

BERGEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

150 YEARS OF

*Growing
in
God's Grace*

1872-2022



The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.

Psalm 126:3



This image is found on many of the stained-glass windows in Bergen. The Fleur-de-Lis is often used as a symbol of the Trinity: God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

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Bergen Lutheran Church

Dedication

1872 - 2022

With thanksgiving to God for one hundred fifty years of life and service, this anniversary book is dedicated to the memory of the pioneers and our families, heroes of faith who earnestly sought to know and do the will of God and to those who have.



We are gardeners and field workers laboring with God.
You are the vineyard, the garden, the house where God dwells.
1 Corinthians 3:9

Bergen Lutheran Church Sanctuary



For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy Name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
Alleluia, Alleluia.

For All the Saints, text by William Walsham How, published 1864

The Lord has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.
Psalm 126:3

Greetings From Pastors

Vicar Mort Meyenburg

I pray that God, the source of all hope, will infuse your lives with an abundance of joy and peace in the midst of your faith so that your hope will overflow through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13 (The Voice)



To my Bergen family,

I have been so blessed by the loving members of Bergen. It's quite unbelievable that I am writing this letter to you at your 150th anniversary as your vicar. You have accepted me and all my quirky ways, you've shown love without judgement, and you make me laugh. A lot! And laughing is a gift from God!

A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones.

Proverbs 17:22

Bergen is full of cheerful hearts and good medicine for the soul; Bergen is anything but dried up and downcast. The way you welcome everyone into your community is only bested by the way you bring God out into the community. You work well together, taking care of each other and your church. Planning for this celebration has been such a great way for me to not only learn about Bergen through all the history, but also become a part of Bergen's history as we move forward into the future.

For everyone at Bergen, I will continue to pray for you as we travel this journey of God's mission on the prairie together. Thanks be to God for Bergen!

✝ Vicar Mort

Pastor Bill Klavetter



Pastor Bill and his youngest daughter Megan

To my Brothers and Sisters in Christ;
Congratulations on the celebration of Bergen Lutheran's 150th Anniversary of living and proclaiming the love of Jesus Christ in the Good News of the Gospel.

Those charter members in 1872 wanted to not only establish a community of faith for their families but for the future generations that would follow them. This community of faith, Bergen Lutheran Church, was, is and will

continue as a beacon of comfort, courage, and strength.

I have fond memories of my years as your pastor. I remember how you welcomed a newly ordained young pastor and his family. Through those years you gave me permission to learn and find my style of ministry. I was privileged to hear your faith stories and walk with you. Allowing me to be with you in difficult, sad, and joyous times.

I remember the fun times we shared, an example is the annual pancake suppers as the men cooked the pancakes and made sure that there would not be a power outage with the tractors that were used to keep the griddles hot. A special memory is the invitations you extended to me and my family into your homes to share a meal to celebrate a baptism, a confirmation or just a time to visit.

I have memories of each parish that I served during my ministry. But the first call I received after graduating from seminary holds a special place in my memory and heart for the kindness and warm welcome. The members of Bergen Lutheran Church and the friendships made were a large part of my ministry and life and hold a special place for me.

Again, congratulations on this 150th anniversary, my prayer is that God, through our Savior, Jesus Christ bless the Bergen faith fellowship for years to come.

Pastor Bill

Pastors Joyce Piper & Dave Mesner



"I thank my God every
time I remember you . . ."
Philippians 1:3

Dear people of God at
Bergen,
Congratulations! Bergen
Lutheran Church has
been a holy place for
150 years! As I thank God
for the time we were
blessed to share, I
realize those memories
create trajectories that
have shaped us and
continue to nurture us
today. You welcomed
Joyce and me with

Hiking on the Superior Hiking Trail

unconditional love. Very early in our time together you created the space for us to experience life healing through counseling and spiritual direction. Thank you for my "holy places" at Bergen:

Library/Study

Yes, I begin with the library, because that is the place where I began each day when I arrived as your pastor. You welcomed me by transforming the library into a study. I enjoyed drop-in conversations with church members. My daily rhythm was to get up at 5 am, drive to Bergen, and write five pages a day on my Ph. D. dissertation. What does "Paul's Use of Hebrew Scripture in Romans 9" (catchy title!) have to do with pastoral ministry at Bergen? Everything! I learned that listening to God's Word in the depths of my soul was welcomed at Bergen, which also showed that I was welcome. And the library was deeply connected to the next holy place.

Sanctuary

God taught me that there is nothing deeper than gathering with the people of God around Word and Sacrament week by week, season by season, year by year. The study and the worship space enhanced, completed and sanctified each other. That trajectory from Bergen has carried me to subsequent holy places, but none has been deeper. Thank you.

Basement

God is with us in the basement! Think of all the conversations that happen around those tables. I loved the energy of the gathered community at the waffle supper,

even as I was being patiently trained for my responsibilities in the dish room. I will never forget the Bible study when we heard of the beginning of the Iraq war.

Cemetery

Having the cemetery surround the church building brings a sense of eternity to everything we do. What a story of "God with us" is told by the lives of those buried at Bergen. I was especially touched that one could gaze at the cemetery while kneeling at the communion rail. God is with us! A special honor for me was presiding at the funeral of Magnus Haga, the last Bergen member born in Norway.

Augustana and Swede Home

A visionary creation of a joint parish enhanced the mission of each individually and all three together. Special thanks to Kathy Larson Koetter, church secretary and accompanist who heard (endured?) my sermon three times every Sunday!

Every place!

The story of Bergen is the story of the people of Bergen. Holy times and holy places experienced in every place: homes and hospitals, Boundary Waters and National Youth Gatherings, any road in Lisbon and Stony Run, life passages of baptism, confirmation, wedding and funeral; God is with us!

The trajectories from Bergen have carried us to some wonderful places. Joyce and I served together as Co-Pastors of Christ Lutheran Church in Slayton from 1997-2003. In 2004 Joyce was called to serve as Synod Minister with Bishop Jon Anderson of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod. I was called as Lead Pastor of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Duluth, where I continue to serve. After 12 years of households in both Redwood Falls and Duluth, we celebrate that we are together in our home in Duluth. Joyce has served interim parishes in Duluth, Virginia, Mountain Iron and Hermantown, and is currently called as a Chaplain in Essentia/St. Mary's Hospital in Duluth. Joyce and I are both cancer survivors, grateful for the healing ministry of the Mayo system.

Our family is doing well. Phil and his wife Brenda live in Seattle and work in finance. Their greatest claim to fame is that they are the parents of our granddaughters Ava and Ella. Chris and his wife Jao live in Miami, where Chris is a flight dispatcher and Jao a chef. Daughters Jenny and Katy live near Cleveland.

Congratulations on 150 years of ministry! We thank God for you!

In Christ,

Pastor Dave Mesner
Pastor Joyce Piper

Pastor Raphaela Mueller (Intern)



Dear members of Bergen, Congratulations on this momentous occasion - 150 years of worshiping and praising God, of mourning and celebrating together, and of bringing the kingdom of God and knowledge of Jesus' sacrifice and God's tremendous, all-encompassing love to the people and land of southwestern Minnesota!

Especially after the extraordinary challenges of living through and adapting to a pandemic, I am so happy to get to celebrate with you all.

When I arrived at Healing Waters in late 2019 I was only just learning what it meant to be a pastor, and your warm welcome, kind encouragement, and honest feedback allowed me to grow into my role and identity so that now I get to visit you from my first call congregation on the east coast!

I have tremendously enjoyed following the work that you, St. Lucas, and Augustana have done together with Mort these past two years, and cannot wait to cheer you on as you continue God's work in the future.

Much love and God's blessing to you all,

Pr. (Vicar) Raphaela Mueller

Bishop Dee Pederson



Vicar Mort and Bishop Dee in the gardens of the synod office in Redwood Falls.

"O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come!" I give thanks to God for the faith and vision God gave to the people of Bergen Lutheran Church through 150 years of ministry. There were difficult and trying times in the past. You stand on a strong legacy of leadership and service. Now we all have just come through all the challenges of continuing ministry through a pandemic, and God has been with you. May God continue to be your Help and your Hope as you grow in God's grace through the next chapters of your ministry.

+ Celebrating with you in joy, grace, and peace,
Rev. Dee Pederson
Bishop, Southwestern Minnesota Synod, ELCA



Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

History

Our Priceless Heritage

By the late Monroe Rachie

First published in *Our First 100 Years Under God's Grace* (1972)

Many of our older congregations can trace their origins to lands beyond the seas. Those devout Christians who came to America and who were often not able to provide anything but the bare necessities for the trip, little realized that they were contributing untold riches to their loved ones' future by their adventurous trek to America and, what is more important, by having instilled in their children a love FOR and a faith IN Jesus Christ. This faith proved to be the basis for their new life in America. In fact, many times it was their only comfort through long months of trials and loneliness; their only hope when business or farming ventures failed; their only resort when plague and death scourged their settlements. The Word, as it had been integrated into their youth in the "Old Country," was to remain for those pioneers their "mighty fortress," their "trusty shield and weapon." These men and women cherished the church as the one great possession which they had felt compelled to bring with them and then transplant it on the new soil so that generations yet unborn might also be given the privilege of knowing and serving the same Lord Jesus Christ, who had been their God and their fathers' God.

Early History of Bergen Lutheran Church

The Bergen Lutheran Church of Yellow Medicine County was organized May 13, 1872 by a number of Norwegian emigrants who had moved westward, most of them from southeastern Minnesota. The journey westward was made in covered, ox-drawn wagons loaded with all their personal effects. Many came as early as 1866.

The first homes were dugouts and sod huts, with only a few small log cabins the first winter. Those early years certainly taxed the strength, the endurance and the courage of each emigrant from the father-land. Roads were non-existent, and the nearest market place was Willmar, sixty miles away.

Couriers In the Night

It was on a May morning in 1872, while at Willmar for a load of merchandise for his store in Stony Run Township, that K. E. Neste met the Reverend L. J. Markus, pastor at Norway Lake, and told him of the many Norwegian settlers in his home community who were without a church. Early the next morning, after much urging on the part of Mr. Neste, the Rev. L. J. Markus climbed into the loaded Neste wagon

and the two men made the long, sixty-mile trek back to Stony Run. It was midnight when they reached their destination. Leaving the unhitching of the horses and the unloading of the wagon to others, Knute E. Neste mounted another horse and rode to the farm of the Thomton brothers to enlist their help in notifying the settlers that a pastor had come and that there would be services the next morning at ten o'clock in the log cabin of Rasmus Knutson Hoialman, whose cabin was the largest building in the community.

Those couriers spent most of the night riding from one cabin to the next and they did their work well for, when ten o'clock came the next morning, the Hoialman farmyard was filled with vehicles, horses, oxen, while the house itself overflowed with people. The men had to give up their places to the women and children and join the bellowing oxen in the yard. It was such a scene that met the eyes of the Rev. L. J. Markus when he arrived to preach. In an attempt to make his words reach all the men and women, Pastor Markus delivered his sermon from the cabin doorway, but, as the pioneers afterward related, the women and children benefited most as the voice of the preacher could not compete with the bellowing of the oxen tied to the wagons in the farmyard.

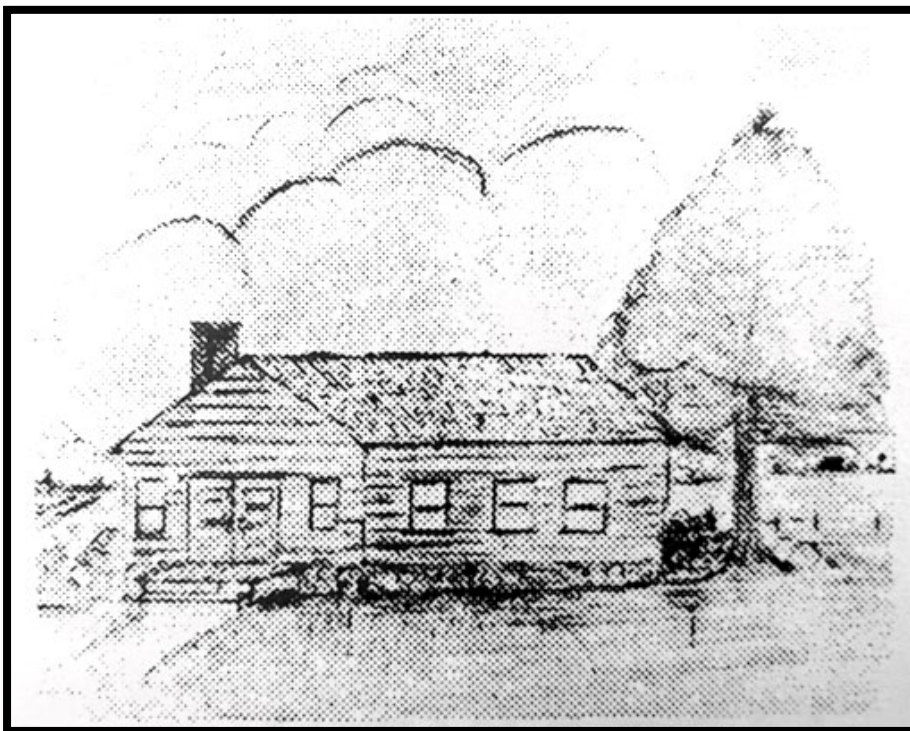


The settlement had been visited a few times by other pastors who were passing by, and such itinerant preachers were very welcome to the new settlers. Meetings were quickly arranged for and hurriedly announced at these occasions by sending the children from home to home throughout the settlement with the message. "A pastor has come and now you must all come to services right away." Whatever the day of the week, work was dropped and the families started for the place where the services were to be held. Some came walking, some came in ox-drawn wagons. Yes, our forefathers always had time to go to church.

