



Bethel Lutheran Church Rochester Minnesota

The First 150 Years

Second Edition

July 30, 2023

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Bethel Member since 1965

Introduction to First Edition

This history was prepared in connection with the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the Bethel Lutheran congregation in Rochester, Minnesota. Original sources for information have been used whenever possible.

The previous histories of Bethel congregation have no citations for the information that is presented. In most cases, I have been able to find a source that confirms the information in the previous history, but at times I have not, and in some cases, the information I find does not agree with that in the history. I have noted those instances in the end notes.

The bibliography in the back of this history contains a list of sources used and the following endnotes contain citations that support information in the history. Since this document is not intended for academic publication, the notations in the bibliography and the end notes are not formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style. The source of the citations should however be clear so an interested person can find them.

From the very beginning in 1869 the history of Bethel is well documented. When the Lutheran Free Church merged with the American Lutheran Church in 1963, the church records to that date were microfilmed and are kept in Dubuque, Iowa. These records were available when the 1922 anonymous history was written since they are mentioned in that document. All later histories use the 1922 information and add very little for the period before 1922. The 1922 Bethel constitution mentions the secretary's book of 1869 that is among the missing records.

When writing a history of this complexity, choices need to be made regarding what parts of the story can be included in a reasonable length document. I have chosen to focus on the pastors and to a lesser degree the lay staff over the 150 years of Bethel's existence as well as the decisions of the governing bodies of the church, i.e., the deacons, the trustees, the church council, and finally the facilities used by the church.

Some of the activities of church committees and special groups of people are described within the body of the text. Groups whose work covers a span of years appear in the appendices to better focus on their story. The choice to include some groups within the church and not others was somewhat related to my familiarity with their work. That does not mean that those that were not included are not an important part of the Bethel mission. Hopefully, my choices of what to feature and what is left out will not upset anyone.

Introduction to Second Edition

The first edition of this history was written without the benefit of information from parts of the original documents that are handwritten in Norwegian as the translation could not be completed in time for the 150-year celebration festivities. Since then, two things have happened that provide more information for the early parts of this history. First, the 1869 secretary's book which contains congregational meeting minutes from 1869 to 1887 was found in a display case in the narthex and secondly, the translation of it and various other documents in Norwegian has been completed. These documents include the 1869 to 1887 Congregational meeting minutes, the 1888 to 1917 Congregational meeting minutes, the 1875 Bethel record book, the 1891 Bethel record book, and the 1916 Bethel record book. The congregational meeting minutes give a good view of congregation decisions made throughout this time period. Some of the secretaries provide very complete notes so that the reasons for the decisions are clear while others merely state what is decided without background information. The Bethel record books contain information on baptisms, confirmations, funerals, marriages, communion dates, and attendance. In addition, a membership list is included. Lastly there is a record of pastoral acts which give dates of services, meetings, etc. often with a notation of whether the event was conducted in English or Norwegian.

These documents have added significant information regarding the activities of Bethel in the years from 1869 to 1919 when the use of the Norwegian language in the records ended. In some cases, this information has changed the interpretation of events included in the first edition of this history. The majority of these changes and additions have been made to Chapter 1 of the history and are noted either in the body of the history or in the end notes. A new Appendix 1 contains some inferences based on an article in the publication of the 1875 Norwegian Synod combined with other sources. All records beyond 1919 are in English.

Additionally, more staff pictures beginning in 1960 have been discovered in the Bethel archives that add to the history.

Some things that have happened in the time from fall 2019 to the present have been added to the history to bring it up to date. Those events include the retirement of Pastor Wahl and the call of a new administrative pastor and the changes in pastoral duties that went along with it. Some of the other pastoral changes since 2019 and important congregational decisions are also included. This information has been summarized at the end of chapter 6 and in a new chapter 7 to bring the history up to date. Information regarding Bethel's response to the corona virus from March 2020 through Easter 2023 are included in Appendix 12 of the history to make this a continuous story rather than spreading it throughout Chapters 6 and 7.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Pastor Norman Wahl for his willingness to fill me in on church practices today and his understanding of what happened in the past. He has been a great source of information and has been able to point me to other sources when he was unsure of the answers to my many questions. Both he and Pastor Jason Burggraff have freely loaned books on Lutheran church history that have been useful. Also, Pastor Anjanette Bandel was helpful filling in material not in the records and explaining how some of the other records connect to the various committees.

Bethel Staff members Janet Hoffmann, Connie Post, Sylvia Ramaker, and Cheri Brinson in the church office have helped me find material, copy material, and sent copies to me when needed. Susan Larson, Terra O'Brien, Brock Besse, Julie Allhiser, Tyler Schoenrock, and Gary Thorn provided information regarding their personal backgrounds and area of service at Bethel. Connie and Terra have also listened patiently to my suggestions for records retention in the future – and acted on some of them. Bethel members June Hain, Donna Anderson, and Diane Vogt have provided material that they have saved over the years they have been members of Bethel. Thanks to all of you for your assistance.

Much of the material in the first three record books covering 1875 to 1919 is in Norwegian. Many thanks are due to Hanne Lucier, Synneva Hicks, and Berit Oviatt for their translations. This has not been easy as the material is handwritten and sometimes hard to read in addition to being 100-year-old Norwegian. Their translations have been placed with the appropriate record books and in a separate bound book so future investigators will not need to repeat the translation process. Special thanks to Hanne for her willingness to answer my many questions. Also, thanks to the Adult Education and Endowment teams for providing funds for translation.

Krista Lewis at the Olmsted County History center gave me assistance identifying and locating information in their records and instructed me how to run the microfilm machine. Microfilm research is a detested, but necessary part of research on a project like this. Newspaper stories, Census information, Rochester directories, and maps are only a few of the many resources that are available at the History center.

Jim Deutschle helped provide genealogical information to find the names of some of our Pastors wives and their families and in many cases where they had been prior to coming to Bethel and where they went afterwards. This has been useful to provide a more complete story of the early Bethel Pastors.

My wife, Linda, helped proof reading and correcting grammatical errors as well as making some of the paragraphs more readable and understandable. She has also provided information on activities in which she has participated, particularly Social Missions. She has been very patient with the time I have spent reviewing documents for this history. Finally, thanks to Cindy Bahler and the 150 Anniversary Committee for allowing me to write this history. It has been an interesting and fun project.

Bill Bakken

August 11, 2019

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Bethel Pastors¹

<u>Pastor</u>	<u>Years of service</u>
Nels Jensen	1869 to 1871
Ole Amundsen	1871 to 1874
Gerhard Gjertsen	1874 to 1882
John Blegen	1883 to 1885
Rasmus Andersen	1886 to 1894
Hans Urseth	1895 to 1899
Olaf Flagstad	1899 to 1903
Asmund Oftedal	1904 to 1911
Louis Hanson	1911 to 1913
John Rodvik	1915 to 1919
Morris Vaagenes (Interum)	1919
Elmer Huset	1919 to 1920
Arthur Hansen	1920 to 1960
James Peterson	1953 to 1955 and 1958 to 1959
Morris Johnson	1955 to 1957
Donald Helland	1957
Erling Tungseth	1960 to 1972
Philip Heide	1961 to 1963
John Serkland	1963 to 1966
Earl Dreyer	1964 to 1973
Roger Stensaas	1966 to 1973
Arthur Bagaason	1973 to 1986
Paul Baker	1973 to 1977
John Quello	1974 to 1978
John Freidli	1977 to 1996
John Hinderlie	1978 to 1983
Donald Deines	1979 to 1987
Rolf Torgerson-Bell	1983 to 1987
John Braaten	1986 to 1994
Robert Onkka	1987 to 2009
Gary Dreier	1988 to 1992
Mary Sue Dreier	1988 to 1992
Mark Granquist	1988 to 1992
Linda Helberg	1993 to 2007 and 2013 to present
Norman Wahl	1996 to 2020
Julie Rogness	1997 to 2002
Paul Hauschild	2002 to 2008
Anjanette Bandel	2008 to present
Andrew Nelson	2009 to 2012
Roy Satre	2009 to 2013
Jason Burggraff	2012 to 2022
Nathan Luong	2021 to 2021
Lisa Hawe	2022 to present

Bethel Mission Statement

We, the Bethel Congregation, called by God, commit ourselves:

- to proclaim the Gospel,
- to prepare our members for outreach and service, and
- to minister to human needs.

Bethel Vision Statement

Bethel Lutheran Church will stand as a Lutheran and Christian leader in this community by being:

- a vibrant place of worship;
- a caring institution utilizing its many resources of people, facilities, and finances to serve members, the community, and interdependent expressions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;
- a place to nurture and educate; and
- an interpreter and supporter of global mission.

Bethel Core Values

- Jesus is Lord of all; Christ is at the center of all Bethel's ministry and proclamation.
- Corporate worship is Bethel's highest commitment and will be expressed by sharing the faith with others throughout the week.
- God's people of Bethel are called to serve family, church, community, and world through continuous outreach and mission.
- Bethel will model a godly way of life for our members and society, including, but not limited to a life of integrity, honesty, commitment, and loyalty.
- Bethel will be good stewards of our time, talent, and resources in serving members and the community.
- Bethel will nurture the entire congregation through education and building up of the family unit.
- Bethel will be a source of comfort to those who suffer, mourn, or are in distress.

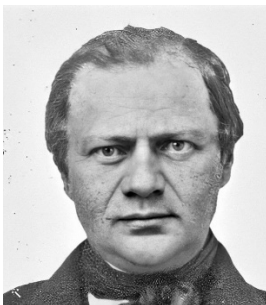
Chapter 1 Bethel's Early Years, 1869 to 1920

The city of Rochester was founded in 1854 by George Head at a stagecoach stop between St Paul and Dubuque. The city had a population of about 3,700 people in 1869. Olmsted County was established by the Territorial Legislature in 1855 and the State of Minnesota entered the union in 1858.



City of Rochester in 1869

When Bethel Lutheran Church was formed in 1869 there were at least two other Lutheran churches in the city, present day Trinity and Zumbro Lutheran congregations, along with Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, Universalist, and Catholic churches. Trinity Lutheran was a German Lutheran church now associated with the Missouri synod and Zumbro Lutheran, then called Evangelical Lutheran Synod church, was a Scandinavian high church congregation that many new settlers distrusted because of their past experiences with the Church of Norway. Appendix 1 shows that there had been some efforts among Rochester Scandinavians to affiliate with a pastor they trusted prior to Bethel's formal organization.



Nels E. S. Jensen
1869-1871²

On Tuesday, May 11, 1869, a group of Scandinavians held an organizational meeting to form a new Norwegian-Lutheran congregation. Andrew Nelson was chairman and Theodore Seeman acted as secretary of this meeting. Reverend Nels Jensen was called to preach every third Sunday at a salary of \$150 to \$200 per year.³ At this time, the pastor's salary was paid quarterly.⁴ Reverend Jensen received his theological training in Norway before he immigrated to the United States in 1859. Prior to coming to Rochester, he served congregations at Highland Prairie, Elstad, Rushford, and Houston. He preached his

last sermon for these churches May 17, 1869.⁵

A committee composed of T. Seeman, G. Hammer, and Marius Listoe was chosen on June 14, 1869, to draw up a constitution for the new organization. The original constitution was presented on August 2 when forty-nine people signed the document. Two hundred and fifty-four dollars and fifty cents were collected to support the church.⁶

They named their church, “Rochester Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation.”⁷ When the congregation first appeared in the Rochester Post church directory in January 1871, the church was called First Scandinavian Lutheran Church.⁸

Although the constitution was presented to the congregation in Norwegian on Aug. 2, 1869, a translation into “the American language” was prepared by Pastor Jensen and filed with the incorporation papers of the congregation at the courthouse.⁹ The congregation was officially incorporated on February 17, 1871.¹⁰

At the time of the 1870 census, Reverend Jensen lived with his family in Houston, Minnesota. Pastor Jensen and his wife, Hanna, had five children between the ages of one and ten at that time. Pastor Jensen’s sister Sina also lived with them. In 1870, he also accepted a call to serve St Peter’s Church in Houston.¹¹ Since Rochester is 65 miles from his home, one service every three weeks is reasonable as he could not travel there and still meet with his other church the same day.

