

*Norwegian Grove  
Lutheran Church*

*Gaylord, Minnesota*



*125th Anniversary*

# Quasquicentennial History

Norwegian immigrants began to settle in Sibley County in 1855. The first settlers were Neri Nereson, Jørgen Nereson, and Ole Nereson, all from Satersdalen.



Norseland Lutheran Church

They soon were joined by Swenke Torgerson and Ole Estenson. They settled in the southern part of the county where there were big woods, and hence the name Norwegian Grove.

The Norwegian Grove Lutheran Church was organized on the first day of February 1881. Prior to the

organization of the congregation, members had been attending services at Norseland where a congregation was organized in 1858. The first resident pastor arrived in 1863 and a church building was constructed at Norseland in 1866. Pastor Thomas Johnsen conducted Divine Services in various locales of his far-flung parish. Already in 1861, Jørgen Nereson and Ole Nereson [Overson] were asked to "call together the children [of the Northern Grove] in order to instruct them in Confirmation knowledge." The first Divine Service appears to have been conducted in the area of the "Northern Grove" on January 24, 1875. This became Norseland Church District #5 with local Services being conducted several times each year.

## Congregation Organized

At the Annual Meeting of the Norseland congregation, on January 11, 1881, it is recorded:

*"A writing from the Northern Grove was read and taken up for consideration. Their proposal was that they wanted to separate from the Congregation in order to organize as an annex of the same Parish with the Nicollet Congregation.*

*"On Motion by Pastor Johnsen that all who were in favor of the request should rise, 12 rose in favor and 1 against."*

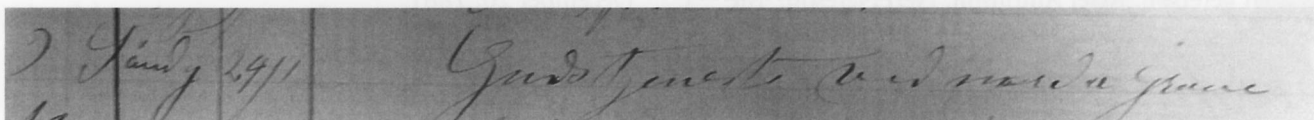
A committee of five men was elected to make arrangements. The committee consisted of S. Svenson, H.C. Hanson, O.P. Renne, Lars Schjoll, and Lars Kvelperud.

The committee met on Friday, January 14 at the home of Svenke Torgerson.

ANNO 1881		Dagsregister.
Januar	4. 20	Guds tjeneste
Februar	17	Guds tjeneste
Marts	6, 16, 30	Guds tjeneste
April	10, 17	"
Mai	16	"
Juni	17	"
Juli	3, 29	"
August	14	"

1881 record of Divine Services

*"After a hymn and scripture reading by Pastor Johnsen the meeting organized by electing H.C. Hanson as chairman and O.P. Renne as secretary.*



Pastor Thomas Johnsen recorded the first Service at the Northern Grove on January 24, 1875.

*"The first order of business was the reading of the report of the Trustees for the year 1880 which showed that the congregation had a debt of \$212 for which there was no subscription. In accordance with the number of members the share of the debt for District #5 will be \$30.00. It was resolved that this annex take on their part of the debt, namely \$30.00.*

*"Next there was a discussion as to the relationship of the annex as regarding the joint property such as the parsonage and Precentor's land. Resolved that the parsonage and Precentor's land be a Joint Property.*



Pastor and Mrs. Thomas Johnsen

*"The matter of Services for the annex was discussed. This was left to the Pastor. There was discussion as to the relationship the annex had for the Pastor's salary. After some discussion back and forth there was an agreement that the annex give \$85.00 per year for the Pastor's salary. This*

*was adopted. There followed a discussion as to where the dividing line should be between the two Congregations and it was resolved that the Rush River [Judicial Ditch 1A] shall be the dividing line."*

The Norwegian Grove Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was then formally organized on February 1, 1881, at the home of Mrs. Jørgen [Anne] Nereson. The following were charter members of Norwegian Grove Lutheran Congregation: Gunder Nereson, Jørgen Peterson, Ole Overson, Svenke Torgerson, Ole Estenson, Asbjorn Torgerson, Gunder L. Torgerson, Ole Erdahl, Neri Nereson, Anton Reilson, Narlett G. Johnson, Reiel Antonson, Isak Wold, Torger L. Torgerson, Halvor Nereson, Gullick Johnson, Sven K. Svenson, Ole O. Foss, Louis Overson, John Wold. The first trustees of the congregation were: Jørgen Peterson, Reiel Antonson, Neri Nereson. The first elder was Gunder Nereson.