A Church is Organized

The arrival of the Rev. L. J. Markus intensified the desire of the settlers for a resident pastor and a church building in which to worship. These Norwegian immigrants, like most of our forefathers who helped build America, were not satisfied with just a home and daily bread. They longed for the ringing of church bells, hymn singing, preaching of the Gospel and administration of the sacraments. Thus it was that on the day following Pastor Markus' cabin service, on May 13, 1872 many of the same group reassembled and the Bergen Lutheran Church was born. The charter members of the new organization were: Knute E. Neste, Rasmus Knutson, John Arneson, C. O. Hagen, P. O. Hagen, Nils Thomton, Auen Christenson, Jacob Nilson, Ole Benson, John Storebo, Kittel Hanson and Nils C. Clausen. A constitution was adopted and officers were elected. Mr. Ole Benson gave one acre of his farm to the newly-formed congregation for a graveyard. Two years later it was decided to move the cemetery to its present location.

The congregation grew rapidly as new settlers moved in and joined the congregation. There was now no home large enough to have the services in, so it was decided to build a church out of logs on the Rasmus Knutson farm, the present home of Clarence Rosetter. This meeting house, only twelve feet by twenty feet and seven feet high, served as a place of worship for two years. When the log cabin used for a church became too small and inconvenient for the rapidly growing congregation, enthusiasm ran high for an edifice 56 by 40 feet by 20 feet high. However, at a meeting held on December 7, 1874, the resolution for such a large building was reconsidered and the size of the intended building was reduced to 32 feet by 24 feet, by 12 feet high.

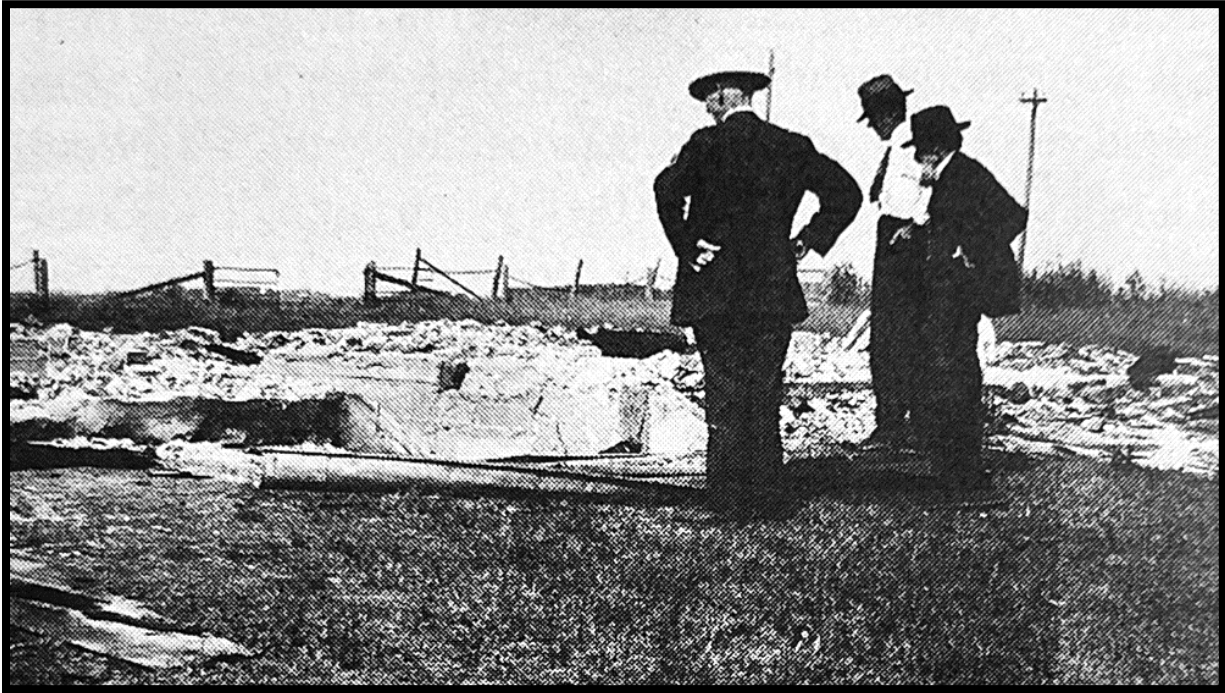


This building was never finished or dedicated, but it was used as a meeting place until 1885. During the summer of 1885 a new church building 60 by 38 and 22 feet high was built on the present location. The congregation also joined the Norwegian Synod (Norske Synode) that year. Three years later in 1888, the Bergen congregation withdrew from the Norwegian Synod and joined the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood which partook in organizing the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in 1890, and later, in 1917, helped to organize the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.

As several church bodies were engaged in doctrinal controversies, namely laymen's activities and predestination controversies, it followed that these important topics were taken into the local congregation and enthusiastically discussed. The Bergen congregation had many of these meetings, covering besides parochial school and the liquor traffic. During all these discussions it must be said that these pioneer church builders maintain a very serious, albeit friendly, manner. The main thing for which they strove was to lay a true and solid foundation so the church might be a great blessing for succeeding generations. For that, we are very grateful today.



Adversities and Anniversaries



In 1920 the Bergen church was struck by lightning and the resulting fire destroyed what had been so pains-takingly built. This was a great loss to the congregation as the structure had been well built, was sufficiently large for some time to come, and was supplied with good furniture and a splendid pipe organ. In 1921, as an interim place of worship, the congregation bought the church building located one mile east of Bergen which had been the property of a group of twelve families who had withdrawn from the Bergen Congregation in 1892 to form a congregation of their own under the Norwegian Synod. Services were held in this building, until again, a new church was constructed. At the annual meeting of 1920 a building committee composed of L. C. Rosetter, H. G. Wilson, C. E. Wilson, Nels Sherdahl and Halvor Iverson was elected. At a special meeting on January 21, 1921 it was decided to construct a new church of cement blocks and stucco in the coming summer. A contractor by the name of Jacobson from Montevideo was hired to build the church. The blocks were to be made at the location of the building, which would require that gravel be hauled. The men of the congregation were to do this, hauling gravel from the Ole Monson gravel pit, 4 ½ miles from the building site. They used horses and wagons and loaded the gravel by hand and one trip a day was all that one rig could make.

The hauling was started in the winter and stockpiled so that work on the foundation could begin early in the summer. Besides hauling gravel, the men of the congregation also help in digging footings, shoveling and hauling lumber and other materials. By early spring of 1922 the building had progressed to the point that services could be held in the basement. The Norwegian Synod church was torn down and some of the materials and the altar, pulpit, baptismal font, pews and organ were used in the new church.



On June 11, 1922, the Bergen congregation celebrated its 50th anniversary and the laying of the cornerstone. This was an occasion of joy for now they had completed the building of one of the finest churches in the community.

Twenty years later, on June 7, 1942, festival services were held again in Bergen commemorating the 70th anniversary. The Rev. P. B. Trelstad was pastor at the time and only one of the original charter members of the congregation, Mr. Nils Thomson was still living. Among the many visitors who attended the celebration were sons and daughters of the pioneers who had participated in the organization of the congregation. The Ladies' Aid served a dinner at noon to over 500 people, an evening meal to an even greater number, and the Luther League served lunch after the evening service to over 300. A 16-page booklet was prepared containing history, pictures and data as a lasting reminder of the gala occasion. Three sons of the congregation participated in the worship services. The Rev. E. C. Eid, then of Lake Preston, preached the morning sermon; the Rev. C. K. Solberg recounted local church history at the afternoon service and the Rev. E. O. Stenson, then a pastor at Pelican Rapids, preached the evening sermon. The Rev. J. J. Salhus, who had served the congregation from 1907 to 1921, preached an afternoon sermon in the Norwegian language.

In September of 1942 disaster struck again in the form of a severely damaging windstorm. The building was kept in use until 1946 when it was condemned and postponement of repair was no longer possible. The congregation used the Camp Release Lutheran Free Church, one mile to the east, for services while their building was being repaired and renovated.

Traditions Are Broken

The change from the continued use of the Norwegian language to the English language and the discontinuance of the services of the klokker came to a close together in the early thirties. Services had been held mainly in Norwegian from the time Bergen was organized until 1922. At that time, during the pastorate of Rev. A. Haugland, services were in English every other time. This continued until in the late thirties when it was changed to a Norwegian service once every two months, and then, in the early forties, the Norwegian language service was dropped altogether. The business meetings of the congregation had been conducted in the Norwegian language and the secretary's minutes were written in Norwegian until 1936.

Bergen Lutheran was now thoroughly American—even to the discontinuance of the Old World custom of the “klokker”. The “klokker” was a song leader, a man with a good strong singing voice chosen to lead the congregational singing and also to render the opening and closing prayer at the worship service. Sometimes the “klokker” chose to sing the opening and closing prayers. At the business meeting of 1932, by a voice vote, the office of the “klokker” was abandoned and another tradition had vanished. Some of those who had served as “klokkers” in Bergen were Jonas Feroe, I. K. Rollefson, Jacob Halvorson, Hans Skulstad and Bert Knutson.

The Fifties and Sixties

The congregation bought a new electric organ in 1950. The chimes for this organ were donated in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Steen Johnson by their children. A rededication service and organ dedication concert were held on October 15, 1950. The congregation had just completed extensive repairs on the church earlier in the year. The guest speakers at the dedicatory service were Pastors E. C. Eid, C. K. Solberg and A. Haugland. Mrs. A. N. Olson, wife of the pastor, was the guest organist.

It was in 1960 that the congregation decided to hire an architect to draw up plans for an addition to the church building which would provide Sunday School rooms and enclose the steps to the church. On July 27, 1961, the congregation accepted a plan that the architect had drawn up. Mr. George Rysdahl, a contractor from Clarkfield, Minnesota, was hired to build the addition. This addition provided five Sunday School rooms, a large roomy entrance, enclosed the steps, and changed the appearance of the tower.

Two area churches found it no longer expedient to maintain their separate establishments and consequently dissolved their congregations. In the fall of 1960, the Camp Release Lutheran Free Church voted to disband, and in December of 1967, the Stony Run Lutheran Church voted similarly. Seven families from these two churches eventually joined the Bergen congregation.

Once again it was anniversary time and on October 28, 1962, while the Rev. E. T. Fyrand was pastor, the congregation celebrated its 90th anniversary. On this occasion a pageant was presented portraying the history of the local church,

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showing pictures also of former pastors, sons of the congregation ordained into the ministry and other things of a "Do you remember when..." nature.

One Hundred Years – Under God’s Grace

From a small beginning of about a dozen families on that historic day of May 13, 1872, the Bergen Lutheran congregation had grown to 125 families in 1972. When Bergen church celebrated its Centennial Anniversary on Sunday, June 11, 1972, its theme was *Under God's Grace*. The celebration started with a morning church service, followed by dinner and an afternoon service with Rev. E. T. Fyrand presiding. (This is the end of Monroe Rachie's wonderfully told history.)

The Next 25 Years – Rooted in God’s Grace.

By Kim Kvam

Edited from *125 Years Rooted in God's Grace (1997)*

Following Pastor Fyrand's retirement in 1974, Pastor Berdell Digerness became our pastor, serving Bergen and Hazel Run until 1981. A number of innovations occurred during his call here. These included the hiring of a part-time secretary; the use of lay readers at Sunday worship services; cooperating with other churches in round robin pulpit exchange for Lenten services; and lowering the communion age from confirmation to ten years. As many of the green hymnals had been given in memory of Pastor Fyrand, Mrs. Fyrand was called on to be the dedication speaker when they were placed in service in 1978. Also, in 1978 the cemetery was separated from the church, becoming the Bergen Lutheran Cemetery Association,



When Pastor Digerness accepted a call to St. John's Lutheran of Winthrop, Minnesota, Pastor William Klavetter, who was serving St. John's, as interim pastor, accepted a call to Bergen and Hazel Run, bringing a rather unique trading of parishes. In 1982 public catechization of the confirmand was dropped. The need for more cemetery lots was solved in 1986 when the Swang estate donated an acre of land to the Cemetery Association, Conrad Kittelson then donated evergreen trees to line the south and east borders of the cemetery.

