the Synagogue of the Summit for their High Holy Days celebrations, the High Country Unitarians, El Bethel Church, Muslims for Friday prayers and AA;

- 2006 - Rich Mayfield retired in 2006 after serving the congregation for 23 years.

The Work Continues as Pastoral Leadership Changes - 2006 - Present (2017)

- On September 13, 2009, Lord of the Mountains celebrated the 35th anniversary of the founding of the congregation with a party at Arapahoe Basin. Jan Shackelford was the chief organizer and Pastors Bansmear, Mayfield, Reiquam and Holub were all in attendance. A partial attendance list included the following: Steve and Linda Wakefield, Jena and Darald Hurlbut, Jean and Bill Daily, Henry and Mabel Kircher, Jim and Alice Noble, John and Mary Kidd, Henry and Terry Rissier, Donna and Catherine Clark, Chuck and Myra Kincaide, Pat Foote, Jack and Aleen Nyquist, Bonnie Brown, Diane Wegner, Ken and Mary McHose, Blair and Christie Miller, Barb and Glenn Johnson, Kari Reiquam, Elmer and Doris Koneman, Tom Hand, Jim and Luray Wiberg, Carl and Anne Schomberg, Paul and Deborah Hage, Jim and Lorraine Hudson, Jonie Thieme Weinberg, Amy Christina and Nicole Mclachlan, Laurie and Bob Fobes, Brian and Jane Smith, Joe and Linda Kimak, John, Cathy and Deke Spierling, Karen and Bill Musolf, Nancy and Jim Gullery, Rick and Karen Garrell, Sandy and Bill Reetz, Jodi Wiedl, Rod and Sharie Schofield, Mary Staliz, Alex Cooper and Candace Barnes, Susan Juergensmier, Doug and Mary Schwartz, Bill and Dee Simon, Linda and Tom Festa, Peggy, Keith, Genna, Abby and Mac Hiller.

- 2005 Lord of the Mountains formed a 15-member task force to study the issues surrounding homosexual marriage and ordination (Summit Daily, May 9, 2005). One of the outcomes of this task force is that LOTM, became a reconciling in Christ congregation, announcing to the public that the congregation welcomes gays and lesbians to a safe place for them to worship.

- 2008 - Kari Reiquam served the congregation until 2008 at which time Rev. Ken Stenman served as interim pastor.

- 2008 - Rev. Joseph Holub and his wife Marcia arrived at LOTM in 2008. He served the congregation until his retirement in 2013. The congregation presented Rev Holub with a camera upon his retirement and since then he has become an accomplished photographer while living in the mountains of Buena Vista Colorado.

- 2008 - Upon the arrival of Pastor Joe he and Len Rhodes worked on developing a new liturgy “that better fits the emerging paradigm of Christianity and Lord of the Mountains.” (Annual Report, 2008).

- In 2012, Gerald Ireland, a member of the congregation, gifted to the church the Bosendorfer Grand Piano which continues to be an important part of LOTM services in 2017.

- Pastor Stephanie Kopsch was installed as Pastor of LOTM in 2013 and resigned in 2016.

- LOTM is grateful to Pastor Beverly Piro who served as interim after Pastor Joe retired and to Pastor Dena Williams who served as an extended supply pastor after Pastor Kopsch’s departure.

- August 2016 - Pastor Liliana Stahlberg was called by the Rocky Mountains Synod to serve as a pastor for redevelopment. Pastor Stahlberg and her husband, retired pastor Wolfgang Stahlberg, arrived at LOTM in August of 2016. Sadly, Pastor Wolfgang died suddenly in October, 2017 leaving his friends at Lord of the Mountains and the Progressive Christianity community deeply sad.

- Collaborating with Bishop J. Gonia of the Rocky Mountain Synod and under the leadership of Pastor Liliana Stahlberg, the congregation embarked on a process of re-formation as described in the statement below. At the time of this history update (September 2017, the work of re-formation continues with a report due to the congregation in January 2018.
Purpose of Re-formation at Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church

November 16, 2016

This period of renewal and redevelopment for the Lord of the Mountain congregation is designed to discover and generate the capacity to thrive as a congregation for the purpose of God’s mission of a transformed world.