The new church became associated with the Conference of Norwegian Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in a split from the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod in North America (SOS) in 1870.¹² Augsburg Seminary had been founded as a separate Norwegian institution in 1869 at Marshall, Wisconsin and was moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1872 as the seminary of the Norwegian Danish Conference. The reasons for the move were that Minneapolis was close to a major concentration of Scandinavian immigrants and the city offered land and financial assistance to the school.¹³

Bethel remained associated with Augsburg Seminary when the Lutheran Free Church formed in 1897 and continued in association until the 1963 merger with the American Lutheran Church when Augsburg and Luther Seminaries were merged.¹⁴

When the Rochester Baptist Congregation moved to their new location at Fourth and Franklin Streets in January 1871, Bethel purchased their old building.¹⁵ This purchase was authorized by the congregation at a meeting on January 6, 1871.¹⁶ The church building was located on a small elevation back of the Northern Hotel on Zumbro Street, present Second Street SE between Broadway and the Zumbro River.¹⁷ The sale paperwork was processed and notarized by two elected congregational officers, J. W. Emerson and P. Johnson, January 17, 1871.¹⁸ On January 24, 1871 the congregation authorized the purchase of a lock and two keys for the building.¹⁹

The decision to purchase the building was ratified at a second meeting held February 14, 1871 and six men were elected trustees of the organization. At the same meeting, the congregation

reorganized under the name “The First Norwegian Independent Lutheran Congregation in Rochester.”²⁰

Sometime during September 1871, the church was moved to Fifth Street, now Center Street, across from the Damon Hotel.²¹ See Appendix 4 for a description of the locations of Bethel from 1871 to 1957.

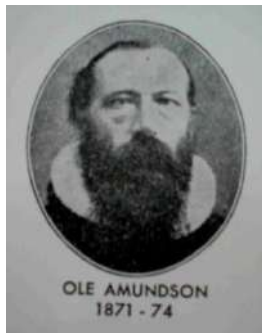


Bethel Clapboard church on 3rd Ave²²



Original Interior in 1911, Pastor Oftedal by the altar

By the spring of 1871 services were held every week.²³ A three-year call to Reverend Jensen was considered but rejected at a meeting October 8, 1871.²⁴ The reason may have been that Pastor Jensen was reluctant to increase the number of Sundays that the congregation could meet with him as he was also serving St. Peter’s Church in Houston.



When Pastor Jensen left in November 1871²⁵, Reverend Ole Amundson was called to serve Bethel for three years²⁶. Worship services were to be held every Sunday and Holy day and the letter of call included the requirement that he preach in the local dialect of the mother church in Norway. His initial salary was \$100 per year with three Sundays vacation each year. His salary was changed to \$400 in November 1872. This would indicate significant growth in the congregation in order to be able to pay that much more. At that same meeting, a bell ringer was

elected who was to ring the church bell on all Sundays and holidays with an annual salary of \$75.00 per year.²⁷

There seems to have been a problem in the congregation late in 1871, as on December 10, 1871, a special meeting was held where each congregation member was asked by Pastor Amundson if they wanted to continue being a member of the congregation. The result of this review is not recorded, but at the end of the meeting, Pastor Amundson announced the upcoming annual meeting and expressed the hope that all would be able to attend indicating that most of the people wished to continue their membership. In addition, a list of 27 people accepted as new members was created at the end of the meeting.²⁸

In January 1872, Pastor Amundsen obtained the approval of the congregation to preach one Sunday to a few Norwegian and Swedish farmers from Plainview.²⁹ Reverend Amundsen was well liked by the congregation “for his upright Christian deportment and superior ministerial qualification”. When his three-year call ended, Pastor Amundsen accepted a call to a church in Manistee, Michigan and he was presented with a gold watch in appreciation for his service. His last service at Bethel was in early May 1874. After he left, Bethel received pastoral support from Augsburg Professors Weenaas and Oftedal until a new pastor could be called.³⁰

Before Pastor Amundsen left, he suggested that the congregation call Mr. Jon Giverholdt from Christiana (Oslo Norway). At that time, it was moved that a meeting be called “with the other congregation” to see if a joint call could be agreed. This motion was defeated by a vote of 25 to 5.³¹ A letter of call was prepared after a meeting on March 28, 1874, but this was rescinded in August when they agreed to a temporary call to Mr. Gerhard Gjertsen for one year.³² According to the Church Bulletin in the Rochester Post newspaper, Reverend Gerhard Gjertsen held his first service at Bethel on September 13, 1874. He is described in the newspaper as “a young gentleman of fine education and superior ability and has a high reputation as a preacher in both the Norwegian and English languages.” Services at this time were held every other week as Pastor Gjertsen had another church that he met with in St. Paul.³³



He apparently made a good impression on the congregation as a letter of call dated November 11, 1874, was sent without stipulating a call period with an offer of an annual salary of \$600 with 3 annual holidays. The call was to begin at the 1875 Annual meeting.³⁴

Throughout 1875 and 1876 Pastor Gjertsen was assisted by his father, J. P. Gjertsen and early in 1876 by his brother M. Falk Gjertsen.³⁵

Reverend J. P. Gjertsen was located in Oshkosh, Wisconsin at the time and was a frequent visitor at Bethel. He and his wife appear in the Bethel communion record at least once in each of the years from 1875

to 1879.³⁶ Also during 1875, visits by Professors Oftedal and Gunnerson of Augsburg Seminary are mentioned. Professor Gunnerson preached at the Sunday service several times in 1875. Their visits suggest that Pastor Gjertsen's education had been associated with Augsburg in some way. There was certainly a family connection as in 1873, his brother Falk accompanied Augsburg Professor Weenaas during a trip to Norway in which Pastor Sven Oftedal was recruited to teach at the seminary. Augsburg had a theological program beginning at its inception in 1869 but did not formally graduate a seminary class until 1879.³⁷

The first service in English noted in the Bethel records was May 9, 1875 at a 7:30 P.M. Evening Service. Another was held June 19, the seventh Sunday after Trinity.³⁸ There are several Evening Services in the succeeding months that were in English. It appears that Pastor Gjertsen preached in English on an occasional basis throughout the year, primarily at evening services.³⁹

Pastor Gjertsen took his vacation during June as other pastors or sometimes Augsburg professors are noted as preachers during that time in both 1875 and 1876. He was also not listed as preaching in September 1876 when his Father J P Gjertsen officiated at all services.⁴⁰ It is at this time that the Ladies Aid first appears in the records.⁴¹

In October 1876, the property at Third and Prospect Streets (225 Third Street SW) was purchased for \$1,350 to be used as a parsonage. Prior to that time, the congregation had been renting a house for the pastor at a cost of \$200 per year.⁴² Reverend Gjertsen planted some trees on the lot in 1878. The \$16.50 cost of the trees was shared between the pastor and the congregation.⁴³

On January 9, 1877, the yearly church council meeting endorsed the “Konference.”⁴⁴ This would be the Norwegian-Danish Conference, a Lutheran church group which chose a theological position between the high church Norwegian Synod and the low church pietists. The Conference inherited Augsburg Seminary at its founding in 1870.⁴⁵ It is not clear from the records if this was the first official association with the Conference, or if it was just a choice reaffirmed at the 1877 meeting.

On May 28, 1879 Reverend Gjertsen married Elizabeth (Lizzy) Johnson, the daughter of P. F. Johnson a prominent member of Bethel Congregation.⁴⁶ Their marriage license was issued in Rochester and they were married by his father but do not appear on the Bethel marriage register. Perhaps they were married at the home of her parents. Their first child, Lina Louise, was born July 31, 1880 and she was baptized at Bethel on August 29, 1880.⁴⁷

Beginning in 1877 the communion record shows services were led by Bethel pastors at Long Creek, which is likely a country congregation near Millville, and also at Winona. In 1878 Kasson was added to the list. The last service at Kasson was in December 1878 and Winona in November 1879.⁴⁸ Long Creek continued to intermittently have communion services led by a Bethel pastor until May 1887.⁴⁹ The travel time between these congregations might explain why Pastor Gjertsen had the assistance of his father during those years. Bethel had about six communion services a year at this time, but most members only participated once a year or even less.

Reverend Gjertsen is last mentioned in a note in the pastoral record on February 12, 1882.⁵⁰ He had clearly given notice to the congregation earlier as there is discussion regarding pastor selection beginning with the December 13, 1881 congregational meeting.⁵¹ Since it was evident that it would take some time to find a new permanent pastor, in February 1882 the congregation voted to pay temporary pastors at a rate of \$14 per service.⁵² Both of the previous entries make it likely that the Gjertsen family left Rochester some time in February 1882.

Sunday school is first mentioned in the pastoral notes for April 25, 1875 along with an English service in the evening. It appears that the Sunday school was held on an irregular basis at this time.⁵³ A parochial school is mentioned the next year. The section 6 of the 1869 constitution called for all members to “contribute as according to ability ... to establish and support

congregational religious schools.”⁵⁴ Norwegian Lutherans, unlike the German Lutherans, generally preferred to send their children to the public schools rather than run their own congregational schools. A short summer parochial school was common to provide a time of more focused religious education which is likely the school mentioned in the records.⁵⁵

Bethel membership over the years is shown in Appendix 2. The membership record for 1875 shows 69 of the members on that date had joined the congregation in 1869. Church membership prior to 1920 is somewhat difficult to determine. A listing of the people who joined each year is available, but only the reason people left the congregation, not the dates. Thus, the membership numbers for the early period derived from those records are likely high. It is clear that there was significant growth during the time that Pastor Amundsen was at Bethel and that the growth continued during the first years after Reverend Gjertsen became pastor. A peak membership of about 260 can be estimated for this early period.⁵⁶

The last membership recorded in the 1875 book was in October 1890. At that time Bethel membership had declined to 178 people. Membership records at this time include adult members and their children.⁵⁷ A significant part of the loss seems to have happened in the late 1870's and early 1880's. The treasurer's report during that time period shows a significant reduction in income from congregational donations which are likely due to loss of membership. In response to that reduction, two things happened. First the pastor's annual salary was reduced from \$600 to \$500 in 1879 and finally to \$375 in 1881.⁵⁸ In order to have funds to pay the pastor and other church expenses, extra pledges for the pastor's salary were taken in some years and suppers and other fund-raising activities were used in others.⁵⁹ The yearly record of people leaving the congregation only covers the years from 1886 to 1890. During those years, 12 members died, and 35 members moved out of town, most of them to Washington State. However, new members were added to more than balance the losses. Appendix 2 Figure 1 shows Bethel membership trends from 1869 to 1921. These numbers are tentative based on the limitation of available records.

In September 1882, the church lot on Center Street was sold for \$180 and the church building was moved to a new location on Prospect Street, later 214 Third Ave SW, right next to the parsonage on Third Street SW. The cost of moving the church to its new location was \$600.⁶⁰ The congregation remained at that location for the next 75 years.