In 1988 Pastor Klavetter accepted a call to Fairfax, Minnesota, and Pastor David Mesner was called to Bergen. At the same time Pastor Mesner's wife, Joyce, accepted a call to Augustana and Swede Home of Clarkfield, with Augustana providing the parsonage, thus bringing about the severing of our relationship with Hazel Run and the beginning of a new alliance with Augustana and Swede Home. Pastor Joyce Mesner was ordained in May 1991. In June of 1991, Pastor Dave completed his dissertation and was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Northwestern University of Evanston, Illinois. When Pastor Joyce chose to return to school to earn a doctorate, Pastor Dave was issued a call in June 1992 to serve all three congregations, and he accepted. In addition to his parish ministry, he also taught a lectionary series to other pastors at four sites in southern Minnesota for each season of the church year. Pastor Dave also planned annual retreats with the confirmation class to the Twin Cities. There they got to experience first hand the reality of homelessness and living on the street by helping to serve meals at "Sharing and Caring Hands." They also attended worship at other churches, including a Jewish Synagogue.

In 1988 church offices were furnished for the pastor and the secretary. The following year Schulmerich Carillons were installed in the church, a gift from Conrad Kittelson. Bibles for the pews and a lectionary Bible for the podium were given in memory of Richard Danielson. In 1992 Albert Wangberg located a newly reconditioned pipe organ and helped get it installed.

A second hymnal, "With One Voice" was taken into service in 1995, and work groups were organized to be responsible for help with the worship services.

Once again, reunion time was nearing and on June 14-15, 1997, Bergen celebrated 125 years with a Saturday evening program, Sunday morning worship with Pastor Dave presiding, dinner and afternoon program. A commemorative banner was made by Donna Christopherson, Marilyn Larson and Dorthea Heimark. To quote the history booklet, "Through the 125-year history of Bergen Church, traditions have been broken, new traditions begun, and many changes have occurred, but our mission remains constant - to witness to God's love and power in our community and beyond. We have truly been blessed with many faithful servants. *Rooted in God's Grace*, we look confidently to the future."

Growing in God's Grace

By Kim Kvam

Not long after the 125th Anniversary at Bergen Pastors Dave and Joyce left Bergen to accept a call as co-pastors of Christ Lutheran Church in Slayton, Minnesota. Pastor Terry Hagensen served as an interim until Pastor Julie Smith accepted a call to serve Bergen, Augustana and Swede Home. She continued the traditions that Pastor Dave Mesner started in the confirmation classes and Luther League plus adding a youth "movie night" at the parsonage in Clarkfield once a month on Sunday nights. Pastor Julie served Bergen, Augustana and Swede Home from 1998 through 2003. Pastor Gail Klavetter served as our interim in 2003, followed by Interim Pastor Jennifer Hackbarth in March of 2004. Pastor Jennifer accepted a call and Interim Pastor Sue Seiffert began in July 2004.

During this time, it was becoming difficult for small rural churches to find pastors and also to be able to afford paying for full-time ministry when congregations were becoming smaller. An area task force started meeting in 2002, hoping to find a new solution for rural ministry. This joint effort started with many meetings of representatives from seven small congregations (Augustana, Bergen, Swede Home, Yellow Medicine, Israel, St. Lucas, and Hazel Run Lutheran Churches). An agreement was written, voted on, and Healing Waters Lutheran Parish began in May of 2003. Healing Waters Parish Council members represented each church. By fall a call committee was formed and in July 2004 a call was extended to Pastor Allan Johnson as lead pastor of the newly formed Healing Waters Parish. The following article, from the Granite Falls-Clarkfield Advocate/Tribune, is a summary of this time.

Gathered in Faith - Sent to Serve

What began as an idea in 2002 became reality on September 1, 2004. The seven churches- Augustana (Clarkfield), Bergen (rural Granite Falls), Israel and Swede Home (rural Clarkfield), St. Lucas (Cottonwood), Hazel Run (Hazel Run), and Yellow Medicine (Hanley Falls) came together and agreed to work together in a partnership called Healing Waters Parish (HWP).

These churches celebrated this partnership on September 19, 2004 with approximately 375 people attending. The celebration was held on the grounds of Bergen Lutheran Church with an outdoor worship service. ELCA SWMN leaders from each congregation participated in the preparation and celebration by assembling the Bible, cross, communion vessels, candles and other articles for the service.

Bishop Jon Anderson led the service and was assisted by interim pastors: Donald Clifford, Sue Sieffert and Robert Kemppainen. Pastor Allan Johnson was installed as the first permanent pastor of the Healing Waters Parish. In an email he stated, "God is still doing miracles out there,

for God is turning this community of people in 'healing water' for a world that needs it".

A song, "O Healing Waters," written by Sally Christianson of Augustana Lutheran was sung by a quartet. Music was a special part of the service with children's and adult choirs composed of members from all the churches. Following the service, a potluck dinner was provided. Many hands went into work as the worship tent was converted to a dining hall. Later, well-fed parishioners helped take down and put away tables and chairs. All the while, the children played many games in the church yard.

Each church holds services and other events separately but will support each other and the surrounding communities by working together in partnership in ministry.

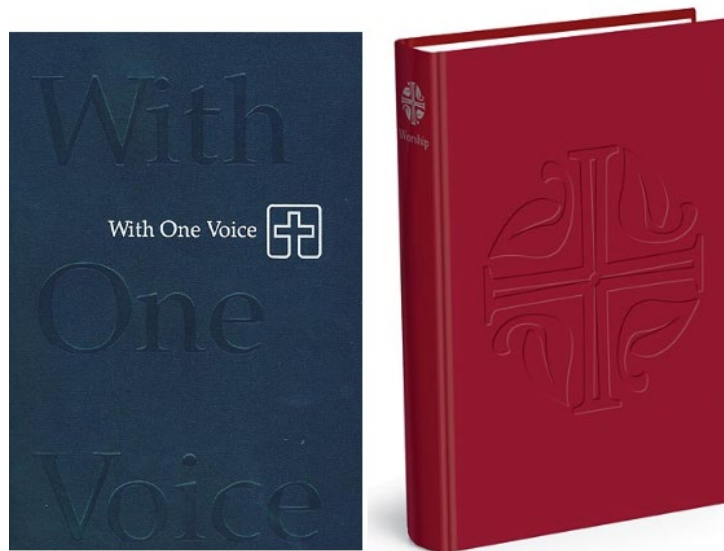
Over the years, HWP has sponsored a needy family in the area: participated in Santa's Sleigh; donated to Lac Qui Parle Global Missions, Red Cross, and the Salvation Army; distributed to the Japanese earthquake fund and the ELCA Disaster Relief for those destroyed by tornadoes.

(End of article.)

Two interim ministers continued with HWP while Pastor Allan Johnson and the call committee began the process of finding candidates to fill two minister positions. In April of 2005, a call was extended to Pastors Evelyn and Steve Weston. Healing Waters Parish was now complete and joint ministry began among seven congregations with three pastors and a HWP office staff person. Coordination and organization were key and this was accomplished through monthly HWP council meetings and quarterly all-council meetings with HWP and all church councils. Each church continued with Sunday morning worship and Sunday School and continued with their activities, boards and councils. Coming together as a parish allowed for joint programming for youth programming, Bible studies and music. Joint confirmation, joint youth group, FLY (Fellowship of Lutheran Youth) and VBS were held and HWP cantatas took place during the Christmas season. All-parish worship events took place in January, May, August and September. This team approach in ministry allowed for programming for ministry with senior adults, youth work, adult education to progress towards our service, outreach and worship goals.

In 2007, one of the smaller churches in HWP, Israel Lutheran Church closed, leaving six congregations in HWP. The next 13 years were full of change and challenges. Bergen stayed with HWP working to stay focused on God's Mission. Bergen continued with well-attended monthly council meetings, monthly work groups and annual events of the men's waffle supper, Luther League & women bake sale and bazaar, Luther League chili supper and setting up the tree, Lenten suppers and worship, Luther League Palm Sunday brunch, Spring church cleaning and women's circle monthly bible studies/meetings and quilting. Sunday school was small enough (around 6 children), for teachers to rotate for the group.

In 2007 some roof repair was completed as well as painting of the outside of the church. By 2008 Sunday school numbers had dwindled and there was no longer Sunday school at Bergen. Bergen had two confirmands in 2008 and one other boy in confirmation. New ELW hymnals came out; this cranberry hymnal was now used as well as "With One Voice."



During the fall of 2008 a suggestion was made to have potluck dinner the first Sunday of every month with work groups coordinating the meal for the winter months and this tradition was so popular, it was decided to continue all year long. This has been a blessing to Bergen in many ways. New landscaping was added in 2009 as well as new windows for the library and office in 2010.

In 2010, Hazel Run Lutheran Church left HWP; this left five churches in HWP. In 2011, Pastor Allan accepted a call to Canby. Pastor Steve and Evelyn continued until 2012, when they left for another ministry. Pastor Dave Wall became our interim minister along with part-time retired Pastor Steve Quist and pulpit supply. Sunday school was held twice a month for a few children in 2012-2013 before numbers dwindled again. As the few Luther leaguers graduated, their duties of putting up the tree, bazaar, chili supper and Palm Sunday brunch were picked up by others at Bergen; the community spirit continued. The entryway, steps and landings got an update with new carpet.

Pastors Dave and Rena Peterson were called to the parish in 2014. Bergen dug a new well and upgraded the sound system. The following year the sanctuary got a facelift with painting and carpet. Bishop Jon Anderson met with members of individual churches for lunch and conversation about ministry and mission in these changing times. From that conversation in December 2015, Bergen decided to plan a family neighborhood picnic and in July 2016 over 125 people including at least 20 children gathered on the Bergen lawn for a potluck picnic. Lots of good food was shared and good visiting ensued while the children bounced in the bouncy house and played yard games. The root beer floats at the end of the picnic were a great success on such a hot day. A new summer tradition was started. A few young

families with kids were starting to attend Bergen and people could feel the excitement of growing once again.

In 2016 Swede Home Lutheran church closed, leaving four churches remaining. Pastors Dave and Rena left in 2017 and the parish again had Pastor Steve Quist part-time and pulpit supply.

Bergen's second summer neighborhood picnic was also well attended with 115 people enjoying the hot summer evening. Vacation Bible School was back at Bergen with 35 kids attending and 23 Bergen member volunteers helping out. Sunday school began twice a month with 6-12 kids attending.

In January 2018, Yellow Medicine Lutheran Church left the parish to be on their own. Augustana, Bergen and St. Lucas continued in HWP with interim Pastor Stephen Olson, part-time Pastor Quist, and pulpit supply. With more members becoming physically unable to walk all the steps in church, Bergen began an improvement project fund drive and installed a platform lift that travels from the first floor in the library to the sanctuary or down to the dining room and restrooms.

"And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house." Ezekiel 43:5



The lift in sanctuary.

Bergen celebrated in May with the ordination of Pastor Matt Danielson, who grew up in Bergen, a very special day indeed. The summer neighborhood picnic was another great evening with 65 attending. Sunday school and VBS continued and nine children received First Communion this year.

In August 2019, HWP contracted with Raphaela Mueller, a Wartburg seminary student, to be her context for internship. With Raphaela and pulpit supply, the parish pushed through. Bergen continued with some improvement projects of replacing furnaces, basement carpet and painting in the basement, office and library and technology additions of laptop and large screen TV. The fourth picnic was attended by 90 and the root beer floats were still a hit! Sunday school and VBS carried on.

In March 2020 COVID-19 brought the world to a halt. We were so thankful for Vicar Raphaela's technology skills and the synod's guidance as we began virtual worship, zoom meetings with the synod and zoom council meetings. We all learned and prayed together. An online-giving option began at Bergen and has continued. Summer brought drive-up worship. In-person worship, along with a virtual option, started in September, only to dial back to all virtual worship in November. In-person worship returned on Christmas Eve and virtual worship continues to remain an option each Sunday on Facebook Live.

In July 2020, Vicar Raphaela's internship was completed and SWMN Synod authorized a Luther Seminary student as Vicar of Healing Waters Parish, Vicar Mort Meyenburg, who had been doing pulpit supply within HWP over the last few years. Vicar Mort is very busy with ministering three congregations and attending Luther Seminary with plans to be ordained in 2023. Blessedly, after many years of change and challenges, HWP has a constant, consistent and vibrant ministry. The HWP parish council (six church representatives, two from each church, a secretary and Vicar Mort) have monthly zoom meetings. Vicar Mort preaches at three churches each Sunday morning.