Anne Nereson home

The first pastor of the congregation was the Rev. Thomas Johnsen who arrived in Nicollet County in August of 1863 and, at one time or another, served twenty-seven congregations in Minnesota and Iowa. His field of labor extended from Esterville, Iowa to Alexandria, Minnesota. He traveled through much of this area on foot. It is said that eventually his field of labor was divided into congregations

which were served by fifty pastors. In 1881 the parish consisted of Nicollet (Norseland) Lutheran Church with 382 members, Swan Lake Lutheran Church with 175 members, and Norwegian Grove Lutheran Church with 70 members. Pastor Johnsen lived in the log parsonage which had been constructed at Norseland in 1864. Additional construction at the parsonage site included a barn in 1888, a well and windmill in 1890 (at a total cost of \$425), a grainery in 1893, a corn crib and wood shed in 1897, a summer kitchen in 1898, and a barn in 1913. The pastor's salary (from the Norwegian Grove congregation) was \$85/year, plus produce which was to be delivered to the parsonage. Pastor and Mrs. Johnsen had eight children; three of their children reached adult-hood. Pastor Johnsen is remembered as a large man with great physical strength who could pick-up two grain sacks from the ground, one in each arm, and walk off with them—something few, if any of the farmers themselves could do. He served the congregation until his death on April 19, 1906, at the age of 68 years, and was buried in the Norseland cemetery.

Fourteen Services were conducted in 1881. The first baptisms after the congregation had been organized were administered on Sunday, May 15, 1881. Baptized that day were: Anne Maria Kristenson, daughter of Karl & Bertha Kristenson, born March 20, and Anne Mathilde Svendsen, daughter of Sven & Margit Svendsen, born January 21. The first recorded marriage was that of Ole Foss and Anne Nereson on December 20, 1881.

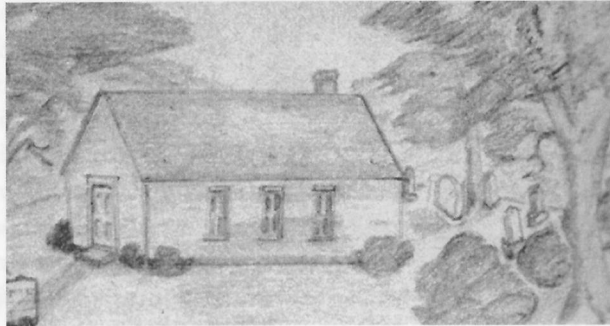
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## *Church Constructed*

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Until the church was erected in 1884, Services were held in the homes of the members. A building committee was elected consisting of Jørgen Peterson, Asbjørn Torgerson, and Ole Estenson who were "to act on behalf of the congregation in regard to the church building using their own judgment." Land for the church and cemetery was donated by Ole Overson. The site chosen for the new church was conveniently located, as the members all lived within a five-mile radius of it. Eventually an additional one-fourth acre of land was purchased from Ole Overson for \$10 for the construction of a "privy."

John Rice did the carpenter work on the first church, and also built the furniture. It is recalled that the church was of good construction, about 20 feet by 30 feet, and was built on a low stone foundation. The building consisted of one room, with a small sacristy built out at the west end. Two doors, one on each side of the altar, led from the church to the sacristy. Between the two doors was a small door leading to the altar. The church had three windows on the north, three on the south, and a small one on the west in the sacristy. There was only one outside door; that was on the east side. Just inside the door to the left stood the stove. It was a long, black, narrow stove with a large drum on top, through which the smoke went before it passed into the stovepipe. The stovepipe extended the full length of the church to the west end where the chimney was. There was a narrow aisle up the center of the church, and on each side of the aisle were rows of pews extending to the wall. Extra pews stood against the wall in the front for the Sunday School pupils. At the back of the church there was a pew facing the stove. People could sit and



warm themselves there or use it if the church was full. A reed organ sat in the front on the right side of the church. Women, and children under confirmation age, sat on the left side and men and boys sat on the right side. The first class of confirmands in the new church was in 1885: Nils Nereson, son of Jørgen Nereson, Karl Reilson, son of Anton Reilson, Thone Torgerson,

son of Asbjorn Torgerson, Anne Torgerson, daughter of Asbjorn Torgerson. Mr. and Mrs. Louis Peterson (Mary Peterson) were the first to be married after the church building was constructed. On one Sunday in May 1896, Pastor Johnsen's son, Johan (who was a student in the seminary) was to conduct the service. He rushed into the church and announced that he had arrived before the coming storm—and then died.