Through **prayer** and **study** of Scripture, through **listening** and **learning**, our task is to deepen our relationship with each other, with the community, the wider church, the world, and with God resulting in a clear sense of identity.

**Re-formation Team**

*NOTE: The Rocky Mountain Synod provides guidance to congregations in a document entitled “Congregations in Transition” (available on the Synod website). The information below is taken from that document, from materials provided to Pastor Liliana during interim training and from the November 15th Church Council “Advance”. This is a GUIDE to the re-formation team and may be altered as the re-formation process progresses.*

**Re-Formation Team Members:** Bonnie Brown, Mark Clark, David Domzal, Peggy Hiller, Karen Kugler, Jean McArthur, Sam Sooter, Steve Wakefield, Pastor Liliana Stahlberg, Facilitator

- On September 17, 2017 Pastor Liliana Stahlberg and Father Michael Glenn conducted an ecumenical pray service to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The service life up the Five Imperatives agreed upon by the Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church in the document *From Conflict to Communion* attended the celebration and the meal that followed. The following clergy participated in the prayer service Reverend Liliana Stahlberg (Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church), Reverend Michael Glenn (Silverthorne), Reverend Felician Mvala (St. Mary’s Catholic Church Breckenridge), Reverend Judith Van Osdol (Rocky Mountain Synod), Reverend Wolfgang Stahlberg (Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church), Reverend Lydia Wittman (St. Anthony’s Hospital Chaplain), Reverend Kari Reiquam, Reverend Darlene Muschett, Deacon Jim Doyle (Silverthorne Colorado). Lay readers included Connie Anders, Patti Leifheit and Ferol Menzel. Karen Reifsteck Peterson, former organist at Lord of the Mountains, accompanied the service. Christy Reinking directed the bell choir.

- September 2017, Challenging finances are not new to Lord of the Mountains. In reviewing past annual reports, there were a number of times that council members declared concern about ending a fiscal year in the black. That financial challenge revisited LOTM in August of 2017. Based on a recommendation of the Finance Committee, the church council launched a “Bridge the Gap” Campaign and raised slight over $30,000 to complete the 2017 fiscal year in good fiscal order.

- Since the establishment of Lord of the Mountains, music has been an integral part of the church life. There was an adult choir from the beginning. The addition LOTM supports a bell choir, and individual members consistently volunteer their talents on the flute, bass viola, violin and other instruments to enhance the worship experience. Recent Choir Directors include Len
Rhodes, resigning in 2016 and Chris Keelan (2016 to present). Accompanists have included Len Rhodes and Michael Groff.

- Fine Arts has been incorporated into our services and also in the liturgy. Members of LOTM have contributed Christian art work to the Synod Conferences and subsequently made that art available to other churches in our synod for display. Katie Romanoski and her family members have designed and completed beautiful banners for the various seasons of the church. In 2017 the congregation completed a mural on the outside of the church designed by Bonnie Norling Wakeman. The mural represents the various organizations who use the LOTM facility with a message of love, peace, hope and reconciliation.

- Since the founding of this congregation, members have been actively engaged in caring for the people of Summit County. Members have been on the school board, other non-profit boards, worked on behalf of the people of Haiti and West African refugees and supported the Family and Intercultural Center (FIRC). Here are a few of the activities chronicled in the scrapbooks of LOTM.

  In December 1998 eight youth from LOTM were joined by 11 adults and high school students in making the first trip to Juarez for Casas por Christo, a group that builds houses for the poor. Mission trips continued to Juarez, Peru, Haiti, Jordan, and Africa through 2006. In the 2003 Annual Report Jim and Nancy Gulley reported on the West African Community Care Team of Summit County and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, a division of Lutheran Family Services. LOTM shared Thanksgiving Baskets with ten West Africans families located in Summit County.