Bergen continues with our monthly council meetings, work groups and annual events. HWP has joint Lenten suppers and worship at Augustana with each church taking turns with serving. Our Bergen family is growing, we have 22 children enrolled in Sunday School and five in confirmation. We are blessed with many people giving gifts of service, time and support. And we are especially grateful for Vicar Mort who connects us all. God's love comes shining through as she speaks from the pulpit, as she engages the kids of all ages in worship and shows genuine caring for everyone.

This is a time of opportunities and blessings—what might God be up to and what are our dreams for our future at Bergen? Growing in God's Grace! We are so very thankful for all of God's Blessings!

The May Celebration



May 15, 2022, just two days after the 150th birthday of Bergen, birthday cake was served for a Coffee Hour celebration!



There is always much to celebrate at Bergen!

The 2022 Congregation



Pew One: Gilmore and Marilyn Larson, Kathy Koetter, Deborah Janicula, Rudell Isaacs.

Pew Two: Adam, Krista, Aceson, Allison, Arie, and Kathy Isaacs.

Pew Three: Jarrod, Jenn, Janie and Jonna Miller.

Pew Four: Alivia, Samantha, Jesse and Archer Gort, Rick and Vicar Mort Meyenburg.

Pew Five: Dave and Kim Kvam, Kathryn and John Skoglund, Cindy and Curt Skulstad, Richard and Donna Christopherson.

Pew Six: Marcie Augeson, Kingsley Remund, Dave Augeson, Hailee Ward, Larry and Peggy Danielson, Veyda Pouliot, Caitlin Bagaus, Joseph Pouliot.

Pew Seven: David and Janet Gabrielson, Karol and Roger Sorum, Kris McCoy, Tina and Rick Klosterboer.

Pew Eight: Scott, Kaitlynn, Jenni, and Abby Schuler, Miriam and Larry Schuler.

Pew Nine: Wendy and Adrienne Best.

(Many members were not available on this picture day.)

Our Nonagenarians!

♥ We celebrate our members 90 years and older! ♥



Vivian Anderson

Gilmore & Marilyn Larson



Betty Velde

150th Anniversary Banner

By Donna Christopherson



Bergen Today

Bergen Statistics

From a small beginning of about a dozen families on that historic day of May 13, 1872, the Bergen congregation grew to 125 families by 1972, a hundred years later. Up to this time there were 1541 baptisms, 1244 persons confirmed, 338 couples married, and 541 burials. By 1996 there had been 1576 baptisms, 1345 confirmations, 383 marriages and 832 burials.

Presently, through 2021 we have 30 active families. There have been 1609 baptisms, 1372 confirmations, 394 marriages and 927 funerals.

2022 Bergen Council



Back row: David Gabrielson, David Kvam, Adam Isaacs, Peggy Danielson, Larry Danielson, Roger Sorum. Middle row: Curt Skulstad, Cindy Skulstad, Jenni Schuler, Krista Isaacs, Deborah Janicula. Front row: Kim Kvam.

2022 Bergen Congregational Officers

President	Kimberly Kvam
Secretary	Cindy Skulstad
Treasurer	Curtis Skulstad
Trustee District 1&2	Larry Danielson
Trustee District 3	Adam Isaacs
Trustee District 4	Dave Kvam
Deacons	Peggy Danielson Roger Sorum
Board of Education	Krista Isaacs Jenni Schuler
Healing Waters Parish Council	Kimberly Kvam Donna Christopherson
Synodical/Memorial/ELCA	Janet Gabrielson David Gabrielson Rick Klosterboer
Men's Waffle Supper	David Gabrielson Roger Sorum Dustin Virkus
Auditing Committee	Karol Sorum Donna Krueger Kathy Isaacs
Nominating Committee	Peggy Danielson Miriam Schuler
Delegates to SWMN Synod	Adam & Krista Isaacs
Delegate to Luther Haven	Kathy Isaacs
Delegates to Green Lake Bible Camp	Curt & Cindy Skulstad
Cemetery Board	Nick Krueger Dale Pederson David Gabrielson Roger Sorum Richard Christopherson Wayne Virkus
Sextons	Scott Schuler Dustin Virkus Adam Isaacs

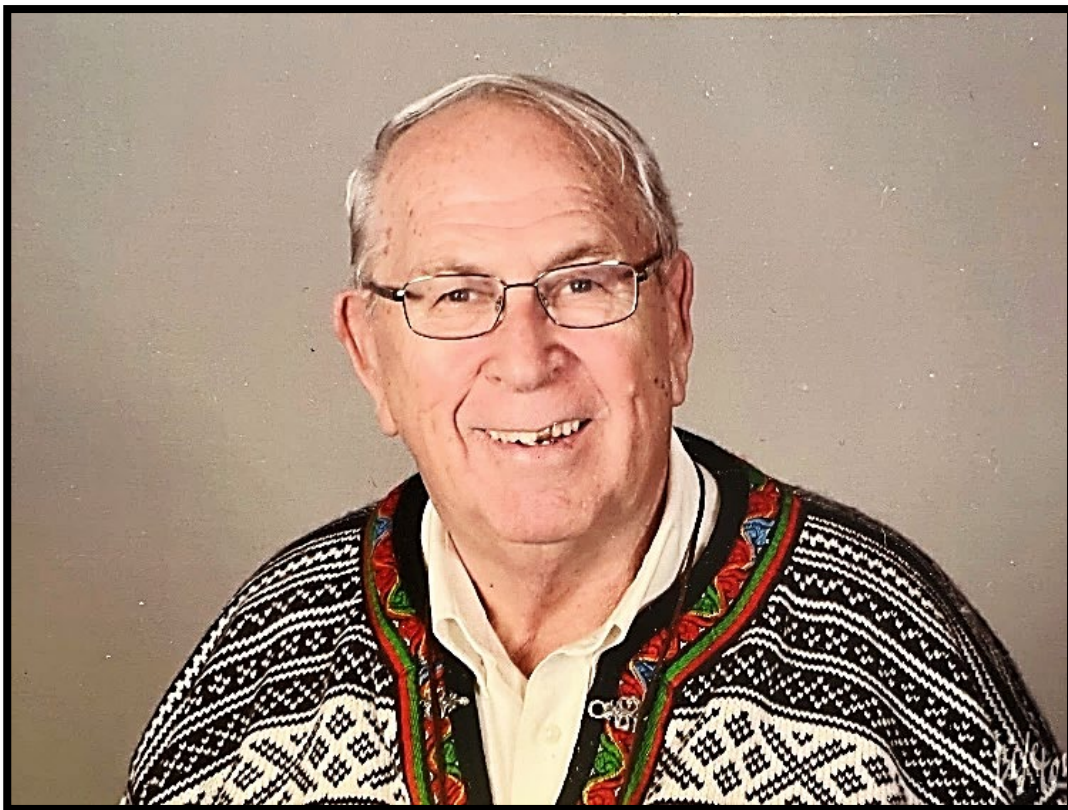
Bergen's Ministry Timeline and Church Affiliations

Dates	Bergen Ministers	Affiliated Congregations		
1872-1874	Pastor Ole E. Solseth	Immanuel Lutheran of Watson		
1874-1881	Pastor Knut Thorstenson	Yellow Medicine of Hanley Falls		
1881-1894	Pastor Ole Lokensgaard	United Lutheran of Granite Falls (North Church)		
1894-1907	Pastor H. O. Fjelstad	United Lutheran of Granite Falls		
1907-1921	Pastor J. J. Salhus	Hazel Run & Stony Run		
1922-1940	Pastor A. Haugland	Hazel Run & Stony Run		
1940-1945	Pastor P. B. Trelstad	Hazel Run		
1945-1956	Pastor A. N. Olson	Hazel Run		
1956	Pastor M. P. Kaatrud	Hazel Run		
1956-1958	Pastor Elden Landvik	Hazel Run		
1958	Pastor Carl O. Bomgren	Hazel Run		
1958-1959	Students Virgil Hendrickson & Walter Lexvold	Hazel Run		
1959-1974	Pastor E. T. Fyrand	Hazel Run		
1974-1981	Pastor B. Digerness	Hazel Run		
1981-1988	Pastor Bill Klavetter	Hazel Run		
1988-1992	Pastor Dave Mesner	Bergen alone		
1992-1997	Pastor Dave Mesner & Pastor Joyce Piper	Augustana, Bergen, Swede Home		
1997-1998	Interim Pastor Terry Hagensen	Augustana, Bergen Swede Home		
A/B/SH Call Committee:				
	Melissa Anderson	Marcie Augeson	Tim Ratz	Charles Pederson
	Pearl Coover	Iona Peterson	Bill Houston	Paulette O'Connell
	Alvern Johnson	Scott Schlenner	Roger Sorum	Tina Klosterboer
	Kimberly Kvam	Vicky Willander		
1998-2003	Pastor Julie Smith	Augustana, Bergen, Swede Home		
2002	Area Task Force Started Meeting			
2003-2004	Interim Pastor Gail Klavetter	Augustana, Bergen, Swede Home		
May 2003	Voted to Form HWP (Augustana, Bergen, Swede Home, Yellow Medicine, Israel, St. Lucas, Hazel Run)			
HWP Council:				
	Kevin Eye	Bill Houston	Linda Dieken	Dale & Marlene Berg
	Becky Johnson	Kimberly Kvam	Linda Nelson	John & Marlys Lundgren
	Brenda Ohlson	Sara Rausch	Glenn Sharkey	Sandra Weber

October 2003 HWP Call Committee:			
Tom Johnson	Mike Brusven	Grant Hagen	Rodney Stensrud
Kim Kvam	Nick Kvam	Sue Greseth	Elaine Halverson Wilson
Lacey Dyrdaahl	Nicole Willander	Jean Nelson	Bette Schweer
Charles Pederson	Bruce Gustafson	Jolene Johnson	John Lundgren
Duane Severson	Helen Werner	Duane Coover	Dennis Broughton
Mar 2004	Interim Pastor Jennifer Hackbarth		HWP
July 2004	Interim Pastor Sue Seiffert		HWP
2004-2011	Pastor Allan Johnson		HWP
2004-2005	Interim Pastor Tom Lammers		HWP
2005-2012	Pastors Steve & Evelyn Weston		HWP
2007	Israel Closed		
2010	Hazel Run left the parish		
2011	Pastor Steve Quist part-time		HWP
2013	Interim Pastor David Wall & Pastor Steve Quist (P/T)		
August 2013 HWP Call Committee:			
Matt Danielson	Donna Krueger	Dave Kvam	Jolene Johnson
Vicky Willander	Josh Brusven	Donna Riecke	Sharon & Chuck Gaffney
Chery Stensrud	Shannon Lenz	Andrew Lenz	
2014-2017	Pastors Dave & Rena Peterson		HWP
2016	Swede Home Closed		
Aug 2016- Feb 2017	Interim Kelly France (P/T) during Pastor Rena's absence		HWP
Oct 2017- Dec 2017	Part-time Pastor Steve Quist/Pulpit Supply		HWP
2018	Interim Pastor Steve Olson/Pastor Steve Quist (P/T)		HWP
Dec 2018	Yellow Medicine left the parish leaving Augustana, Bergen, and St. Lucas		
Dec 2018 - Oct 2019	Pulpit Supply (Mort Meyenburg, Pr. Rochelle Anderson, Pr. Steve Quist, Elizabeth Larson)		HWP
Oct 2019 - July 2020	Vicar Raphaela Mueller (Wartburg Seminary Student), Pulpit Supply Mort Meyenburg, Elizabeth Larson		HWP
Aug 2020 - Present	Vicar Mort Meyenburg (Luther Seminary Student)		HWP

Bergen Kids Who Went into Ministry

Howard Skulstad



Howard A. Skulstad, son of Carl and Harriet Skulstad was born January 16, 1944 in Clarkfield, Minnesota. Howard was baptized, confirmed and ordained at Bergen Lutheran Church. He graduated High School in Granite Falls, Minnesota and graduated from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Following graduation, Howard spent a year in Norway and as a result of experiences there, he felt called to ordained ministry. Upon returning to the US he enrolled in Luther Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota. In May of 1969, he married Kristin Graf in Minneapolis, Minnesota and they spent the following year in Santa Rosa, California, where he served his internship at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Following ordination at Bergen Lutheran in July of 1971, Howard received his first parish call to Evangelical Lutheran Church of Heron Lake, MN and Delafield Lutheran Church of Wilder, MN. He has also served Shiloh Lutheran Church in Elmore, MN, Zion Lutheran in Buffalo Lake, MN, Epiphany Luther in Eagle Lake, MN and Long Lake Lutheran in Isanti, MN. Howard retired from full-time ministry in April of 2009 and then served interim ministries at St. John's Lutheran, Mound, MN, Bethany Lutheran, South Minneapolis, MN, Glen Cary Lutheran, Ham Lake, MN and Immanuel Lutheran, Princeton, MN. Howard and Kristin currently reside in Blaine, MN.