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## *Early Years*

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For many years services were conducted every second or third Sunday, usually in the afternoon with Sunday School being taught on the alternate Sundays. In the early years, religious school was held at the church every spring for two months. This was always concluded with "Barnefest" which was a large picnic. Each fall a Mission-Festival was held when there were two services: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The afternoon service was devoted to Mission work. Dinner and lunch were served outside on the church grounds.

Following Pastor Johnsen's death in 1905, seminary professor J.B. Frick served as the vacancy pastor. The congregation was then served by Rev. Benjamin Raffteseth who was born in Norway and



Rev. Benjamin Raffteseth





Sunday School picnic

in 1881 had emigrated to South Africa. On the voyage, the passengers were shipwrecked with only thirteen of the three-hundred passengers surviving (his parents and two sisters were included among those lost). He immigrated to the United States in 1905 and one year later accepted the call to serve as our pastor. At this time it was decided that the old log parsonage should be replaced. Louis Estensen, from Norwegian Grove,



parsonage constructed in 1907

was a member of the building committee.

The total cost of the house was \$4,411.79. During the one-year time of construction, the Raffteseth family lived in St. Peter.

To begin with the church had no organ. The singing was led by the Klokke,

Jørgen Peterson. The second Klokke was Ole Foss who continued in this position until 1902 when it was discontinued and the pastor was asked to "speak the opening and closing prayer by kneeling on the kneeler at the altar and that the Lord's Prayer hitherto spoken by the precentor be left out." When an organ was purchased, Anna Foss was the first organist. Each family

had their own hymnbooks, which they brought along to Services and Ladies' Aid meetings. They were small books with the words only. The pastor and organist had the music editions. For the Norwegian Services, the *Koralbog* by Rev. E. Jensen, was used. For the English services the *Lutheran Hymnary* is used.

In 1909, Rev. J.J. Strand became the pastor of the congregation and served until 1925. It was during these years that the Norwegian Synod merged with other Norwegian Lutheran church bodies based upon a doctrinal

agreement which compromised the truth in regard to the doctrines of conversion, election, and grace alone. Norwegian Grove continued to remain independent of synodical affiliation. The Norseland congregation became independent of synodical affiliation and later joined the current Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The Swan Lake congregation withdrew from the parish at this time.



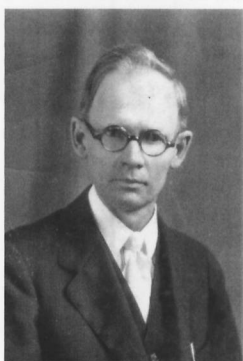
Rev. J.J. Strand

Rev. O.M. Gullerud accepted the congregation's call to serve as pastor in 1925. Shortly after his arrival, the Ladies' Aid Society held its first recorded meeting on June 7, 1925. Officers elected were Mrs. F.W. Briard, president, Mrs. A.T. Skaro, treasurer, and Mrs. H.E. Tollefson, secretary. The Ladies' Aid Society first met at the homes of members on Sunday afternoons, and the whole family was invited. If the weather was pleasant, the men would sit outside and visit while the women held their meetings inside the house. The charge for supper was 25¢ for adults and 10¢ for children. Dues collected in these early days were 10¢ from each member. When a young woman was married, she automatically became a member of the Ladies' Aid. In 1935, it was determined that all women "who belong to the church become thereby members of the Ladies' Aid." Still, the following year, the secretary laments about a meeting that "there were only seven members present."

## *New Church Constructed*

Already by 1899, there was discussion about repairing or enlarging the church building. Instead, "it was resolved to paint the church both on the inside and outside and to move the pulpit and lower it two feet. It was also resolved that the sacristy and kneeler around the Altar be repaired, also that a platform at the entrance be built. Also that a new fence be erected around the cemetery a part of boards and a part of netting wire and oak posts; also

that the church be shingled. It was also resolved that the whole congregation gather after spring work to carry out all the repairs on the property." Whether this was all accomplished, or not, is not known; but again in 1911, the congregation resolved to "lower the pulpit." In 1914, and again in 1916, the foundation-wall needed repair.



