

First Evangelical Lutheran Church



**FIRST EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Dedication

This collection of historical data in celebration of 125 years of faithful disciples is presented in a way to preserve our heritage and its people. This collection is dedicated to all the past and present members of First Evangelical Lutheran Church who have sacrificed their time and energy to build and promote fellowship and a community of worshippers of Christ.

The information collected reflects each person's contribution to the whole picture of who and what we are. No one person can provide what we can as a family does together.

Read and remember!

Carol Lozon, Chair, 125th Anniversary Committee



For 125 years, the greatest love song of all time has been sung within the walls of First Evangelical Lutheran Church. It is a song announcing a message of final destiny ... an unconditional promise, undefeatable hope, and freedom ... enfleshed in the Son of God, the Savior of the World, Jesus Christ. It has strengthened the afflicted, comforted the sorrowful, and assure the anxious and afraid. It has flowed from the lips of those in the midst of life's greatest joys.

Contained in this little booklet is the history of the strong and gritty chorus of beautiful men, women, and children who, in this congregation, have added their voices to the great cosmic choir of the Church throughout the ages. You will find some personal, joyful and melodious remembrances of life in and with the choir. Surely, these are just a few of the remembrances of First's saints, too many to number ... but all grounded in the love of our Christ. His love and life has been our song for 125 years. It is our song today. It will be sung by the faithful of First Evangelical Lutheran Church in years to come.

"Through the Church the song goes on"

Pastor Luther Mathsen

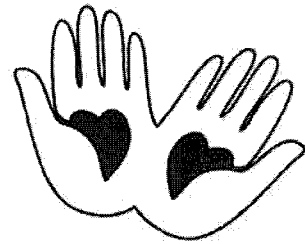
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Mission Statement

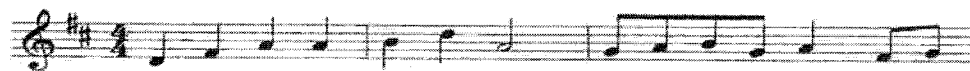
Every member inviting others to Christ through worship, learning,
and fellowship activities

HEBREWS 13:8

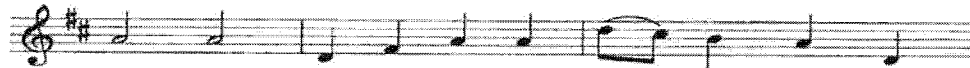
Jesus the same, yesterday, today, and tomorrow

JESUS CHRIST THE SAME ALWAYS ✚

Words & Music by Annette Thunhorst



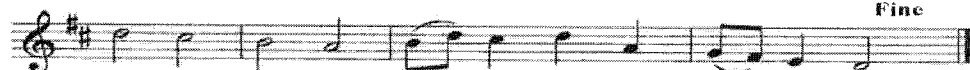
1. Je - sus Christ the same al - ways, yes - ter - day, to - day and to -
3. Je - sus Christ the same al - ways, yes - ter - day, to - day and to -
5. Je - sus Christ the same al - ways, yes - ter - day, to - day and to -



mor - row. His the prom - ise and the glo - ry,
mor - row. His the pow - er and the glo - ry,
mor - row. His the king - dom and the glo - ry,



ours the love that ne - ver dies. And we sing:
ours the life that ne - ver dies. And we sing:
ours the joy that ne - ver dies. And we sing:

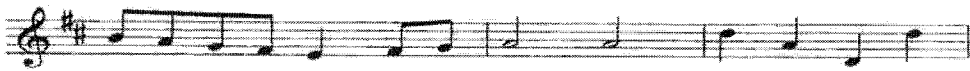


Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia.



(Interlude—)

2. By the cross and emp - ty grave,
4. Still His grace comes down to us,



He has con - quered death and re - deemed us. He has called us
In the bread and wine and the bless - ing. Ev - 'ry day His



each by name; we are His for - ev - er - more.
love un - folds on His child - ren here be - low.

Based on HEBREWS 13:8 [KJV] *"Jesus Christ the same always, yesterday, today and forever"* - this song was originally composed in 1990 by Annette for her Junior Choir in Unison Voice. It was later commissioned by the Centennial Committee for First Evangelical Lutheran's Centennial year. It underwent several revisions to become, first, a congregational hymn with leading solo voice, and last, a congregational hymn featuring women's three-part voice and brass accompaniment for the culminating centennial service on April 21, 1991.

History of First Evangelical Lutheran Church

Helen Aase

Our church, First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenyon, had a once-in-a-lifetime celebration in 1991; its centennial. Not only will we remember the past 100 years of service to God, but we now celebrate 125 years.

Our theme verse from the Bible reflects the past, present, and future of our congregation. From Hebrews 13:8 we read: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever." Our church history reflects the life of men, women, and children. Some of these people had a major role in the shaping of the congregation, but there were many who had a supporting role in the struggle to become a church which has grown these 125 years.

Much of our congregation's history goes back to Norway as its early members were of Norwegian heritage who wanted to continue worship services much like they had in their native land. This would also cause some conflicts in our congregation as there were people of various beliefs regarding styles of worship and types of leadership. The pietistic, anti-liturgical, lay leader movement for the common people of Norway countered the highly-liturgical educated and authoritative pastors of the national church of Norway. These Low-Church and High-Church beliefs would influence not only church life but also permeate social life of the immigrants and their descendants.

Since the majority of Norwegian immigrants were poor peasants who had no hope of owning land in Norway, they were eager to get to America where they could own tillable land that was free from rocks and forests. They naturally settled among their own kind, relatives and friends from Norway. To these pioneers who came to southeastern Goodhue County, it was the farmer's dream of paradise. The Kenyon area became almost entirely Norwegian in its makeup. Their language with their various dialects became the dominant language for many years. By the mid-1800's pioneer pastors visited the settlers preaching several days at a time in outdoor gatherings or in homes. They would also conduct weddings, confirmations, and baptisms of many children at one time.

Kenyon had slow growth until the railroad came in 1885. Not only did farmers want to live close to the railroad line, but businesses began to flourish in town. With a spurt in growth there also was an increase in building churches, but along ethnic lines so services could be held in their native languages.

Pastor B. J. Muus arrived from Norway in the fall of 1859 to be pastor to "all the Norwegian Lutherans in Minnesota." He functioned as the typical pastor of Norway with his authoritative administration, publicly chastising the sinful and impenitent, and providing uncompromising spiritual direction to the Norwegian people.

Pastor Muus eventually had 28 preaching stations over 32 square miles in addition to Holden church which were members of the Norwegian Synod, officially known as the "Synod of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Between 1846 and 1900, Norwegian immigrants founded 14 Lutheran Synods due to dissension over doctrine and personal clashes. In 1887 dissensions caused some congregations to leave the Norwegian Synod and form "The Anti-Missouri Brotherhood." Three years later other groups joined and formed the "United Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church," Gol, Moland and the Kenyon churches were affiliated with this United church.

After several short-term pastors who found Gol and Moland congregations difficult to work with, an energetic young pastor, Rev. Knut O. Lundeberg, came to the Moland and Gol churches in 1889. Norwegians living in Kenyon were expected to attend Gol church as there was no Lutheran church in town. But some began to attend the Baptist, Episcopal and Methodist churches. This led Pastor Lundeberg to take steps to form a town congregation as a mission congregation of Gol. They found an empty building on the main street as temporary quarters. It was the Phiel Building, a former saloon and bowling alley, which was an eyesore and a disgrace to the community. Walls and floor were removed; a pulpit was built and chairs were brought from Faribault by a team of horses. It soon proved too small for their Sunday school classes and interest grew to build a church.

Six months after Rev. Lundeberg arrived, he had a meeting in April 1890 on a Friday morning at Gol to discuss building a Lutheran church in Kenyon and how to unify the different factions of Lutherans. By the following spring, in 1891, a lot had been purchased near the public school, the present site, and a small frame church was erected. In its early years, First Lutheran was called the "Kenyon Church," but after the building of the second church, a brick structure, it was called the "big church."

On January 28, 1891, the articles of incorporation were adopted and signed by 24 men. The constitution was written in English but the bylaws were in Norwegian. The officers of the congregation were 3 trustees, treasurer, secretary and chairman who was the pastor.

The Kenyon church was 34 X 76 feet with a spire 80 feet high; was expected to cost \$3,000.00, actual cost was \$4,700.00. Even though the walls were not completed, it was host for a national convention for the United Lutheran Church in June. Tents were put in place on the north and south sides for protection from the almost continuous rain. Dinners were served all week in the unfinished basement.

A month later a storm twisted the unfinished church 5 to 6 inches, but in August they were ready for Sunday School, church services every other Sunday evening, and prayer meetings every Wednesday night.

Rev. Lundeberg saw Christian life as do's and don'ts which began to create irritation and dissension in Gol and Moland. On an extended vacation to Norway in 1893, he had learned about the Lutheran Free church which he began to promote in the Kenyon area. At the January 1895, annual meeting there were the usual long harsh debates. They led to the pastor's sudden resignation which was readily accepted. He continued preaching alternate Sundays at Moland and First, but the synod president said the resignation included Moland and First since there had been only one call from Gol and the other churches only used him.

In September, nine months after he resigned at Gol, Rev. Lundeberg gave a farewell sermon to over 1,600 people who came from surrounding areas. He preached in the grove by the brick Gol parsonage in which he lived. In addition, he conducted services with communion at First in Kenyon that evening. Two years later in 1897 Rev. Lundeberg began another church, Bethany, a Lutheran Free Church, for those considered good enough to be members. Locally, Bethany was called the Lundeberg church.

During the congregation's early years, men sat on one side of the church and women and children on the other. Church officers and committees were comprised of men which was common practice until 1920 when suffragists made it possible for women to vote in elections. First Lutheran elected trustees who set the amount of dues for each person. The committee heads included auditors,

ushers, Sunday school superintendent and assistant superintendent, building, ingathering for mission and building funds, and special subscriptions (funds) for such projects as sidewalks, salaries, roof repairs, parsonage repairs, etc.

The congregation operated on a pay-as-you-go basis until 1920 when the envelope system was initiated. People were expected to pay their church dues. If they failed, an effort would be made by a representative of the board of trustees to obtain the money by a personal visit. Sometimes some women would be excused from paying their full dues. Money was collected to pay salaries of the pastor, custodian, organist, and Norwegian summer school teacher. In addition, certain Sundays would be designated for special collections including missions, church repairs, organ and sidewalks. Always at Christmas and Easter there was a special offering.

From the original 65 members in 20 families, which became 95 members during the first year, membership grew gradually as people were invited to join. Being a Christian and a member of the congregation meant not only by word but also by deed. People would be dropped from membership for various sins such as owning a saloon, belonging to a Workman's lodge, non-attendance at worship, and non-participation in communion. In 1893 a man was forbidden to be a godfather because his children attended services at the Episcopal Church. In 1895 discussions on being a true Christian meant standing up at prayer meetings to affirm their belief in Christ.

Acceptance into membership was voted on at annual meetings so this was the time to publicly repent one's transgressions, ask for forgiveness by the congregation and be accepted into membership. Since the pastor was chairman of the church council, he also took advantage of this position to give a long report that was similar to a sermon.

Since First Lutheran had originally been a mission church of Gol, Gol cemetery was used for burial. In 1893, by one vote, the members chose Gol Cemetery over the Kenyon Cemetery as their burial place and so purchased a half acre of land from Gol which was to be fenced in to prevent suicide victims from being buried within the church lot. Three years later it was compulsory to have the church trustee's approval to buy a lot.

Following the first year in which they had nine meetings, congregational meetings were usually held twice a year. The annual meeting was generally all day on a Tuesday in January for reports and major discussions. The other meeting in May was for electing delegates to the June Synod meeting. Annual meeting records often indicated the number of eligible voters; for example, in 1896 there were 19, in 1910, 53; and in 1913, 69.

They also indicated amounts of money given by each person/family for salaries of the pastor, organist and custodian. In the first year, 1891, 7 families paid \$10.00 each, 7 families paid \$5.00 each and 19 families paid \$4.00 each. The total income of \$2,473.92 was about \$35.00 short of expenses.

In March 1895 after the departure of Rev. K. O. Lundeberg, a student pastor was sent to minister and heal a rift in the congregations of Moland, Gol and First. The newly-ordained S.O. Simundson, a married man with a family, moved into the Gol parsonage in January 1896 where he had a barn for his horses and fields for crops to feed his horses. His wife and daughter usually did the field work in the evening hours when there were fewer people traveling the nearby road as he didn't want others to see his womenfolk in the field.

Of his \$600 annual salary, First Lutheran paid only \$50.00 because they were "so small." By 1909 he received \$800.00 plus produce and meat, oats for his horses, and the share paid by First

Lutheran increased to \$185.00. He continued preaching every other Sunday at Moland and Gol and every Sunday evening in Kenyon. He requested one Sunday off a year so he "could go home."

By 1900 there was a new 1,526-pound bell for the church which cost \$245.48. Occasional Sunday morning services began for the 200 members. There were about 20 baptisms a year and 2 to 8 funerals yearly.

A major change in the early 1900's was the introduction of English services at the request of the Young People's Aid. At first, they were every third Wednesday evening but then changed to every other Sunday afternoon. Confirmation classes began to be in English. English song books were purchased and a layman was used to read the lessons with the worship services.

A number of improvements were made: papering the ceiling and walls of the church putting a slant to the floor, removing the gallery, installing a new furnace, and putting in a cement sidewalk, as well as remodeling and upkeep of the parsonage. Each church provided one third of the \$100.00 cost of a seminary student to teach parochial school for Gol, Moland and First.

Use of the church by others was for "Lutherans who were in agreement with them for funerals and such" for \$5.00 in winter and \$3.00 in summer. In 1917 three Norwegian Synods, United, Hauge, and Norwegian combined to form the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. But the more conservative Norwegians withdrew and formed a small synod called Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

With America's involvement in World War I during 1917 to 1918, the pressures to be American were immense, especially on young people. Speaking of all foreign languages was discouraged, especially German. Thus, English became the dominant language for all regular church services, meetings and classes. Norwegian services were provided two Sunday afternoons each month for the special benefit of the immigrants who maintained their original language. This World War, as with subsequent wars, would affect church mission and identity. Not only the return of the soldiers in 1919, but also the automobile and radio broke the isolation of the community. Church members presented a new Ford to Pastor Simundson which had to be stored in the shed in winter months because roads weren't open. During the war churches had women's groups helping the Red Cross by sewing and knitting mittens and wristlets for the soldiers and soliciting contributions for church relief work which included ministry to soldiers. Several times doors were shut in their faces by persons who said, "It's not my war."

In addition, after the war, lay people began to challenge pastoral authority and control which brought about some moderation of the extremes of the highly-liturgical, rigid church of Norway and the pietistic laymen involvement rejecting liturgy and ministerial gowns. The 5-cent fee for communion was discontinued at First Lutheran. Members registered with the pastor in the sacristy prior to the church service. At this time the pastor would inquire about their readiness for the Sacrament and would press the individuals about their sinfulness to see if he should deny communion.

In 1923 the Kenyon congregation wished to share a pastor with only one other congregation. Pastor Simundson was understandably distressed wondering if he was at fault and had not done all he could for the congregation, and so he resigned. A "Committee of Twelve" met often, usually at a local bank, to discuss having a resident pastor.

The congregation was concerned about its financial problems which were due to the economic conditions in the entire country in the early 1920's. The pastor's salary had reached \$1,000.00, and the organist received an additional \$1.00 for playing at funerals. The cost of the Norwegian summer

school became part of the church budget rather than using a special offering. For the first time two women became financial secretaries, but men continued as other officers of the church.

After the departure of Rev. Simundson in 1923, the pulpit was filled on Sundays by Professor H.M. Thompson of St. Olaf College until 1929. Pastor Thompson is remembered for his powerful voice.

A low point for the congregation was August 29, 1924 when the recently remodeled wooden church was destroyed by fire due to arson by a church member.

Undaunted, the 60 families responded showing great vision and faith. A brick building was built on the same site at a cost of \$41,000, seating more than 400 people. During the building process, they used nearby Bethany church for 1 and a half years, 1924 to 1926. The new church was first used in February 1926, but the dedication was not until November. The revised constitution of 1926 allowed the women to vote at age 21.

Rev. C.A. Stormo, the first pastor to serve only at First Lutheran, came in June 1929 for nine years during hard times of our country which began with the Great Crash on Wall Street in 1929. During these years, the church became an important part of peoples' lives, not only spiritually but also socially. Rev. and Mrs. Stormo were both very musical and developed outstanding Senior and Junior Choirs. Mrs. Stormo played the organ and Rev. Stormo also gave voice lessons to young people.

The 260-member congregation could not meet their budgets of \$3,900 and \$3,300 in the early 1930's. Rev. Stormo's salary stayed at \$1,500, plus house and \$25 from each of Christmas and Easter offerings which members placed on the altar. Salaries of the janitor and organist were decreased from \$225.00 and \$125.00 to \$150.00 and \$96.00 respectively for a while. Rev. Stormo was paid \$80.00 for teaching parochial school, and Mrs. Stormo's wages as organist were increased from \$8.00 to \$10.00 a month which were applied to "notes you have against us" probably their dues, so "we can pay off our debt to you."

Rev. Stormo transferred to another church in 1938 but some years later had a career change and became a chiropractor and lived in Minneapolis.

The next pastor was A.E. Syverud who ministered from 1938 to 1945 through the years of World War II. His salary went from \$1,600.00 to \$2,000.00 plus parsonage as well as the usual \$25.00 from each of the Christmas and Easter offerings. Two flags were placed in the chancel on either side of the altar. American and Christian. People came to see the preacher play ball with "his town team" which played prior to the regular high school basketball games on Friday nights. His basketball team also brought about an increase in church attendance and Wednesday night Bible classes.

"Church night" was developed for church activities on Wednesday night with the high school cooperating by having no scheduled activities that night, a practice that has been continuous but modified.

