

# PHILIPP WAMBSGANSS JR.

## *Caring Servant*

BORN: FEBRUARY 16, 1857 *Bingen, Ind.*

DIED: APRIL 21, 1933 *Fort Wayne, Ind.*

**P**HILIPP WAMBSGANSS JR. WAS A VISIONARY leader and promoter of diaconal and human-care ministries in the Missouri Synod. His father, Johannes Philipp Wambsganss Sr., was a German-born pastor. His mother, Maria Elisabeth Hess (later Wambsganss), was a deaconess who immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1849. From his parents, Philipp learned the importance of the ministry of the Gospel and of living a life of love and service to others.

Wambsganss attended Concordia College, Fort Wayne, and then Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Ill., graduating in 1878. His first call was as pastor of Saints Peter and Paul Lutheran Church, Hancock, Mich., where he also was missionary at large for an expansive territory: the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and the northern regions of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Later he was pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Bedford and St. John's Lutheran Church in Newburgh, Ohio. In 1895, he was called to Emmanuel Lutheran and, in 1900, also became pastor at Emmaus Lutheran in Fort Wayne. He gained the reputation of a powerful preacher and a caring pastor. Yet his service to the Church and to his community expanded.

From childhood, Wambsganss had known the valuable role deaconesses play in the church. He helped organize the Lutheran Deaconess Association of the Synodical Conference, and, in 1919, he became its first president, serving in the office until his death. He was a tireless advocate and recruiter for deaconess ministry and promoted deaconesses as missionaries both at home and abroad.

Wambsganss also understood the importance of caring for others in need and dedicated himself to this cause throughout his career. He was president of Associated Lutheran Charities of

the Synodical Conference, working in particular with hospitals and child welfare agencies.

In addition to his long service to the Lutheran Deaconess Association and his work with Lutheran Charities, Wambsganss was president of the Fort Wayne Lutheran Hospital Association, president of the Lutheran Friend's Society and president of the Lutheran Children's Aid Society. He also worked to support two orphanages in Germany. All the while, he remained a much-beloved pastor at Emmaus Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne.

Wambsganss served the Lord's Church for 55 years. Approximately 2,500 attended his funeral at Emmaus, the congregation he had served for so long. He is remembered by many with gratitude to God: "Looking back upon his life of active service we thank God for what He has done through Pastor Wambsganss and pray God to give us such trusting, child-like faith, such zealous love, and such ever-joyful, buoyant spirit as were given to this, our departed leader in Israel" (Naumann 111).

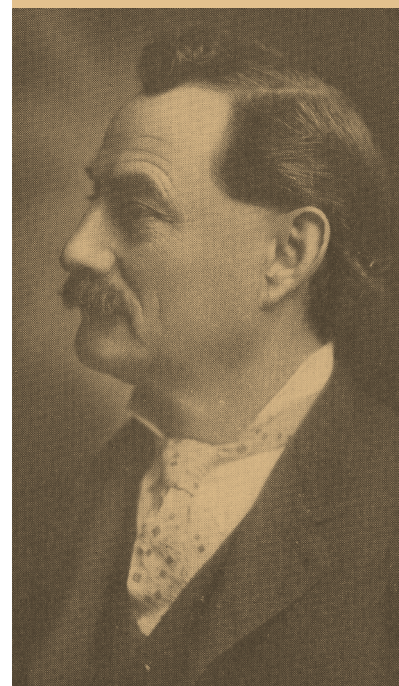
**For more information about the 175th anniversary of the LCMS, visit [lcms.org/175](http://lcms.org/175).**



### DISCOVER MORE

Cheryl D. Naumann, *In the Footsteps of Phoebe: A Complete History of the Deaconess Movement in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008).

Fred Wambsganss, "Five Decades of Pastoral Activity," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (Winter 1958): 145–54.



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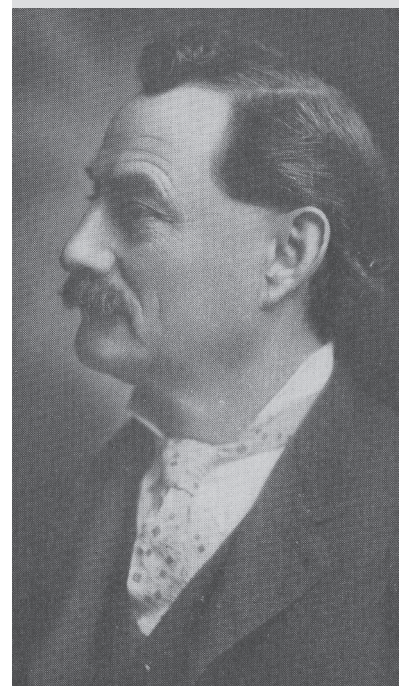
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