Matt Danielson



On the day of my graduation from high school, I returned home and showed Doris Solberg, who had been at the house getting things ready, that my diploma was signed and authentic. I then spent four fruitless years at Gustavus Adolphus, fell off a grain dryer, moved to the cities, and met my wife, Tami. We raised our four children: Kim, Rik, Jake and Walker, on the Evjen farm north of Bergen. Kim and Devon and their daughters, Astrid and Tova, are in the process of moving to Garretson, SD. Rik and Claire live in Des Moines. Jake and Brooke and their children, LuElla and William, live in Maple Grove. Walker and Emee live in Bloomington, MN. I taught English and reading in Montevideo for several years before becoming the pastor at Saron Lutheran and Our Savior's Lutheran of Baxter. Tami works for Onward Services at a group home in Granite Falls.

Eric Pederson

Eric (born 6/19/60), the youngest son of Charles and Joyce Pederson, attended Bergen Lutheran from 1960 until 1978. He was confirmed in 1975 and graduated from Granite Falls High School in 1978. After 4 years of involvement in Cru (aka Campus Crusade for Christ) at Moorhead State University, he graduated (1983, Biology) and joined Cru staff. He has served on campuses at St. Cloud State, UND, Rollins College, UCF, and more. He has also served overseas in Kenya, Russia, The Ukraine, Czech Republic, Turkey, and several other countries in Europe and Asia. He received his Master of Divinity from the International School of Theology in 1992. He is married to Susan, and they have four sons (Evan, Gabe, Luke, & Stephen), daughter-in-law Priscilla and grandchildren Adelaide & Aidan.

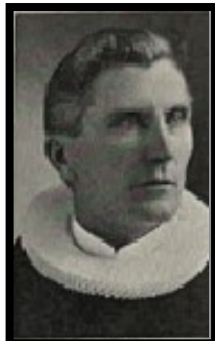
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Ministry of Saints Gone Before Us

In addition to Howard, Matt and Eric, during these 150 years, Bergen has had five other baptized members enter the ministry.



John J. Akre, born in Norway April 14, 1863, came to America with his parents in 1864 and was confirmed and married at Bergen Lutheran Church. He was ordained on June 27, 1892 and passed away April 20, 1950.



Christian L. Rachie, born in Norway, emigrated to America with his parent to Granite Falls, MN about 1871. He was ordained in 1896 and passed away in January of 1947.



Carl K. Solberg was born in Minnesota on June 2, 1872, ordained in 1900 and passed away June 15, 1954.



Edward C. Eid born in Minnesota on January 22, 1878, ordained after graduating from Lutheran Seminary in St. Paul and passed away on September 14, 1963.



Edward O. Stenson, born December 30, 1897, and baptized at Bergen Lutheran Church. He was a minister and died in February of 1986.

Two women from Bergen were deaconesses and worked in hospitals in the late 1800s into the 1900s.



Thalie Falk was born April 2, 1869, at Hayfield, MN. She entered full time Christian service as a deaconess in the Deaconess Hospital, Minneapolis, MN. She passed away in 1918.

Ella Wilson was born December 8, 1877 and entered Christian service as a deaconess working in hospitals in Chicago and Rugby, North Dakota. She passed away September 13, 1962.

Poetry

The Second Mile

By Rev. Carl K. Solberg

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." Matthew 5:41

To do what is expected
And what you have to do,
To love your friend and neighbor,
Who does the same to you,
To give to those you favor
And smile to those who smile,
Is very, very easy, —
'Tis walking just one mile.

But loving those who hate you,
Who seek to do you harm,
Requires more will and effort,
Because it has no charm;
To help the poor and needy,
To serve those who you revile,
To sacrifice for others, —
That is the second mile.

To do your Christian duty
'Mid danger and 'mid loss,
To lift your brother's burden,
When lifting is a cross,
And sacrifice your comfort
To do the thing worth while,
Denying self for others, —
That is the second mile.

The first mile of your giving
Is only your "fair share",
It is not self-denial
To give what you can spare;
Your all to God surrender
To live the life worth while,
And give as gave the widow—
That is the second mile.

Bergen Lutheran Church Women

Original Article written by Mrs. Ervin Weckwerth
Edited from *125 Years Rooted in God's Grace (1997)*

Anniversaries are like the Greek god Janus who had two faces and could look backward and forward at the same time. It is a good thing to look back to our heritage of the first 100 years of our church and then having looked back at our accomplishments or lack, plan ahead for the next segment of time until the Lord comes to take home His own. Historians of the past have compiled commendable histories for the Fiftieth, Seventieth and Ninetieth (100th, 125th) Anniversaries to which this centennial history must/need to be both a continuation and a recap of what has gone before.

In May of 1884, when the Rev. O. Lokensgaard was Bergen's pastor, The Bergen Ladies' Aid was organized. Later that month was the first meeting, elected positions were filled, and a decision was made that they would meet every two weeks. It is told that many of the women would walk many miles to attend each meeting. Women gave a first donation for "start up" money to buy material for their projects. In addition, everyone who attended each meeting would make a financial donation. At the first meeting it was decided that their first purchase they would make with the money they had saved would be for a bell for the church. In 1884 they had two auctions to sell their sewing projects. During the winter months they didn't meet at church but each member would sew at home. They would gather at church again when the weather was nice to finish the projects that they had started at home. Later, in 1885 they already had enough money saved to purchase the bell they wanted for church. They also had enough money to make contributions for missions. As time went on more auctions were held and that money was used to buy things that the church needed. The first money was spent on altar cloths and giving towards organizing their first choir.

In May 1912, for convenience's sake, the Ladies Aid was divided into two Aids, named The East Bergen Ladies' Aid and The West Bergen Ladies' Aid. The two Aids did some things independently and some things in conjunction with each other. For example, both Aids during WW I went together to give a fountain pen as a gift to each boy called for service. Additionally, during WWII, the organization together gave a testament and a prayer book to every boy called into the service from the Bergen congregation. The Aids did do things separately, too. For instance, The East Bergen Ladies Aid used the money they had earned from their projects to furnish the church. Pews were purchased, as well as upholstery material and other items. The West Bergen Ladies' Aid also bought things such as folding chairs, a stove and dishes to help furnish the church.

In 1949 due largely to the efforts of Pastor A. N. Olson, the East and West Ladies' Aid groups merged into one organization like they were originally. It was felt that one organization could carry on the work they did more effectively and with less

duplication. It is interesting here to note that there were 58 members of the Ladies' Aid group at this time. Now instead of meeting every two weeks, the Ladies' Aid was meeting monthly. At these monthly meetings, a Bible study was led by the pastor. When the Ladies' Aid joined the Women's Missionary Federation in 1918, they adopted and carried out the program suggested and this they continued to do as a combined group. This included missions and thank-offering projects.

The transition from the Norwegian language to the English language was a gradual thing, but in 1925 a motion was made that the secretary's minutes were to be written and read in English from then on.

When reading the histories of the Ladies' Aid one of the most common subjects written about were the dues that were paid at their meetings. For many years the dues at each meeting was 25 cents. This money always came in handy because where there was a special need The Ladies' Aid would have money to donate. If there was a need where more money was needed than they had, they would have a supper, a bake sale, or some other project to get the money to meet the goal. For instance, silverware and dishes were needed in the kitchen in 1948. The Ladies' Aid served at the 4th of July celebration at Oraas' Grove and raised enough money to get the silverware and dishes. It has always been the practice of the Aid to assist by serving at annual meetings of the congregation, choir concerts, mission festivals, and at weddings, anniversary gatherings and funerals. Also in 1948, the Ladies' Aid was honored by being host to the fall convention of the Women's Missionary Federation. The two Aids' jointly served 500 people. Later on in 1953, the Ladies' aid published a cookbook called Favorite Recipes. The organization contributed in large measure to all the anniversary celebrations in Bergen's history.

For many years a special table at the monthly meeting was provided honoring those having birthdays during the month. Birthday offerings were used as a flower fund for the sick. Later, a committee would remember the ill with a gift instead of flowers. Each November the Aid participated in the clothing drive for Lutheran World Relief.

The Bergen American Lutheran Church Women

At the time of the merger of the church, The Bergen Ladies' Aid became the Bergen American Lutheran Church Women of the ALCW as it was most often called. In 1960, the group organized into circles of 15 to 20 members which met once a month individually, all members as the ALCW meeting the alternate month. It began with three circles choosing to meet in the afternoon and two in the evening.

By 1971, it was decided to re-group into two afternoon circles and two evening circles. Bible study and mission study have dominated the programs. Generally, the pastor gave the devotions at the ALCW meeting, but the women presented the bible study at both the general and circle meetings. At this time a worship offering replaced the system of dues. From 58 members in 1949 when both Aids joined as

one, the membership had increased to 160 in 1962. The increase was largely due to the fact that in the new American Lutheran Church all confirmed women of the congregation were considered members and are known as "Women of the Church."

In 1962 the Women of the Church mimeographed and mailed out periodically the letters from Pastor and Mrs. Elden Landvik, who were then missionaries in Brazil. In 1962 a church nursery was organized so mothers with infants may have the opportunity to sing in the choir or participate in the worship service. The circles take charge, one month at a time, throughout the year. The ALCW also contributes each year to support the library in their need of buying books. Members have continued to make quilts and coverings for Lutheran World Relief as well as donating used clothing.

It was noted in the 125th Anniversary History book of Bergen that the Bergen Lutheran Church Women continue to make quilts, donating them to Lutheran World Relief and to families who have experienced disasters. Caring hearts and busy hands have made 1,360 quilts from 1977 to 1997. One stitch at a time they have provided warmth all over the world. Every year a quilt was donated to the Green Lake Bible Camp for their fundraising auction. They served lunches at the Bloodmobile and pies to residents of area nursing homes. Other projects included Christmas gifts to nursing homes; food for area food shelves; mittens for the mitten tree; kits; layettes; and homemade soap for Lutheran World Relief. Good used items were also collected for King's Aid. Hundreds of boxes of good used clothing have been sent to the Marie Sandvik Center in Minneapolis. Circles sometimes give food baskets at Easter and Thanksgiving. The organization has also contributed financially to many of the improvements of the church such as new windows, a stair rail, remodeling of the kitchen in 1991 and the remodeling of the dining room in 1996-1997. A cookbook "Sharing Our Best" was published in 1992.

100th Anniversary of the Women of Bergen Lutheran Church

In 1984 the Women of Bergen Lutheran Church observed the 100th Anniversary. At this meeting they presented a skit "Women in Mission." The women wore fashions from by-gone years and antiques added to the atmosphere.

One of the changes that occurred at this time was the organization changed its name from the American Lutheran Church Women (ALCW) to Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (WELCA). The same year the Bible study magazine "Scope" became "Lutheran Women Today." In 1980 it was decided to have four WELCA meetings per year and monthly circle meetings. Bible study is still an important part of the circle meetings. Bergen women also had their famous Mother Daughter Salad Luncheons.

1997 to Present Day

By Deb Janicula

Due to the departure of families from the farming community, membership of Ladies' Aid has decreased to only one circle with less than a dozen members, down from four circles in the year 2000. They continue with their monthly meetings and Bible study, and have continued bringing a financial donation to each meeting. These women have donated their time and money to making quilts. These quilts are given to new members, graduating high school students, members getting married, sold some at the Men's Waffle Supper and to the Green Lake Bible Camp. Some were given to the Marie Sandvik Center, the Family Services Center of Chippewa County, and Project Turnabout in Granite Falls. Money they have gotten from quilt sales was donated to the Food Shelves in Granite Falls, Clarkfield and Montevideo twice a year. Ladies' Aid organized and helped at the Mother Daughter Luncheons. They also clean the church once a year. They also help out at the Clarkfield Bloodmobile. They also purchase items for school and health kits, collect items for Kings Aid and deliver gifts to the Girls Ranch in Benson. They also purchased material and made diapers for children in the Honduras Project, served pancakes at the Granite Falls Manor and participated in altar guild, and served when and where needed.

A benefit was held for Dustin Virkus in 2019 at the Clarkfield Charter School with the ladies of Bergen providing, preparing, and selling food. Over the years there was a need to have banners in church. Donna Christopherson took on the task of creating and making many banners seen in the church today. Donna made the 150th banner that is currently displayed in the Sanctuary.

At each circle meeting, this prayer and the purpose statement are read:

Prayer:

"Lord, give us strength to work for Thee, that all the tasks Thou givest, done in thy power, may yet seem light, for in Thy service hearts grow strong in helping weary ones along. Lord, give us strength to work for Thee. Amen."