Reverend John Blegen was called to Bethel on June 4, 1882. It was not until January 1883 that it was announced that he had accepted the call.⁶¹ He was given until October 25, 1883 to begin service as he had planned to take a trip to Norway in the interval.⁶² Reverend Blegen is the first Bethel pastor to graduate from Augsburg Seminary under the Augsburg Plan of Education. Augsburg provided theological education from its beginnings in 1869, but the formal system was only adopted in 1876.⁶³ The first Augsburg seminarians were

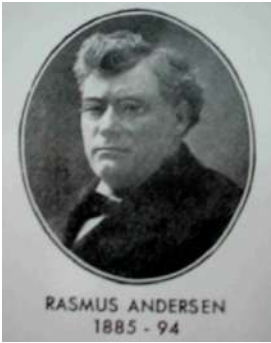
enrolled in 1874 and the first graduation was in 1879.⁶⁴ Prior to the founding of Augsburg some early Norwegian Lutheran church pastors were trained at the Missouri Synod seminary in St. Louis.⁶⁵ Others like Pastor Jensen and possibly Pastor Amundsen were trained in Norway and later immigrated to the United States.

There is a gap in the communion record from October 23, 1881 until July 15, 1883.⁶⁶ Reverend Gjertsen left Bethel in February 1882 and Reverend Blegen began his service in July 1883.⁶⁷ This long interval between permanent pastors may be the reason for the membership loss at this time. When he came to Bethel, Pastor Blegen was newly married to his wife, Anne. While Pastor Blegen does not appear on the communion records, his wife communed at Bethel once on July 15, 1883, twice in 1884, and the last time on June 7, 1885.⁶⁸ She is also mentioned as one of the Sunday school teachers in the 1922 history.⁶⁹

At the end of April 1884, Pastor Blegen announced he was thinking about traveling to Norway as he had elderly parents and would like approval to be there for about a month. This request was unanimously accepted.⁷⁰ The church records indicate that Pastor R Anderson and Pastor C Wold led services from July 27 to September 21 of 1884. The records also show that there were no baptisms, marriages, or communion services during that time, so that is likely when he took his trip.⁷¹ The nearly three months' time period would have been needed to allow for travel time plus a month's visit to his parents.

In June of 1885, Reverend Blegen announced that he had received a call to teach at Augsburg Seminary. The congregation decided that this call was a sign from God, and they would leave the decision to him, but would accept his resignation with regret.⁷² Reverend Blegen accepted this call and served as a teacher of Greek, German, and Norwegian at Augsburg until he retired in 1916.⁷³ He and Theodor Reimestad became permanent Augsburg staff members in 1885 in order to relieve the load on the theological professors who previously taught the language classes.⁷⁴

Pastor Blegen officially announced his resignation at the July 13, 1885, congregational meeting. He also attended the August congregational meeting.⁷⁵ Pastors regularly gave several months' notice when they resigned to give their old congregation time to call a new pastor. There is no gap in the communion record until September 1885, so Pastor Blegen likely stayed at Bethel until his school term at Augsburg started in the fall.⁷⁶ A September end date is further supported by the fact that John and Anne Blegen's son, Harvard Martin, was baptized at Bethel on August 29, 1885.⁷⁷ In addition to teaching at Augsburg, Pastor Blegen also served on the Lutheran Board of Missions and the Bethel Ladies Aid often sent their mission money to him for distribution.⁷⁸



In August of 1885, Reverend Rasmus Andersen was called to serve Bethel.⁷⁹ He was offered \$300 annual salary from Bethel and received another call from Wanamingo with a salary of \$200 per year for a service every third Sunday.⁸⁰ He is likely the R. Andersen who conducted services at Bethel in Pastor Blegen's absence on July 27 and September 21, 1884, so the congregation was familiar with his qualifications. The 1875 congregational record book first mentions Pastor Andersen on October 4, 1885, so he likely began his ministry near that time.⁸¹

In December 1886, the Pontoppidan congregation in rural Waseca County negotiated a cooperative arrangement in which Pastor Andersen would meet with their congregation nine weekends a year and be available to them six weekdays per year. For this they agreed to pay \$50 of the pastor's annual salary. Bethel agreed to this as long as the pastor would be available in Rochester for required meetings, especially the annual meeting.⁸²

The December 14, 1888, issue of the Rochester Post reported that Rasmus Anderson (spelling?) was admitted to citizenship the previous week which indicates he had been born in Norway and quite possibly received his theological training there.

At the annual meeting January 10, 1888, the congregation approved Pastor Andersen's request for a three month leave for a trip to Norway. The approval was contingent on Pastor Andersen not being gone more than four months and that he secure a visiting pastor to preach at Bethel once a month during the time he was gone.⁸³

Services were held every other week in 1890 as Bethel was in a joint parish agreement with Rock Dell.⁸⁴ That same year the United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America was formed, and Augsburg became the seminary for the new organization.

When Pastor Andersen received a call to a mission church in Chicago in 1891, the congregation refused to accept his resignation as they could not easily find another pastor "in the current situation."⁸⁵ During 1892, a new parsonage was built on the site of the old one. Pastor Anderson expressed his thanks to the congregation at the 1893 annual meeting. By January 2, 1895, the new parsonage had been built and occupied.⁸⁶

Three of the children of Pastor Andersen and his wife Johanna were born while he was at Bethel. Rolf was baptized November 6, 1887, George Ragnavold was baptized August 17, 1890, and Ruth Josephine was baptized November 13, 1892.⁸⁷

At the annual business meeting in January 1893, the congregation voted that the Ladies Aid should hold a Lutefisk Supper. The Ladies Aid hired the Ancient Order of United Workmen (A.O.U.W.) Hall and the supper was well received by the community. From then on, the Lutefisk supper was an annual event at the German Library Hall. The town people looked forward to them with pleasant anticipation.⁸⁸

In the mid-1890s, there was an increased need for English language services, especially for the younger people. Pastor Andersen did not feel comfortable with this demand and offered his resignation on January 2, 1894. He had accepted a call to St. Paul's congregation in LaCrosse, WI.⁸⁹ The 1922 anonymous history notes that "We truly miss his eloquent Norwegian sermons and happy, friendly manner."⁹⁰ At this time, Reverend Andersen was the longest serving pastor at Bethel having been with the congregation for over eight years. He appears to have given a three-month notice as he last presided at a congregational meeting on April 12, 1894.⁹¹ The pastoral record indicates that he left after May 23, 1894 as the entry for June 3 lists Professor Blegen as the presiding pastor.⁹²

The congregation expected a long pastoral interim as on September 17, 1894 they agreed to rent the parsonage until July 1, 1895.⁹³ During the pastoral interim the congregation held services every two weeks with nine different pastors serving on a week to week basis in addition to an Augsburg student, Hans Urseth, who first preached in both Norwegian and English at services on October 21.⁹⁴ They liked what they heard from him and at the November 5, 1894 congregational meeting they approved a letter to "Student Urseth" asking if he would be willing to serve the congregation for a while. They offered \$10 for each time he came to Rochester.⁹⁵ By April 29, 1895, a letter of call was sent offering a salary of \$400 per year and four Sundays off per year. They also include the use of the parsonage and added a required three month notice of termination by either pastor or congregation.⁹⁶



Reverend Hans Urseth accepted the call to Bethel on July 2, 1895 and presided at his first congregational meeting on July 22.⁹⁷ He had just graduated from Augsburg Seminary and was described as very thoughtful and a good man. The name Bethel Lutheran Church was adopted at this time.⁹⁸

His first communion service was not until October 6, 1895. Beginning in 1895 communion was offered to the congregation usually one and rarely two times per year. This does not mean fewer people received communion, but that more people came each time it was offered. The total number of attendees each year remained fairly constant and as before, most people received communion only once a year or less.⁹⁹

Soon after he became Bethel pastor, Reverend Urseth recommended that the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor (called YPS or CE) be adopted at Bethel.¹⁰⁰ The Society was an interdenominational Christian youth society first formed in 1881. CE created publications for youth, devised youth programs, and sponsored special events.¹⁰¹ It was organized at Bethel and grew to be a strong and vital part of the Youth Ministry of the church. CE continued to be a part of the Bethel youth program until the end of 1923.

Even before he officially was called as pastor, Student Urseth preached regularly in English. The Congregational records indicate that the Evening Service each Sunday was in English. The Evening Service and the YPS are usually recorded on the same line in the records which

indicates that the youth group meetings were also in English. This practice continued even after Pastor Urseth left the congregation.¹⁰² In October 1885 the congregation voted that Sunday School teachers could decide whether to use Norwegian or English in their classes based on their personal preference. In the same meeting one committee was formed to set up English Evening Services and another to investigate the availability and use of English Hymnals for that service. They also set up a committee of two to research the cost of building a basement under the church.¹⁰³ It was not until February 1897 that a decision was made to keep the building as it was and defer any build decision to the future.¹⁰⁴

While at Bethel, two of the children of Pastor Urseth and his wife Martha were born and baptized. Ethel Adelaid was baptized January 18, 1897 and Clemens Oliver was baptized June 26, 1898.¹⁰⁵

Reverend Urseth loved music and worked to produce new hymns with his friend F. Melius Christianson, the Director of the St. Olaf Gospel Chorus and the St. Olaf Band in Northfield, Minnesota.¹⁰⁶ Dr. Christianson attended Augsburg in 1892 so they may have met there.¹⁰⁷ Reverend Urseth wrote the songs and Dr. Christianson composed music for them. *De Holy Sange* was an album of twelve songs which they published. Pastor Urseth also wrote hymns to the music of other composers. Appendix 5 contains the words and music for one of his hymns. With his musical interest and ability, Reverend Urseth succeeded in training the Bethel choir to a high caliber.¹⁰⁸

At the May 1897 meeting the congregation began to discuss the request from the women's union regarding their right to vote on congregational affairs. They felt that the right to vote would make them feel more a part of the congregation. The result of this discussion was a recommendation to vote to change the paragraph in constitution regarding voting rights.¹⁰⁹ Paragraph 6 of Article 3 of the constitution was approved and became effective on October 31, 1899. This Article granted voting rights to all men and women who are confirmed and over 18 years of age and not under church discipline. Once women were made voting members, they slowly began to fill positions of responsibility within the congregation. Also, Article 1 of the constitution states that the name of the congregation is to be Bethel Lutheran Congregation.¹¹⁰

When the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America formed in 1890, it designated St. Olaf College to be a college of the church. Augsburg leaders were concerned that the curriculum of St Olaf was too secular and unfit for ministerial training. This was important to Augsburg as they planned an integrated ministerial education from academy through seminary.