The office of deacon was created which eventually increased to 5 deacons and 2 deaconesses. As appointees of the pastor they were persons of character to assist with services, visiting the ill and those moving away, and to select the Sunday School superintendents. They were discontinued in 1960 with a church merger.

America was jolted on December 7, 1941 with Japan bombing Pearl Harbor, and we were involved in a two-front war, European and Asian. There was renewed interest in religion and patriotism throughout the country.

Other than baccalaureate or programs of a patriotic nature held in the church, a Lutheran pastor was required to be present for other events such as non-member weddings and funerals at a cost of \$5.00, or \$7.00 in winter, and a member had to sponsor use of the basement.

The celebration of the 50th anniversary of our church was postponed until the following year as Pastor Syverud was on a medical leave. At that time, there were 475 members in 172 family units. During the tenure of Rev. and Mrs. Syverud there was an increase in church attendance and variety of activities for various groups including music and education.

For several months after Pastor Syverud left, a former pastor, Rev. S. O. Simundson, returned until the next pastor would arrive. His eloquent sermons began with folded arms and the words, "My dear friends." He never referred to a note, not even for the quoting of Bible verses.

In January 1945 Rev. Virgil T. Foss came for an 8 and a half year stay until 1953. For the first time, there were women on the call committee. The end of World War II came in August. The budget in 1945 was \$5,000.00 with salaries of \$3,200 and house for the pastor, \$300.00 for the janitor, and \$120.00 for the organist.

In 1946 the name of our national church changed when "Norwegian" was dropped, and it became known as The Evangelical Lutheran church, commonly called ELC. The church magazine was now called *The Lutheran Herald*. Beginning in 1949, we employed a part-time secretary.

In the early 1950's we went from 5 to 7 council members, used a duplex envelope for offerings, and had Lenten dime folders. In 1951 we celebrated our church's 60th anniversary with a special offering for a new \$23,500 organ, installed in 1952. Church membership grew to more than 640 in 250 family units. We had 2 services on Easter Sunday and breakfast was served by high school youth.

Mrs. Foss continued the tradition of the pastor's wife participating in the music portion of worship, as director of the Junior choir and singing in the Senior Choir as well as the Ladies Chorus.

Rev. Foss left in August 1953 to work at St. Olaf College doing fund raising, and Rev. J. F. Ylvisaker was interim pastor for only a few weeks before the next pastor came. Rev. B. M. Rogness came for a 7 year stay from 1953 to 1960. His calm demeanor aided his work with troubled people in the community. During his tenure, we had the first layman as president of the congregation replacing the pastor. In addition, we had monthly communion rather than 4 - 6 times a year.

The practice of listing names and amounts given, which had been in effect since 1939, was discontinued with the 1955 annual report. Continued growth in membership led to a new \$45,000.00 educational building connected to the church, dedicated in November 1959. Also, a crying room with a window facing the sanctuary was built in the southwest corner of the church where parents could take their children during worship.

Rev. Rogness left for Wyoming and was followed by Rev. M. A. Kaatrud as interim pastor for about 5 months.

In 1960 our budget was \$27,000.00 with salaries of \$ 5,500.00 and house for the pastor, \$1,800.00 for the janitor and \$300.00 for the organist. Church membership was over 800.

Another church merger in 1960 resulted in the ALC, American Lutheran church, and a new church magazine, *The Lutheran Standard*. This merger of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the

American Lutheran Church (formed in 1930 by the Iowa, Ohio, buffalo, and Texas Synods), and the United Evangelical Lutheran church (of Danish background) was the beginning of similar faith and problems being more important than ethnic roots and language. The Lutheran Free Church joined in 1963.

Rev. Stanley V. Gjervik came from Hawaii for a 5-year stay from 1961 to 1966, and again we heard outstanding sermons. Local changes increased members on the church council to 25 including 7 women. Members considered changing the name of our church to Our Savior's Lutheran church, but it was defeated 66 – 18 at a special congregational meeting in February 1962.

Our lot at Gol Cemetery was transferred back to Gol church in February 19, 1961. Members had 60 days to sign up for lots in that portion and a few people transferred to Gol Church because of the cemetery transfer.

More worship services were provided in the early 1960's which have been continuous: Sundays, Christmas, Easter, and a community Good Friday service between noon and 2 or 3 p.m. with stores closed part of that time. Registration for communion was now done with pew cards. Nursery care and listing of members' contributions were tried a few years.

Loans from Lutheran Brotherhood and Kenyon's Security State Bank made it possible for major physical changes in the church: communion rail lowered to floor level, pulpit lowered to alter level. The two pictures of Jesus behind the altar were removed, framed and placed at the bottom of the steps to the basement. In their place velvet drapes were hung but were removed some years later as fans in the summer posed a danger of their blowing into the candles. Following remodeling, the basement was now called the Fellowship Hall. In addition, four hearing aid units were installed in several pews.

The 1960's were a time of tumult with protest groups, civil rights actions, an unpopular war in Vietnam, and occult religions even in nearby towns.

A less serious problem in our church that interfered with worship was the appearance of bats flying in the sanctuary during evening activities.

During the time of Rev. Gjervik's ministry here, our church was mortgaged so that a new church could be built in El rancho Cordova, California. Also, Mrs. Doris Gjervik was the first to break the traditional role of the pastor's wife when she went to work as a nurse at the hospital in Faribault. Rev. Gjervik also served on the Kenyon School board. He resigned in 1966, and his next ministry was a mission church in California.

Rev. Richard Hansen was here for 9 and a half years, 1966 to 1975. Our church newsletter, Parish News, replaced The Lamplighter. He was blessed with a strong deep bass voice that didn't need a microphone and was an avid golfer.

In 1966 we celebrated our 75th anniversary with the installation of a carillon. There were 383 family units and costs of renting our facilities were increased to \$15.00 for the basement and \$25.00 for the whole church.

In the late 60's the church secretary replaced the ushers in counting the offerings, and we had the end of long-term treasurers and financial secretaries, J.C. E. Holmen, J. Millerd Lee, Albion Rodde and Clarence Dahlen. The church interior was repainted, a priest was permitted to participate in a wedding ceremony, and in 1973 acolytes began participating in the worship service. Sunday worship was sent by telephone to the Sunset Home.

A major fund drive of the national church in the 1960's called LIFE, Lutheran Ingathering for Education, was the forerunner of the UMA, United Mission Appeal. The outstanding response by our members over a 3-year period for UMA in the 70's helped in building and providing temporary support for mission churches as home and abroad. We also began participating in Project Neighbor through our Cannon River Conference. This local mission effort based on a church wide project began under the direction of Albion Rodde. from our congregation.

Rev. Richard Hansen left in 1975 for Albert Lea. He was the last pastor to wear a black robe covered by a short white gown, a surplice. Death came shortly after retirement, and he is buried in the Kenyon Cemetery.

Our first and only visitation pastor, Rev. M.A. Braaten, came September 1971 and stayed for 12 years until 1983. He endeared himself not only to the elderly whom he visited regularly but also others in need of pastoral care. When Rev. Hansen left, Rev. Braaten served alone for almost 3 months before the next pastor came. After his second retirement, he moved to Florida. He too is buried in the Kenyon Cemetery.

Rev. Theodore J. Vinger was here for less than 5 years during 1976 to 1980. He brought a change in the pastor's robe, or alb, by wearing a cream-colored homespun-type cloth robe held in place by a rope belt. At first, parishioners thought he looked like pictures of the disciples. Church membership reached its maximum of 1,072 in 1976 in 388 family units, most of them being professional and technical workers plus businessmen and farmers. Our monthly newsletter was now called *The First Lutheran*. Women began to be ordained in the late 1970's.

First Lutheran participated with 8 other congregations in a rural internship program from 1977 to 1982, which was partially funded by UMA. Our beginning cost was \$800.00. Our interns were James Shadduck, Steven Goldammer, Dale Svendsen, Leif and Rivka Vage, and David Drewes.

Again, we were involved in another major church renovation of over \$92,000.00, completed in 1979. It involved straightening the bell tower, enlarging the narthex, making a new stairway at the front of the sanctuary, removing lectern and choir lofts from the front of the sanctuary, and removing the sacristy.

A tape ministry began in 1979 in which volunteers delivered cassette tapes of the sermon to shut-ins. We also began partial support of a missionary. In February 1980, a new altar/communion table allowed the pastor to face the congregation at all times. Because of the theft of brass pieces from the altar plus other articles increased efforts were made to lock the church at night.

In 1979 the Vinger family moved out of the parsonage into their own home and the parsonage was rented out. About a year later, Rev. Vinger left for a call to St. Paul. Again, we missed a pastor with organization skills and stimulating sermons.

Rev. Stephen O. Swanson was interim pastor for three months until the arrival of our next pastor who came from Detroit, Michigan.

Rev. Bruce Kjellberg was a pastor a little over seven years; November 1980 to January 1988. During his term, we had another church merger causing considerable consternation which led to some congregations voting against the newly merged church called the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Those opposing the merger formed another synod called the American Association of Lutheran Churches. First Lutheran voted to remain part of the ELCA.

The ELCA was a merger of three church bodies, our former American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America from Swedish, Danish, Finnish, German and other origins, and Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, a group that separated from the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. This merger brought about a new title for our church magazine, *The Lutheran*. At

national, regional and local levels we had to learn to use bishop and synod instead of president and district. National church offices moved from Minneapolis to Chicago.

Our local congregation had constitutional revisions again and now had 10 members on the council, but a total of 35 including committee members. Our church newsletter was changed to *The First Link* in 1981. Women began to serve on the church council.

During the early 1980's, rural churches had financial difficulties as a result of the world-wide recession which had its greatest impact on farmers and farm industries. We did not meet our benevolence budget for several years. Financial support of our local church continued with the pattern of one third of the members being non-contributors and one third providing the major support.

Because of our inability to find a visitation pastor, a retired pastor to work half-time or less, we voted to have an associate pastor. In 1983 we hired a former intern, Rev. Steven P. Goldammer, to work $\frac{3}{4}$ time as he had Navy Reserve obligations. With his arrival, we withdrew from the rural Intern Program.

Pastor Goldammer's main focus was to work with youth which included senior high Sunday school, youth leagues and going to national conventions, backpacking trips in mountains, etc. Pastor Goldammer bought a new home, the second pastor to do so.

We continued with Stewardship suppers in the fall at the completion of using a variety of techniques to obtain pledges: Pony Express involving delivery of saddle bags; a photo album with local stories and video; and every member visits.

Again, we had some physical changes in our church. We put in a handicap elevator at a cost of \$18,000.00, four sanctuary ceiling fans, and refinished all the pews. The latter was paid for by donations and a raffle of a picnic table and chairs, which was a first in collecting funds.

Also, in the 1980's we had lay readers of lessons, Sunday morning greeters, continued paying tuition for local seminary students, bought artificial Christmas trees, instituted a no-smoking policy for the church and sold the second parsonage, which we had owned for 20 years. This home to the east of the parsonage, called the Baker House also had a large garage for storage of church equipment.

Pastor Kjellberg's musical talents were used in directing our Senior Choir for a while and singing in local musical productions. He moved to a Minneapolis church where his forte of preaching was desired. With his departure, we had an interim senior pastor, Rev. Eldon Person, who came in February 1988 for 7 months.

Mission Outreach became a reality for the congregation in the late 1980's. In addition to the partial support of a missionary, monthly donations to World Hunger, and donations to the Kenyon Area Food Shelf which was housed in the kitchen of the education unit under the direction of Marcy Kvittem, we selected two Mission Partner churches, First Lutheran in St. Paul and Christ Lutheran in Faribault.

The congregation voted by an overwhelming majority to call the associate pastor, Steven P. Goldammer, to be senior pastor with the privilege of days off for flying in the Navy Reserve for his remaining two years of Navy Reserve duty. Pastor Goldammer served alone for a year until we called an associate pastor.

James E. Boline, a recent seminary graduate, began as full-time associate pastor in August, 1989. His main focus would be youth work; he lived in the parsonage which he also used for his high school Sunday school classes. Pastor Boline's vocal and keyboard talents have been shared in

community activities. He and Pastor Goldammer sang in the senior choir and other musical groups. With this team, there is a new warmth and a more relaxed community life in the church.

During the 1980's we had 9 to 15 baptisms, 7 to 9 weddings and 12 to 19 funerals a year. 1989 was the end of pancake suppers prior to the annual meeting, and there was a decline in attendance at Sunday morning coffee.

Moving into the 1990's, we celebrated our church's centennial throughout 1991. Some of our former pastors and some of our "sons of the congregation" provided sermons. We provided nursery care during worship but it was seldom used. Midweek services began in 1991.

Major improvements during the 1990's included renovations of the education/offices building, ceiling fans and a room window air conditioner in the Fellowship Hall, and remodeling the front of the sanctuary for more space for the choir to perform and using a portable kneeling rail for communion.

We had changes in our pastoral staff in the 1990's. Associate Jim Boline resigned in 1992 to return to the seminary. Julie Rogness became Associate in Ministry to work with youth in 1993-94 which led to her internship in the next year. Pastor Goldammer left in summer 1995 on a 6-month sabbatical to our mission church in Tanzania, Africa. After a few weeks, he resigned. Our interim pastors were Rev. Thomas Lee in 1995-96 and Rev. Thomas Anderson the following year.

In 1991 there are almost 950 baptized members. The budget of \$212,000.00 includes salaries of two pastors, \$73,000.00; office manager, \$15,000.00; custodian, \$7,000.00; and organist, \$4,000.00. We instituted mid-week worship services in summer, 1990. Inflation shows in our charges for use of our facilities by non-members for weddings; \$150.00 for the sanctuary, \$100.00 for the Fellowship Hall, and \$10.00 per hour for the custodian.

Women have been ordained in the Lutheran church since late 1970. We had our first woman council president in 1982, Maurine Olson, followed by Dorothy Erickson in 1987 and Mary Danielson-Gates in 1991. In 1990, for the first time we had an all-woman church council presided by a man, Steven Johnson.

First Lutheran has been both privileged and honored to have eight sons of the congregation ordained as pastors; Robert Arneson, 1949; Curtis Jorstad, 1950, Paul Jorstad; 1956; Charles Akre, 1958; John Akre, 1965, Timothy Bauer; 1981; Jeffrey Kjellberg, 1988; and Durward Peterson, 1989.

Carmen Nesseth was hired as our first Youth Director for the next 18 years, and Helen Aase became our first volunteer Parish Nurse for the next 12 years. Visiting teams called '2 by 2' visited home bound people or some assigned by the pastor. Marcy Kvittem began our local food shelf for over 30 years.

The next 5 years beginning in 2000 had continual physical improvements: new PA system, return of 2 flags to the sanctuary (Christian and U.S.), new roof and furnace in the education unit, tuck pointing and pew cushions. The parsonage was sold and moved in 2002. During these 5 years, Pastor Guy Redfield resigned to become a missionary to English speaking people in Oslo, Norway.

Pastor Lyndy West was our interim pastor until the arrival of Pastor Luther Mathsen in 2004 who moved into a new house in the growing suburb of Trondheim, the home of the first residents from Trondheim, Norway.

Pastor Luther Mathsen became involved with the Good Neighbor Welcome committee with 3 other local churches to welcome new people in town: Methodist, Hauge, and St. Michael Catholic churches.

The next 5 years until 2010 again were filled with renovations: new roof and insulation of the church, repairs to the church due to a lightning strike, and light weight tables and chairs for the fellowship hall. Also, at this time we experienced a national economic slump requiring borrowing funds from the bank.

Several changes occurred pertaining to our church functions. We had lay people volunteer as greeters, readers of the lessons, providing children's sermons and assisting with communion. Annual meetings became once a year for one hour following the worship service instead of twice a year in an evening meeting or day meeting. Weekly communion replaced twice a month communion. The economic slump of 2008-2009 affected the need for more funds for the Chaplain program at the Sunset Nursing Home from the 18 congregations around Kenyon who are members of the Sunset Home corporation.

A major issue in 2009 was a vote at the Church Wide Assembly that approved accepting homosexuals as members and pastors which caused a number of churches to leave the ELCA (Evangelical Church in America) and become community churches or to join a new national organization called the North America Lutheran Church.

In 2010 we returned to participating in our area rural church intern program after having associate pastors for 23 years (1970 – 1995). No intern was available in 2015 – 2016 – the seminary had a lack of students also.

Another program that has decreased numbers of participants is the Vacation Bible School – both pupils and teachers. As the availability of teachers for Bible School we used staff from Good Earth Bible camp for a number of years. Then a lack of funds led to several churches combining for classes and the last few years we have been at Holden Church along with several other churches.

In 2012 we bought the old high school lot to make into a parking area. The Sunset Home had completed its remodeling project to change the Sunset Home into the Kenyon Senior Living facility for nursing home, assisted living (Gunderson Gardens and Rose Wing) Memory Care (the Suites, rehabilitation and community senior noon meals 3 times a week at Gunderson Gardens.

During the years of 2011 – 2014 there were events that would lead to changes. First, the pastor had a 3- month sabbatical was granted to our pastor for educational purposes. Next, our Area Food Shelf Program of 30 years was replaced, the Parish Nurse program closed, and our Youth Director resigned after 13 years. The 2x2 Program of 12 years, which provided visitation to homebound members became inactive.

In November of 2016, Pastor Luther Mathsen accepted a call to Highland Prairie and Elstad Churches.

In addition to taking responsibilities for the life of our church we have also supported various other churches in other nations, Tanzania, Costa Rica, Japan, and more. In addition, we provided funds for our nation and other countries having flood, drought, epidemics, hunger, refugees, etc. through our ELCA office.

A major concern for our church, and most traditional churches is the declining participation in the life of these churches. This has affected membership, church attendance and participation in Sunday School but membership and attendance is increasing in non-traditional churches, such as community and independent churches. The following figures are an example of our declining members: we had 915 members in 1990 and 600 members in 2015. Our weekly attendance was 225

in 1990 and 70 – 100 in 2015. Our Sunday School attendance was 145 in 1990 and 55 in 2015. It has been said there are more Christians in Africa than in the United States.