Purpose Statement:

"As a community of women, created in the image of God, called to the discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world."

Much of this information was given to this writer by Marcie Augeson, President/Secretary/Treasurer of Bergen's Women of the ELCA for this anniversary booklet. A great thank you to Marcie for all her years of service to the women of Bergen.

History of Bergen's Library

By Deb Janicula

For some time, the Ladies Aid had a vision to have a library in Bergen Church to provide good reading and reference books to the congregation. In September of 1966, fine custom-made oak bookcases were installed in the church dining room. The library started with fifty-two books and has grown to over 1790 books. As books were donated, there was a need for more shelves so the library was moved to the north Sunday School room, which is now the church office. With more and more books being added to the library, the need to move the books caused the books to be moved to its present location in the south Sunday School room, now considered the library. Over the years, donations have come from the ALCW, individuals and memorials, who have shared in this vision over the years.

The library joined The Lutheran Church Library Association in 1975. Information was given to the board on "How to Build A Church Library." This was invaluable help in starting the library.

A library board was created with the following members: Mrs. Dorothy McCoy, Mrs. Joan Rosetter, and Kermit Ness. Over the years the board has included Mrs. Leonard Olson, Mrs. Eldon Peterson, Mrs. Carl Danielson, Mrs. Minnie Johnson, Mrs. Joan Rosetter, Mrs. Duane McCoy, Mrs. Edwin Falk, Mrs. Roger Sorum, Mrs. Gilmore Larson, Mrs. Ronald Halvorson, Mrs. Marj Danielson, Mrs. Linda Nelson, Mrs. Vivian

Anderson, Mrs. Joyce Pederson, and Deborah (Anderson) Janicula.

Mrs. Betty Peterson was on the board from 1968 until her passing in 2020. She provided insight into choosing and purchasing the books, and notifying the congregation about the new books by placing notices in the weekly bulletins. The books are listed in these

categories: author, reference number, alphabetical, biography, devotional, inspirational, children, youth, reference, history, fiction, missions, Bibles, Guideposts, famous authors, and large print books. There is a binder in the library where a person can look up the name of a book and/or author.

The library members meet to review and audit all the books in the library. During those meetings, they determine if the book(s) is outdated and then if it should be donated or given away.

The library's saying is "Imagine a school without a library, you cannot; imagine a pastor without books, horrors; imagine a local church without a library, no, do not!"

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Bergen Choirs and Organists

By the late Dorothy McCoy

Reprinted from *125 Years Rooted in God's Grace (1997)*

The history of the Bergen American Lutheran Church Women records that the first choir in Bergen was organized in 1890. It apparently experienced a recession, as the choir was re-organized and directed by Pastor A. Haugland, who served the congregation from 1922 to 1940. He was followed by Mr. Zimmerman from Montevideo and Mrs. Minton Peterson of Wegdahl in the early 40s.

The following members of Bergen have directed the choir:

Bertha Rosetter late 1940's - 1963, Dorothy McCoy 1963-1966, Ramona Cornelius 1966-1969, Sally Velde 1969-1973, Dorothy McCoy 1973-1975, Verna Patrick 1975-1982, Debbie Isaacs 1982-1984, Jon and Linda Nelson 1984-1988, Dorothy McCoy 1988- 1997.

During the early 1950s through 1985 Bergen and Hazel Run choirs worked jointly on Christmas cantatas, which were sung at both churches. In 1961 they sang a Christmas program written and directed by Bertha Rosetter. Debbie Isaacs also directed an Easter cantata. From 1988-1990 Augustana and Bergen choirs sang the same cantata directed by Dorothy for two years and came together for a joint performance the third year. Clarkfield Lutheran choir joined the two choirs for Christmas cantatas in 1992-1993. Without a director, the Christmas cantatas came to an end.

Junior Choir was organized in the late 1950s by Dorothy McCoy. They sang one Sunday a month. Directors of this choir included Gerda Jacobson, Sue Halvorson, Debbie Isaacs, Angie Hoffman, Loretta Lundy, and Jeanie Anderson was the current director in 1997. Jeanie was also the Sunday School Choir director. Pianists for either choirs through the years have been Emily Hollenback, Dorothy McCoy, Diane (Cornelius) Norgaard, Jerry Stenson, Lorraine (Stueland) Loesch, Annette (Isaacs) Thompson, Joan (Wangberg) Randt, Janet Gabrielson, Barb (Christopherson) Kleven, Joan Rosetter, LuAnn Rosetter, Angie Hoffman, Loretta Lundy and Kathy (Larson) Koetter.

Organists for Bergen Church since 1940 have been: Dorothy (Holtan) Zelgart, Geraldine (Swang) Velde, Bertha Rosetter, Lorraine (Stueland) Loesch, Donna (Wilson) Lund, LaVonne Evjen, Barb (Christopherson) Kleven, Janet Gabrielson, Gerda Jacobson, Annette (Isaacs) Thompson, Dorothy McCoy, Verna (Rosetter) Patrick, Kim (McCoy) Mead, Lisa (Lundy) Bistodeau, and Kathy (Larson) Koetter (current organist in 1997).

1997 to Present Day

By Kim Kvam

Jeanie Anderson continued directing the choir as well as the Sunday School Choir through the early 2000s. Since then, Bergen hasn't had a choir but will come together to sing a special song for special occasions. Bergen singers also sang in the Healing Waters Parish Christmas cantatas in 2004, 2005, 2007-2009, 2011, and 2016.

Our pianist and organist continues to be Kathy (Larson) Koetter. Kathy began playing at age 16 or 17 as a fill-in for Janet Gabrielson. By 1988 she was one of three main organists; and became our sole organist in 1992. When Bergen was paired with Augustana and Swede Home Kathy was the organist at all three churches from 1992 - 2003. 34 years later she continues as our organist! What an amazing gift of time and talent Kathy has shared with Bergen. She comments, "I have never thought of it as a job."



Kathy Koetter

Labors of Love

Edited from *125 Years Rooted in God's Grace* (1997)

It takes people to not only do God's mission of Word, but also God's mission of service. A church building requires a lot of time and maintenance. Over the years there have been many names that have loved and cared for Bergen. Starting back during the years of Bergen's coal fired furnace. Gust Christopherson was the



*Gust & Alma Christopherson,
Hiram and Gladys on their way to church.*

custodian for 19 years. Then it required walking to and from church two miles to "fire-up" the furnace to have the church warm for worship. Gust's son, Hiram recalled stopping by the church on Saturday night to check the furnace and put on more coal. Gust and his family are pictured here with their son Hiram and daughter Gladys, going to church.

From about 1943 to 1949, Oscar and Amanda Swang were custodians. Their daughter Dorothy McCoy recalled several

of the families going up to church on Saturday evening to "clean up" for Sunday services, sometimes walking a half a mile. In about 1948 Bergen changed from coal to fuel oil fired furnaces.

For about 16 years, Edgar and Thelma Anundson were custodians. In those years they had to drape a black and white cloth over the altar rail for funerals, as well as prepare bread and wine for the communion services. They would go to the church an hour before services and ring the bell many times, as well as just before and after the service.

Edwin and Ione Falk took over the duties of custodians after Edgar and Thelma for 14 years. This was the first time that the church doors had to be locked. Locking doors meant that there was an increase in how many trips the key holders had to make to the church with all of the various activities.

In 1976 when Edwin passed away, Pat and Wayne Virkus took over the job. They continued caring and loving for Bergen for 16 years. They said that when they started, they had to be at the church for every function. On Sunday mornings the janitor had to light all the candles, ring the bell, run the loudspeaker, and open and close the church. Later these jobs were entrusted to ushers and trustees. But they had to be more than custodians, they had to be maintenance people taking care of furnaces and other church repairs. They often took home all the cleaning trash and

burned it until the mid-80s when the garbage route started to pick it up. As times changed so did the job of caring for the church. Over the many years it's always been a wonderful tradition when the women of Bergen would come in and do spring cleaning.

1997 to Present Day

By Mort Meyenburg



After the Virkus', Duane and Dorothy McCoy took over for 13 years until 2006 when Bethany Crosby took over the duties. Bethany continued with the custodial works until 2009. In 2009, Jesse Danielson began the role he still holds today cleaning and caring for Bergen. Jesse, son of Larry and Peggy Danielson, has been custodian for many years and we are very grateful for this tradition of Bergen people caring for Bergen.

It takes more than cleaning to maintain a building and Bergen continues to work hard to keep Bergen in tip-top shape. The most recent update has been the kitchen. With new flooring and some new paint, a wonderful modern kitchen continues to be the center of coffee hours, potluck dinners, waffle suppers, and much more; a true center of God's mission at Bergen.



The Bell

"I to the Church the Living call and to the grave Do Summon All."

(Inscription on the church bell.)



The bell is also inscribed with the information about where it was made and who it was given by. The bell was cast by Stuckstede and Bro. of St. Louis, Missouri in 1926. It was presented to Bergen Norwegian Lutheran Congregation, Stony Run Township, Yellow Medicine County, Minnesota by the Women's Society 1885-1901-1926.

Due to a unique issue with the structure and placement of bell, leaking through the roof was a continual issue, and the decision was made to place the bell out of commission around 1990. However, for the 150th Celebration members came together to hear the bell chime again.



In the picture by bell, you will see Dave Kvam and Adam Isaacs working to put the bell back into commission.

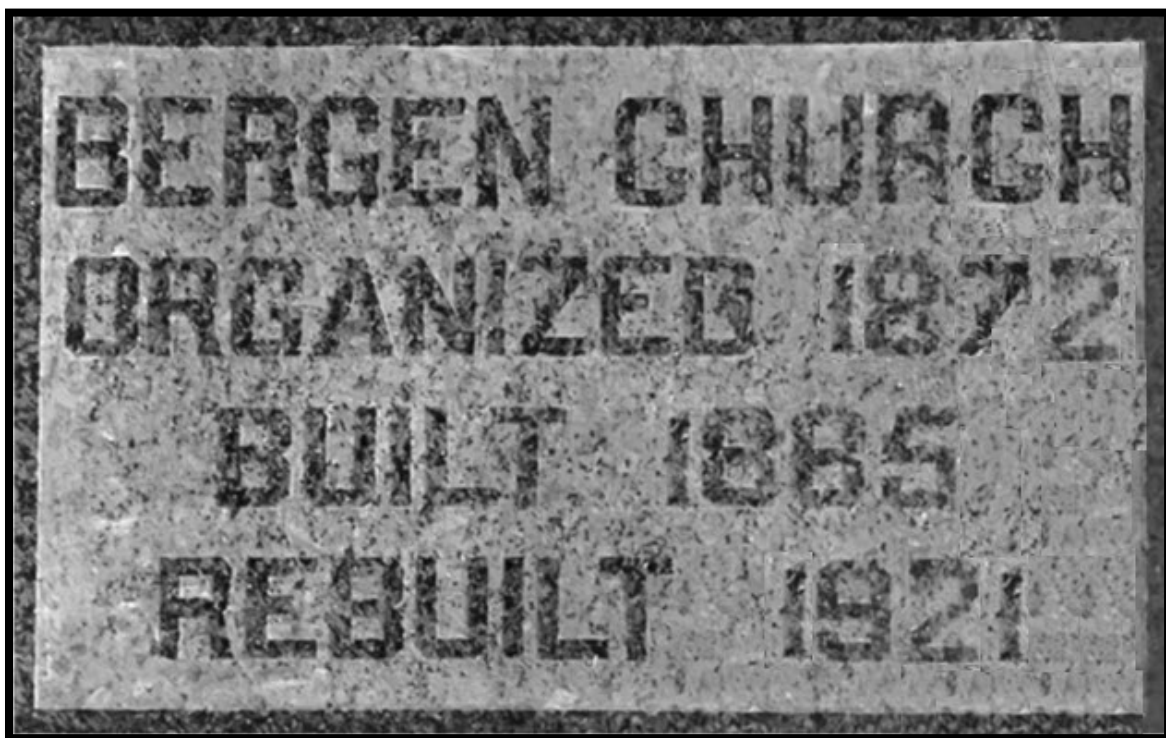
[Click here to hear the bell chime for the first time in over 30 years.](#) Listen carefully in the beginning as she groans and cries coming back to life. But soon, she rings over the fields again, calling out to proclaim Bergen's mission on the prairie.

In the lower right picture, Larry Danielson, Adam Issacs, and Dave Kvam diligently work to get the bell working again.