This dispute led to the formation of the friends of Augsburg in 1893 and in 1897 Augsburg leaders George Svedrup and Sven Oftedal and their supporters withdrew from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America to form the Lutheran Free Church which stressed "a free church in a free land."¹¹¹

Bethel congregation dealt with the confrontation between Augsburg and the United Church cautiously. In December 1892 they voted to support Augsburg as the United Church college and

also encouraged the Augsburg leaders to assimilate with the United Church.¹¹² By the annual meeting in January 1894, they took a neutral position on a request for college donations by letting members donate to the church college of their choice. They also reported that they would “take an indefinite time to take into consideration the denomination’s current disagreement.”¹¹³ In October 1895 the congregation agreed to collect money when they received a request from the United Church but in 1897 they tabled a request for funds and decided not to send a delegate to the United Church annual convention.¹¹⁴ Similar decisions were made in 1898 and 1899.¹¹⁵ The Bethel constitution approved in October 1899 makes no mention of larger church affiliation.¹¹⁶

Bethel sent a delegate to the annual conference of the Lutheran Free Church held in Fargo, ND in 1907. The congregation appears to have decided to become a part of the Lutheran Free Church at that time, or perhaps an earlier time between 1900 and 1907 that does not appear in the records.¹¹⁷ The congregation continued to send delegates to the annual conference from that time on. The 1922 Bethel constitution clearly takes a position when it states that “the congregation shall belong to the Lutheran Free Church.”¹¹⁸ Bethel remained associated with the Lutheran Free Church until the merger with the American Lutheran Church in 1963.¹¹⁹

At a September 12, 1898, meeting Pastor Urseth announced that he had received a call to teach at Augsburg Seminary. This call gave Pastor Urseth little time to give notice to the congregation. He told them that he did not wish to leave the congregation without a pastor but hoped they would be willing to give up some of the services.¹²⁰ While his resignation was not approved immediately, the congregation decided that Bethel would hold services every other Sunday and the pastor agreed to continue to serve the congregation in the interim at half pay.¹²¹ Pastor Urseth accepted the teaching position at Augsburg that fall and he became a well-liked and respected teacher.¹²² In June 1899 services were again held every Sunday as Pastor Urseth apparently did not need to teach during the summer.¹²³ He continued to preach at Bethel until his new school term began in the fall. The note that was sent to him in August accepting his resignation ended with “we expect you here again to preach next Sunday.”¹²⁴

Hans Urseth died in 1909 at the early age of 42 leaving a young family in tight financial circumstances. This was likely common for pastor’s families at this time as they had few financial resources to fall back on if the man of the family was no longer earning a salary.¹²⁵



Olaf J. Flagstad, a recent graduate of Augsburg Seminary, accepted the call to Bethel on August 7, 1899 to succeed Pastor Urseth. He was offered an annual salary of \$300, the free use of the parsonage, and the offerings taken at three holiday services. In his letter of call, he was encouraged to use both English, which was important in dealing with the young people, and also to maintain the use of the Norwegian language as long as possible.¹²⁶ Pastor Flagstad was ordained at Bethel on October 8, 1899 by Pastor M. Falk Gjertsen and installed by former Pastor Urseth the same day.¹²⁷ He was a fluent speaker and

was able to inspire active interest among the young people of the church.

In mid-1900, the church in Blooming Prairie asked if Pastor Flagstad could preach there on two different occasions. Beginning in October of that year, the congregation approved a motion that he be allowed to preach there once a month until further notice.¹²⁸

In February 1901, Pastor Flagstad asked for six weeks off to recover from an unstated illness. He promised to find ministers to cover for the time he was away. The congregation approved his request and decided that they would continue his salary and that he would pay the replacement pastors. In May he was still not feeling well enough to resume his duties and asked for another month to recover or offered to resign as pastor if the congregation preferred. It was decided that he be given an extra two months off under the previously approved terms.¹²⁹

Pastor Flagstad was a bachelor when he first came to Bethel. He married Onne Qualhelm at Arendahl Lutheran Church in Peterson, Minnesota on June 23, 1902.¹³⁰ Their first child, Silvia Jeanette, was born on November 11, 1903 and was baptized at Bethel on December 12, 1903.¹³¹

Reverend Flagstad accepted a call to the People's Church of St. Paul and read his resignation to the congregation from the pulpit October 4th, 1903.¹³² His resignation was accepted with the condition that he continue as Bethel pastor until January 1, 1904. In the meantime, a committee of three was appointed to begin the search for a new pastor.¹³³

Two candidates were recommended by Professor Sverdrup, Augsburg student Asmund Oftedal who preached in both Norwegian and English at services on December 6, 1903, and Pastor Nicholas Nelson of Minot, ND who was invited to come to preach as well. There was also some discussion regarding a letter to the United Church requesting a pastoral recommendation from them.¹³⁴ While nebulous ties with the United Church remained, Bethel continued to look to Augsburg for pastors instead of the United Church Seminary which had been founded in 1893.¹³⁵

A letter was received from Pastor Nelson that his present responsibilities meant that he could not come to Rochester before the end of February. A conversation between P. F. Johnson of the call committee and Professor Sverdrup led to another student, Student Mils, being invited to preach to the congregation on February 28. A vote regarding which candidate to call led to the decision to send a letter of call to Asmund Oftedal.¹³⁶

On February 29th, 1904, this letter was sent to Reverend Asmund Oftedal who was the son of Sven Oftedal, one of the leaders of Augsburg Seminary. Like the letter of call to Pastor Flagstad, the congregation recommended that the English language be used to satisfy the youth, but that Norwegian be continued to be used as long as possible. He was offered an annual salary of \$400 and the use of the parsonage with a three-month notice required to terminate his call.¹³⁷



As with previous pastors, he also received the proceeds from three special offerings during the year.

He accepted the call and fit into the congregation from the beginning. His wife, Clara, worked hard as his partner in the church. She accepted any challenge and worked well with young and old.¹³⁸ She appears to have taken an active part in midweek prayer meetings many of which were held at the parsonage and on some occasions led by Mrs. Oftedal. She also worked with the younger youth as she is often noted as giving their report at annual meetings.¹³⁹

In May 1904 city sewer services were added to the parsonage at a cost of \$156.50 which was paid by congregational pledges. Pastor Oftedal was made responsible for repairs should the sewer freeze due to neglect on his side. At the same time, the congregation allowed Pastor Oftedal to add gas service at his own expense and in August electricity was added to the house at a cost of \$50 and paid by the congregation.¹⁴⁰

At the August 1, 1905 congregational meeting, a request was received from the German Lutheran Congregation (likely Trinity Lutheran) to be allowed to use the church Sunday afternoons from 2:30 to 4:00 PM.¹⁴¹ At the next meeting they decided to approve the request and ask for \$1 per Sunday for the use of the church.¹⁴²

There was a very active program for young people at Bethel at this time. The Young Peoples Christian Endeavor Society met each Sunday for a prayer service followed by a social. Each Christmas and Easter the CE group held a 6:30 A.M. prayer service. As the CE group was ecumenical, there were often "Union" services held at different churches in Rochester. From May 16 to 19, 1908, the Young Peoples convention was held at Bethel. The opening sermon was given by Reverend J. S. Strand with talks and sermons by other visiting pastors. One of the talks to the group was titled, "After Confirmation What?" which is a pertinent issue at any time. A talk on practical consecration was introduced by Mrs. Clara Oftedal. The convention ended with testimonials from visiting delegates and a farewell reception.¹⁴³

Adult programs at this time included the Ladies Aid, which met monthly at the home of members and put on a yearly supper, the Men's League which met at the church, and the church choir which often met at the parsonage to practice.

In January 1906 Reverend Oftedal encouraged the church to take part in Reverend Billy Sunday's great month-long revival, which was held in Rochester from December 28, 1905 to January 29, 1906.¹⁴⁴ Through this event thirty new members were added to the congregation and became a valuable addition to the church.¹⁴⁵

The regular use of English for services is hinted in the records as early as June 7, 1895 when the pastor's records of the evening services and Young Peoples group meetings are written in English in the middle of the Norwegian record. This continued until the end of 1903 when all of the records are in Norwegian, but the English evening service is still mentioned.

The use of the English instead of Norwegian in the Bethel church records began on October 14, 1907. Appendix 6 shows the varying times that Norwegian, and English were used in the church records. The entries for most Sundays mention morning and evening services, sometimes with the comment, "as usual." It appears that the evening service continued to be in English and the morning services were in Norwegian.¹⁴⁶ An additional step was taken at the annual meeting in January 1908 when it was decided to hold one morning service a month in English for the children. At the same meeting, the pastor's salary was increased to \$500 per year, but without the three offerings per year that had been customary.¹⁴⁷

Throughout the period from 1906 to 1912, a midweek prayer service was held, sometimes at the parsonage and other times at the church. At times, this service was in English. Often the Sunday school teachers met after this meeting.¹⁴⁸

Rally day at Bethel was held the first Sunday in October. At Rally Day on October 2, 1910, Augsburg Seminary Professor Svein Oftedal preached the sermon, and a mission offering was taken. Offerings like this usually went to the mission being presented, in this case, Augsburg Seminary.

In addition to services and meetings at Bethel in Rochester, Pastor Oftedal held services on an irregular, but near monthly basis in Kalmar Township at the home of various local residents and also at the State Hospital.¹⁴⁹

Pastor Oftedal was given a month vacation each year during which there were no services. He took his vacation during August, probably as that was the least disruptive time during the church year. While he was gone, other summer activities of the church continued. Confirmation classes and Sunday school resumed when he returned.

In May 1908, the church building committee again investigated building a basement under the church. However, the cost estimate of \$1000 was more than the congregation could pay. The committee continued meeting to study other options.¹⁵⁰ By February 1909 the committee reported that a 16 by 32-foot room could be constructed to use as church parlors for \$525. The decision was made to build if the money was available.¹⁵¹ At the congregational business meeting the next month a total of \$475 had been pledged and the decision was made to go ahead with the construction.¹⁵² There is no direct indication when this room was occupied, but beginning with the January 19, 1910 Trustees meeting, the meeting location of most subsequent events is in the "church parlors."¹⁵³



Clapboard church with Parlor annex

A fortieth anniversary celebration was held on May 11, 1909, with a supper at the parsonage followed by a program at the church. The anniversary address was given by Professor Blegen, a former Bethel pastor, and the Augsburg sextet provided special music.¹⁵⁴

Reverend Oftedal's resignation was accepted February 23, 1911. He had accepted a call to the English Lutheran Church of Minneapolis. Both Reverend and Mrs. Oftedal were greatly appreciated by the congregation and a resolution of thanks was placed in the church record in appreciation for their service during the seven years they were in Rochester. A copy of this resolution was also given to Reverend and Mrs. Oftedal.¹⁵⁵

A call committee was elected and a call to Louis T. Hanson was approved at a business meeting on April 12, 1911.¹⁵⁶ Reverend Hanson was another Augsburg seminary student so he could not begin his ministry at Bethel until fall. Pastor Oftedal likely remained in Rochester until his graduation. For certain, he presided at the July 1911 church business meeting.¹⁵⁷

There was a much larger than normal rise in membership in 1911 when 15 people were received into the Bethel congregation.¹⁵⁸ 1911 was a period of internal disagreement at Trinity Lutheran Church in Rochester which required several investigations by the synod.¹⁵⁹ People leaving Trinity at that time may have chosen to become members of Bethel.



Reverend Louis T. Hanson's service to Bethel began with his installation on September 10, 1911. There is no break in Sunday services and other activities of the congregation in the interval between Reverend Hanson's call and installation, so it appears that Pastor Oftedal continued his ministry for most of this period. After Pastor Hanson was installed, the records note that Sunday morning services were in Norwegian and the evening services were in English.