Rev. O.M. Gullerud

The congregation also gathered two or three times each year to clean the church grounds and especially the cemetery.

During the mid-1920s the congregation realized the need for a larger and improved church building. At first it was thought that the old church could be remodeled, but after a more careful study of the situation, it was decided to erect a new building. Several sites were considered, but finally the gift of the present site by Junetta Foss was accepted.



an early Ladies' Aid gathering

This site was located about six miles south of Gaylord on State Highway 22, about a half mile east of the old site. To meet the expenses of the new church building, pledges were made, and suppers, bazaars and ice-cream socials were held at the homes of members. The Ladies' Aid also served lutefisk suppers to help pay for the new church. The menu often consisted of lutefisk, chicken or meatballs, mashed potatoes, vegetables, rice pudding, rommegrøt, and Norwegian cookies. At first the suppers were served in the homes of members and the furniture was moved upstairs so all the rooms, except the kitchen, were used to set tables which were brought-in from other people's homes. While the church was being built, the Ladies' Aid members took turns making the meals for the workers and taking food to the work-site. The Ladies' Aid paid \$36.75 for dishes, \$13.90 for

silverware, \$72.00 for chairs and \$1,100 toward lumber.

After the church was constructed, the Ladies' Aid continued to serve many suppers; but, because of the Great Depression, which began with the Stock Market Crash just nine days after the church was dedicated, there were few tables or chairs. Finally, the first folding tables

were built by the men. In time, Theodore Tollefson donated one-half acre of land adjoining the church grounds to be used as a cemetery.



the old kitchen

Those who served on the building committee were Selmer Wold, Helmer Tollefson, Wm. F. Briard, and William Skaro. A contract was let early in the spring of 1929. Ole Olson of Winthrop did the carpenter work, and E.J. Gladitsch of Gaylord did the mason work. The altar and pulpit were a gift from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Gaylord who recently had remodeled their church building. Members of the congregation donated freely of their time and labor to build the new house of worship. The frame building had a full cement basement, was 30 feet by 46 feet, and the estimated cost was \$6,000. Work on the new building was begun in May of 1929, and was completed in October of that same year. The Rev. O.M. Gullerud, pastor of the congregation, presided at the dedication of the new building on October 20, 1929. The cornerstone-laying Service was held in



wedding service showing the 1929 chancel

the morning at 10:30, with the Rev. J.J. Strand of Chicago, a former pastor of the congregation, officiating for the Cornerstone Laying. The dedication Service was held at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon with the synod's president, the Rev. Christian Anderson, delivering the sermon. Other pastors who assisted

at the dedication were the Rev. E.H. Gade of Gaylord and the Rev. C.W.A. Kuehner of Winthrop. Dinner was served by the ladies in their newly finished kitchen and dining hall and the Bernadotte Band also contributed music. The Norseland Lutheran Church choir sang at the services. At this time, the congregation consisted of 106 members. There were 10 students in the Sunday School.

Since there have been few young people in the confirmation class each year, they have usually been combined with the Norseland class, and oftentimes confirmed in the Norseland Church. In the early years of the congregation, young people would occasionally get together for fun and fellowship. Such meetings were usually held at the homes of members, and were not held on any regular basis. In 1927 the young people from our congregation were invited to join the youth society at the Norseland Church. This invitation was accepted, and from that time to the present the two congregations have operated a parish youth society. The monthly meetings of the society alternate between the two churches. Separate treasuries are maintained.

Parents of the young people have taken their turns assisting in the work of the organization as adult leaders



1935 Funeral Service — notice the flower girls



In the late 1930s, Services began to be conducted every Sunday and a choir was organized around 1935.

Pastor Gullerud became afflicted with tuberculosis. A two-story sleeping porch was added to the parsonage to assist with his treatment. He died in 1937 and was buried in the Norseland cemetery. Milton Tweit already was providing pastoral assistance and was called to serve the congregation. He was ordained and then installed as pastor in 1937.