In this year of 2016 we celebrated our 125th anniversary. Our centennial year, our 100th anniversary, had a positive picture of our church life. Now, just 25 years later, the picture is changing. It can make us wonder about the next 25 years for the 150th anniversary. What will it take to have a more positive picture for the life of our First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenyon. Only God knows.

Let us thank God for the vision of those early founders who laid the groundwork for a Christian ministry, based on Lutheran doctrine, in Kenyon. Let us pray that God will guide our hearts and minds to carry on that ministry and plant the seeds of faith in Christ for future generations.

Education

Sunday School



Before 1891 Sunday school was held in the empty Phiel building, town council rooms and an old schoolhouse. Classes were held every other Sunday until 4:00 p.m. at first but by the 1900's Sunday school was for one hour Sunday morning which has continued as traditional practice with occasional changes due to shortage of classrooms.

Numbers grew from 100 in 1900 to 145 in the 1920's, 230 in the 1960's and about 200 including high school in the 1980's. In the 1980's there were about 35 teachers and an equal number of substitutes or assistants.

Early records indicate that the children were expected to bring at least 1 penny to help pay for their papers and to learn their lessons. Donations increased gradually until today some bring as much as \$1.00.

As early as 1900 both Norwegian and English papers were purchased. These Sunday School papers have changed so that in these latter years' pictures to color and other activities were added to the stories for the primary grades. Various types of books or worksheets for reading and discussion with declining memory work have been common for fourth grade and up.

Sunday School superintendents were elected to their position for over 50 years from 1891-1948. In the next 13 years, the superintendents were appointed by the deacons. Since 1961 the Education Committee of the church has been responsible for obtaining volunteers to serve two-year terms with the first year as assistant. Men were superintendents from 1891 to 1944. Since then they have been primarily women, with occasional men.

Christmas programs were identified as early as 1902 and were called "Christmas Tree" programs. The tree was electrified in 1915 for \$6.00. Special offerings were taken at the program to pay the costs as well as to send money to places like "Children's Home." In recent years, the children's offering at the Christmas program has gone into the church budget.

Over the years, Sunday School Christmas programs were usually held on a Sunday night but other times used were Sunday morning, afternoon, evening or week nights. In 1960 an apple treat for the children replaced the bags of peanuts, hard candy and an apple.

As early as 1904 there were indications of a Sunday School picnic which continued for an unknown number of years.

Pupils with perfect attendance were often rewarded, a practice that continued until 1954. In 1917 books and pins were presented. Three years later bibles and hymnals were given. Today, student's names are written in the church bulletin and the monthly church newsletter including those with only 1 or 2 absences.

In the years 1938 to 1945 up to 90 high school students attended Wednesday night bible classes. Their Sunday school classes began meeting in any available space from this time on: basement with sections curtained off, sanctuary, choir lofts, balcony, kitchen, room off the kitchen and furnace room.

The education unit was completed in 1959 to provide individual classrooms but soon became inadequate with increasing numbers of children. Bethany Church (one block west) was used in 1958 and 1959 during construction. Dr. L. E. Jacobson taught a high school class for many years in his dental office waiting room. Heavy curtain dividers in the basement were unsuccessful in the mid 1970's. Other measures used were: 4 and 5 year olds met during a church service (1957), high school classes met on Wednesday evenings (1960's) and in 1970 the high school classes were combined into one group called "Bible Classes" taught by the pastor or lay people. Beginning fall 1977, students in grades 10, 11, 12 met in the high school band room until 1989 when they moved to the parsonage with the associate pastor as their teacher. The tradition of presenting a bible to each third-grade pupil started in 1967 and has been continued since.

Rally Sunday, the first Sunday of the Sunday school year, began in the 1970's. Following Sunday school, the children walked about 4 blocks to the Depot Park to join the congregation for an outdoor informal service and potluck dinner.

Attendance at the dinner declined from 300 to about 30 in 1989 which was the last dinner. Clowns participated in worship services and Sunday school in the late 80's. In 1990 all children had an opportunity to pull the bell rope to ring in our centennial year.

Since the mid 1970's the teachers of both Sunday school and vacation bible school have been honored at an appreciation dinner at the end of their year, often held at the local golf club. A number of members have been long-time teachers/superintendents: Margrethe (Hjermstad) Satron, 27 years; Ida Halvorson, 50 years; Oscar Jorstad, 25 years; and Andrew Finstuen, 50 years (which included additional activities).

In addition to Sunday school, 175 pupils in grades 4,5,6 also attended religious instruction for an hour on Wednesday mornings, 8:30-9:30 for about 20 years in the 1950's and 60's. Teachers received \$1.00 an hour. The Protestant students went to First Lutheran and Catholic pupils went to St. Michael's Catholic Church. These classes were held during the school year only.

On the final Sunday of the Centennial year, January, 1992 both children and adults were in the church Fellowship hall to view the contents of the Cornerstone Box from 1891 and also to select items from 1992 to add to the box. In a few weeks staff changes occurred: Associate Pastor Jim Boline left and Julie Rogness, Associate in Ministry, joined the staff. From the fall of 1994 to the summer of 1995 Julie also served as an Intern at First Lutheran. In 1995 Pastor Goldammer took a

six month leave of absence (3months sabbatical and 3 months LOA to Tanzania where we have a partner church. While there he unexpectedly resigned from our church. In the fall of 1995 Carmen Nesseth was hired to be a Youth Director. Her first year was under the leadership of interim pastors Thomas Lee and Thomas Anderson. Her responsibilities included Sunday youth forum, monthly senior high activities, 8th grade confirmation instruction, trips, events and fundraiser activities.

Sunday school classes began with Rally Day in September and ended in May. Finding Sunday school teachers was a challenge. The teachers were given options of teaching for a half year, every other month, or several sharing Sundays each month. Sunday school superintendents were often co-superintendents. In 1992 there were 148 students in Sunday school. This number declined during the next 25 years. By the end of the decade there 99 students. That number continued until 2010 at which time it dropped to 82 and by 2015 to 68. In November 2014, a “family friendly” worship service was added during the Sunday school hour on the first Sunday of the month to encourage families to worship in a more informal setting.

Three programs were continuous. One was that third graders received Bibles from the members of First Lutheran at a church service in the fall. Second, was first communion class for the 5th graders; after which they would receive their first communion at Maundy Thursday worship. The third one was the Cradle Roll program, which had been done at FLCW meetings but now occurs during Sunday worship service. Newly baptized children are inducted into Cradle Roll. Once they reach age 4 they graduate and are able to attend Sunday school. The Cradle Roll committee was a shared venture between FLCW and the Youth Director.

Christmas programs were also continuous but with less practice and less pageantry. After trying a variety of times and days it is now held during the Sunday school hour in the church sanctuary. Over the years Sunday school superintendents, music leaders, and the youth director have chaired this. New in 2014 was the “FLCW Christmas Shop” at which the Sunday school students were given the opportunity to shop for their families from a variety of donations from church members. The Fellowship Hall becomes the store and many members help out as the students shop during the Sunday school hour. Another Christmas event has been Operation Christmas Samaritan’s Purse. Families bring shoe boxes filled with gifts for a boy or girl to be sent to other counties.

Intergenerational Sunday school was a new program the Youth Director held for students and adults in the Fellowship Hall. Adults and students coming together for devotions and to work on special projects. In 1998 parents of students in grades 4-7 were instrumental in forming KFC ... Kids For Christ. This was a monthly event planned by families that included devotions and activity. This is no longer part of the youth program at First Lutheran.

When Pastor Redfield was pastor he introduced the “children’s sermon” prior to the regular sermon. Children are invited to the alter to hear a simple message based on the gospel text. At present, we have many lay people that lead the “kids message.”

Vacation Bible School

Structured religious weekday education has been held since the organization of the church., In the early years it was in addition to Sunday school but in the last 50 years or so there has been no Sunday school. Since Norwegian was the language used it was called “Norwegian school”. When

English became the language in the 20's it was called parochial school and is now called Vacation Bible School.

At the turn of the century, the children had seven months of school plus two months of Norwegian school, which eventually became one month in the 1930's.

Teachers of Norwegian school were usually seminary students or the pastor, but women were hired beginning in the 1920's. Teachers lived with various families for room and board and often purchased their own teaching materials and treats for the children.

"Subscriptions" were requested through a personal visit to help defray the costs of the teacher. In 1896 the teacher earned \$35, in 1908 \$38, but \$45 two years later because "he boarded himself". In 1914 we shared the \$100 salary with Moland and Gol churches. In 1936 Rev. Stormo received \$80 for teaching parochial school. In the 1940's teachers received \$20 for two weeks; but they have been volunteers since then.

For many years one teacher was responsible for teaching all classes, just like in country school. For example, in 1913, 41 students were the responsibility of one teacher. Beginning in the 1940's more teachers were used and the school decreased to two weeks. In the 1960's the morning classes had more than 175 students and they often presented a program at Sunday morning worship service.

Changes occurred in the 1980's because of the lack of available women to teach due to being employed. Class days decreased to five half days and then two days, 9:00 to 3:00. In 1988 we began participation in a community Bible School for pre-school through sixth grade with Moland, Gol, and St. Michaels. There were 35 adult and school aged youth volunteers serving as teachers, helpers, and food servers from First Lutheran in addition to the other churches. Money was collected from parents to help defray the costs of material. Without these volunteers, religious education of our young people would be neglected.

During the early 1990's many women and youth helpers were involved with Vacation Bible School (VBS). Getting volunteer helpers became more difficult so 3-4 churches combined for VBS. They were First, Gol, St. Michaels and sometimes Moland would join us. Classes were from nine to noon for one week.

In 1993 our Associate in Ministry, Julie Rogness, held a one day VBS at Depot Park for First Lutheran students and friends. In 1994 Good Earth Village started an offsite day camp. Staff from GEV would come to our church to lead VBS for a week. Staff members were housed and fed in private homes, giving students an opportunity to get to know the staff better. The VBS Day Camp was held at Depot Park where there was a space for outside games and inside crafts. Monday-Thursday the students came at 9:00 and stayed until 3:00. Friday's were a half day and usually included a water activity.

In 2008 Good Earth Village discontinued their off-site day camp so First Lutheran provided their own leader and helpers to continue the tradition of VBS, meeting evenings in Depot Park with outdoor games, crafts, Bible story time, camp songs and snack time.

From 2013 to the present First Lutheran joined Holden/Dale and Vang for an area VBS held each year at Holden Church. VBS was held Wednesday thru Friday evenings from 5:30-8:30 and Saturday morning from 8:30-12:30. On Sunday morning the students would participate in a program at Holden Church, followed by a coffee fellowship for everyone.

Confirmation

Confirmation in the early years and perhaps until the 1930's was seen as the end of childhood, the point at which youth entered the world of work and into certain church groups.

Prior to 1900 students from Kenyon and Moland went to Gol church for the classes usually held from spring until fall. After 1900, classes were held at Gol in summer and at Kenyon in winter. In 1915, winter classes were sometimes held in the high school as it was warmer.

Classes were held all day in the early years and consisted of rote memory work of Bible verses, hymns and catechism all in Norwegian. About 1930 English became the common language after about 25 years of combination of English and Norwegian.

The day of catechization was often a day of terror. It was a time of questions by the pastor with confirmands standing in front of the people or in the church aisle at a worship service. The confirmands and families returned in the afternoon for their first communion. In 1939, the pastor and church board listened to the recitations, and in 1962 private catechization was instituted on a week night in the presence of parents. Catechization as such is no longer observed.

At First Lutheran Church, the most common times for Confirmation were May and June. The confirmands were generally about 14 to 15 years old. Adult Confirmation was sporadic, sometimes in conjunction with baptism.

From 1981 to 1988 Confirmation instruction used an individual study approach with filmstrips, worksheets, projects and individual sessions with the pastor. Students in grades 7, 8, and 9 had 1 to 3 years to complete the course. Confirmation Day was either on Pentecost or Reformation Sundays. In 1989, we returned to a two-year course of study that is more structured and confirmation is at the end of 9th grade.

The usual number of confirmands in a class has been about 20 but they have ranged from 3 to 26, the smaller number occurring when using the individualized study program. The first-year students have usually met separately from the second-year group at various times of the week.

Confirmation Sunday has always been a festive occasion. For about the first 50 years, the boys might have a suit for the first time. In some classes, all the girls wore white dresses. Beginning in 1939 our confirmands wore long white robes which had been sewn by the Priscilla Club. In 1963 white robes with red stoles were purchased and made available for area churches for a minimal fee. Since 1975 fifth graders participated in communion after having several classes with the pastor. Thus, confirmation today is stressed as the Affirmation of Baptism rather than having the emphasis on the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Since 1973 confirmands have been assigned to be acolytes for worship services. In 1990 the acolyte gown changed from a white surplice over a red robe to a beige hooded alb.

As we look back over the past 100 years, we find that the religious education of our young people had been an important part of our Lutheran heritage and is expected to continue as a high priority.

In the next 25 years Confirmands in 8th and 9th grades continued wearing the red stole on the white robe on the Confirmation Day. Numbers of confirmands varied from year to year ranging from 9 to 18 with an occasional year of only 4. The larger groups often had non-members with boys and girls who wanted to be confirmed with their friends or not wanting to be the only student being confirmed in their church. Usually these non-members left after they were confirmed.

In the first few years in this period the first-year students were taught by the Youth Director during Sunday school. In the latter years, they were taught by the pastor on Wednesday afternoon after school.

On the Wednesday evening prior to Confirmation Day the pastor met with the students and their families for a review of the Catechism. Confirmation is also called Affirmation of Baptism.

Luther League / Hi League / Youth Organizations

The Lutheran Youth Organization, LYO, is the new national name of the old familiar Luther League. Before 1900 it was known as Ungdonsforening (Youth Organization), then became the Mission Board, and next the Luther League. Locally, in our church, the group is called Hi-League, Senior Hi-League and Junior Hi-League.

In 1898, 7 years after the formation of our church, we had a Young People's Society which was comprised of young adults rather than high school youth as we have it today. This group met every other Sunday afternoon and for prayer meetings every second Friday night. Not only did this group promote social life for themselves but they also worked on church projects, such as a piano and carpet in the church hall.

In 1912 the Luther League was renewed as an organization with the Lutheran League and choral Union Convention held at First Lutheran Church in Kenyon. From then on, their meetings were Sunday afternoons in the parsonage.

In 1929 and for about the next 10 years it was difficult to differentiate between Luther League and Bible class.

Through the 1930's, not only the youth attended Luther League meetings, but also their families, friends and other adults. In the 1940's the Luther League met the first Sunday evening each month having a program, lunch and social hour, and it was only for the youth. About 10 years later the group was divided into Senior and Junior High Leagues, each meeting twice a month, on alternate Sundays.

In the 1950's the Senior Hi-League met Wednesday nights with parents as advisors and serving the supper. The leaguers also served the Easter breakfast.

In the 1980's the Senior Hi-League participated in national conventions, canoeing, backpacking, and other excursions. The Junior Hi-League was reactivated in 1981.

Beginning in the 1970's the graduating seniors provided the worship service on their last Sunday of the school year at which time they usually received hymnals from the church women, FLCW. Also, their Baccalaureate service was changed from the high school to churches, usually First Lutheran, on the Sunday prior to graduation, because programs of a religious nature were no longer to be held within schools. Many of our college students participate in Student Recognition Sunday between Christmas and New Year's when they return from their various post-secondary schools.

Much of the time and energy spent by the Youth Director was with the Senior High students. Students in grades 10-11-12 gathered weekly for Sunday school or Youth Forum as it was called. Monthly activities were planned for this age group which included pool parties, campouts, hayrides, tubing, outings at Mall of America, Bible Camp (Christikon and Good Earth Village). Retreats and mission trips through youth Works to Milwaukee, Kansas City, Denver, Chicago, and Minneapolis

were held. The mission trip to Mexico was with Trinity Lutheran of Wanamingo and Pastor Byron Meline. Every third year First Lutheran youth were a part of the Kenyon area youth that would attend the ELCA National Youth Gathering in cities like Atlanta, New Orleans, San Antonio, St. Louis, and Detroit.

The high school students had to do many fundraisers for their trips which included hosting annual meeting coffee, bake sales, pancake breakfast, Advent suppers, Lenten soup suppers, Easter breakfast, and November pie and coffee.

Other unique activities were "See You at the Pole" – an international event each September where students, teachers, and church leaders would gather at the school's U.S. flag pole and pray for teachers, community leaders and fellow students, and 30-hour famine students would fast for 30 hours to help raise awareness of world hunger.

Other community projects included 'ditch cleaning', Trick or Treat for UNICEF, Souper Bowl of Caring, Easter fruit baskets to the homebound church members, raking, cleaning and planting flowers.

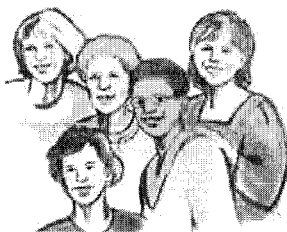
Senior Recognition Sunday is held in May when the graduating students serve as worship leaders for a worship service in their honor. At that time, they each receive a devotional from FLCW and a quilt made by the Love Day ladies.

The Youth Director (Carmen Nesseth) also taught 8th grade confirmation on Wednesdays after school until the fall of 2004 at which time Pastor Mathsen took over that responsibility. It was at that time the Youth Director began a new program for students in grades 1 – 4 called ASK (After School Kids). ASK was held on Wednesdays after school and included snacks, Bible story time, singing, games and crafts. When the youth Director resigned in 2013 these activities ended.

The Youth Director resigned in September of 2013 after 18 years of full schedules. Since it will be most difficult to replace her several churches have organized to hire a person to be shared among the following churches: Dale, First, Holden Lutheran of Kenyon, Grace Lutheran of Nerstrand, Trinity and Wanamingo Lutheran of Wanamingo. All these churches have problems with decreasing numbers at worship and Sunday school, especially with younger adults. We know this is a national problem for traditional churches.

Women Of The Church

Young Women's Organizations



The life of young women was different in the early years from today as they had less opportunity for education beyond high school, had no modern conveniences and home tasks took more time and effort.