In January 1912, the pastoral record returned to Norwegian, but

Sunday services in both languages continued and the business meeting minutes continued to be in English. Norwegian was still appreciated by many and in January 1912 Reverend Peter Nelson of Duluth was invited to hold a week of special meetings with the services to be in Norwegian.¹⁶⁰

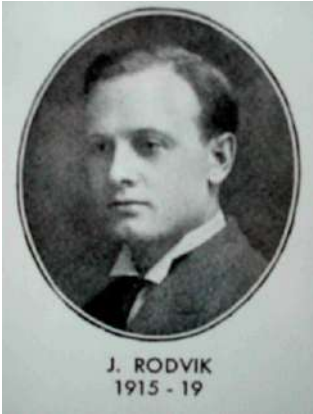
Lillian Evenell was born to Reverend Louis and Emma Hanson on July 9, 1912 and was baptized at Bethel on July 28, 1912.¹⁶¹

Later in 1912, Pastor Hanson received a letter from a church in Ellendale, MN requesting that he come for one service a month as they were without a pastor. This request was approved by the congregation.¹⁶² The people of Bethel are certainly sympathetic to this problem as they have also been in that situation. They were soon faced with the same problem as Pastor Hanson resigned his pastorate on January 6, 1913, on account of ill health. His resignation was to be effective on April 6, 1913.¹⁶³

The church record indicates that the congregation was without a regular pastor from February 2, 1913, until May 30, 1915.¹⁶⁴ There was a confirmation service on March 23, 1913, which would be the class prepared by Pastor Hanson and was possibly his last service at Bethel. There was not another class confirmed until May 14, 1916, a year after Pastor Rodvik was installed at Bethel.¹⁶⁵ Pastor Hanson likely left after April 6, 1913. The communion record ends in April 1912, though there continue to be baptisms. There were two baptisms in 1913, one in February and one in May, both with Reverend Oftedal as officiating pastor. Reverend O. L. Christenson was pastor for two baptism services in 1914.¹⁶⁶

At different times from February 2, 1913 to May 30, 1915, Pastors Rufsvold, Oftedal, and Tollefson from Minneapolis, Professor Severson of Augsburg Seminary, Pastor Shefeland from Hayfield, and Pastor Ristov of Wanamingo preached at Bethel. In February 1914, a letter of call was sent to J. R. Michaelson, but he replied he could not accept the call.¹⁶⁷ Pastor O. L. Christenson of La Crosse preached once a month from the fall 1914 to the spring 1915. In addition, Augsburg students Arthur Lien, J. Reitan, and Johan Rodvik visited the congregation, preached a few times, and taught the confirmation class.¹⁶⁸

Figure 1 in Appendix 2 shows changes in membership of Bethel from 1869 to 1921. From 1891 to 1912, 81 members left the congregation. Of that number, 18 of those people died, two left with the notation “out of town” and the remaining 61 moved out of the community to a specified destination, many of those in the period from 1908 to 1910. From 1913 to 1915 the membership dropped by 26. This is likely due to the pastoral transition with no installed pastor in those years. The records for that time period are not very concise so the membership for 1913 is based on a projection from earlier and later membership data. The membership loss demonstrates the importance of having a regular pastor.¹⁶⁹



On May 30, 1915, Mr. Johan Rodvik was ordained by Reverend O. H. Slettin from Augsburg Seminary and installed at Bethel by former Pastor Oftedal.¹⁷⁰

The 1922 Bethel history states that there was a decline in membership during the time that Pastor Rodvik was at Bethel. The membership records do not substantiate that claim. The record shows an addition of 18 members in 1916 and 20 in 1917 and 21 in 1918.¹⁷¹ The 1922 history acknowledges that Pastor Rodvik brought in new members, but also states these were people that agreed with him and that the dispute over language created two

opposing factions within the church.¹⁷²

A comparison of the membership record started in 1916 with a new one started in 1920 (see Figure A1-1) shows that there was a rise in membership until 1917 and then a slight decline in the last two years that Pastor Rodvik was at Bethel. New people joined and some former members rejoined once Pastor Rodvik was installed but members were also leaving.

The Congregational Meetings during 1916 and 1917 discuss member resignations although it is not always clear if this was a resignation from an elected position or from the congregation as well. In most cases it appears to be a resignation from an elected position. During this time, Mr. Stark Bratager resigned as Sunday School superintendent after nineteen years in that office. Helen Lee was elected in his place and when she was unable to continue, Alma Altona was elected in her place.¹⁷³ From this time on we begin to see women holding responsible positions within the congregation.

Low membership was recognized as a problem and a discussion on how to make the congregation grow followed the business meeting on April 2, 1916. At the same meeting, the problem of finances was addressed by forming a committee "to take subscriptions for defraying the expenses of the congregation."¹⁷⁴ Financial problems continued throughout 1916 and 1917 and the trustees were instructed to deal with it. Subscriptions from members helped, but apparently not enough. By April 1916 there was not enough money to pay the bills and the question of selling church property and finding another location was brought up.¹⁷⁵ The financial situation did not improve significantly and by May 1917 there was again no money to pay the bills and without significant action to resolve the issue the treasurer resigned.¹⁷⁶ In October Pastor Rodvik reported that the congregation was three months behind in paying his salary. At the same meeting he insisted that a pastoral salary of \$80 per month and three Sundays per year vacation would be required or he would resign. In return for the requested salary, he would turn the parsonage and his allotted three Sunday offerings per year back to the congregation.¹⁷⁷ Although the congregational minutes do not mention this again, the Rochester city directories for 1917 and 1919 list Pastor Rodvik's address as a room at 420 3rd Ave SW so this agreement was clearly carried through. The financial stress in the congregation may have been because members who did not like what Pastor Rodvik was doing were withholding

contributions or simply leaving the congregation.¹⁷⁸ This financial situation was not only causing tensions between the congregation and the pastor but a janitor could not be found to work for what the congregation could afford, major maintenance of the church building was suffering, and subscriptions were needed for things like coal.¹⁷⁹

There was certainly a conflict over language in the congregation with many preferring to use English for all services and in the records of the congregation since they felt that the young people were more comfortable using the English language.¹⁸⁰ Some people argued that English should become the language of the church while others wanted to keep using both languages.¹⁸¹ Beginning in 1917, there was considerable anti-German feeling among people in the United States.¹⁸² This included the German Language and any language like Norwegian that sounded Germanic. This may have led to a call from some members for less Norwegian in Bethel services.

At the March 26, 1917, congregational meeting, a petition was presented from the young people of the Christian Endeavor Society requesting that the English language be used more extensively in preaching and in church business. After discussion from both sides of the issue with the pastor speaking against it, a vote was taken with 13 votes supporting the petition and 18 votes against.¹⁸³ This result may have led to the demise of the Christian Endeavor group mentioned in the 1922 Anonymous History. In any case, a new Norwegian language youth organization called Solglimt was formed at Bethel which divided the youth into two groups. There did continue to be evening services in English some Sundays. In February 1917, Pastor Rodvik had reported that 20 families requested a Norwegian school in the summer, so the parochial school held in June 1917 was in Norwegian.¹⁸⁴

At their meeting on April 3, 1919, the Ladies Aid voted to change their constitution to declare English the official language of the church.¹⁸⁵ In this vote, the ladies preceded the congregation by about a year. It is also likely a reaction to the push for more Norwegian by some in the congregation.

Beginning with the annual meeting on January 14, 1918, in addition to the election for trustees, a deacon, and the church secretary, two ushers, an organist and assistant organist, a janitor, the Sunday school superintendent were also elected. Reverend Rodvik was elected the Sunday school superintendent at this meeting. The trustees reported that the church was again short of money. The income for the year was \$960.12 while expenses exceeded that amount by \$30.16. A supper was suggested to make up the difference and a committee of nine women was appointed to plan the supper.¹⁸⁶ They later reported that the supper could not be held due to the high cost of supplies; however, they were able to collect \$94.80 from members.¹⁸⁷

At the March 25, 1918, business meeting of the church Pastor Rodvik resigned effective March 17, 1918. His resignation was accepted, and a committee was elected to look after the welfare of the church and find a new minister.¹⁸⁸ By April there was a discussion on joining the Synod church (present Zumbro Lutheran) but the matter was tabled and never brought up again.¹⁸⁹ In addition, Pastor Rodvik announced that he had not been paid his March salary. The

congregation voted to borrow \$200 in order to pay his back salary.¹⁹⁰ At the May business meeting Reverend Rodvik was asked to continue to serve Bethel until a new minister could be called. He agreed to do so for a reasonable time.¹⁹¹

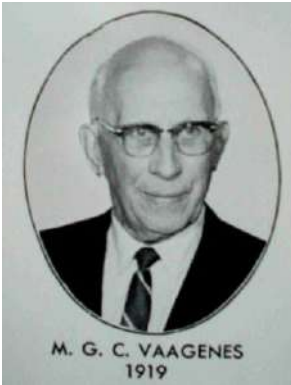
In June, Reverend Rodvik reported that four church members had told him he should resign effective June 15 in spite of the previous decision for him to stay. As a result, two of the trustees were dismissed from the board and new trustees were elected.¹⁹² Since both men were received as new members in the 1920 membership record, they likely left the congregation after this incident. By November 1918, a church member had written a letter to the Board of Organization of the Lutheran Free Church accusing Reverend Rodvik of not being a true minister of the church. It was decided to invite the Lutheran Free Church Board of Organization to come to Bethel and investigate. The board report dated February 6, 1919 found right and wrong on both sides and urged Christian understanding and reconciliation.¹⁹³

The congregation also voted at this meeting to request that the Lutheran Free Church Inner Mission organization be asked to provide \$500 a year instead of the \$200 they had been paying. This indicates that Bethel had been receiving assistance from the Free Church for some time, perhaps since Pastor Rodvik began his service.¹⁹⁴

The Spanish Flu epidemic lasted from January 1918 to December 1920 and infected about 500 million people with 50 to 100 million deaths worldwide. In the United States, the flu was spread by soldiers returning home from service in World War I¹⁹⁵ The Spanish flu hit Minnesota in September and lasted until January 1919.¹⁹⁶ The epidemic affected Bethel as the records show Sunday services were cancelled from October 13 through November 17 in 1918 with the notation “No service due to Spanish flu.” There were also no meetings from October 21 to 26 for the same reason although Saturday confirmation and Wednesday prayer meetings were conducted other weeks during this period. There were no church services at all in Rochester on October 20.¹⁹⁷ These steps may have been successful, in any case there are no funerals noted in the Bethel records during the months when the flu was active in Minnesota.¹⁹⁸ There were also few deaths in Rochester. People came down with the flu but had a relatively mild case due to the administration of a vaccine which was available to anyone who wanted it.¹⁹⁹

The fiftieth anniversary celebration in May 1919 was a small event. A committee of three was appointed at the May 5 meeting to plan the affair. It was decided that the Sunday May 11 offering would be used to pay the expenses of the speakers, Professors Gunnerson and Evjen from Augsburg.²⁰⁰

Pastor Rodvik appears to have left Bethel at the end of April 1919 as the June 1 service was led by congregational deacons and the two services on June 8 were led by Pastor Hagen.²⁰¹ During the April-May time frame, Bethel sent a call to at least two pastors. The May 25, 1919, business meeting minutes note that Pastor Ludvik Peterson of Montevideo turned down a call and Pastor Hagen replied to a request to serve as interim pastor that he was unable to preach in English.²⁰² Pastor Rodvik was at the service on June 29 and gave a departure speech. The congregation held a goodbye party for the pastor and his wife, Anna, the next day.²⁰³



As a final result of the conflict within the congregation, Pastor Rodvik left, and Morris Vaagenes was called as interim pastor.²⁰⁴ Reverend Vaagenes was later a long-time missionary to Madagascar. In 1919, He was either on home leave from his missionary work or just ready to start concentrated training for the mission field. By 1921, he was located at Manasoa, Madagascar.²⁰⁵ He began service at Bethel on June 15, 1919. He last presided at a church meeting on August 25, 1919 when his resignation was accepted.²⁰⁶

At that August meeting, Reverend Vaagenes shared a report from the congregation's management committee meeting dated March 31, 1919 that the "opposite party" in the congregation had been cast out.²⁰⁷ This is likely the result of a rejection of the March 31, 1919 peace proposal to members who "opposed Pastor Rodvik and the work of the congregation."²⁰⁸ Since the management committee minutes are not available, it is not clear how many people were ejected but 35 members signed the complaint to the Board of Organization and all of them left Bethel at some time between 1916 and 1920. A review of the membership lists in the 1916 Record book shows there were 60 new members accepted after Pastor Rodvik left the congregation, 33 of whom were among the complaint signers. The sharp drop in membership in 1919 shown on Figure 1 of appendix 2 illustrates this drop and rapid recovery. There were also 40 people on the 1916 list who were not members in 1920 but no reason is given for their withdrawal. Twenty-three of the 40 had joined the congregation while Pastor Rodvik was at Bethel and likely left when he was gone. The others may have left during the turmoil of the pastoral changes between late 1918 and mid-1919 and did not return.