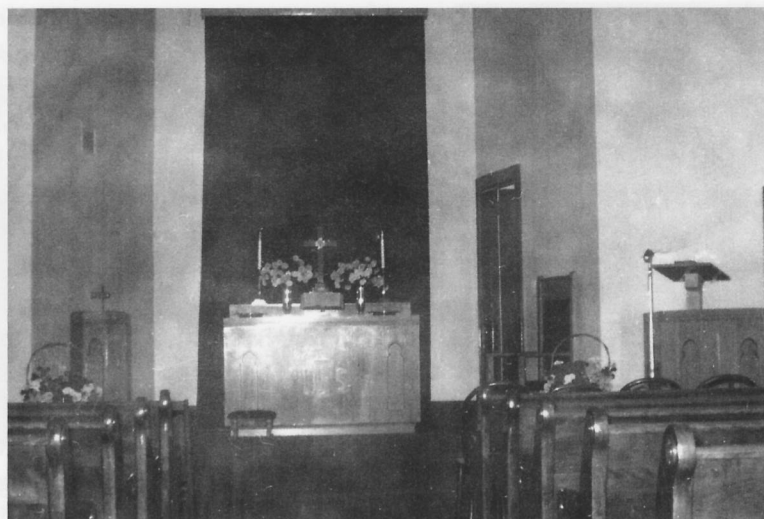
Possibly one of the most traumatic occurrences in the history of the congregation occurred on September 4, 1941 when Merton

Tollefson, who was mowing grass near the church grounds, was struck and killed by lightning when a thunderstorm arose. Another heartbreaking event occurred on September 14, 1944 when Floraine Stevens was killed in action during World War II. A memorial Service was conducted the following year.



Pastor Milton Tweit

During these years, the congregation was supported through the collection of annual "dues" which were \$25/year for a married couple or \$15/year for a single man and \$10/year for a single woman. These were gathered by the trustees of the congregations in two installments during the year. There also was a monthly



interior redecoration for the 75th Anniversary

collection gathered for the work of missions. Electrical power came to Norwegian Grove in 1948. The cost of wiring was \$675, which was considered to be an excessive cost.

## 75th Anniversary

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the congregation was observed on October 28, 1956. Rev. C. M. Gullerud, a former son of the parish, preached the anniversary sermon. In preparation for this anniversary the altar was replaced with a new altar and a burgundy Dossal Curtain. A new pulpit, baptismal font and hymnboard also were purchased, and a wine-colored carpet was laid. The *Gaylord Hub* reported: "The anniversary event was fittingly observed with solemn services and the return of many former parishioners and friends of the parish."



75th Anniversary





75th Anniversary choir

After serving our congregation for over twenty years, Pastor Tweit accepted a call to Iowa. The Rev. J.A.O. Preus served as vacancy pastor until the Rev. Joseph Petersen was installed as our pastor. Shortly after his arrival, in 1958, the first electronic organ was purchased for the church. In 1964, a well

was drilled on the church property, making running water available in the church basement for the first time.

1929 members, a catechism, a short history of the congregation, a Norwegian newspaper and a copy of the *Gaylord Hub*. Additional items, placed in the cornerstone, were some 1966 coins, photos of President Johnson and Governor Rolvaag, a church constitution, names of the builders and building committee, names of the church officers, a *Gaylord Hub* and a brief church history updated to the current time. With 145 members, the congregation was nearly at its largest size ever. A new cemetery marker was dedicated, that same afternoon at a 3:00 o'clock ceremony. The Ladies' Aid served a dinner to 275 guests.



Rev. Joseph Petersen



Pastor Theodore Aaberg

### *Church Remodeled*

In 1966, the congregation dedicated a 22 x 30 foot addition to the building at a cost of \$15,000. This included an enlarged Nave with the addition of four rows of pews, a new entrance, kitchen and rest rooms. Members of the Building Committee at this time were: Arnold Schmidt, Arthur Tollefson, Kenneth Skaro, Donald Berg, and Charles Goodman (later replaced by Clayton Overson). Members of the kitchen committee included: Mrs. Karl Johnson, Mrs. Alfred Nagel, Mrs. Fred Berg, Mrs. Lloyd Tollefson, Mrs. Henry Bonderson and Mrs. Howard Hanson. Former pastor, Rev. M. E. Tweit, was guest speaker at the 11:00 o'clock Dedication Service on October 23, 1966. Cornerstone-laying ceremonies followed the Service at 12:00 noon. The 1929 cornerstone contained a list of the

The wages of war were again sharply felt by our congregation when on March 4, 1966, Dwight Tollefson lost his life in Vietnam.