  LOTM has hosted Day Services since January of 2012. The Day Services are offered on Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00. Showers, telephone, laundry, internet, computer and a meal are offered to those who do not have access to these services. These clients are screened and referred to LOTM by FIRC (Family and Intercultural Resources Center). Day Services also provides information about food banks, community dinner and other services offered in the county. Day Services has served 86 different clients since January of 2015. Those clients represent over 500 visits. Most clients use all of the services offered, but the showers and laundry are especially helpful as a number of the people who come are camping or living in their vehicles even in the winter.

  Every fourth Sunday of the month with the exception of December, LOTM’s congregation makes a second offering to local, national and international causes. The purpose of the Outreach Committee is to select which non-profit groups to whom Lord of the Mountains Church will offer support by collecting and donating this offering to them. Some of these groups have included: Dillon Valley Elementary School, the Community Dinner, the Family Intercultural Resource Center, Haiti, Namibia, and Lutheran World Relief to name a few. The Committee also ensures that the funds collected are wisely spent and that youth are included as volunteers in as many activities as possible.

  Lord of the Mountains Church in Dillon began its efforts to reduce gun violence in March of 2014 with an event called “March Sabbath”. Since then, a small task force of members has worked to build awareness, in the church and across Summit County, of the epidemic
that gun violence has become both in Colorado and in the United States. Over 30,000 people die every year in the US by guns, but instead of the country working to reduce that number, a few special interest groups have turned the issue into a political controversy. Therefore, LOTM joined with Colorado Faith Communities United to Reduce Gun Violence in an effort to find solutions to the epidemic and to encourage lawmakers to enact provisions to protect citizens. On January 31, 2016, the church formally adopted a resolution calling for the right of individuals who own guns to do so legally and responsibly, while at the same time, working with gun owners, educators, law enforcement, mental health providers, community leaders and other faith based organizations to educate the public about the causes of this epidemic, create policy solutions, and reduce the horrific number of deaths.

Fair Trade Markets sell craft items produced by workers and artists from different countries all around the world. The markets ensure that the workers and artists are paid a fair amount for their wares and it helps them use their skills and talents to become self-sustaining. LOTM purchases the items from several non-profit organizations. Our markets are held at least once a year in November (and sometimes at Easter) providing a fun opportunity for everyone to purchase gifts for the holiday(s) and also support the fair trade effort.

Lord of the Mountains supports the Family Intercultural Resources Center (FIRC) - Food Bank by collecting food, diapers and toiletries for those in need and the collections are taken to the FIRC food bank, located at FIRC headquarters in Dillon. The food and other goods are collected from the "Food Bank" cart in the Church Narthex. Once a week, the food and other items are collected and taken to the FIRC headquarters and dropped off. Over the course of a year, LOTM collects thousands of dollars worth of food, diapers, etc. Volunteers are welcome to share the responsibility of making this delivery.

In late 2008, Deborah Hage, an active member of the Outreach Committee at LOTM had a dream of providing an inclusive community dinner for anyone who wanted to come. Hage received start-up funds from Summit Rotary and LOTM, and the Elks Lodge opened their hall and the community dinner was born. In early March of 2009 the first dinner attracted 50 people. This last winter, the average dinner saw over 500 people attending most Tuesday nights. The 90,000th meal was served this spring!! The attendees represent a cross-section of the community, including but not limited to, the under employed, homeless, the deaf community, the elderly, seasonal workers, and many of the diners are children. It is a needs-based meal, but an inclusive meal where everyone and anyone is invited. A broad spectrum of the community has gotten behind the dinner with local resorts and restaurants providing and preparing food and many church and civic organizations serving the dinner.

Camp Compassion provides a week of summer activities for children from preschool through middle school. The curriculum includes Bible study, songs, craft activities, games and fellowship. Since 2014 adult counselors from Sky Ranch have provided the curriculum. Members of the congregation providing leadership include Peggy Hiller, Katie Romanoski, Cindy Massaro, Darlene Muschett and more recently Katie Okes.
MISSION STATEMENT
(2004)

In the spirit of the Reformation, Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church continually seeks meaningful ways of expressing our commitment to the life and teaching of Jesus. We do this by...