Reverend Elmer A. Huset was present at the above noted August 25, 1919, meeting and was called to become Bethel's pastor. He immediately accepted the call. Before coming to Rochester, Reverend Huset was the pastor of Cloquet Norwegian Lutheran Church, later Our Saviors Lutheran church. His church and all his belongings were destroyed in the Cloquet fire of October 1918 which destroyed 250,000 acres and at least three towns including Cloquet.²⁰⁹ After losing his church, he enlisted in the army and was stationed at Fort Snelling serving as a hospital chaplain with the rank of captain. He had been released from his army duties only a few days before he was called by Bethel.²¹⁰



He married his wife Mabel in 1917, probably just after he graduated from Augsburg Seminary. He moved to Rochester with his wife and daughter Kathryn shortly after he began his ministry at Bethel.²¹¹

Since the parsonage had been empty for two years, some upkeep and repair were required before Pastor Huset and his family could move in. The trustees were authorized to borrow money for

this work. The building was painted and new wallpaper was applied for \$127.04 and the furnace was repaired for \$150. At the same October meeting that authorized this loan nine former members returned to the congregation.²¹²

On May 31, 1920, the exclusive use of the English language in the services and meetings of the church was adopted by a large majority. From June through September after that decision was made, 14 people left the congregation, 7 of them from one family. The reason for leaving given in the membership list is “dissatisfied” but this was likely a reaction to the English language decision. One of the first to leave was Jens Rasmusson who also resigned as trustee and deacon immediately after the meeting that chose English as the church language. Since Zumbro Lutheran church in Rochester had Norwegian and English services until 1925 and beyond, dissatisfied members could have joined that congregation.²¹³ Appendix 6 describes the English to Norwegian changes at Bethel.

During his time at Bethel Pastor Huset received a salary of \$50 a month which was raised to \$68 shortly before he left. In addition to his Bethel salary, the Lutheran Free Church home missions provided \$40 per month. The small amount paid by Bethel indicates a small congregation unable to support more money for their pastor.

During his year at Bethel, Reverend Huset worked extremely hard to encourage new members to join the church and previous members to return. From October 1919 through September 1920, 72 people joined the church, 34 of whom had previously been Bethel members. When Reverend Huset resigned to accept a call to serve as an army chaplain on September 27, 1920, there were 157 members of the congregation, 48 of whom were children under the age of confirmation.²¹⁴

With an energetic pastor and increased membership, the congregation began to look to the future. At the January 1920 annual meeting a new church building was discussed. In addition to the building being too small to hold a growing congregation, there were safety concerns.²¹⁵ The first thought was to sell the old property and build on a new site. A committee was appointed to investigate the matter. The Kahler organization was contacted and offered the property for \$42,500 but they were not interested in a new property investment at that time. A later offer of \$25,000 from a private party was met with a counteroffer of \$35,000 which was not accepted.²¹⁶

At a special meeting in July Pastor Huset reported that he had received a letter from the army asking if he would consider a call to serve as an army chaplain. He offered his resignation at that time but the congregation decided to table the question until he had received an official call.²¹⁷ At the September business meeting Pastor Huset’s resignation was accepted and a special meeting was scheduled after services on September 28.²¹⁸

It appears that in the interval between July and September Reverend A. G. Hansen had been contacted by the congregation on the recommendation of Pastor Huset.²¹⁹ Reverend Hansen graduated from Augsburg in 1915 and may have been known by Reverend Huset who attended at the same time.²²⁰ Before his call to Bethel, Pastor Hansen had served several congregations in the Tioga, North Dakota area from March 1916 until mid-November 1920.²²¹

Bethel was fortunate that Reverend Huset was able to take a year away from the army to serve as its pastor. When he resigned the congregation was unified in language and looking to the future with confidence. The congregation's later growth was built on his work at Bethel. Without his efforts it would have been much more difficult for the congregation to achieve the rapid expansion that occurred in the succeeding years.

Chapter 2 Pastor Arthur Hansen 1920 to 1960



Arthur Hansen²²²

At a special meeting of the congregation on September 28, 1920, Reverend Arthur G. Hansen of Tioga, North Dakota, was called by the Bethel congregation.²²³ Prior to calling Reverend Hansen, the church voted to provide a pastoral salary of \$1600 per year.²²⁴ Pastor Hansen arrived by train late that day. He was asked to give a short sermon for those attending the meeting and then waited outside while the congregation met. Pastor Huset came out of the meeting and informed him that he had been unanimously called to be pastor of Bethel. Pastors Hansen and Huset spent some quiet time together to discuss questions about the call. After a short time of consideration, he accepted.²²⁵ He returned to Tioga as his personal journal shows

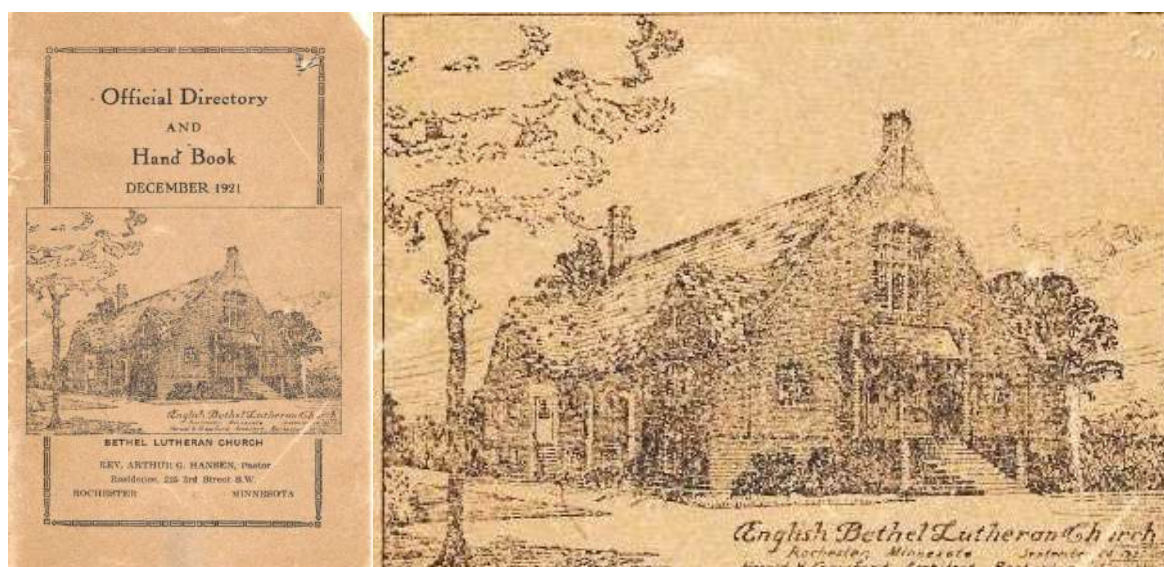
payments from his Tioga congregations up to mid November 1920. He began service at Bethel November 18, 1920, and he received a half month salary from Bethel on December 2.²²⁶ He presided at his first monthly business meeting on November 29, 1920. At this meeting, a committee was appointed to find appropriate books in English for use by the congregation.²²⁷ By this time English versions of liturgy and teaching materials were readily available.

Doris Jane Hanson was born October 10, 1920 while Pastor Hansen was completing his duties at Tioga. She was baptized at Bethel on December 12, 1920 with the Bethel congregation as sponsors. This was the first baptism at Bethel after Reverend Hansen became Pastor.²²⁸

Pastor Hansen considered one of his priorities at Bethel to be congregational membership growth. One of the needs of the growing congregation was a new building. At the June 1921 monthly business meeting, a building committee was given full powers to plan a new building. The congregation voted to tear down the old church and start building the basement, and a committee was appointed to find a suitable place to meet during the anticipated construction.²²⁹ The Universalist Church property was made available for use by the congregation in the interim. The October and November business meetings of the church were held in the Universalist Church parlors.²³⁰

At the March 1921 business meeting of the church, a building fund was set up with a separate fund to contain Ladies Aid donations to be used as they saw fit. At the next meeting, a soliciting committee was elected to begin collecting money for the building project. In June, a building committee was elected and given full power to act on plans for the new building which was to be built on the site of the old church structure. It was expected that the basement would be started as soon as possible to be used until the rest of the building was available. A mortgage of up to \$12,000 and provisions for temporary financing for the building were approved at the November 1921 business meeting with the stipulation that the interest on any loans not exceed 7% and the loan period not exceed five years. The mortgage limit was raised to \$15,000 at the 1922 annual meeting.²³¹

The building committee moved quickly as the December 1921 Directory had an architect's rendering of the new church building on the cover. The new building was phased in as the basement was quickly completed and used by the congregation until the main structure was ready. The Christmas service in 1921 was held in the newly completed basement.²³² The first service in the completed church building was held on December 25, 1924.



Cover of Bethel Directory December 1921

The church annual meeting on January 9, 1922, was held in the new basement preceded by a dinner. At this meeting Pastor Hansen reported that 70 new members had been added to the congregation during 1921.²³³ Based on the congregation vote in 1920, Pastor Hansen wished to emphasize that Bethel was an English-speaking church, and the 1921 Handbook cover calls the church "English Bethel Lutheran Church." By the time the cornerstone was laid in 1922 the name had become Bethel English Lutheran Church. This name was kept until 1964.

The October 21, 1922 issues of both Rochester papers told the story of the three-day annual convention of the Minneapolis District of the Lutheran Free Church held at the new Bethel.



1925 Church Cornerstone

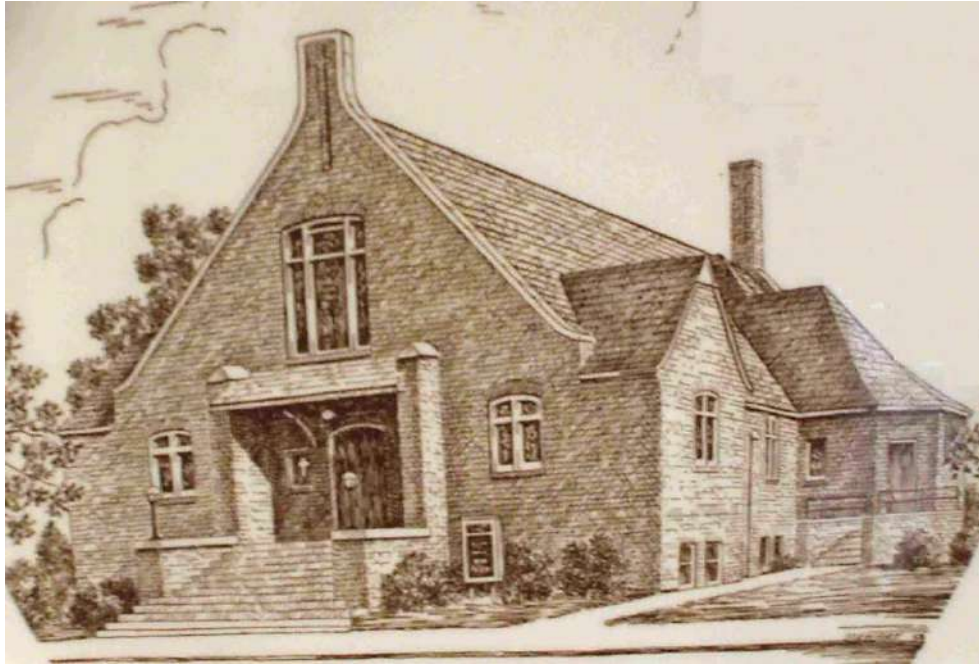
the entrance of the new church building.²³⁵

church building. As a part of the convention, the cornerstone of the new building was dedicated by Reverend Asmund Oftedal a former Bethel pastor, who was then pastor at English Olivet Church in Minneapolis. Although the official language of the Bethel was now English, the Monday afternoon and evening sessions of the conference were in Norwegian.²³⁴ When this building was demolished in 1972, the cornerstone was given to Bethel and placed at