During the years 1964-66, Rev. Petersen served as the president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. In 1968, Pastor Petersen accepted a position to serve as





the congregation at that year's synod convention were Leslie Enter and Howard Hanson.

The chancel of the church was redecorated in 1978, when the Dossal Curtain was replaced with brick and the organ was moved to the back of the church and placed upon a platform. The Ladies' Aid also purchased the cross (which was constructed by Lanny Briard) and new carpeting in the front of the church and down the center aisle.

a recruiter at Bethany Lutheran College and the Rev. Theodore Aaberg succeeded him. The basement dining room was remodeled in 1973, with a new suspended ceiling and steel posts. In 1976, the Scripture lessons began to be read from the New International Version of the Bible; and in the same year the organ was replaced. Later that same year, Pastor Aaberg accepted a call to become the first full-time president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

## Centennial

Rev. Norman Madson became the shepherd of the flock in June of 1980 as the congregation was preparing for her centennial observance. The *Gaylord Hub* reported the following about the 1981 Centennial:

*"Overflow crowds attended both the morning and afternoon programs as the Norwegian Grove Lutheran Church of rural Gaylord observed its 100th Anniversary on Sunday, June 28th. Three hundred people were served a catered sit-down dinner of ham and turkey at noon. A large tent on the church grounds helped accommodate the large crowd. At the morning service Rev. Tosten Skaaland served as liturgist, and the Rev. Milton Tweit of Lawler, Iowa, preached the festival sermon. He preached on the text I Peter 2:9, and used as his theme: "The High Honor & Grace God Has Granted Your Congregation." The children's choir sang "Ye Lands to the Lord Make a*

## Synodical Membership



Rev. Tosten Skaaland

It was the Rev. Tosten Skaaland who next became pastor of the flock at Norwegian Grove. The congregation always had been independent of synodical membership since its organization in 1881. The congregation had been served by pastors of the Norwegian Synod and later the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Finally,

at the annual congregational meeting in January of 1977, Norwegian Grove Lutheran Church voted to join the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and was accepted as a member of the synod at its convention in June of that year. Representing



1978 chancel redecoration



*Jubilant Noise." The adult choir sang "For Many Years, O God of Grace." Miss Valerie Enter, accompanied by her mother, Mrs. Leslie Enter, sang "How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings." Mrs. Norman Madson served as organist for both the morning service and the afternoon program.*

*"Rev. Joseph Petersen of Colorado Springs, Colorado was the main speaker at the afternoon program. He based his message on Psalm 16:6, and spoke of "Norwegian Grove's Godly Heritage." Members of the congregation helped the audience reminisce a little bit with a skit entitled: "I Remember When." Miss Valerie Enter and Mrs. Sherilyn Birkholz accompanied by Mrs. Leslie Enter sang "I Waited for the Lord." A Youth Choir sang "The Lord's Prayer." The afternoon offering was taken for the Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in Mankato, in memory of a former pastor, Rev. T.A. Aaberg.*



planting the centennial tree

*Besides the former pastors who were present, oral greetings to the congregation were given by President Norman Holte of Bethany Lutheran College, and Mr. Carl Annexstad of the Norseland Lutheran Church. Mr. Howard Hanson, chairman of the Board of Deacons, responded on behalf of the congregation. Williams Studio of Gaylord was on hand to take a group picture following the afternoon program. Coffee and bars were served by the ladies of the congregation at the conclusion of the day. Though the skies were threatening most of the day, the rains held off, and good weather was enjoyed for the day's festivities. The closing verse of the final hymn by the assembly at the afternoon program expresses the feeling of the members of the congregation:*

*O God our help in ages past,  
Our hope for years to come!  
Be Thou our guard, while life shall last,  
And our eternal home."*

During the centennial year, considerable remodeling also was undertaken at the parsonage. Pastor Madson served as the Vice-president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod from 1978-86. He also served as the Field Secretary for the ELS Board for Foreign Missions. In 1983, the Women's Mission Society was organized for this circuit of the synod. Our congregation hosted the rallies in 1984 and again in 1994.