Early organizations for young women and girls at First Lutheran Church were Willing Workers, Women's Guild, Young Girls Society, and Dorcas Society.

Of these only the Dorcas Society had any records, however minimal. This Dorcas Society, active in the early 1900's, had as its purpose to encourage interest in missions among 'ambitious

girls', with their regular meetings in their homes. Their activities included sewing for a yearly bazaar, giving clothing to orphan homes, sending money to a Madagascar mission, making quilts, serving Norwegian dinners upstairs in Clausen Hall which was without conveniences, giving dishes to the Ladies Aid, and they paid \$115.00 toward expenses of elevating the basement floor of the first church.

Another group, the LDR, Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation, formed in 1926 on a national basis was primarily for young married women who joined when they were confirmed. Their primary interest was the Shishmaref Mission in Alaska. The Kenyon girls made flannel layettes for this mission; plain gray flannel was used for clothing and diapers. In addition, they supported a Wisconsin Indian Mission and a Jewish Mission in New York.

Mrs. Syverud assisted by Margrethe (Hjermstad) Satron, who also continued as advisor, had an active group of about 25 girls having monthly Bible study meetings at 4:00 p.m. in homes. Their projects also included Mother's Tea, bazaar, cafeteria supper and sending cards to servicemen during World War II. College groups used the forget-me-not as their flower and had their own song books. The end of LDR occurred in 1960 with the church merger, and these young women were absorbed into Luther League or the women's organizations.

First Lutheran Church Women

In the latter 1800's, small groups of women organized into social and religious groups having all-day meetings. Husbands also participated in the noon meal and programs in the rural areas. These local societies were often called ladies aids or mission circles.

These women's organizations began as independent groups within their individual churches as there was no national women's organization. In 1885, six years before the official formation of First Lutheran Church, seven women got together to form a Ladies Aid Society in Kenyon.

Even though the Lutherans in town were part of the Gol and Moland parishes they apparently felt a need to organize a town Ladies Aid. They met every other Wednesday at 3:00 p.m. in homes, where they sewed, had socials, and served dinners for 25 cents.

The men selected the site of our present church, but the cost of \$300 for the lot was paid for by the women over three years, as well as the boardwalk.

One wonders if these hard-working women complained when they had to move the machines out of a machine shed to prepare for serving dinners there in 1889. Or again in 1891 when they had to serve meals for a week-long convention in their unfinished church.

The dirt floor in the basement was like gopher mounds during the church convention in 1891. At 9:00 they were completing baking cakes, setting bread and peeling potatoes. In addition, they provided beds, breakfasts and suppers in their homes for the delegates. The \$600 they earned was used to complete the basement.

In the early 1900's they served lutefisk and other types of suppers in empty stores without benefit of lights, dishes, tables, chairs, etc. Ice cream socials provided all the home-made ice cream and cake one could eat for 10 cents. Selling subscriptions for the Minneapolis Tribune gave them a piano.

Water seepage was such a problem in the church basement that water had to be carried out by pails until the women paid to have a sewer line put in. Then the basement could be rented to the Methodist Society, German Society, and Bethany Aid for costs ranging from \$1.50 to \$3.00.

In 1896 Rev. Simundson reorganized them to meet on Tuesday's with the year term starting in August. In 1935 it would change to a January to December year, back to September to August in 1988, and again to January to December beginning in 1991.

From the beginning, the women had two main organizations, the Ladies Aid and the Missionary Society which probably continued until circles were formed for Bible study sometime before 1920. Minutes were written in Norwegian until 1914 and not always very complete. Notices in The Kenyon Leader of the "kvindeforening" meeting changed to "Lutheran Ladies Aid" by 1907.

A church wide organization for women was formed in 1911 at St. Paul called Kvindernes Missionsforbund, Women's Missionary Federation (WMF). Its purpose was to raise funds to build housing for missionaries. With the national merger in 1917, the local women's organization became part of the WMF.

Following the tragedy in August 1924 when the newly decorated church was destroyed by fire due to arson, the women reorganized into four circles, I, II, III, and IV, meeting twice a month, once in a home and once in the Odd Fellows Hall. The Aid returned to meetings on the first and third Tuesdays in April 1926 after the new church was build, with dues of 25 cents a month or \$3.00 a year.

Until the basement was completed, a variety of buildings were used for their suppers and bazaars; Hauge church, Nelson's Opera House, Commercial Club and Odd Fellows Hall. These women would earn over \$1,000.00 a year by many means: 15 cents for aid meeting lunches which extended over the supper hour, pavement celebration, lutefisk dinners, apron sale, bake sales, selling Easter lilies; selling glare shields, bazaars having booths for dolls, lingerie, bedroom supplies, bathroom, kitchen, dresses, candy, chimes; traveling baskets, quilting bee, etc. Their spring supper and bazaar eventually became the May 17th supper, a Norwegian Independence Day celebration

Money was given to many missions such as Eskimo, Indian, Black, and Jewish. In 1929, within three years of completing the church, the women would assume the debt for the newly-built parsonage which cost \$6,300.00. Mr. John Engesether loaned the money to the women.

In 1928 the women organized the Cradle Roll and sent \$1.00 to the general church treasury for every baptized child under 4 years. Sixty years later, in 1989, Cradle Roll programs were included in the church worship service rather than being a part of the Ladies Aid meeting program.

Beginning in the 1930's, the Aid had long programs and big lunches for their twice monthly meetings. Four or five women served hot dish or salad, buns or sandwiches and cake or dessert which continued over the supper hour so the men could come to eat. The circles no longer met and were used only for workers and solicitation for food for various events. The "Reading Project," a structured Bible study began in 1934. In addition, the women raised money by serving 40 cent lutefisk suppers, 40 cent solicitations in place of sociable, rummage sales and selling magazine subscriptions.

In the 1940's and 50's the women sponsored many types of meals: Mother-Daughter and Father-Son banquets, lutefisk and cafeteria suppers, Sunday morning coffee, and bake sales. They paid for choir gowns, song books, folding tables, kitchen stoves, dishes, Bible camp, church and parsonage repairs. They began serving only two items at their Aid meeting which met twice a month, one being a Bible study, which was in addition to the "Reading Circle." In 1947 free-will donations replaced dues or lunch fees. They began participation in the ecumenical World Day of Prayer.

In 1960 with the formation of the ALC, American Lutheran Church, the women's organization changed to ALCW, American Lutheran Church Women. Our local women changed

their name from ALC auxiliary to FLCW, First Lutheran Church Women. All women were placed into circles for monthly Bible studies found in the Scope magazine. The circles were also assigned to provide a program and furnish the lunch, one item only, at the monthly Aid meeting.

In the 1960's and 70's, circles were usually named after women of the Bible but other names used were Faith, Hope, Love, etc. To promote community, circle membership was rotated every two years. Love Day was organized to make quilts for missions. In addition to the continuous financial assistance for church and parsonage needs, the women also provided choir robes, drapes for Sunday school rooms, sunset Home room furnishings, devotional booklets to each family, and supported various mission groups including seamen, Orient, Indian, Ephphatha, leprosy and unwed mothers. The FLCW president was a non-voting council member in the 1980's.

Restructuring of the women's organization in the late 1980's due to our church merger, filtered down from the new national Women of the ELCA to our own FLCW. All business is now conducted at monthly general board meetings. Congregation-wide meetings are held at least four times yearly for programs and socialization. Minimum business is conducted at these events. All women are placed into eight service groups for solicitation of workers and donations. Monthly Circle Bible study format is now in a magazine called Lutheran Women Today. The group of long-time faithful women who met Tuesday afternoons now formed the Christian Mission Society whose president is a voting member of the FLCW board.

In 1985 a Centennial cookbook marked 100 years for the women's organization. Annual income in the 1980's passed \$14,000.00. New sources of revenue were: salad luncheons, Advent luncheons, ice cream socials, soup and sandwich and a few May 17 suppers. The women continued with their usual donations to church needs and community groups.

In 1988 we received commercial ovens and stoves from First Lutheran Church in Blooming Prairie and gave our commercial ovens to Vang Lutheran Church. In 1990 we purchased a commercial refrigerator for our kitchen.

For over 100 years, the women of our congregation have worked diligently to earn money to provide necessities for the local church and to provide for needs of needy people both locally and far away. The role of women has changed from the conscientious, determined, tireless worker with few conveniences to the present day with most women being employed outside the home and thus being able to provide only short-term dedicated service at a variety of church-wide activities. From the original 7 women who first organized the women's organization, today we attempt to involve the 285 women who are members of the congregation.

After our year of celebrating our church centennial in 1991 we realized we were fortunate to have a key group of women in our FLCW to provide events, activities, and food for our church. The FLCW had recently gone through reorganization as the result of a recent church merger that made us part of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) effective in 1988. It's national women's group is called WELCA (Women of the Evangelical Church of America). Our local women's group continued using the name FLCW.

This merger gave us new terminology for our officers and committees: Coordinator (for president), Vice Coordinator (for vice president), Recorder (for secretary), but treasurer did not change. In a few years, we returned to using president, vice-president, and secretary. The three major committees were Stewardship, Education and Ways and Means, concerning 3 Mission groups: Growth, Community, and Action. Today our 3 Mission Groups have new titles: Discipleship,

Stewardship, and Justice. Some of the additional sub-committees are: Kitchen Care, Callers, Nursery Care, Sunday Coffee, Dining room, Communion Helpers, Altar Care, Prayer Chain, Visitation, Wedding Coordinators, and Baptism/Cradle Roll.

At the beginning of our next 25 years, in the 1990's, we began to notice decreased participation by the women in these various functions. All women are considered participants (not members) in the FLCW. These changes may have been due to the declining economy in addition to many women being employed. Our monthly meetings changed to various hours and finally to quarterly meetings at various hours. The final change is having the quarterly meeting during the forum following worship. Men are also invited to the hour meeting with its coffee and treats and program. Board meetings are monthly in an evening where most decisions are made. Even the twice-yearly cleaning of the church had to change its schedule from a few days to providing a list of duties and the women came when they could on specified days. They checked off the items that were listed on a schedule.

Major responsibilities of the women refer to the kitchen and Fellowship Hall and its maintenances. Major purchases over the years have been stoves, kitchen air conditioners, commercial refrigerators, freezers, supplies, and other needs.

Continuing projects are: Priscilla (stitching of quilts), Love Day (making quilts for Lutheran World Relief and local needs, SERRV (buying gifts made in developing countries), Thank Offering worship service, Sunday-school projects, Vacation Bible School, Bibles to 3rd graders, gifts to graduating seniors, Good Earth Bible Camp quilt auction, mitten tree, Christmas shopping for Sunday-school students, Christmas gifts to Goodhue county families, collecting used postage stamps, sending birthday cards to women 80 and older, and financial help with major church expenses.

Entering the next century (2000-2016) significant changes have occurred as a result of declining numbers of participants in church activities. These changes began in the 1990's on a small scale and continued to a larger scale in the following activities:

- 2 X 2 teams consisting of 2 women to visit shut-ins
- decreased from 3 teams to 1
- 8 original circles became 4 in 1997, 3 in 2000, and 1 in 2015
- World Day of Prayer began with full churches and now have only about 50 women attending
- Rose Fest yard sale changed from annual to every other year in 2010
- 8 service groups changed to 6 in 2014
- Bake sales had fewer donations and changed from a set price to freewill donations
- Our church Food Shelf closed when All Seasons Community Service began a food shelf in a building on a former used car lot
- Festival of Tables began 2009 and still continues

The FLCW continues to prepare and serve meals for funerals but many area churches can no longer continue as done in the past due to lack of workers. Some churches have replaced the lunch following the funeral with simple refreshments or have served catered meals.

As we celebrate 125 years for our church, it is actually 150 years for our "Ladies Aid" since Lutherans living in town had organized before we had a "town church." The FLCW continues to serve the needs of our members from infancy to old age, both physical and spiritual.

The Priscilla Club

The Priscilla Club is an ecumenical group of women who meet twice a month at First Lutheran Church. They spend the afternoon stitching beautiful pieced and embroidered quilts and also tie a few quilts. There is a program and lunch.

This group began in November 1929 at the home of Mrs. Ed Foss as a continuation of the Lutheran Birthday Club which had been organized October 1926 at the home of Mrs. C. W. (Annie) Sorteberg. The 14 ladies had the pipe organ fund as their project. In 1931, about 2 years after their formation, devotions were added by Rev. and Mrs. C. A. Stormo.

Additional sewing projects have included orphan's home, Indian mission, needy families, Confirmation gowns in 1939, draperies for the living room and dining room in the Sunset Home in 1949, and material for Junior Choir gowns in 1971. During the early years, they also served banquets and dinners. Following World War II they sent boxes of clothing to Norway. It is believed that the Priscilla Club provided two pictures of Jesus which were behind the altar from the late 1920's to the 1960's. They are now framed and hang in the Fellowship Hall entrance.

In the 1930's they tied quilts for \$1.00 and stitched for \$3.00, but in 1991 the costs were \$25.00 for tying and \$100.00 or more for stitching. Their 10-cent donation in 1930 has increased to \$1.00 in 1991. Most have been sewing for many years and there is a need for new members to keep the club active.

Men's Organizations

Men's organizations have usually had short lives, even in the early years of First Lutheran Church. There is little documentation about their activities.

There was a Missionary Society for Men organized in 1901 that met biweekly. By 1939 the Men's Club was organized and provided a bulletin board located outside the church. They functioned into the 1940's and reorganized as a Men's Brotherhood that met from 1949 – 1954. It was quite an active group with monthly meetings for Bible study as well as having social events with men from Dennison Lutheran Church.

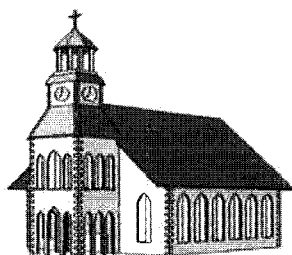
The Men's Brotherhood selected ushering as their project in 1949, passing the collection plates and ushering the people out. In the 1970's, ushering out was discontinued.

In the early history, beginning in 1900, two ushers were elected yearly. In the 1920's and 1930's they were appointed by the pastor. Currently, all men are assigned to be ushers two months out of a fourteen-month schedule. In 1989 women were also listed, but only a few participate in that role. Two people appointed to be head ushers arrange Sunday morning and special service scheduling.

The national church promoted Lutheran Men in Mission in 1990 but it was unsuccessful at First Lutheran Church.

Beginning in the 1960's Men's Bible studies were tried at 7:00 a.m. In the late 70's they had a Men's Bible group Wednesday noon's during Advent, but in the 1980's women were also invited to attend the meal and Bible study.

Other Activities



A number of organizations and activities have focused on meeting the needs of the members and the community. Couples Club was quite active during 1957 – 1967, but later attempts in 1979 to 1981 and in 1986 were short lived. Family night activities such as a potluck Sunday night supper have been sporadic for the past 20 years.

Adult Bible studies have been tried at various times over the past 20 to 25 years either week night or Sunday morning. Adult Forums have been offered on Sunday mornings between church services. Bible studies for women found in the national magazine began in the 1960's with many women participating in home meetings, but by 1990 numbers of women decreased, especially for the evening sessions.

The most successful Bible study was the Bethel Bible series in the 1960's and a few in 1980. Thirteen lay members studied for two years under Rev. Gjervik. After two years of study, some members were able to teach the picture based Bethel Bible Series on their own. SEARCH Bible study was also led by lay leaders in the 1980's.

First Lutheran Church facilities have been used for a number of community activities. Major events in the 1960's were the 8-week pre-school prior to spring kindergarten, monthly Senior Citizens meetings along with area churches, and Boy Scouts. In the 1970's Cub Scout sponsorship and Girls Scouts were added. In the 1980's there were pre-school health screening sessions, and AA and grief support groups

Music

In the early years, Pastors brought not only Norwegian liturgy, but also the familiar hymns of the Lutheran Church from Norway to America. Members often had their own small hymnal that fit into a pocket. These books had only words with no music.



At First Lutheran, pianos and organs were available in its early years and the klokker led the people in singing until 1920. His wages in 1896 were \$15 and in 1905 increased to \$25 plus one offering contents. The first hymnal was the Norwegian Synoden Hymnal followed by the Landstad Hymnal which had newer hymns along with the old favorites. The English language black

covered Hymnary was used from the 1930's until the 1960's when the red cover Service Book and Hymnal came into use. Also, in 1950, we bought the green Lutheran Book of Worship which again had new liturgy and songs and some songs were replaced. Our red hymnals were sent to a mission school in Nigria. We also have the Marty Haugen supplement and *With One Voice*. Following the ELCA merger we got the present cranberry colored hymnals.

Church organists/keyboardists have been an integral part of our congregation. The first organist was a man, but the majority of them have been women. Wages have varied from \$25 with

gradual increases to \$125 in the 1930's. One of the offerings was part of the salary for some years. Directing the choir was part of their duties at one time. Salaries have increased to the present time of \$600 in the 1960's to \$4000 in 1991. The wages given in the present day are paid per service.

In order to preserve the memory of all of the loyal musicians at First Evangelical Lutheran Church, we have included a composite listing of them under Historical Data.

The Senior Choir wore black robes with stiff white collars until the early 1960's when they changed to dark blue gowns; a memorial for Oscar C. Jorstad, Sr., a long-time choir member. These were replaced with purple gowns with beige stoles in 1982. The current navy gowns with white stoles with an embroidered cross were purchased in 2014 through the donations from Lynn Tollefson, Mabel Gates, Ingram Nesseth, and Lloyd Jacobson families. The Senior Choir has had loyal members, director and accompanists throughout the years. The choirs used to sit and sing from the choir lofts until the lofts were removed in 1978. The anthems were sung from the front.

The Junior Choir was formed in about 1930. In 1939, the organ was moved to the north side and the choir on the south side was built so that both choirs could sit in the front. After the lofts were removed, the choirs have sat in the front pews, but stand to sing in front of the sanctuary. The first Junior Choir robes were short white slipover robes and in 1972 they wore red robes with white collars. In 1984, new red robes with ivory collars were designed by Ila Quam and made by the women of the congregation.