In August 1923, the congregation voted to sell its parsonage property at 225 3rd Street SW and Reverend Hansen was authorized to rent housing at 221 Sixth Avenue NW at a rate of \$50 per

month.²³⁶ When the rent was raised to \$60 a month in 1927, the congregation arranged to purchase land and build a new parsonage at 815 7th Avenue SW. To pay for the parsonage, a loan of \$5,300 was arranged which required a payment of \$55 per month.²³⁷

Also in 1927, the Ladies Aid agreed to take responsibility for the church mortgage and interest if the Board of Trustees would pay the running expenses of the church. They supported the mortgage on the parsonage in the same way. To meet these expenses they held suppers, bake sales, apron sales, and anything else that would make money to finance the payments. Over 21 years they paid off both mortgages for a total amount of just over \$49,000.²³⁸



Bethel English Lutheran Church at 224 3rd Ave SE

Picture from a plate that is titled, Bethel English Lutheran Church Established 1869

The completed church building was dedicated on January 5, 1925. A whole day of dedication was celebrated. At the morning service at 10:30 AM, there were two sermons, the first by Reverend Claus Morgan of St Louis Church in Minneapolis and the second by former Bethel pastor Reverend Asmund Oftedal. The dedication service was held at 2:00 P.M. with sermons by Reverend C. J. Carlson of Wanamingo and Reverend O. H. Slettin from Augsburg Seminary. The Rochester Post and Record reported that the service was one of the most impressive ever conducted here. An evening service at 7:30 included Professor Sverdrup, Reverend Slettin, and Reverend Bunge of Augsburg as well as Pastor Oftedal.²³⁹

Reverend Hansen was very active promoting new membership. The December 1921 directory lists 206 members, 68 of whom joined during 1921. Eight of the new members are listed as returning to Bethel. There were two services every Sunday, a morning service at 10:30 and an evening service at 7:45 PM. The Sunday school met at noon. In his comments in the new directory, Pastor Hansen encouraged people to send their children to Sunday school if they were

not already in attendance “as you can give them no better education than that of God Almighty.”²⁴⁰



Soon after he came to Bethel, Pastor Hansen began reaching out to adults in the community. From 1924 to 1935 he baptized 10 adults. Beginning in 1935 he baptized and confirmed many more adults. Adult confirmation classes began that year and continued until he retired.

From 1936 until 1961, Reverend Hansen baptized 107 adults and confirmed 124 in twenty-one separate adult confirmation classes.

There were several changes to the name and probably the structure of the Bethel youth program during the 1920s and 1930s. The last report of the Norwegian language Solglimt was given at the 1920 annual meeting. That was the same meeting that the church established English as its official language for all services and records so the Solglimt youth group probably disbanded at that time.²⁴¹

By the January 1921 annual meeting the youth group's name is Society of Christian Endeavor which was in place prior to the introduction of Solglimt.²⁴² That group may not have lasted long as the annual meetings have no youth reports from 1922 and 1925.

Sometime during 1924 a Boy Scout troop (Troop 28) was formed at Bethel with Carl Myre as scoutmaster.²⁴³ During 1925 there is evidence of youth activity when a Young People's Federation is reported to have held a convention which was reported to have been "very successful."²⁴⁴ This seems to have been a onetime occurrence as there was no further youth reports in the next year.

The lack of a youth program at Bethel was brought up at the 1928 annual meeting and the Girls Club leader was appointed to investigate.²⁴⁵ There is no further action reported the next year, but there was a report from both the treasurer and secretary of the Young People's Society at the October 1930 annual meeting. In that same meeting a scout committee of 5 was appointed to assist the scoutmaster.²⁴⁶

During the early 1930s both the youth and the boy scout programs were struggling due to low attendance.²⁴⁷ They both seem to have recovered within a few years. The Young Peoples Society had clearly rallied by 1937/38 when it was reported that they held fall and spring rallies with the Minneapolis District of the Luther League.²⁴⁸ By 1940 the Youth group was identified as the Luther League and a regular program of speakers and social events is reported.²⁴⁹ The national Luther League organization died in the 1960s but the name for the local youth group continued at Bethel and other congregations for many years after that time²⁵⁰.

Pastor Hansen took his vacation during the month of July each year. During the time he was gone, the decision was often made to hold no Sunday services, but to continue other church events. In a few other years, the board of deacons found pastors in the surrounding area who could preach on the Sundays during Pastor Hansen's vacation.²⁵¹

At the annual meeting in January 1929, it was decided not to hold Sunday school during the summer and to resume on Rally Day which was now the second Sunday in September. At the same meeting, the pastor's salary was raised to \$2,300 per year. He also received the Christmas offering.

During 1929, it was decided to move the annual meeting from January to the second week in October each year. That required a constitution change and a change in the fiscal year of the church to run from October 1 to September 30 of the following year. From then on, the congregational records are summarized using September to October rather than a calendar year.

At the October 1929 annual meeting, it was decided to hold a four-week, half-day, parochial school for the children of the congregation during the month of June. An Augsburg student, Kenneth Johnson, was hired to teach for \$60 plus room and board. It was also arranged for him to preach on the third Sunday of July 1930. He was popular enough that he was asked to return to teach the parochial school the next year which he agreed to do at the same salary.²⁵² Mr. Johnson was asked to preach on the Sundays during June in 1931. In that year he came with his wife and room and board was furnished for them by different families of the congregation on a weekly basis.

In 1933, it was decided to reduce the parochial school term to two weeks. Reverend Hansen was put in charge of the school with three assistants. The attendance at the school the first year was 17 students increasing to 40 enrollments in 1932. In his message to the annual meeting in October, which was attended by 43 members, Reverend Hansen promoted the summer parochial school as a wonderful opportunity for the children to promote both character and learning.²⁵³

Beginning in 1921, Pastor Hansen received an annual salary of \$1,600 with added income from offerings, and ministerial acts which totaled \$399.37. In 1929 his salary had increased to \$2,300 per year and he earned \$403.71 from what he called ministerials. As the effects of the depression hit, his salary was reduced to \$2,000 per year in 1933 when he received \$331.35 for ministerials. It was further reduced to \$1,800 per year in 1934 when he earned 351.40 for ministerials. In addition to service at Bethel, like previous pastors, Pastor Hansen also led services and presided at funerals at the State Hospital. For these ministerial acts he received \$5 per meeting.²⁵⁴

By the annual meeting in 1937 financial conditions had improved enough that Reverend Hansen's annual salary was increased to \$2,100. There were 110 members present at this meeting.²⁵⁵ The annual report for 1937 was mimeographed instead of being printed in order to save money. This report contained the usual financial and business reports and by vote of the congregation continued to list members and their financial pledges. At this time 562 members

are listed. Pledges for the upcoming year ranged from \$0.25 from a young person to \$208 with an average of about \$15 for the year. The Sunday school reported 228 children in attendance.²⁵⁶

The 70th anniversary of the church was in 1939. The Annual for that year lists 622 contributing members and 284 children in the Sunday school. At a ceremony after services on the day of the annual meeting the 1923 mortgage on the parsonage was burned. Also noted at the same meeting was the problem with the wet basement of the parsonage which needed repair. Installation of drain tile was suggested as a solution. The treasurer reported nearly \$4,400 in church income with expenses about \$210 less so the congregation was in good financial shape at that point. The remaining mortgage on the church itself was \$3,950 which was due to be paid off by June 1942.²⁵⁷

During 1940, Pastor Hansen's annual salary was increased to \$2,400. The church, except the sanctuary, was repainted at this time at a cost of \$800. At the Annual meeting, Pastor Hansen asked whether the congregation wanted him to wear a robe at the services. The resulting vote was negative by a two to one margin. This vote is not surprising given the Low Church inclinations of the founders of Bethel and the Lutheran Free Church. The slogan, "a free church in a free land" gave congregations a large degree of autonomy in their operation. That meant that Pastor Hansen could have worn a robe had the congregation desired and still be operating within the spirit of the free church idea.²⁵⁸

The church organization as seen in the meeting minutes had three main governing bodies. The congregational meeting was the final decision maker in all matters. In 1918 when the meeting records begin, the congregation met for a business meeting once a month. By 1940, annual congregational meetings with special meetings when needed were the normal practice. The pastor was the presiding officer of all congregational meetings. When questions that involved pastoral salary and other issues that would be a conflict of interest for him, the pastor would appoint a temporary presiding officer to take his place and leave the meeting area.

The Board of Trustees was the overseer of the financial aspects of the congregation. This included the church building and the parsonage as well as congregational income and expenses. They also made sure that the congregational acts were in accordance with the constitution. This board initially consisted of six men but was changed to seven to avoid tie votes. They met about once a month to oversee the business of the congregation. The pastor was an ex-officio member of this board.

The Board of Deacons mission was to oversee the religious aspects of congregational life, including worship and education, and act as an advisor and sounding board for the pastor on religious affairs. By decision of the annual meeting this board consisted of four women and three men.

Like congregations today, there was a Sunday school, a Youth program called the Young People's Society at this time, the Ladies Aid, an Altar Guild which was formed in 1938 as a project for young married women who tended not to join a Ladies Aid group, a Men's group, and

various bible study groups. These groups gave the congregation multiple and varying means of working together and getting to know each other.

Figure 1 in Appendix 2 shows the early growth and at times decline in membership of the church. Figure 2 shows the recovery during the ministries of Pastors Huset and Hansen. Pastor Hansen was a very vibrant and effective leader who was able to meet the spiritual needs of both young and old. Both Pastor Huset and Pastor Hansen brought many new members into Bethel, but also convinced members who had left in the previous years to return to membership. Of 137 people added to the congregation from 1919 to 1921, 63 were returning members.

By the time of the annual meeting in October 1943, the congregation had grown to about 1,300 members and they considered two actions as a result of the growth over the past years.

A resolution to hire a parish worker to assist Pastor Hansen with visitation and education was passed.

A resolution to enlarge the seating capacity of the church building and provide more space for the growing Sunday school was passed.²⁵⁹

During early 1943, Pastor Hansen injured his back in an accident and was not able to keep up with his pastoral responsibilities for five months. During that time Augsburg student Mr. Orville Kleppe served the congregation in his place.²⁶⁰

With the beginning of American participation in World War II, Bethel kept in contact with members in the various branches of service by sending a two-page Bethel news sheet to them each month. A list of the names of active service members was printed in the annual report for each of the years during the war. By October 1942, 40 Bethel members were in the service, thirty-nine men and one woman. By the annual meeting in 1944, 113 Bethel members were serving, 5 of whom were women.²⁶¹

The 75th anniversary of Bethel congregation was celebrated in 1944. Mrs. V. E. Strifert, congregation secretary, wrote a history of Bethel to commemorate the occasion.²⁶² The commemoration began with an evening service on Wednesday, May 10, followed by a fellowship hour and lunch in the church parlors. On Friday evening a memorial service was held for former congregation members. The president of the Lutheran Free Church, Dr. T. O. Burntvedt, gave the sermon on Sunday Morning. That afternoon there was a service in honor of the members of the congregation who were in military service. Dr. B. M. Christensen, the president of Augsburg College gave the address at the afternoon service. The celebration closed with an evening concert by the Augsburg choir singing without accompaniment.²⁶³

The membership of the congregation in 1945 was causing crowded conditions at the services as well as crowded class space due to the number of students enrolled in the Sunday school. At the annual meeting in 1946, the congregation approved the request to consult an architect regarding expansion of the church building. By 1947, the discussion to enlarge the church building continued, but no action was taken. At this point, the congregation membership had grown to

about 1,575 and there were 318 students in the Sunday school, so the space problem was becoming more urgent.