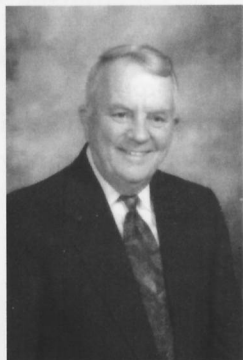
100th Anniversary





Gaylord city centennial float

The congregation always has provided for the education of its children. In the earliest years, Sunday School was taught on the Sundays when there were no Divine Services. This was followed by Saturday School until 1974, and then Sunday School. A number of students also attended Christian Day School at the Norseland Lutheran School or Trinity Lutheran School in Nicollet. In 1993, another significant step was taken when the congregation voted to become a member of the Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School Association in New Ulm. A number of the congregation's youth have attended MVL since that time.



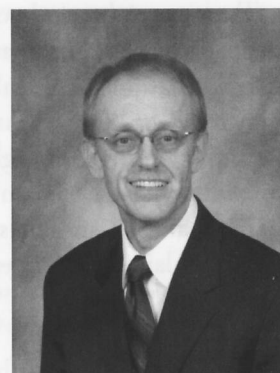
Pastor Norman Madson

The current pastor of the congregation is the Rev. Craig Ferkenstad who was installed on October 3, 1993. He has served as the Secretary of the Evangelical



75th anniversary of the Ladies' Aid

Lutheran Synod since 1996. Several improvements have been made on the church building in recent years. New shrubbery was planted in front of the building in 1999. A new Rogers Organ was dedicated on Sunday, March 3, 2000 when an afternoon organ recital was attended by seventy-five people. The Ladies' Aid observed its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2000 and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church building was observed on October 24, 2004. A noticeable improvement to the physical property also include the addition of steel roofing in 2004.

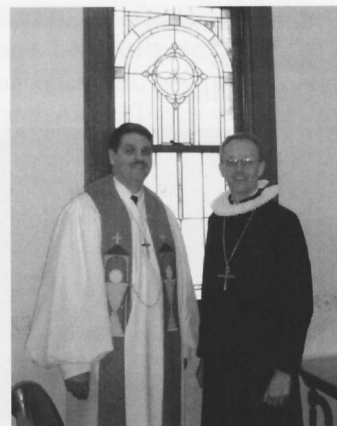


Pastor Craig Ferkenstad

### *Quasiquicentennial*

In preparation for the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the chancel of the church has been redecorated and new carpet installed. Stained glass repair also has been completed.

On February 5, 2006 the congregation gathered for a "Founders' Service." ELS President John Moldstad was the guest speaker for the Service, following which a dinner was served by the young people. On Easter Sunday, baptismal shells with the name of each individual baptized during the past 125 years were hung in the front of the church. On Sunday, June 25, former members and guests were invited to return for the anniversary celebration. Pastor Norman Madson preached the sermon at the Anniversary Service and Pastor Tosten Skaaland served as the liturgist. Following a catered noon-meal, an Anniversary program was held.



President John Moldstad and Pastor Ferkenstad at the Founders' Service



There are eighteen descendants of the charter members of this congregation who are members in this the quasiquicentennial year. A summary of the ministerial acts shows that 359 baptisms have been performed in the Norwegian Grove congregation, 266 individuals have been confirmed, 87 couples have been married, and 171 funerals have been held as believers have been laid to rest to await the resurrection with Christ.

The following pastors have served the congregation during the past 125 years:

Rev. Thomas Johnsen	1881-1906
Rev. Benjamin J. Raffteseth	1907-1909
Rev. J.J. Strand	1909-1925
Rev. O.M. Gullerud	1925-1937
Rev. Milton E. Tveit	1937-1958
Rev. Joseph N. Petersen	1958-1968
Rev. Theodore A. Aaberg	1968-1976
Rev. Tosten D. Skaaland	1976-1980
Rev. Norman A. Madson	1980-1993
Rev. Craig A. Ferkenstad	1993-

Five vicars also have served the congregation in recent years:

David Thompson	1981-82
Darryl Bakke	1983-84
Robert Lawson	1985-86
Jon Bruss	1993-94
Daniel Finn	2004-05



Descendants of charter members

It is yet with gratitude that the congregation acknowledges the many special gifts which have been received over the years for the building and improvement of the church property. As the congregation looks back on over a century of God's blessings it says as with one voice: "Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness" (Psalm 115:1).



Baptismal shells



2004 chancel redecoration



*Quasquicentennial Events:*

*February 5, 2006: Founders' Service*

*March 5, 2006: Heritage Dinner*

*April 16, 2006: Baptismal Remembrance*

*May 11, 2006: Confirmation Remembrance*

*June 25, 2006: Festival Celebration*