*Welcoming all people to full participation in our community of faith.

*Recognizing there are other ways to God than just our way.

*Striving to be compassionate toward all of creation.

*Aspiring to live what we believe.

*Allowing for diversity of thought and opinion.

*Working for peace and justice for all people.

*Committing ourselves to serving others.

WELCOME STATEMENT
(2005)

Welcome to Lord of the Mountains

We rejoice that diversity in God’s creation enriches, nurtures and challenges our life and ministry as followers of Jesus and as servants in the world.

Because we believe with Jesus that God’s grace is truly amazing, we are committed to welcoming all people to this place… no matter where you come from, no matter what age, race, socio-economic or family status, no matter what gender identity or sexual orientation.

Grace is for everyone or it isn’t grace.
   It’s that simple.
   It’s that amazing.

We really do welcome all!
2005
Charter Members of Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church

Miss Laurie Anderson
The Rev. and Mrs. Richard (Mary Ann) Bansemer (3 children)
Miss Laurie Anderson
Mrs Judy Benge
Mr. and Mrs. Peer (Nancy) Bjornstad (2 children)
Miss Melissa Cantrell
Mr. and Mrs. Robert (Judy) Clock (1 child)
Mr. and Mrs. Kemper (Joan) Coleman (3 children)
Mr. and Mrs. Milt (Martha) Copenhaver
Mr. and Mrs. Dan (Marti) Dever (2 children)
Mr. William C. Dixon
Mr. and Mrs. Fred (Naomi) Dumler (3 children)
Mrs. Linda More (1 child)
Mr. Norm Evanger
Mr. and Mrs. Joe (Barbara) Fehr (1 child)
Mr. and Mrs. Quent (Carol) Gauerke (2 children)
Mr. and Mrs. Rex (Marcy) Glass (2 children)
Mr. and Mrs. Dene (Emily) Hurlbert (2 children)
Mr. and Mrs. Clarence (Edna) James
Mr. Robert Jobman
Mr. and Mrs. Rod (Judy) Jobman
Mr. and Mrs. Tal (Lynn) Jones (child)
Mr. and Mrs. Neil (Shirley) Kelly (2 children)
Mr. and Mrs. Robert (Linda) Killinen (3 children)
Mr. and Mrs. Lash (Marlis) Laursoo (2 children)
Mr. and Mrs. Dean (Gerry) Mosher (2 children)
Mr. and Mrs. Harry (Betty) Moyes
Mr. and Mrs. Olin (Marian) Mueller
Mr. and Mrs. Alan (Shirley) Olson (4 children)
Mr. and Mrs. Brian (Jan) Petersen (1 child)
Dr. and Mrs. J.D. (Sue) Peterson (2 children)
Mr. and Mrs. Ron (Norma) Peterson
The Rev. and Mrs. John (Mary) Pfeiffer
Dr. and Mrs. Harvey (Sue Butler) Rester
Mr. and Mrs. Dave (Darlene) Rud (1 child)
Mr. and Mrs. Doug (Gigi) Rud (1 child)
Miss Jackie Skaro
Mr. Dave Thayer
Mr. and Mrs. Erich (Jean) Windisch (1 child)
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald L. (Dona) Wittwer (2 children)
Mr and Mrs. Wesley L. (Van) Woodford (2 children)
LOTM PASTORS

1973-1978 Rev. Richard Bansemer - Pastor Developer/Pastor

1978-1982 Rev. Willard Bickel - Pastor


1996-2008 Rev. Kari Reiquam - Co Pastor

1999-2007 Ms. Cassandra Olson - Associate in Ministry/Director of Christian Education

2008-2013 Rev. Joseph Holub - Pastor

2013-2016 Rev. Stephanie Kopsch - Pastor

2016 to Present Rev. Liliana Stahlberg - Pastor

Interim Pastors
Rev. Bev Piro
Rev. James Wiberg
Rev. Ken Stenman

Honorary Pastor Emeritus
Henry W. Kircher