In the 1930's and 1940's there was a woman's chorus. During the 1960's there were a number of short-term choirs under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. (Judy) Langemo. There have been, throughout the years, other musical productions and choirs for special occasions. In recent years, we have also had a Community Choir in cooperation with area churches.

The Cherub Choir was first organized in the early 1940's by Evelyn Danielson and reactivated in 1979 by Shirley Wallager and Kaia Lehman. The present "Kids Choir" is part of the Sunday School and perform at special events.

A new Bell Choir was added in 2011 with donations from the Church and funding from individual members to buy the needed bells and equipment. This has been a wonderful addition to our musical family at First Lutheran.

The wages for the choirs have improved from the 1912 salary of \$10 per year to a salaried amount for directors and accompanists for each choir. The choirs provide special music for each Sunday and for special events. The members, musicians, directors and congregational members provide the musical voice/message for the Word of God.

Senior Living

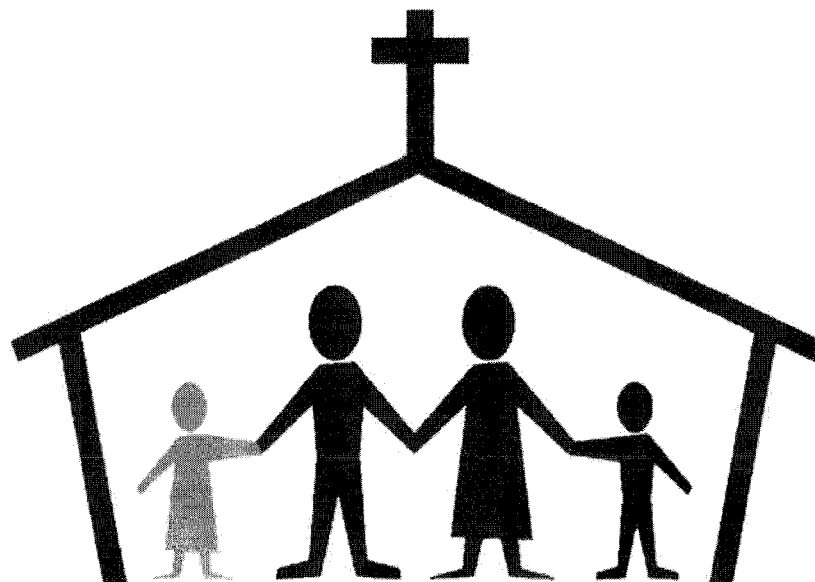
First Lutheran Church is one of 18 area Lutheran churches that are corporate members of Kenyon Senior Living which hold their annual meeting in the Gunderson Gardens area. It is commonly referred to as The Sunset Home.

It began as a board and lodging facility and later became our area nursing home. It began in Ray Gunderson's home, which has gone through many building programs to meet community needs. First, there was an addition for another wing and kitchen and dining area followed by a need for rehabilitation services for both residents and other community members.

The increase of older people desiring assisted living services led to adding small apartments that include meals, 24-hour staff and limited services. This addition also included an attached medical clinic operated by the Mayo Clinic System. After a number of years there was a decrease in the need for nursing home beds. This led to changing one wing that was used for nursing home residents to assisted living facilities which was called the Rose Wing.

Another change was changing a small area in Gunderson Gardens into a memory care area called Gunderson Suites. Here there is increased security with 24-hour staff. With all these additions, the facility has changed its official name to Kenyon Senior Living. So now we have three levels of care: skilled care, assisted living, and secure memory care.

The corporate churches provide assessed fees and funds for the half time Lutheran chaplain. In addition, the women of these churches provide a program and treats on an assigned day by the Sunset Home Auxiliary which also pays for the aviary (birds) and lobby TV.



SUMMARY



First Evangelical Lutheran church, the 'town church' in Kenyon, built in 1901, became the 'big church' when it was replaced with a brick structure in 1926. This Norwegian, somber, conservative, highly-liturgical congregation became bilingual in the 1920's when English was added. Today it is more pluralistic, relaxed and community oriented in its outreach.

The role of the pastor's wife changed from being a partner in church life with music as her priority, to using her talents in community endeavors, including employment.

Our church mergers show the decline from ethnicity as a priority to emphasis on having similarities in faith; United Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran church in 1890, Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran of America in 1917, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1946, The American Lutheran Church in 1960, and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1987

May this 125th anniversary history of our church point beyond itself to the Lord who involved history through the Word and Sacrament.

By celebrating our 125th anniversary this past year we can appreciate the vision of our early founders who laid the groundwork for the ministry of our church.

As our \$208,000 tuck-pointing project is being done to preserve the church for the future, we demonstrate our trust and faith that God will guide our congregation as we praise, commune, and grow in His Word.

We stand on the foundation of all who have lived the good fight of faith through their love, their hymns, and their grief. And may this history direct us to the future according to our mission statement.

Every member inviting others to Christ through worship, learning, and fellowship activities

Historical Data

Pastors

1889		M.O. Bokman
1889-91		Rev. Anderson
1891	January	Pastor Stere
1891	February	Pastor Ofstdal
1895		Rev. Knut Lundberg
1896-1923		Rev. Simundson
1923-29		HG. M. Thompson of St. Olaf
1929-38		Rev. C.A. Stormo
1938-44		Rev. A. E. Syverud
1944	Interim	Rev. O. Simundsen
1945-53		Rev. Virgil T. Foss
1953	Interim	Rev. J.F. Ylvisaker
1953-60		Rev. B.M. Rogness
1960	Interim	Rev. M.A. Kaatrud
1961-66		Rev. Stanley Gjervick
1966-75		Rev. Richard Hanson
1971-83	Visitation	M.A. Braaten
1976-80		Rev. Theodore J. Vinger
1980	Interim	Rev. Stephen O. Swanson
1980-1988		Rev. Bruce Kjellberg
1983-88	Associate $\frac{3}{4}$ time	Steven Goldammer
1988	Interim	Rev. Eldon Persson
1988 (Sep.)-95		Rev. Steven P. Goldammer
1989-92	Associate	Rev. James Boline
1993-94	Associate in ministry	Julie Rogness
1995-96	Interim	Rev. Thomas B. Lee
1996-97	Interim	Rev. Thomas Anderson
1997-2003		Rev. Guy Redfield
2003-04	Interim	Rev. Lyndy West
2004 - 2016		Rev. Luther Mathsen

Sons of the Congregation

1949	Robert Arneson
1950	Curtis Jorstad
1956	Charles Aakre
1958	Paul Jorstad
1965	John Aakre
1981	Timothy Bauer
1988	Jeffrey Kjellberg
1989	Durwood Peterson

Interns

1972-78	James Shadduk
1978-79	Steven Goldammer
1979-80	Dale Svendsen
1980-81	Leif & Rivkah Vage
1981-82	David Drews
1994-95	Julie Rogness
2010-11	Amanda Jertson
2011-12	Ann Zastrow
2012-13	Ashley Anderson
2013-14	Wayne Reddy
2014-15	Eric Thiele
2016	Laurel Midthun

Custodians

1894	E.Stefferud
1908	Evan Thune
1909	Jon Lund
1910	P.O. Ruan
1912	Harold Severson
1913-17	J. Olson
1918	G.O. Olson
	G.O. Urness
1932-38	M.P. Langemo
1956	Andrew Flaten
1957	Henry Anderson
1958	Tenus Rustud
1959	Sam Underdahl
1961-74	Mr. & Mrs. Russel Grose
1975	Alvin Stene
1976-78	Donald Ihle
1979-81	Robert & Susan Jensen
1960-86	Wayne Spidahl
1987-92	Ingram Nesseth
1992	Ingram Nesseth
	Wayne Spidahl
1995-96	Wayne Spidahl
1997-2010	Ingram Nesseth
2010-11	Jessee Jensen
2012 ⇒	Dave & Betty Redfield

Secretaries

1949	Eloise Anderson
1963-65	Mrs. Robert Arndt
1966-70	Mrs. Paul Arndt
1971-76	Ruby Hagberg
1976 (1 month)	Carol Ronning
1970-78	Evelyn Holta
1977-92	Lenice Hoversten
1993	Theresa Hebert
1994-97	Mary Held
1998-2000	Barb Schaller
1996 ⇒	Debbie Eggert

Adult Forum

1998-2009	Helen Aase
2010-2016	Lyn Cole Clarke

Youth Director

1993-1994	Julie Rogness
1995-2012	Carmen nesseth

Food Shelf Coordinator

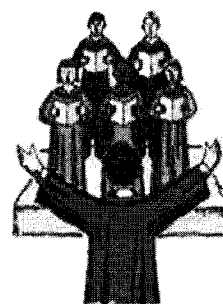
1984-2011	Marcy Kvitem
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Organists

1890's	A.B. Ivers (songleader)	1932-33	Ikena Grose
1893	Elnora Solum	1930-40's	Mrs. C. Jorstad
1898	Arthur Glemme	1941	Mrs. Thorson
			Donna Schneider
1901	Annette Gausemal	1941-61	Evelyn Thune
1903	Helen Borlaug	1951	Mrs. A. Nelson
1906	Miss Merseth	1961-65	Mrs. Al Warstler
1907-12	Luella Glimme	1964-78	Evelyn Danielson
			Lois Barsness
1909-11	A.C. Severson	1965-80	Lenice Hoversten
1913	Marie Hilstad	1967	Gertrude Dalbotten
1915	A.C. Severson	1974-84	Gertrude Dalbotten
1915	Mildred Gunderson	1976	Marilyn Merseth
1916	Clara Growen	1984-91	Lori Burrow
1918-21	Mrs. H. O. Skilbred	1991	Laura Whitney
1919-20	Leona Foss	1993	Sonia Gustufson
1921	Mrs. C.A. Stormo	1993-99	Marion Voxland
1921-25	G.A. Flom	1993-2006	Lenice Hoversten
1923	Mrs. H.O. Skilbred	1999-2013	Anna Thissen
1929	Gladys Lozon (Norwegian services & Junior choir)	2013 ➡	Tammy Hanson
1929-38	Mrs. C.A. Stormo		
			<u>Keyboard & Piano</u>
		1993 ➡	Annette Thunhorst

Senior Choir Directors

1905	Olaus Iverson	1970	Larry Loftness
1909-20	A.O. Iverson	1978	George Langemo
1929	Rev. Stormo	1981	Carol Lozon
1938-45	Mrs. Syverud	1984	Jonathan bast
	Evelyn Thune		
	Lila Mork		
1938-45	Harold Ylvisaker	1985-87	Rev. Kjellberg
1948-56	Dan Hagen	1988-2012	Lynn Tollefson
1956-59	Doris Jorstad	2012 ➡	Carol Lozon



Accompanists

1970's-1994	Marjean Loftness
1994 ➡	Annette Thunhorst

Church Council Presidents

Until the Pastorate of B.A. Rogness, the pastor was the president

1954	Herbert Akre	2001	Jim Malloy
1957	Fred Harapat	2002	Rich Kincaid
1964	Peter Langemo	2003	Kirk Hiner
1980	Joel Hjermstad	2004	Jason Quam
1987	Dorothy Erickson	2005	Karen Fountain
1988	Larry Lehman	2006	Harris Haugen
1989	Steve Alger	2007	Carol Lozon
1990	Steve Johnson	2008	Carol Lozon
1991	Mary Danielson-Gates	2009	Jim Fountain
1992	Don Herrlich	2010	Lee Sjolander
1993	Carol Lozon	2011	Rich Ellingsberg
1994	Bill Lewis	2012	Steve Alger
1995	Lois Estrem	2013	Carol Lozon
1996	Denis Monroe	2014	Brad Nesseth
1997	Doug Klatt	2015	Rich Ellingsberg
1998	Dorothy Erickson	2016	Cindy Trapp
1999	Kevin Langemo		
2000	Harvey Fossum		

FLCW Presidents

1991	Cindy Trapp, Susan Wold	2005	Kim Lang, Jackie Mortensen
1992	Kaia Lehman, Beverly Nesseth	2006	Carol Fossum, Cora Lee Monroe
1993	Karen Fountaine	2007	Robin Langemo
1994	Ruth Jorstad, Gwen Maus	2008	Jill Berg, Marie Spidahl
1995		2009	Jackie Mortensen, Julie Schuster
1996	Virginia Budensiek, Anne Gilster	2010	Cindy Trapp, Jill Berg
1997	Helen Aase	2011	Holly Aldofer
1998	Karen Fountaine	2012	Heidi Haugen, Kris Kincaid
1999	Lenice Hoversten	2013	Cora Lee Monroe
2000	Maurine Olson	2014	Cora Lee Monroe
2001	Cora Lee Monroe	2015	Carol Lozon, Anna Bauer
2002	Ruth Baldus	2016	Cindy Lewis, Jackie Mortenson
2003	Diane Barrett		
2004	Kayo Kirchoff, Norma Shelstad		

Sunday School Superintendents

1891-1948	Elected at Annual meeting	1988	Cherie Floren
1948-1961	Appointed by Deacon	1989	Debra Tungland, Sue Dodds
1962-present	Appointed by the Education Committee of the church Council	1990	Sue Dodds, Martha Zimmerman
1891-1944	Always men; after 1949 men were rare	1991	Martha Zimmerman, Mary Ann Schmidt
1896	A.H. Iverson, P.O. Floan	1992	Mary Ann Schmidt, Heidi Haugen
1996-1923	Only one Sunday School teacher	1993	Mary Ann Schmidt
1923	P. L. Berg, Ole H. Huseth	1995	Deb Sombke
1916	Charles Halvorson	1996	Deb Sombke, Cora Lee Monroe
1922	J.C.E. Homen, C. A. Anderson, Arthur Nelson	1997	Cora Lee Monroe, Renee Qualle
1936	H. Ylvisaker, M. Hjermstad	1998	Renee Qualle, Renee Redfield
1945	Grace Werdahl	1999	Renee Redfield, Sherry Sathrum
1949	Oscar Jorstad	2000	Sherry Sathrum, Sherry Aronson
1962	C.K. Forsberg	2001	Sherry Aronson, Heather Schuster
1965	Marcy Kvittem	2002	Heather Schuster, Stephanie Knutson
1968-69	Mrs. Gilman Satron	2003	Heather Schuster, Tanya McCauley
1980	Sharon Quam, Mary Danielson-Gates	2004	Tanya McCauley
		2005	Stephanie Knutson, Carey Hjermstad
		2006	Stephanie Knutson
		2007	Stephanie Knutson, Rhana Olson
		2008	Rhana Olson, Angie Eggert
		2012+	Amy Lee, Becky Baka

Financial Secretary Treasurer

1943-53	Millard Lee	1992	Howard Held
1953-64	Albion Rodde	1993	Don Herrlich
1954-64	Clarence Dahlen	1994	Steve Johnson
1967	Eliminated financial secretary	1995	Don Herrlich
1986	Gerald Walker	1996	Candy Herrlich
1987	Jerold Berg	1997	Don Herrlich
1988	Jan Ashland	1999	Pat Schreiber
1989	Ruby Hagberg	2001	Don Herrlich
1990	Pam Mauseh	2014 ⇒	Dan Quam
1991	Susan Jensen		

Accountant

1993 Susan Jensen
1995 - Julie Dyrdaahl

Junior Choir

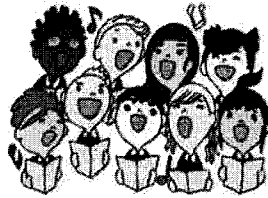
1938	Mrs. Syverud
	Evelyn Thune
1938	Lila Mork (grade 3-6)
1945-1953	Mrs. Virgil Foss
1954	Doris Jorstad
1965-77	Judy Langemo
1978-80	Sonia Benson
1980-2002	Annette Thunhorst

Accompanist

1976	Margaret Kleese
1977-80	Annette Thunhorst
	Brenda Luebke
1980-2002	Lenice Hoversten
	Anna Thissen

Boy's Chorus

George Langemo



Cherub Choir

1940	Evelyn Danielson
1979-82	Shirley Wallager
	Kaia Lehman
1982-90	Martha Zimmerman

Kids's Choir pre K - 3rd grade

2008	Tanya Short
	Rebecca Sjolander
2009	Rebecca Sjolander
2011	Tanya Short
2015	⇒ Katie Doehling

Bell Choir

2011	Jan Strand
2014	Miriam Dotson
2016	Tanya Short

Missionaries

1979-83	Lance Kittelson	Madagascar
1984-85	Harvey & Marie Nelson	Nigeria
1986-98	Mark & Shirley Lutio	Japan
1999-2006	Steve & Marta Deal	Central America
2008-12		Costa Rica
2001-06	Johnathan & Ann Sorum	Slovakia
2003-06	Guy & Renee Redfield	Norway
2007-11	Kristopher & Rebecca Hartwig	Tanzania
2008-present	Patrick & Jackie Bencke	Japan
2012-present	Karen Anderson	Chile

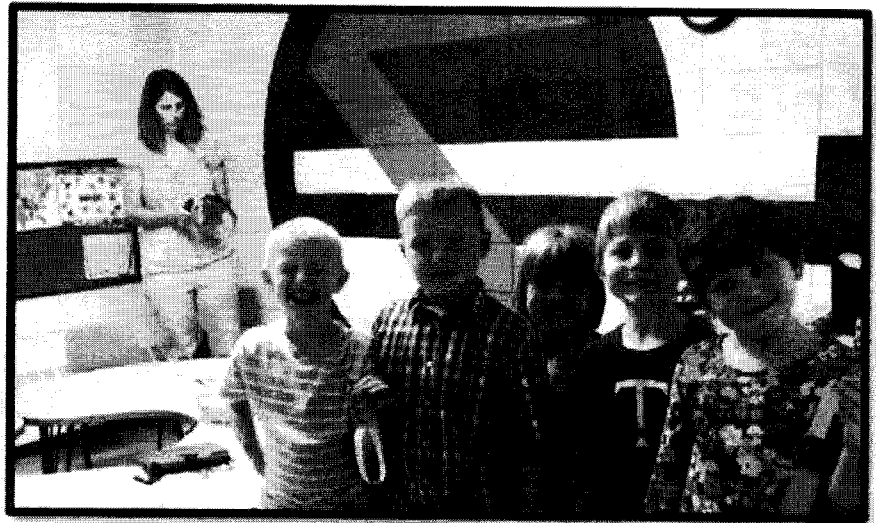
Together
we make a
Family

memories

September 2015

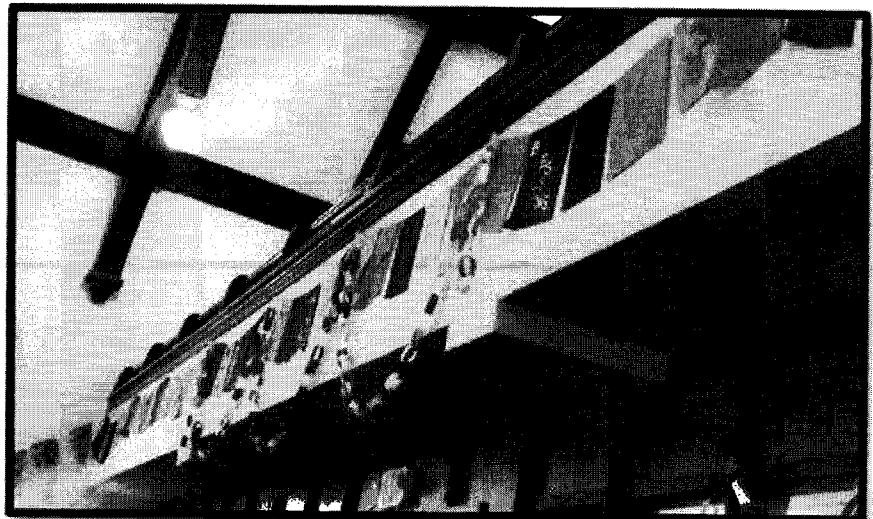
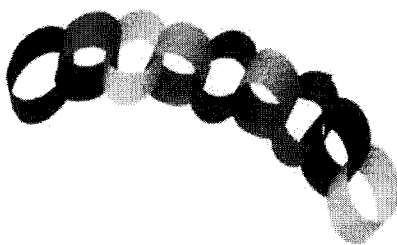


Sunday School classes gathered to make 125 rings representing the number of years we have been together. The activity lasted for the fall, but proved to be a fun activity for all.