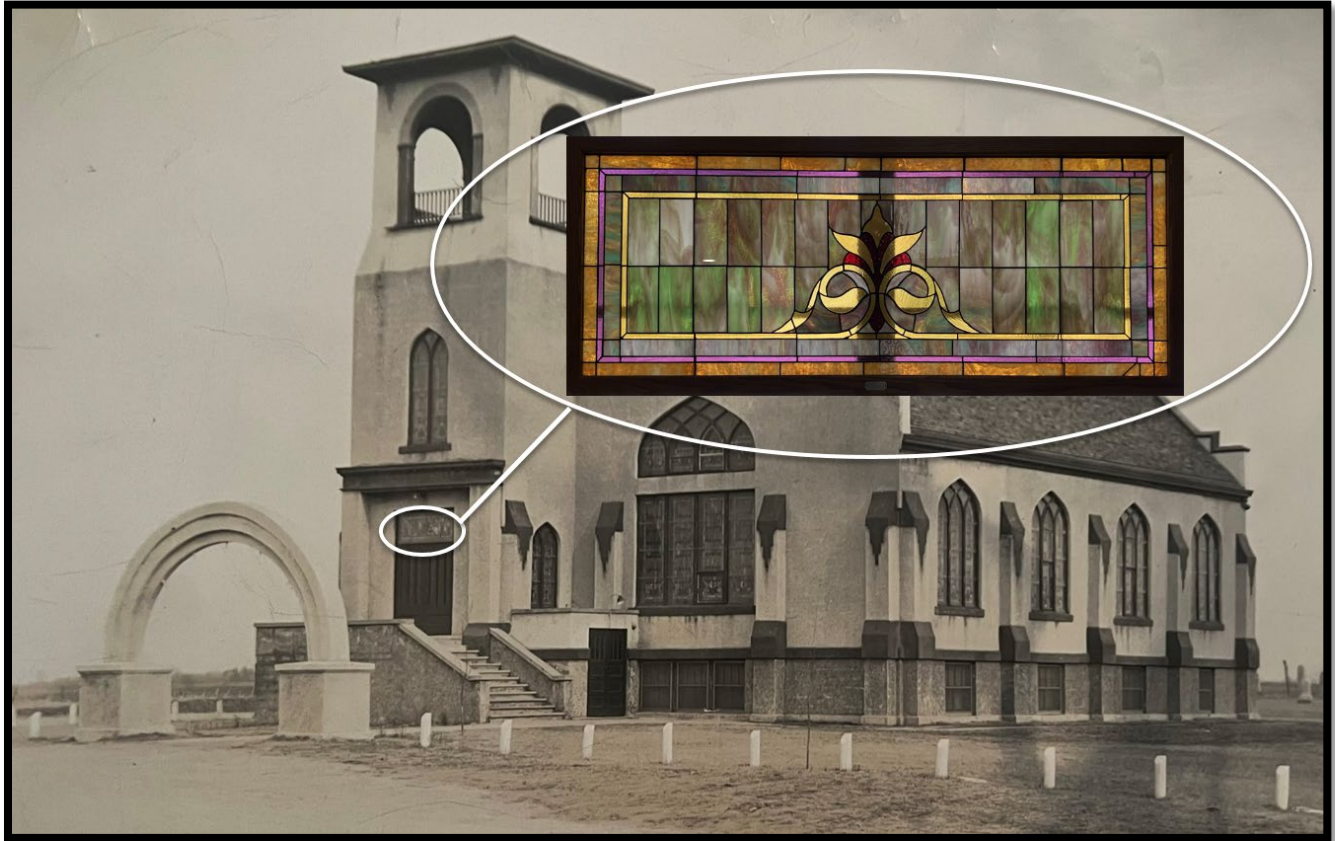
The Cornerstone

On June 11, 1922, the Bergen congregation celebrated its 50th anniversary and the laying of the cornerstone. This is the cornerstone from 1921 when the church was rebuilt. When the new front of the church was added, this cornerstone that was built into the outside wall was uniquely displayed on the interior of the new addition in its original location.



Bergen Lutheran Church rebuilt in 1921.

The Stained Glass Story



In the early 2000s, members were looking through the attic space above the balcony and found the original stained-glass window that had been above the entry doors prior to the new entry being added. Peggy Danielson and Cindy Skulstad worked with local stained-glass teacher and restorer Helen Anderson, to fully restore the window. The window was taken apart, cleaned and re-leaded and put back together. It is now preserved for future generations. This currently hangs on the window prior to entering the sanctuary.



Bergen Sunday School

By Kimberly Kvam

Edited from *125 Years Rooted in God's Grace* (1997)

Sunday School in Bergen was organized in 1930 by Rev. Haugland with the help of Bertha Rosetter. Some of the first teachers were: Mrs. Walter Wilson, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Swang, Mrs. Norman Hagen, Mrs. Alf Ringsven, Mrs. Carl Haydenfelt, Amanda Larson, Mrs. Gust Christopherson and Mr. Monroe Rachie. Several young people from the Bible class were also recruited to help.

At the outset each pupil bought their own Sunday School Book at a cost of 35 cents. The graded Sunday School series was used. Each child also brought one penny each Sunday plus birthday money when it occurred and this money was sent to missions. Curriculums changed over the years; those used in 1997 were David C. Cook and Augsburg Fortress. The children continued to bring offering money and birthday money.

Vacation Bible School was started a number of years ago and this has been carried on each summer. In 1997 Bergen Sunday School paired up with Clarkfield Lutheran Sunday School for VBS led by the Green Lake Bible Camp counselors. Jeanie Anderson was the music director for a number of years and adeptly led the Sunday School choir in singing at the Christmas programs and on the third Sunday of each month during worship.

Among those who have served as Sunday School superintendents were: Mrs. Carl Haydenfelt, Mrs. Emma Ness Johnson, Mrs. Clifford Lynne, Mrs. Ervin Weckwerth, Mrs. Wilburn Hokuf, Mrs. Gerhard Kittelson, Mrs. Andrew Danielson, Mrs. Earl Stueland, Alton Isaacs, Gilmore Larson, Mrs. Robert Heimark, Mrs. Ronald Halvorson, Richard Rosetter, David Lundy, Marcie Augeson and Cindy Skulstad. Since 1991 there has not been a Superintendent, rather, the Board of Education shares in these duties.

In 1997 there were around 35 children in Sunday School Pre-K to 9th grade.

1997 to Present Day

By Kim Kvam

There have been many teachers and helpers over the 92 years since Sunday School at Bergen began. Sunday School, Christmas programs and VBS continued over the years as class sizes became smaller and fewer teachers and Board of Education members were needed.

By 2002, there were 6 children ages Pre-K -6th grade coming to Sunday School. Teachers began to use a group approach for teaching. Starting in 2005-2015, Healing Waters Parish had group VBS each summer. Small group Sunday School continued through 2007 at which time there weren't any more children attending. It was revived for a couple years, 2012-2013, with a few children.

Around 2015 a few families with young children started attending Bergen and Bergen welcomed them with open arms. Excitement was in the air with the thought of Bergen to be growing once again. In 2016 Adam and Krista Isaacs started Sunday School at Bergen twice a month with around 6-12 children attending. Summer picnics and VBS created more community spirit and excitement and the youth program continues to grow. A few more young families have joined and everyone loves the children's sermons and we're learning new songs to sing for our table prayer!

Presently, they (Adam and Krista) and Jenni Schuler are teaching 22 children beginning with children Pre-K through confirmation age! Children are given bibles at baptism, when they begin SS and at confirmation. First communion is given in the 3rd grade. Confirmation occurs in 7th-9th grade. The children (ages 3-15) go to Sunday School on the 2nd and last Sunday of each month.

In 2017 Bergen began their Vacation Bible School for 2 weekday evenings in July. Thirty-five children attended with 28 adults assisting with food, music, activities, arts and crafts and Bible lessons. Everyone there agreed God was at work with us. Children came from around the area to attend. The following two years were repeat successes with 2019 bringing even more children.



We are very blessed to have Adam and Krista who have a relentless vision of what Bergen can look like and whose enthusiasm and energy is shared by the kids; and to have Jenni Schuler, who has coordinated Christmas programs the last few years to everyone's delight. With the help of parents and everyone in the congregation's support we will continue to grow in God's love.

Kim Kvam, president of the congregation, wrote, "We are thankful for everyone who has given of their time and efforts to establish our Sunday School and continue its work."

Let the children come to me. Do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Luke 18:16



Bible School - Summer of 2021

Bergen Luther League - Bergen Youth

By Peggy Danielson

Reprinted from *125 Years Rooted in God's Grace (1997)*

A Young People's Society was organized in the Bergen Congregation while Pastor Ole Lokensgaard was pastor - about 1891 or 1892. This was something new and as there were very few similar organizations throughout the church body, this venture was looked upon with great suspicion by many of the old Christians in Bergen.

Pastor C. K. Solberg, then a very young man, was elected as the first president. He, together with the young people of the congregation saw to it that good religious programs with recitations and much singing were given at each meeting, and as a rule, talks by the pastor or a neighboring pastor. Gradually the Young People's Society was accepted by the congregation as a good addition for youth worship in the church.

Eventually the name "Young People's Society" was changed to the Bergen Luther League, and in 1959 Bergen and Hazel Run Leagues began meeting together with one meeting each month.

Since 1988 Bergen Luther League has been on its own. Each September the Bergen Luther League held an organizational meeting, elected officers and planned the year's schedule. Events scheduled usually included the bazaar and bake sale during the Men's Waffle Supper, Card Sales, Christmas caroling at the nursing home followed by the Luther League Christmas party at Bergen. Other events included the LL Ham Dinner, Palm Sunday Brunch and serving coffee before many church services.

The Bergen Luther League continued the tradition of attending the National Convention. In July, 1997 ten Bergen girls and two chaperones traveled to New Orleans to attend the convention.

Peggy and Larry Danielson were the Bergen counselors in 1997. With the help and cooperation for the youth, parents and congregation, the Bergen Luther league continued to flourish.

1997 to Present Day

By Kim Kvam

Bergen Luther League remained active with parents as leaders as long as there were kids. They continued with service and fund-raising projects of ice cream socials, bazaar and bake sale, Chili Supper, putting up the Christmas tree, visiting nursing homes to play games with the residents, Palm Sunday Brunch and serving coffee.

They attended national conventions in St. Louis, San Antonio, and New Orleans. Confirmation was held with Augustana until 2005 when joint confirmation began

with Healing Waters Parish. Also, in 2002 Bergen youth joined Fellowship of Lutheran Youth (FLY), a joint youth league with area churches, that planned at least 4 events throughout the year. Kids and pastor and adult chaperones went to the BWCA in 2007 for a memorable trip. In 2012 there was one child left in Bergen Luther League.

In 2017, Adam and Krista Isaacs began having some youth events again. Children ages 10 and over have had sleepovers and lock-ins at church and served breakfast to the congregation before church the following morning and have also camped out at Bergen overnight. They've also had a hayride with area youth groups, went bowling, swimming and movie nights. Their service projects have included making up First Aid Kits for the food shelf and gathering water and snacks to distribute to the area farmers during harvest. Currently there are five girls from Bergen in confirmation.

The youth are active in Bergen life - they help with serving food, handing out bulletins, and assisting Vicar Mort with various projects and activities. We are blessed at Bergen worship these days which feels lively and warm and spiritual.



← Bergen Youth after distributing water and snacks to area farmers during harvest. (October 10, 2021) Lara Krueger, Karl Krueger, Autumn Best, Kaitlynn Schuler, Allison Isaacs, Janie Miller.

Caroling in Clarkfield for → confirmation. Front: Kaitlynn Schuler, Janie Miller. Back: Kendall Kruger (Augustana), Autumn Best, Allison Isaacs.



God's Mission on the Prairie

By Vicar Mort Meyenburg for Luther Seminary course "God's Mission – Biblical and Theological Explorations." Bergen historical facts taken from Monroe Rachie's writing in *Our First 100 Years Under God's Grace* (1972).

Part 1 - Under God's Grace

Chapter 1 - 1858 - 1866 God's Restless Prairie Spirit

There was the Spirit of God that blew over the land of southwestern Minnesota. It was a forming Spirit. A Spirit that not only helped organize the Norwegian Evangelical Church in America, commonly known as the Norwegian Synod in 1853, but also helped Minnesota organize as the 32nd state in 1858. As a new state, Minnesota named their first governor, Henry Sibley.

About 1866, Norwegian emigrants from southeastern Minnesota began making their way in covered wagons pulled by oxen loaded with all their possessions to southwestern Minnesota. The first homes were dugouts and sod huts, with only a few log cabins the first winter. Not many roads existed, and Willmar, 60 miles away, was the nearest marketplace.

In 1868, the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's name was changed to the Synod for the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America commonly called the Norwegian Synod. God's mission in the pioneers of the United States was at work.

Chapter 2 - 1867-1875

Not long after the Norwegian settlers started setting up their homes, Yellow Medicine County was established by the Minnesota legislature in 1872. Granite Falls was named as the county seat. The name Yellow Medicine comes from the Yellow Medicine River, which runs through the eastern part of the county to the Minnesota River. The river was named after yellow rooted plants, the local Indigenous Natives used for medicinal purposes.