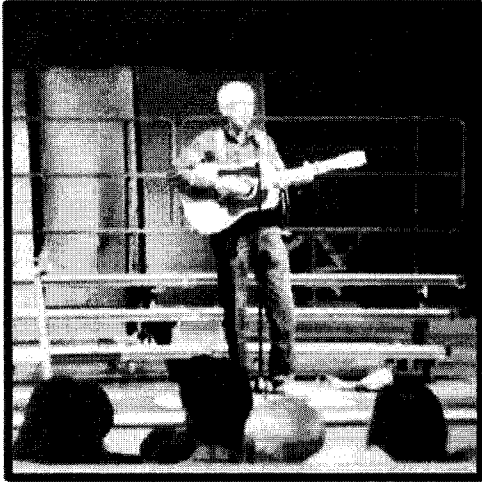


The rings were displayed at several celebrations.

During many children's sermons, the youth were reminded of just how many years we have been gathering to praise the Lord.



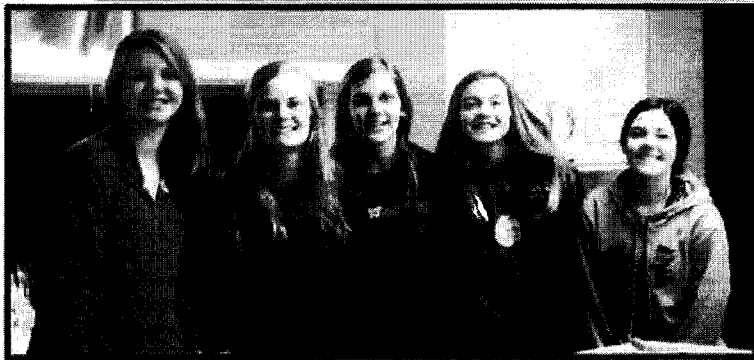
October 4, 2015



The Fall Festival was the official kick-off of our celebration. We had magnets made with the celebration's logo. The logo was designed by Jamie Hiner. They were to remind us of the original date.

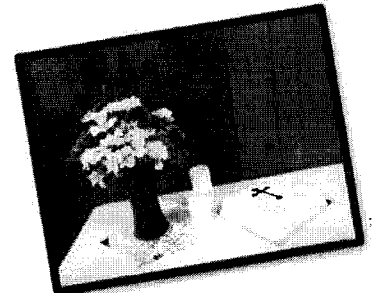
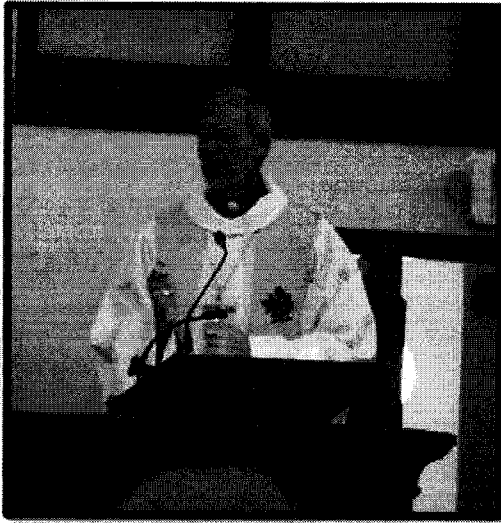


January 6, 2016

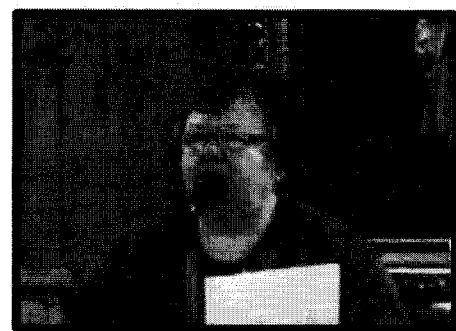
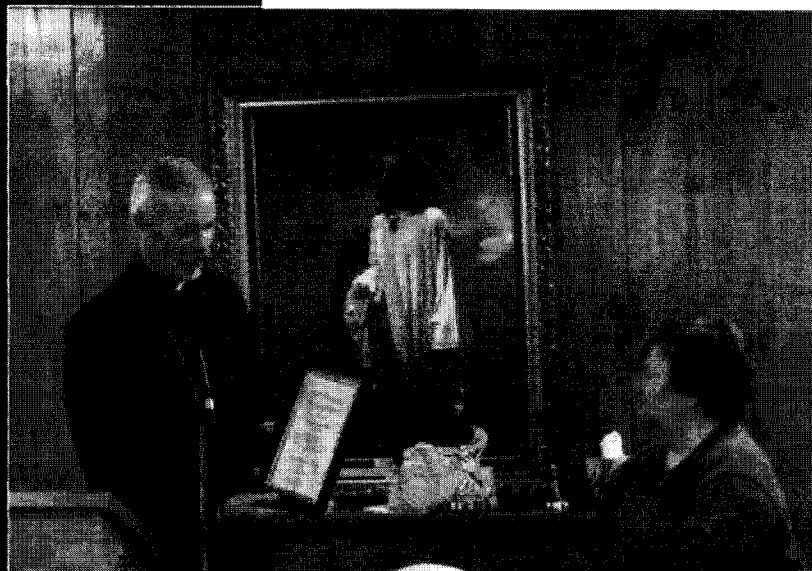
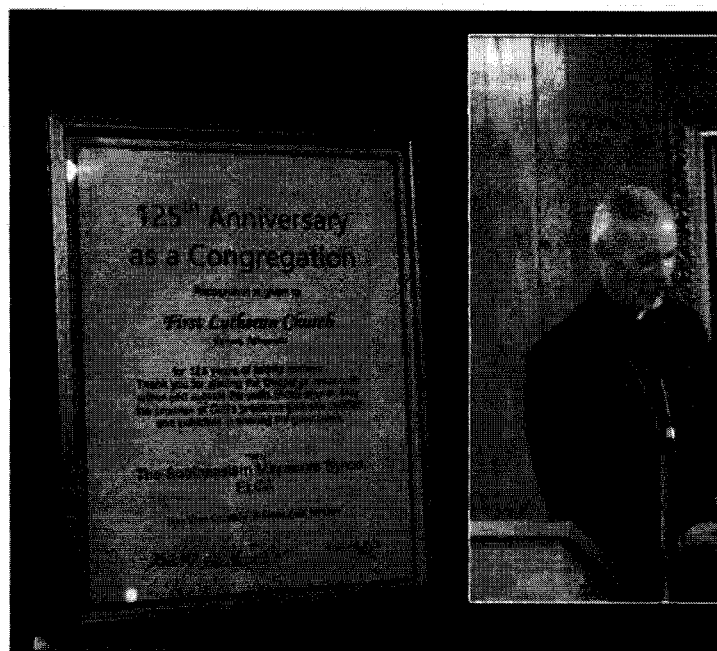


Epiphany: Confirmation classes were involved in the lighting of the candles and in a special service to stress the meaning of Epiphany. A meal was served in the stewardship hall afterwards.

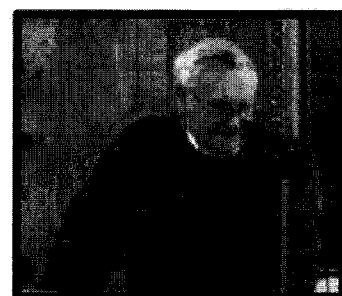
January 24, 2016



A worship service to celebrate the actual date (January 28, 1891) was led by Bishop Steven Delzer as our main speaker. Familiar hymns were sung with all musical groups providing special songs of praise.



Fond memories
were shared
during fellowship
following the
service. We
continued with
the raising of our
voices in song and
praise to the
Lord



125th Anniversary Celebration Program – January 24, 2016
Memories and Hymn Singing – 10:15 a.m

Program

- Welcome and Introduction – Carol Lozon
- Devotions – Pastor Luther Matheson
- Hymn – Amazing Grace
*Amazing Grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind, but now I see.*

*Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed*
- Historical Tidbits - Helen Aase
- Remembrances
 - Carol Lozon – “I Remember When from Centennial Celebration
 - Albion Rodde & Doris Jorstad & the choirs
 - Mary Danielson – Gates for Mabel Gates
 - Lyn Cole Clarke for John Cole
- Hymn – Blessed Be The Tie That Binds
*Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love
The unity of heart and mind is like to that above.*

*Before our Father's Throne we pour our ardent prayer
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.*

*We share our mutual woe, our mutual burdens bear
And often for each love and friendship reign through all eternity.*

*From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free
And perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity*
- Current Reflections
 - Bev Nesseth submitted remembrances – Carmen Nesseth
 - Glenn Ronning
- Hymn – Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow
*Praise God from who all blessings flow
Praise Him, all creatures here below
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.*

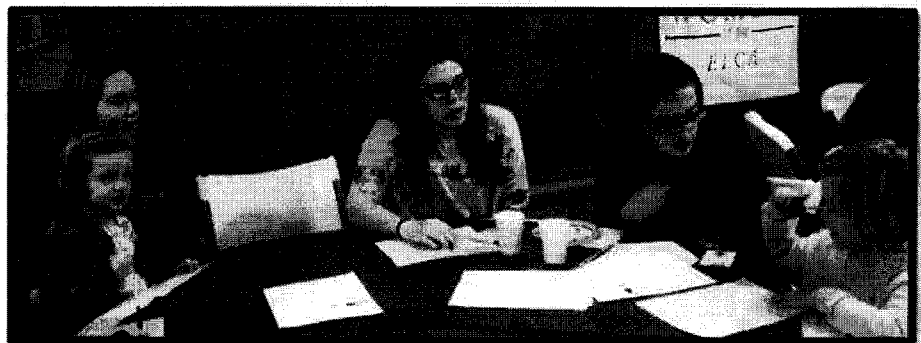
Comments and Closing Prayer Bishop Steven Delzer

An intergenerational Sunday School was held to make prayer flags which were hung in the Church. This was a very successful event. The flags still hang as a record of favorite Bible verses or phrases.

Early records of the Church were shared as part of the program.



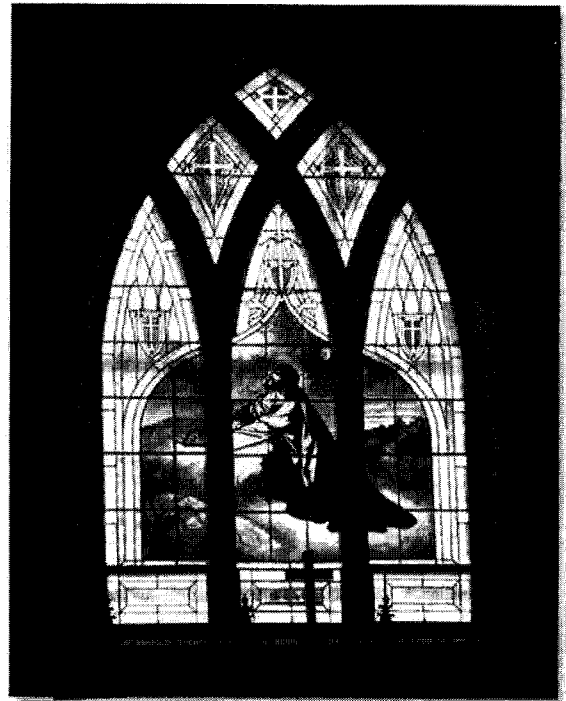
February 28, 2016
After service



March 20-27, 2016: Easter

Emphasis on various eras of Church music was part of each of the services during Holy Week. The old favorites were enjoyed by all.

*Music
is the voice of the soul*



May 1, 2016: Ascension

To celebrate Ascension, balloons were inflated with helium and tagged



with information about our 125th Anniversary. As part of the final day of Sunday School, the children and congregational members gathered outside the church to let the balloons float into the air. As the balloons ascended, the children and adults prayed and blessed them. It was a beautiful sight. We hope that someone finds the balloons and gives us a call.

May 8, 2016: Mother's Day

Senior Recognition



As part of the "Old-Fashioned" Service, the senior choir men wore hats and vests, and the women wore their fine clothes. They marched in to "Holy, Holy, Holy" and exited with "Onward Christian Soldiers."



The Bell Choir and Kid's Choir were also part of the service.



The choir also sang "Jesus Loves Me" before the Children's Sermon

Senior Recognition



June 9, 2016

The women of the church were honored in a celebration with a special program by the Rhubarb Sisters.



As has been done in the past, the tables were decorated with special themes.



Lois Estrem was the Emcee. The FLCW prepared and served special raspberry and chocolate desserts and coffee. Fun time.



June 20, 2016

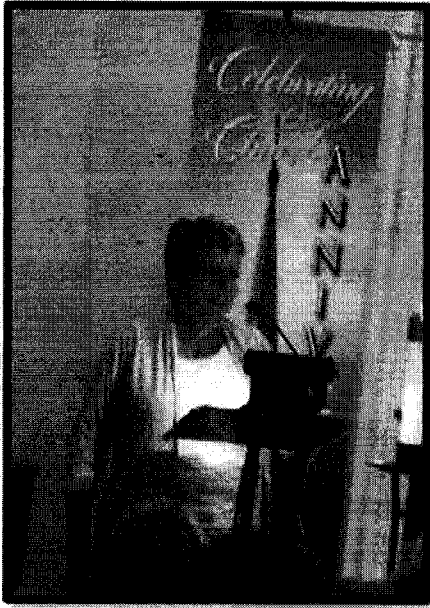
Father's Day.

A pancake breakfast was prepared and served by the men of the congregation.

Some women assisted. What a fun time.

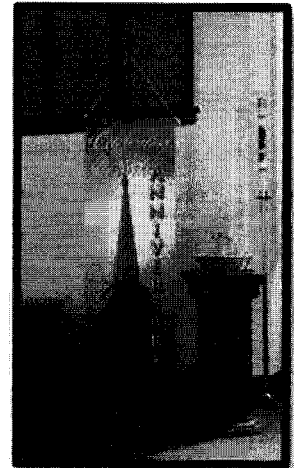
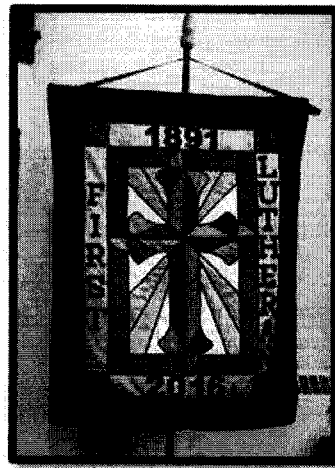
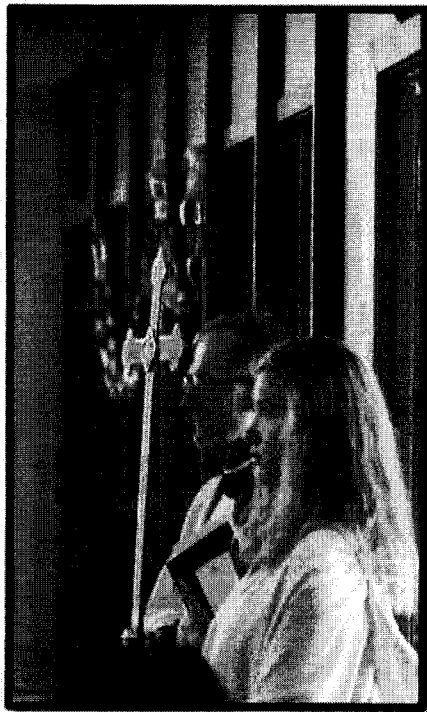


July 31, 2016

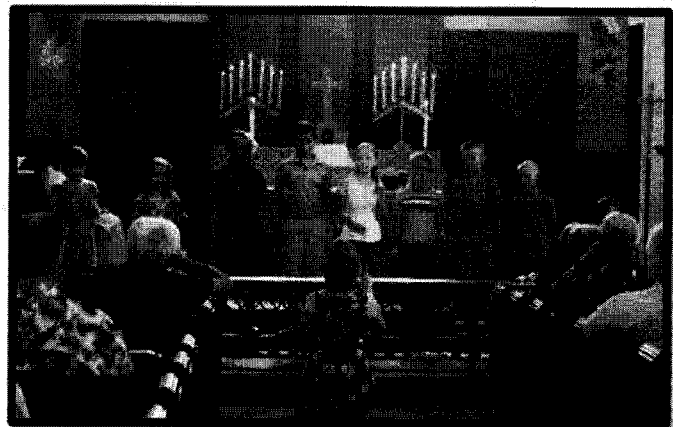


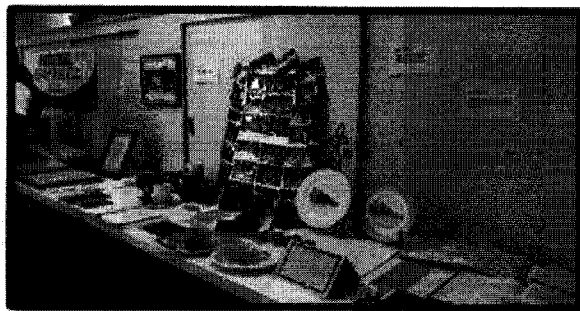
Celebrate

A special Anniversary Service was held at 10:00. Julie and Dan Rogness joined us. Julie spoke about her time with First Lutheran Church. Excellent music from choirs and special hymn singing was enjoyed



Praise the Lord





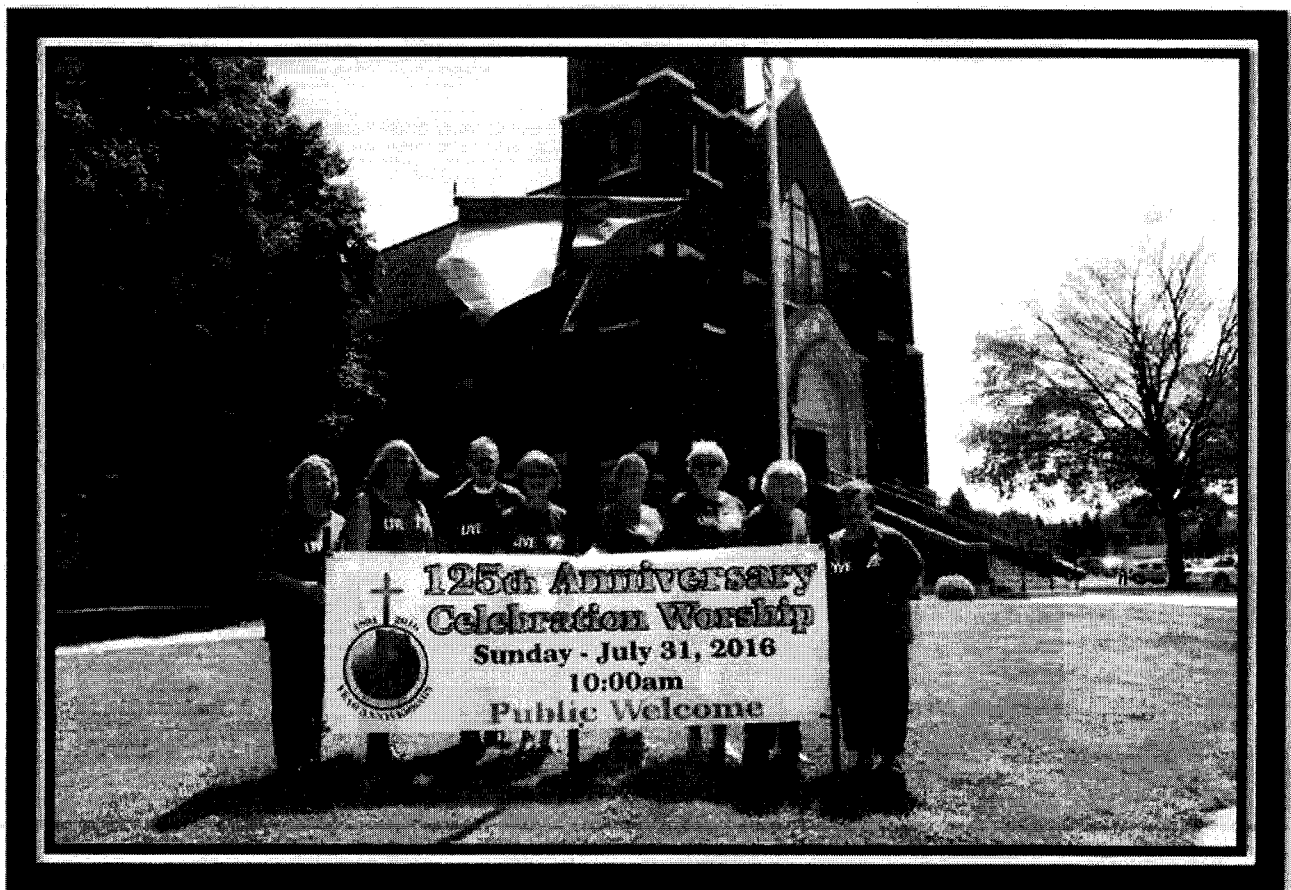
A congregational potluck meal followed the service. Children's activities were held outside after the meal. The FLCW's old plates and cups were given out as mementos.

**GOD is
SO GOOD!**



Other activities:

1. A Christmas ornament was designed from our logo to be sold as a memento.
2. A booklet of The History of First Evangelical Lutheran Church was compiled to be given to each family in the congregation.
3. A banner was designed by Cora Lee Monroe to be hung throughout the year.
4. Gol Lutheran provided a banner of Celebration for our use.
5. Thrivent funds were received to help fund our activities
6. Displays were available of historical data and artifacts during many celebrations.



The 125th Committee

"I REMEMBER WHEN".

By Carol Lozon

It's difficult to sort out just a few memories of my First Lutheran experiences and cherished memories, but most of them would be related to my love of music and how it has calmed me in trying times.

My music education and experiences would always start with my mother and how she encouraged and supported me in everything that I did. She gave me voice and piano lessons, of course, voice was my favorite. She could play the violin, piano and organ, to list a few. My memories at First Lutheran were when mom would accompany me on the piano and/or organ for weddings, funerals, and solos. I sang at many of my classmate's weddings. One of the last times she was able to accompany me was for the Cradle Roll when I sang "The Cradle Song". Charles Rognmoe used to take piano lessons from mom, and he commented that she could sure "tickle the ivories".

Music continued to be my love when I sang in the Junior Choir, and when I reached tenth grade, I could join the Senior Choir. At that time it was not just for what appears to be senior citizens. Doris Jorstad was our very capable director and challenged us to sing out. We had choir lofts at that time and we always sat in the lofts even if we didn't sing an anthem. We were there to lead the congregation. Of course, the Senior Choir would always march in to "Holy, Holy, Holy. I continued to sing in the choir as often as I could even when I worked in other communities. I directed the Senior Choir for the first time in the early 80's and then again starting in 2012 until the present. I still cherish singing in a quartet with Rhana Olson, Steve Goldammer, and Jim Boline. Gary Skundberg, Brad Nesseth and Ken Wold contributed as the group evolved. The name of the group was Variations and was accompanied by Annette Thunhorst. It gives me great joy to continue in music as mother would have wanted.

I remember my confirmation classes with Pastor Rogness and Sunday School until we graduated. Pastor Gjervik was instrumental in offering me a couple of memorable field trips. His son Melvin was in my class. I will always remember our trip to see the Reverend Billy Graham when he was preaching in the cities. Some of us went down in front to be blessed and have our sins forgiven. When you are 15, that is an awakening. I have shared with others a quote from his message that has given me thought many times, he said, "We are not placed on this earth to be happy, if we can catch a few fleeting moments of happiness, we should feel fortunate". WOW. Since then, I have read scripture that supports that quote. The second field trip that we took with Pastor Gjervik was to Augustana College. It was to give us an opportunity to visit and see if we wanted to attend there. I still had my heart set on St. Olaf, but it was fun.

My Christian education continues in my life at First Lutheran. I have many more fond memories, but the most important is the love and support of the community at First that helps me through a lot. Each Pastor throughout the years has had an influence on my life. As we celebrate our 125th year, I want to thank all of them, especially Pastor Mathsen for his support.

Remembering....

I started going to First Lutheran Church when I was quite young ,and when I was 14 years of age, I went with Eleanor Hjermstad Traurig to L.D.R., Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation and to Bible class. L.D.R. met once a month, during the school year, at girls' homes. Mrs. Virgil Foss and Margaret Hjermstad Satren were our leaders. For roll call, each girl recited a Bible verse. Margaret also taught our Bible class which was held every Wednesday night during the school year for grades 9 through 12.

After Bible class we had choir practice. We had great members: Cora Aaker, Gertrude Floyd, Edith Hegvik, Stella Knutson, Ed Hegvik, Oscar Jorstad, Sr. and several high school girls, too. Our director was Don Hagen, who, at that time, was both choir and band director at K.H.S. We all wore black gowns; in addition, the women wore white collars. Singing every other Sunday, we sat in the choir loft, and the Junior Choir sang the opposite Sundays. We marched into church singing "Holy, Holy, Holy and marched out of church singing "Beautiful Savior." The choir also harmonized the liturgy found in the black hymn book. It was so beautiful it gave you "goose bumps" when you sang!

I joined the church in 1949, and I enjoyed everything that I was able to be in, especially the choir! When I rejoined the church in 2006, I was able to participate in the choir again. I was so proud to be a member once again and had a fun time singing under the direction of Lynn Tollefson and later, Carol Lozon, as director.

We still have a great choir! I enjoy listening to them as they sing on Sundays and even remember some of the songs they continue to perform. It still gives me "goose bumps" to hear them sing!

Colleen Estrem

We joined the church on May 21, 1989.

Were married on May 20, 1989.

We were married by Steve Goldammer.

Faye was on the Evangelism Committee.

I was involved in kiddie games.

Down the road Faye and I will have 27 years of marriage.

Jim & Faye Marcuson



I remember my mother, Arline Johnston Ronning, telling me about when the church burned down. The crashing of the bell tower and the clang of the bell.

I was told that my grandfather, August Johnston, the village constable police caught the arsonist setting another fire at a later date.

Is the existing bell the same one? I would like to get the forge & casting numbers. Maybe someone will be up there some day for repairs and get the numbers.

I remember Luther League with Pastor Foss in the basement playing shuffle board; the tile with the games is under the carpet I believe.

I remember about 1950 a late Saturday night/Sunday morning storm blowing out the stained glass window in the balcony. After that storm glass was placed over all stained glass for protection. Pastor Foss was our minister.

Glenn Ronning Jr.

I remember the ground breaking of the education wing. The Sunday School, Pastor Rogness, Oscar Jorstad Sr, Lorrie Ugland Sr Harlan Rosvold, Glenn Ronning Sr, and many church members. After building the building there were many volunteers to do the finishing of the interior, painting, etc.

I remember the remodeling of the sanctuary. The organ was on the left front below open pipes. The senior and junior choir lofts were on the left and right. The plain black robes of the choir. The communion rail up by the altar.

I remember the narrow back stairs, a pastor study in the southeast corner.

I remember the special offerings on Christmas and Easter when everyone would walk around the altar and give their gifts.

I remember the Christmas program, the packed church, the practicing and memorizing weeks before. After the program on the way out all children received a sack of candy and a large red apple.

Confirmation on Saturday mornings. Sitting in the 3rd pew in front of the pulpit taking sermon notes. The scary night in the basement when the 10 of us were questioned about our catechism in front of parents and interested members.

Sunday School in the junior choir pews by Bob Bjelland.

Sunday School in the old kitchen with Margaret Hjermstad Saturn. I still have the picture of the young Jesus as a boy for perfect attendance hanging on our bedroom wall.

I remember the great church suppers. Standing in line the aroma of all the wonderful food served by the Ladies Aid of the church. Some of them were Edith Hedvick, Mrs Glen Loudy, Mrs Berg, Mrs Floyd, Mrs August (Mable) Johnston, Mrs Oscar Jorstad Sr and many others that I can't presently remember. Just the food!!

All great and cherished memories!!

I remember Pastor Bern Rogness. The year was 1958. We were new to Kenyon and our first son had just been born. Pastor came to call on us at 539 Forest Avenue. Mel was at work at the Veterinary Clinic, of course, so I was home alone that morning. It was feeding time and Mark was HUNGRY! So, while I warmed a bottle Pastor Rogness paced the floor with a crying Mark. Having twin sons at home Pastor was quite experienced and quickly calmed the baby down. All the while (as I later learned was his custom) his car idled out on the curb for over an hour. He had that common, practical, touch!

Kayo Kirchoff

I Remember...

In the mid 1960's that there were so many kids in Sunday School that our then 7th grade class of 15 was relegated to meet every Sunday in the church kitchen. That was in spite of the then still "new" education wing. Cap Weisbecker was our teacher that year.

Brad Nesseth

I remember:

- Having both our daughters baptized, confirmed and married in this church ... and one grandson baptized here as well.
- Ted Vinger and James Boline with much love in my heart
- Sitting with our family in the same pew every Sunday
- The girls taking sermon notes during confirmation
- Dodging bats during Lenten Services

Karen Alger

Linda Cordes

One Sunday in church my son Chris talked and jabbered throughout the sermon. After the service I apologized to Pastor Ted Vinger for the chatter. He assured me that he could speak louder than any child's voice, but the adults that carried on a conversation with each other during the sermon really irritated him. Pastor Vinger reassured me it was very important that I continue bringing my children to church .

One of my fondest memories of 1st Lutheran is the "60's." I was about 8 years old, sisters 6 & 4 and baby brother Dean in mom's lap. Dad's arms stretch giving us 3 girls the shoulder pinch if we misbehaved (usually "the look" would do the job).

This was the day when families sat up front, sorta (for a Lutheran that is.) Shelstads in the front of us, Forsbergs in the same pew every Sunday. 14 kids in all! Without dolls, Cheerios, color books ... you get my drift. The only thing Wendy and I got to do was darken the Os in the bulletin with communion pencils ... church was packed 1st service and full 2nd service. I miss those days.

Lyn Cole Clark



Pastor Gjervik was a scholar. His sermons and Bible studies were so thoughtful but at the same time easy to understand. I still can quote some of his teachings.

Annual meetings did not always get good attendance so one year Pastor Gjervik proposed to change the name of the church. It brought out record breaking attendance. It was never a serious proposal but got the intended results.

Kayo Kirchoff

I Remember When...

Carmen Nesseth

It was August...the summer of 1995...when Lois Estrem, congregational President, called to ask if I would consider being the Youth Director at First Lutheran. I had been teaching 8th grade Sunday school, highlighting the commandments, Lord's Prayer and the Bible 101 for the 8th grade Confirmation Students. Julie Rogness would be leaving to complete her final year at Luther Seminary and Pastor Steve would be going on sabbatical in October. The church council was looking for some continuity for the Youth during this time. My son, Ben, was going into 10th grade and my daughter, Calli, into 7th. I knew most of the kids in those two grades and many of the parents. It was only after much prayerful consideration that I said, "YES", I would do it for a year. September 1, 1995 was my first day on the job and I felt like "a deer in the head lights". I moved into my new office and took inventory of everything that was there...files, books, pictures, office supplies, games and furniture. Days turned to weeks, weeks turned to months, months turned to years...18 in all.

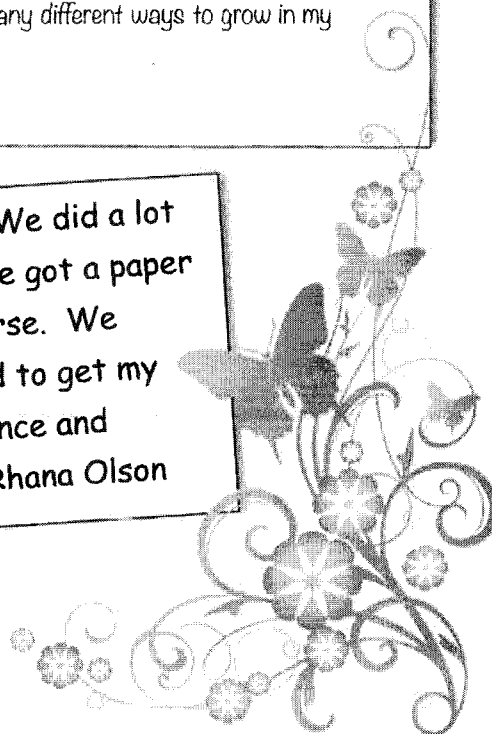
In the beginning I was working with the 10, 11 and 12th grade classes teaching Sunday school and planning monthly events. I also taught Wednesday 8th grade confirmation class each week. Monthly Youth Committee and Council meetings kept me busy. During my time as Youth Director I served with Pastor Steve, Interim Pastor Thomas Lee, Interim Pastor Tom Anderson, Pastor Guy Redfeild, Interim Pastor Lyndy West and Pastor Luther Mathsen.

One of the things I remember about Pastor Tom Anderson was that he smoked. When he came for his Interim interview he smelled of cigarette smoke. I remember thinking, "I sure hoped he doesn't get the position." But God knew better than me. Pastor Tom did get the job and he and I became good friends and colleagues. Pastor Tom kicked the smoking habit, too. He was there for me when both my brother and student, Joy, died. He presided at my brother Jim's burial. That was a real comfort.

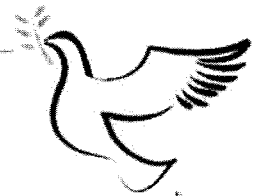
Working with each of the pastor's helped me in many different ways to grow in my faith and I thank God for their witness.