1872 was a big year for the Norwegian settlers. The Norwegian Synod was a co-founder of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America along with the Missouri, Wisconsin, and Ohio synods. The Holy Spirit was stirring the congregational winds.

As the story of Bergen goes, one morning in May of 1872, K. E. Neste traveled to Willmar one morning to get supplies for his general store in Stony Run Township, located in Yellow Medicine County. He met Reverend L. J. Marcus, a pastor at Norway Lake near Willmar. Neste convinced Marcus to come to Stony Run the next day because there were many Norwegians without a church. The next day they left, not getting to Stony Run until midnight, but the message was put out that church would be at 10:00 o'clock in the morning at the Hoialman family cabin as that was the largest building in the community. Getting the message out meant that men went from cabin to cabin most of the night so that at 10:00 o'clock the next morning the farmyard was filled with wagons, horses, oxen, and the cabin

overflowed with people. It wasn't uncommon for meetings to be set up quickly by word of mouth using the message, "A pastor has come and now you must all come to services right away." This happened any day of the week and anytime of the day. No matter how busy they were or how inconvenient the timing was, when a pastor happened to come by, these forefathers always made time to worship.

The service that Reverend Marcus held caused the Norwegian immigrants to want what they missed the most from their homeland: the ringing of church bells, the singing of hymns, the preaching of the gospel, and sharing of the sacraments. The next day after Reverend Marcus' service, many of those same people got together and made a decision. On May 13th, 1872, Bergen Lutheran Church of Stony Run Township in Yellow Medicine County was organized. The congregation grew quickly as new settlers moved in and joined. With no building large enough they decided to build their first church. They built a meeting house 12 feet by 20 feet and 7 feet high which acted as the worship place for two years. Quickly that became too small, so they planned a new building 56 feet by 40 feet by 20 feet high. At an annual meeting in 1874, they decided their planned building would be too large and they reduced it to 32 feet by 24 feet by 12 feet high. Strangely, that building was never finished but it was used as a meeting place until 1885.

Chapter 3 - 1872-1892 God's Shared Prairie Mission

From 1872-1874, Bergen shared a rostered pastor with Immanuel Lutheran near the town of Watson, about 20 miles northwest of the Bergen area. From 1874-1881, they shared a rostered pastor with Yellow Medicine Lutheran Church near Hanley Falls, about 16 miles southeast of Bergen. Then from 1881-1907, a pastor was shared with United Lutheran in Granite Falls, about 11 miles southeast.

The 1880's were a time of inventions, growth, and changes. The telephone communication started around the Minneapolis and St. Paul area. Around Bergen, something else was awakening. In 1884, the women of Bergen church organized Ladies Aid. By the summer of 1885, a new church building 60 feet by 38 feet by 22 feet high was built and the congregation joined the Norwegian Synod that year.

The Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America along with the Missouri, Wisconsin, and Ohio synods were having theological issues, mostly concerning the beliefs of predestination. In 1883, a group challenging the predestination theology, pulled out and called themselves the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood. The Bergen congregation withdrew from the Norwegian Synod and joined the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood in 1888. By 1890, the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood was largely responsible for organizing the United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.

All the changes on church theology caused friction at Bergen and in 1892, 12 families withdrew from Bergen and organized the Stony Run and Lisbon township congregation and joined the Norwegian Senate. In addition, the Camp Release Church was started which, with Bergen, made three Norwegian churches within one mile in Yellow Medicine County.

Chapter 4 - 1893-1919 Growing God's Mission

Its 1893, Minnesota was now 35 years old, and the first Minnesota state flag was accepted by the Minnesota Legislature. More than just the state was starting to organize, as in 1898, Bergen's first choir was organized and from 1907 to 1940, Bergen shared a pastor with Hazel Run and Stony Run Lutheran Churches, both within nine miles.

In 1912, narrowing the miles needed to travel, the Ladies Aid divided their Bergen membership into two groups, from the east and the west. In 1917, the United Norwegian Lutheran Church helped to organize the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. It was about this time many congregations were engaged in doctrinal controversies, namely layman's activities and predestination controversies, and, according to minutes from the Bergen files, the congregation had many meetings about these topics, as well as parochial school and the liquor tariff. The Bergen members' main concern was that the church would be available as a great blessing for future generations. With the greater church decisions based on the Austin Agreement of 1916, the United Church, the Hauge Synod, and the Norwegian Synod merged to become the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America in 1917.

Chapter 5 - 1920-1939 Building a Fellowship in God's Mission

The 1920's started rough for Bergen, lightning struck in 1920 and the fire destroyed everything. By 1921, the congregation bought a church building one mile east of Bergen to hold worship temporarily. That church building had been owned by the 12 families who had withdrawn from the Bergen congregation in 1892 to form a congregation of their own. Sick of fire damage, it was decided to construct a new church building of cement blocks and stucco in summer of 1920. The blocks were made at the location where the church was being built. The men of the congregation, a true fellowship of believers, used horses and wagons and hauled gravel 4 ½ miles. According to their history notes, the loading of the gravel by hand and the trip was all that one wagon could make in a day. But by the spring of 1922, the services were able to be held in the new church basement. The temporary church they were using was torn down and the altar, pulpit, baptismal font, pews, and organ were used in the new sanctuary. The cornerstone was laid which is still prominently displayed in the church. In June of 1922, Bergen celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Through much debate, in 1922 church services were split every other Sunday between the Norwegian and English language.

In a business meeting of Bergen in 1932, they voted to discontinue the old-world custom of Klokker. A Klokker was a lay pastoral assistant that led song and prayers as well as a number of other duties. Klokker can be translated into section, parish clerk, bellringer, deacon, pastoral assistant, reader, singer, and even the one that put up hymn numbers. It wasn't until 1936, that the meeting and secretary notes changed to English. And by the late 1930s the Norwegian speaking services were offered only once every two months. By this time, automobiles had been around

the area for about 10 years, certainly bringing changes to the small Norwegian community.

Chapter 6 - 1940-1949 God's Mission of the Church Building

Starting in 1940 (and continuing through 1988), Bergen shared a pastor with Hazel Run Lutheran about nine miles away. In 1942, Bergen celebrated their 70-year anniversary, and it was noted they served 500 for the noon lunch and 300 for the evening meal. But again, in 1942, a severe damaging windstorm struck the building, it was used until it was condemned, then the congregation used the Camp Release Church a mile down the road, until the building could be repaired.

In 1946, the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America changed its name to the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Modernization was coming from all directions in 1948 when Minnesota's first television station, KSTP, goes on the air. It won't be long and national and local news will be in the homes of the Bergen members. And in 1949, with communication and travel much easier, the Bergen Ladies Aid from the east and west reunited. Then one tradition stopped forever, in the late 1940's, the last Norwegian services were held at Bergen Lutheran Church.

Part 2 - Rooted in God's Grace

Chapter 7-1950-1969 God's Mission in the Community

Bergen grew and added a new organ for the ever-important worship services in 1950. In 1960, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, through a series of mergers, became part of the American Lutheran Church, lovingly called the ALC. Also, the women of Bergen started women's circles in their Ladies Aid. Three of these circles met in the afternoon and two in the evening.

In 1960, the Camp Release Lutheran Free Church disbanded. And in 1961, the Bergen members started planning to build an addition to provide Sunday School rooms and enclose the front steps with a large entry to protect everyone from the prairie winds. In 1962, Bergen celebrated their 90th anniversary. Then in 1967, Stony Run Lutheran Church closed and seven families from this church and Camp Release Church rejoined Bergen, leaving Bergen the only Norwegian Church in that one-mile area.

Chapter 8 - 1970-2002 Resting in God's Mission

Across the United States a lot was happening, in 1970 the first women pastors were ordained in both the ALC and the LCA. In 1972, Bergen celebrated their 100th anniversary with a large festive event. Then in 1988, the American Lutheran Church, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the Lutheran Church in America joined to form the ELCA. And for the first time, from 1988 to 1992, Bergen had their own pastor, not shared with anyone until they teamed up again in 1992 until 2003 with Augustana and Swede Home Lutheran Churches of Clarkfield about 10 miles away.

Chapter 9 - 2003 - 2006 A New Vision to Sustain God's Mission

By 2003, churches in the rural Minnesota area were having a tough time finding pastors they could afford for such small congregations. Hoping to find a new solution for rural ministry, seven small congregations (Augustana, Bergen, Swede Home, Yellow Medicine, Israel, St. Lucas and Hazel Run) voted to form Healing Waters Parish.

The joint effort started with many meetings of representatives from each church, an agreement was written, voted on and the new Healing Waters Parish was commissioned to be a vessel of God's Mission on the prairie lands of southwestern Minnesota. In 2004, the first pastor was called for the 7-congregation parish. Then in 2005, a husband-and-wife pastor team was called, completing their need for three pastors for 7 congregations.

Chapter 10 - 2007 - 2020 Refocusing God's Mission

The next 13 years were full of change. Bergen stayed with Healing Waters Parish (HWP) working to stay focused on God's Mission. In 2007, Israel Lutheran Church closed, leaving six congregations in HWP.

In 2010, shortly after the 2009 Churchwide Assembly vote on human sexuality, Hazel Run Lutheran Church left HWP and became a member of the LCMC. This left five churches in HWP. In 2011, one pastor left so they were down to two pastors for five congregations. Then in 2012, the husband-and-wife pastor team left, and the parish used interim, part-time retired pastors and pulpit supply to continue their worshiping services.

In 2013, a woman became Presiding Bishop of the ELCA for the first time. And in 2014, another husband-wife pastor team was called. Swede Home Lutheran closed in 2016 and then there were four congregations in HWP with two pastors until 2017 when the husband-wife pastor team left. In 2018, Yellow Medicine Lutheran Church left the parish to be on their own, leaving three congregations, Augustana, Bergen and St. Lucas an. There were no full-time pastors, only retired pastors, and pulpit supply.

In August of 2019, HWP contracted with a Wartburg seminary student to be her context for internship. With the intern and pulpit supply, the parish pushed through. Then COVID-19 hit. In July of 2020, the internship had completed and the SWMN Synod authorized a Luther Seminary student as Vicar of the Healing Waters Parish.

Part 3 - Growing in God's Grace

Chapter 11 - 2020 Future - Listen God is Calling us to Mission

I am the Vicar of Healing Waters Parish. I've been in this ministry since August of 2020 as the assigned and synod authorized minister for the parish. As Peterson wrote in her book, *Who Is the Church*, "mission is central to the church's identity and nature because the church has been called into being by a 'missional' God."¹

¹ Peterson, Cheryl M. "Who Is the Church?" (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 84.

Through this rich history of Bergen Lutheran Church, I can see the congregation being led by a missional God. Through all the barriers, all the issues and problems over the years, this congregation continues to thrive.

The people of Bergen don't spend time worrying whether they are doing God's mission because they believe they are doing what they are called to do. This is the friendliest community of people, they get an idea, and they run. This is truly how the Holy Spirit works in and through each person at Bergen to be an important part of God's mission

In 1872, it wasn't called church planting, but that is what these Norwegian settlers did, they came, and they started a congregation because of the need for them to carry on their beliefs as well as customs and traditions of the homeland. They had the right reasons for planting a church in the mission field as Bosch says, "The young churches 'planted' on the 'mission fields' were replicas of the churches on the mission agency's 'home front,' 'blessed' with all the paraphernalia of those churches, everything from harmoniums to archdeacons."² These members carry on this rich tradition today, all in order to bring the message of the gospel to a community of believers, in and outside of the walls of the church building.

I like what Bosch says, "Clinging to yesterday's images provides solace, but little else. And artificial respiration will yield little beyond the semblance of returning life. Neither does the solution lie in embarrassing the values of the contemporary world and attempting to respond to whatever a particular individual or group chooses to call mission. Rather, we require a new vision to break out of the present stalemate toward a different kind of missionary involvement which need not mean jettisoning everything generations of Christians have done before us or haughty condemnations of all their blunders."³ It's this kind of vision that is currently breaking out at Bergen because they have learned so much about their past through their careful care of their history, their building, and their people. Bergen is ready to move forward, ready to see what God's mission is for them as they invite neighbors, bring food to members, call, care and pray for each other and all the community.

Going forward I see Bergen being leaders in their community, strengthening their members by increasing community events that are fun and full of the saving grace of Christ. I see Bergen working hard to help each child in their midst to be part of something bigger in the body of Christ; working to help kids understand the fun and joy in being in a fellowship of Christian believers. I have no doubt that Bergen will continue to do God's mission by continuing to care so much for all God's children, and all of God's creation, just as they have for 150 years as the Holy Spirit has called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified them through the Gospel to be the body of Christ.

² Bosch, David J. "Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission" (Orbis Books, 2018), 5.

³ Bosch, "Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission", 7-8.

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