I remember my Sunday School experience. We did a lot of memorizing. I remember in first grade we got a paper piece of a bear any time we memorized a verse. We attached them with brads. I was so excited to get my bear! We also got pins for perfect attendance and memorizing in Bible School.

Rhana Olson



I Remember:



Special Family Events:

Baptisms: one daughter and five grand-children (Anders during a March Blizzard).

Weddings: Two daughters (after one wedding everyone left for the reception and forgot Beverly, mother of the Bride at Church).

Different qualities in each minister—preacher—administrator—visitation—guitarist—golfer—bicycle rider.

Ted Vinger and Gjervik influenced son Durk to become a minister.

Duane Hukreide—blind—lead to front of Church by mother. His beautiful voice shook the Church building.

Always great choir music.

Characters like Semeda Benson: Borrowed flowers from Catholic neighbor's garden to use on the First Lutheran Altar. She delayed a funeral by ten minutes as she walked from front of Church (with her apron) to the back—paid her respects to her deceased friend—then walked back down the aisle to the kitchen.

Someone said the deceased looked good. Semeda said "She should look good, she was just playing cards yesterday".

By coincidence the son of the Church arsonist came to my law office for legal business. The name "Skilbred" lit up my mind. Knowing that it had to be a terrible embarrassment to him and his family, I said nothing and he said nothing about the First Lutheran connection.

Respectfully,

Frank Peterson

5/11/16

I Remember When:

The girls were little and we went to the EARLY service on Easter Sunday. The SON would shine through the stained glass window with Jesus praying. It would be so bright, they were in awe of the feeling of Jesus being there among us.

One Sunday when Pastor Hanson was telling about Jesus being in a particular situation and started his sentence "Here is Jesus" and paused – One of the girls (about 4 yrs old) stood and said loudly "Where is Jesus?" She was so excited to finally see Him!!

Wayne has memories of Syttende Mai meatball and lutefisk supper. Margaret Satron would make the rommegrot and make sure Wayne got a "good" taste of it!! He always loved helping all the "older" ladies at funerals and suppers that were put on.

When Wayne was janitor of the church, he'd open the church about 4am on Easter. Milo Peterson would be there to crack eggs. He'd have 2 eggs in each hand cracking then into a bowl for the delicious scrambled eggs and ham for breakfast.

Marie Spidahl

Yes, well I do remember- It was in the 1940's, and I was a high school student. Following a serious operation my Aunt Lydia and Uncle John Wallaker invited me to stay at their home to attend school.

I would come in from my home on a farm to see Uncle John, who was the Financial Treasure at the time seated at the dining room table. The lace tablecloth had been removed, and in front of him was a large open ledger listing the names of all the members of First Lutheran Church.

Uncle John was carefully counting and recording the days collection. Checks were placed in one stack, and the currency placed in order. Change that had sometimes been tied into the corner of handkerchiefs put into proper denominations.

The days collection was then placed in the Security State Bank bag ready to be deposited on Monday morning. No Night Drop in those days!

The lace tablecloth was put in place once again, and now Uncle John could relax in his favorite chair and listen to the radio.

The Wallakers were long time members of First Lutheran. Gary and Mary Skundberg now own the home they built. Carolyn Wallaker Walker is also a niece.

Bev Nesseth

Pastor Hanson was an avid golfer as well as a good pastor. On Sundays of golf tournaments, we could count on a short sermon.

Mel Kirchoff

In June, 1953 our Family came to Kenyon. First Lutheran had no pastor as they were in between calls. So our first Sunday in town we went to worship at Hauge Church.

The following week we had a visit from the Hegre Church, proselytizing, I suppose.

Anyway, we went to some country churches during the summer and decided after worshiping at First Lutheran, that we would join here.

Pastor Rogness was called as our first pastor here.

John Shelstad

I remember a couple years back coming to Wednesday church service in a blizzard during Advent only to find I was the only person other than Luther here! I got a one on one church service and the meaning of Advent was told to me! I'll never forget it and suspect I'm one of the only ones at 1st Lutheran to get a personal church service!

Roger A. Anderson



At my Retirement (October 2009) I received a key to the front doors of First Lutheran. Marj Johnson, in her presentation, said "This was a most appropriate gift...." Because I spent so much time (here) goofing off. I haven't tried to see if the keys actually work. The Lord bless His Holy Church.

Mike Lockerby

I'll never forget the first time I served at Ladies' Aid. I was a new citizen of Kenyon & new member in the church. I was a recent college graduate, a first-time mother working in Faribault knowing only my husband and his family

My 2 partners were local caterers and also cooks in the school kitchen. We each provided 10 pounds of peeled and boiled potatoes for the potato salad & 3 cakes. After the meal, I learned that I could have asked 3 women to bring cakes which meant I could bring a cake when they served. (But I didn't know anyone!)

Ladies' Aid sessions are business meeting, program & meal that also served as supper.

Helen Aase

I remember when coffee hour was so full you couldn't find a chair. I would wait for Sunday school to be over with two little ones (one in S.S.) running around. This was fun for a stay-at-home mom, my social time to visit with other young parents. Very good homemade donuts were provided every week by Hazel Burrow. This was in early 1980's.

Candy Herrlich

I remember when I was new to Kenyon the spring of 1959 and I was present for the ground breaking of the new education building. Glenn's dad, Glenn Ronning Sr, was one of the participants.

I remember teaching Vacation Bible School in the 1960s. I believe it was half days for 2 weeks.

I remember in the 1960's participating in the Ladies Aid programs 3 different times. One time I played a piano solo: Schubert Four Impromptus; another time accompanied on the piano daughter, Beth, when she played Green Green Grass of Home on her guitar; another time the program was of women modeling their wedding gowns and I modeled mine of 1958.

Carol Ronning



I remember singing in the choir pews when in school with my friend Lynn Cole Clark ... Married in their beautiful church.

Pam (Grose) Broin

During my interview with Pastor Luther, I was a little nervous. He was explaining the position and I was asking a few questions. In my heart, I felt that I had to explain one thing to him. "I have played organ for church before but I'll need a lot of practice. I hope this is o.k." I explained shyly. Pastor Luther's response was, "That's O.K., we don't need any Rubenstein's here." I kind of chuckled to myself and thought, "We're going to get along just well (if they hire me)!"

Tammy Hanson

I Remember:

Our first day at First Lutheran and how we were welcomed into the church with open arms and huge smiles.

I Remember Pastor Luther told us how to do acolyting and he explained that he would give us a sign when it was time to do something: a high kick of his leg that would be hard to miss!

Unknown Authors

We joined First Lutheran early 1949 just after we moved to the Aaby Farm. The Aaby family were members here. Pastor Virgil and Maybelle Foss visited us to invite us to join. Maybelle and I had our roots in the Augustana Synod and shared our Swedish heritage.

We have had many pastors in our 67 years as members. Each has been special to us and our We joined First Lutheran early 1949 just after we moved to the Aaby Farm. family as they taught and confirmed our children. Many church teachers were also an important influence on their spiritual life.

The passing of Evelyn Danielson Gunderson reminded me of the great organists we have had – Evelyn Thune, Gert Dalbotten, Lori Burow, Marian Voxland, and others. They shared a musical talent for leading the worship. I am grateful for them and also for the choirs where our four children received great training in sacred music.

My interest was in parish education. We had classes in all nooks and crannies, even had classes on the stairwells. Then came the parish building where we filled all the rooms plus other spaces. What a contrast to now when only a few rooms are needed for classes.

I was privileged to serve the church beyond our local church at the synod level and also on a churchwide board. It was good to meet the leaders and know that our church was in good hands.

First Lutheran is more than a building. It is the people who are First Lutheran Church. I remember the women who befriended me and helped me become active in the activities of the church. I am grateful to them, to the pastors, to the musicians, to the teachers, to the leaders, and to all the members who are faithful in being God's hands here on earth for 125 years.

WAYNE ZION
LUTHERAN CHURCH

15531 County Road E-17
Monticello, Iowa 52310

June 28, 2016

Pastor Luther Mathsen
First Evangelical Lutheran Church - ELCA
309 Forest Street
Kenyon, MN 55946

Dear Pastor Luther & Friends in Christ,

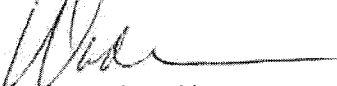
Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Congratulations on 125 years of faithful service to the people of Kenyon, Southeastern Minnesota and throughout the world; partners in God's mission bringing God's Word of forgiveness and salvation.

As I think of my year 2013-2014 among you, I cannot not help but smile and give thanks for a kind and generous gift for my personal growth into the ministry or as Pastor Luther shares "lean into God's call." Lean I did. I cherish the memories and experiences of walking with Marge Alger and her family, following Pastor Luther into the sacred places as we offered spiritual care to Roger Olson and Gordy Homeier and their families, especially Maurine and Sharon, serving communion to Marian Rodde, listening to John Shelstad speak to love and loss, learning to chant from Annette Thunhorst's careful guidance, praying Morning Matins with Vivian Ullevig and Pastor Luther, and other experiences I shared with many of you. Through your trust and love for me as an intern, you helped me to prepare for the ministry I now offer as a called and ordained minister of Jesus Christ to the people of Wayne Zion Lutheran Church in rural Monticello, Iowa. Thank you!

May God continue to bless your ministry and bless current and future interns. I thank God often for your pastor, Luther Mathsen for his mentorship, unselfish love and compassion for each of you. Go forward together; lean into God's call believing and following Jesus Christ.

In Christ's Love,



Pastor Wade Reddy
Wayne Zion Lutheran Church - ELCA

Dear Pastor Mathsen and the dear people of First Evangelical Lutheran Church:

Greetings in the name of Christ, our Bright and Morning Star, as you gather for your kick-off celebration in observance of your 125th anniversary. In the words of St. Paul to the Philippians, "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ." (1:6)

I fondly remember well the festivities surrounding the centennial celebration in 1991, when I had the joy of serving as your associate pastor. Helen Aase and Norma Shelstad were our fearless co-chairs, and a big celebration service was held in the heat of summer with a pie and ice cream social following. I recall how quickly the ice cream became soup over those amazing homemade pies in the fellowship hall, and how drenched we all became in the heat and humidity of that summer afternoon! Annette Thunhorst wrote a wonderful hymn of praise of our Lord Jesus Christ who is "the same yesterday, today and forever, which was the centennial theme.

As I recall those blessed years with you, I think being at various tables of fellowship with so many. Whether it was a booth or table at the Home Plate, the counter at Held Chevrolet, kitchen or dining room tables in your homes, and most of all at the Lord's Table each week. It is the joyful fellowship and communion of you Kenyon saints which I recall with deep gratitude in my heart.

Living next door to the church in the First Lutheran parsonage was an adventure in neighboring. Oscar and Ruth Jorstad were across the alley, and we routinely enjoyed a lively exchange of blueberry muffins and holy hilarity. Mabel Gates would occasionally drop by with her secret recipe of Norwegian chocolate milk rivaling Baileys, at holidays and other auspicious occasions. I recall making a rather confusing announcement one morning in church after Leon Overholt left his overcoat in the narthex and someone had taken it by accident. I think I switched the words Overholt and overcoat around.

Singing with the First Lutheran Choir under the direction of Lynn Tollefson was a highlight as together we sang praises of the God who is our help in ages past and our hope for years to come. Witnessing the Spirit-filled stamina of March Kvittem as she single-handedly stocked the food shelf was an ever-present inspiration, and 25 years later I'm still napping under the blue patchwork quilt which was lovingly made for me by Edith Hegvik and the sewing circles,

May your celebration of 125 years bring great joy as you recall God's love and faithfulness in all the "thens and nows" of life. May Jesus Christ the Light of the World continue to illumine the path ahead for First Evangelical Lutheran of Kenyon. And may each of you continue to shine that light in word and deed in this world so very beloved of God.

I am so very grateful for the years we were called to be together as pastor and people. Press on, dearly loved saints of God!

In the grace and Peace of Christ,

Pastor James Boline

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Santa Monica, California

Associate Pastor First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kenyon, 1989-1992



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Region 3: Serving the nine synods of North Dakota * South Dakota * Minnesota

February 29, 2016

Anniversary Committee
First Lutheran Church
309 Forest St
Kenyon MN 55946

Dear Anniversary Committee:

Annually the Office of the Secretary of the ELCA in Chicago informs our archives of congregations in Region 3 that will celebrate significant milestones. **We note that your congregation will celebrate its 125th anniversary this year. Congratulations!**

Although you may have already contacted us for information or ideas, we want to take this opportunity to invite you to let us know how we can help you. Many congregations like yours celebrate their anniversary by having special services and programs. Some congregations remember their beginnings by producing congregational history booklets. If you have not yet started planning your anniversary celebration, or if you have questions about congregational histories or preservation of records in general, the Region 3 Archives can help.

The ELCA Region 3 Archives for the nine synods of Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota has collected over 5,000 congregational files with materials and histories for use by congregations, seminary students, and researchers. This material is among the most frequently used resources we hold, which is not surprising given that congregational history is the story of the church at its grass roots level.

Please e-mail or write us to the address listed below or call (651) 641-3205. We will be happy to be of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Paul A. Daniels
Archivist, ELCA Region 3
Archivist & Curator, Luther Seminary

P.S. After your congregation has celebrated your anniversary, we ask that you please send two or more copies of all of the pieces you produced to the Region 3.

Dear First Lutheran Church,

As of July 1, I will have completed my first two years as associate pastor of Big Grove Crow River Grace Parish at Belgrade, MN. These three congregations have been a parish for 3 years, and they are discovering the joys of working together as well as independently of one another. It has been a good couple of years for me. People are often amazed that I have THREE congregations, and then their jaws hit the floor when I tell them that on internship I worked with EIGHT congregations! I was well prepared for this sort of ministry working with the Kenyon Area Internship Committee. I am grateful for the learning and mentoring I received from both pastors and congregation members. I learned about keeping track of multiple congregations, some ways working together can happen, and how to be flexible. I learned about the hospitality and graciousness of small town rural living. I am grateful to have been a KAIC intern.

Blessings,

Pastor Ann Zastrow

2011-12 KAIC intern

Luther,

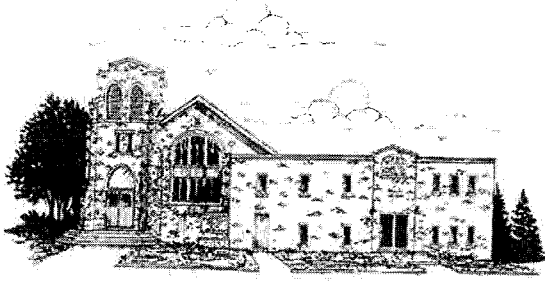
Thanks so much for your note about the 125th anniversary. Unfortunately, I am booked to be in the pulpit at Cross that morning.

Here is my message:

Dear friends of Christ at First Lutheran,

Congratulations and blessings to you upon your 125th anniversary! I thank God for First Lutheran's legacy of supporting missionaries and sons and daughters of the congregation in preparing for the ministry. You prayers and financial support helped to carry me through seminary from 1985-89. Since then, I have been privileged to serve several congregation preaching the gospel, the same good news in Christ proclaimed by Pr. Matheson to you now. Have a great celebration on this historic day!

-Pastor Durk K. Peterson



Trinity Lutheran Church

P.O. Box 156
106 West Centre Street
Hartington, NE 68739
Phone: 402-254-6606
trinitylutheran@hartel.net

January 18, 2016

First Evangelical Lutheran Church
309 Forest Street
Kenyon, MN 55946

Dear friends:

*"And I am sure that he who began a good work in you
will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ." – Philippians 1:6*

Long ago, the Holy Spirit called together the people of First Lutheran, and for 125 years, you have been following the leading of that same Spirit. God has indeed begun a good work in and among you!

In your communal life, you bear witness to the God who created and sustains all things, who saved and redeemed you out of sheer love, and who empowers the church to share that good news. Your faithfulness in living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a testament to good leadership and discipleship.

I am profoundly grateful for the ways in which you shaped my ministry during my year as an intern. You should never underestimate the importance of your teaching and influence in the lives of the future pastors you help to form. By your participation in the intern program, you serve the whole church, as new pastors are sent near and far to proclaim God's mercy and grace. The experience and formation of the intern year is foundational, and I am thankful your kindness and consideration during my time among you.

As you celebrate 125 years of ministry, I rejoice with you! And I trust that God, who has begun a good work among you, will bring it to completion in the day of Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory!

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Amanda Jertson Talley
KAIC Intern 2010-11

Greetings Members of First Evangelical Lutheran Church,

Grace and peace to you as your congregation celebrates 125 years of faithful ministry. It is an honor to be invited to greet you on this special occasion. I had the privilege of serving as Kenyon Area Intern from 2013-2014. In my year as intern, I had the opportunity to witness the powerful and Christ-filled ministry of First Evangelical Lutheran Church.

When I think about my time with you, I remember fondly the beautiful worship services in your sanctuary decorated for each season of the church. I remember journeying with many of you through difficult losses and transitions. I remember visits with many members who were unable to worship on a regular basis. In each of these moments, what I remember the most is the powerful ministry and strong community that supported one another, shared life together and revealed God's love to all people, including myself.

The blessings that I received during my year of internship are the same blessings that I share with the congregation I currently serve. I serve as Associate Pastor at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Faribault, Minnesota. It brings me great joy to be partnering with you in the ministry of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. I am also grateful that my husband Jon and I live so closely to one of the places where I was formed as a pastor.

On this day of celebration, I rejoice and give thanks for you. I give thanks for the way God has called you as a congregation and strengthened you as a body of Christ. I look forward to hearing how God continues to work in your midst as you care for God's children, preach the Good News of Jesus Christ to the community of Kenyon, and proclaim God's grace to a world in need.

Thank you for your commitment to future leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and for all that you have taught me to faithfully serve as a pastor to God's people. Each and every one of you has blessed me and I pray that you continue to witness God's blessings in every year of your ministry together.

In Christ,
Rev. Ashley Osborn