It was not until 1948 that a parish worker was hired. At that time, no action had been taken regarding expansion of the building. Parish worker, Ionia Olson, was employed to visit those congregation members who were home bound as well as new members. She also taught the junior confirmation students, was an advisor to the youth group, and led the girl's chorus.²⁶⁴



Ionia Olson

By 1952, when the membership of Bethel had grown to about 1,800, the congregation voted to call an assistant pastor. They decided on a limited term call for one or two years with a salary of \$3,200 to \$3,600 per year.

With the Sunday school participation approaching 400, it was decided to hold two Sunday school sessions, one held during each of the Sunday service hours. In response to the growing need for more space in the sanctuary, a church building fund was also approved.²⁶⁵



James Peterson

At a special meeting held September 22, 1953, the congregation approved a call to Reverend James Peterson to be Assistant Pastor. His duties included being director of the youth program, Sunday school superintendent, and director of the chapel choir. Miss Olson's duties were changed to visitation and acting as greeter on Sunday mornings. The Board of Trustees decided to rent a house for Reverend Peterson but considered building a second parsonage at a later date.

At the annual meeting in 1953 with 150 members attending, it was suggested that instead of adding to the present building, a new church building be constructed on another site. Mr. A. A. Urness offered to donate \$75,000 if a new building was approved. A building committee

was elected to consider options and present a plan to resolve the space issue that had been building for many years. At that time, there was a balance in the expansion fund of \$11,750. During this meeting Ionia Olson offered her resignation but the congregation voted to reject her request by 118 to 14.²⁶⁶ She resigned again in February 1955 when she accepted a position as Executive Secretary of the Women's Missionary Federation of the Lutheran Free Church.²⁶⁷

In 1954, the building committee proposed that a new facility be constructed on the Feeney site in the 800 block of 3rd Avenue SE. It was estimated that \$183,000 would be needed to remodel the present property on 3rd Avenue SW.²⁶⁸ In the face of that cost and the limited space for expansion on the present site, a motion to purchase the Feeney property for \$20,000 was approved as was the hiring of a professional fund raiser to secure the pledges needed for new construction. Reverend Peterson's report for 1954 stressed the difficult learning environment for the Sunday school. All available space in the lower level of the church was being used and conditions were still crowded. This further supported the need for a new facility.²⁶⁹



Classroom Crowding



Class in the Boiler Room



Record Keeping in a Hallway

In March 1955, the trustees reported that the Feeney property had been purchased and the house on the land would be torn down. At that time, a total of \$179,255 in pledges had been received for the building project. The architects were working on the building layout and the purchase of four nearby lots for parking had been approved.²⁷⁰

The proposed floor plan for the new building was presented at a special congregational meeting on August 25, 1955 along with a cost estimate of \$320,000 to \$340,000 for the construction. This cost did not include nave furniture or Sunday school tables, chairs, etc. The proposed building would seat 500 people in the nave and provide classroom space for 500 Sunday school students. The proposed plan was accepted with construction to begin in the spring of 1956.²⁷¹



Morris Johnson

Reverend Peterson's two-year term as assistant pastor was over in 1955 and Reverend Morris Johnson was called in his place. Miss Gertrude Warren was hired as parish worker in May 1955. Beginning in this year, the Bethel Annual listed the member's names, but no longer included the amount of their pledges.

At the annual meeting that year, Pastor Johnson reported 406 students in the Sunday school and like Reverend Peterson before him described the unfavorable learning conditions that the teachers and students had to endure.²⁷²

In 1955 the Lutheran Free Church voted to accept a merger with the American Lutheran Church. Before this could become effective, the congregations within the Lutheran Free Church had to approve this decision. Bethel voted to accept the merger by a vote of 57 to 1 at the 1955 annual meeting, but because they felt all members should have a voice in this decision, a mail vote was held with the result that 290 members voted to accept the merger and 6 members were against it.²⁷³ By 1963 enough congregations in the Lutheran Free Church had voted to approve the merger and they officially became a part of the American Lutheran Church.²⁷⁴



Bethel about 1957

In their 1957 report to the congregation, the Board of Trustees reported that the old church and property on 3rd Ave SW had been sold to the Olmsted County Historical Society for \$75,000. They also noted various loans had been secured to pay for the new church during the construction phase. \$100,000 was loaned to Bethel by Mr. A. A. Urness and \$200,000 came from Northwest Bank on a note endorsed by Mr. Urness.²⁷⁵ The Women's Guild agreed to furnish the kitchens in

the new building and the Memorial Fund was used to meet other needs. Moving day from the old church to the new was July 7, 1957 and the first service was held in the new building on July 14, 1957.²⁷⁶ The dedication service for the new church facility was held September 15, 1957.²⁷⁷

Reverend Morris Johnson's two-year term as assistant pastor ended in 1957 and Reverend Donald Helland was called to replace him. Reverend Helland had graduated from Lewis and Clark college and had his own accounting firm in Portland, Oregon from 1951 to 1954 before he entered the Seminary. He graduated from Augsburg Seminary in June 1957.²⁷⁸ Pastor Helland resigned at the end of 1957 to take a parish in Ashland, Wisconsin and a special meeting was held on January 19, 1958 to call a new associate pastor. The Board of Trustees recommended a permanent call be sent to Reverend James Peterson who was then serving a parish in Rugby, North Dakota. They proposed a salary of \$5,200 per year.²⁷⁹ Reverend Peterson accepted with the understanding that the position would be one of co-pastor with Reverend Hansen. The sale of the second parsonage and the purchase of a larger house for Pastor Peterson's family were approved at special meetings of the congregation on March 16 and April 12, 1958.²⁸⁰



Donald Helland

Another special meeting was held on July 13, 1958, with Reverend Peterson presiding, authorized the Board of Trustees to obtain a mortgage of \$250,000 on the church building. This loan was to pay off construction loans and consolidate other debts.²⁸¹

At the board of trustees meeting on August 5, 1959, Pastor Peterson announced that he would submit his resignation unless Pastor Hansen was retired by January 1, 1960 and the entire church staff was replaced at the same time. He also expressed the need for immediate attention as he had other demands for his services.²⁸²

A special congregational meeting was held on October 13, 1959 to consider the resignation of Pastor Peterson which was to be effective in 90 days. In his letter of resignation, Reverend Peterson expressed regret, but felt it was necessary as "events of the past year leave no other alternative."²⁸³

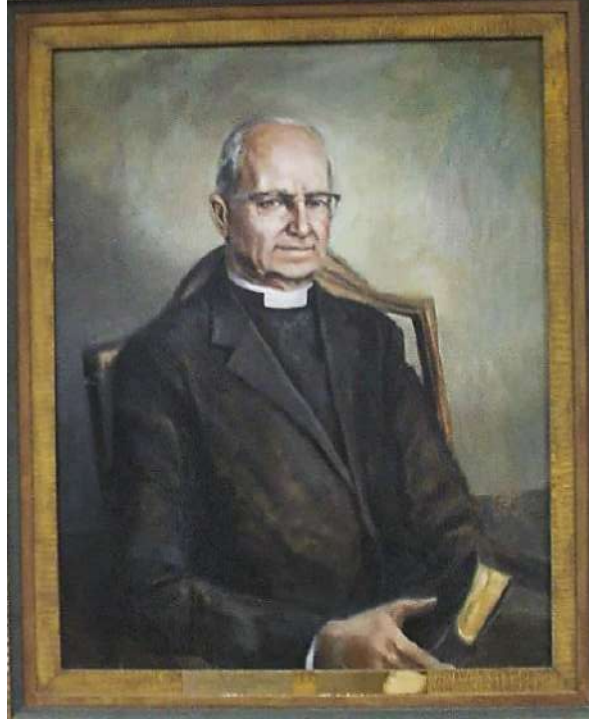
The special meeting minutes report an acrimonious discussion regarding the reasons for this resignation. Pastor Hansen stated that Pastor Peterson was not letting him know what he was doing while it was noted that Pastor Hansen took it upon himself to make changes to Sunday school teacher appointments, an area of Peterson's responsibility, at a meeting he called while Pastor Peterson was on vacation. The disagreement seems to hinge on each pastor's interpretation of their working relationship. Pastor Peterson expected to work within his area of responsibility without oversight or interference as a co-pastor, "responsible only to God and the congregation," and Pastor Hansen was used to being in charge and resented not being part of the decision-making process in all areas of church work.²⁸⁴

A letter was received from Reverend Morris Johnson supporting Pastor Peterson and recalling that he also had difficulty working with Pastor Hansen. There were also signed petitions from the junior and senior Luther League groups asking that the resignation be rejected. As part of the meeting discussion, it was reported that Pastor Hansen would like to remain at Bethel until he reached age 70 (mid 1961) but would retire effective July 1, 1960 if a suitable retirement plan could be arranged.

A vote was held by secret ballot on the question of the resignation of Pastor Peterson. The result was that 197 people voted to reject the resignation and 175 voted to accept it. This result with an almost evenly divided congregation made it urgent that the Board of Trustees resolve the pastoral situation quickly.²⁸⁵

Like the earlier dilemma with Pastor Rodvik, the Lutheran Free Church was asked for advice. A joint meeting of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Deacons was likely held the Monday after the congregational meeting with several interested congregation members sitting in. They met to hear recommendations from Reverend John Stensvaag, then president of the Lutheran Free Church. Reverend Stensvaag recommended that for the good of the church, both pastors should leave.²⁸⁶ The attendees decided that Pastor Hansen should retire on June 1, 1960 or when a new pastor was called, whichever came first and that the Board of Trustees create an equitable retirement plan for Pastor Hansen. Pastor Peterson's resignation was accepted with the three-month notice waived but that he would be paid until January 4, 1960. Names for a call committee for the new pastor were also suggested.²⁸⁷

The situation with Pastor Hansen was settled at the congregation annual meeting on November 27, 1959. At that meeting he announced his retirement effective July 1, 1960 with a request that a retirement package be formally adopted. The retirement package proposed by the Board of Trustees provided a payment of \$150 per month to Mr. and Mrs. Hansen with a continued payment of \$100 per month to the survivor on the death of either one of them. They could also live rent free in a house provided by Bethel during the life of either of them with the church to provide for major repairs and maintenance but not utilities.



Painting of Pastor Hansen on his retirement

In addition, the congregation acted on Pastor Hansen's suggestion that a lay chairman be elected to preside at congregational meetings instead of the pastor as had previously been the practice. This suggestion was adopted, and Carl Myre was elected the first congregational chairman. Also, a search committee for a new senior pastor was formed.²⁸⁸

Chapter 3 Pastor Erling Tungseth 1960 to 1972



Erling Tungseth

The congregation voted to call Reverend Erling M. Tungseth as their pastor at a special meeting held February 18, 1960. Reverend Tungseth graduated from Augsburg Seminary in 1944 and was a member of the Augsburg Board of Trustees. He was pastor of Roseville Lutheran Church in St Paul, Minnesota, where he had served since August 1952. During the time he had been at Roseville, the congregation had grown from 235 to 1,130 members. Figure 2 in Appendix 2 shows that he was also successful in keeping the growth of Bethel on track. Reverend Tungseth was seen as a dynamic and experienced leader who would serve Bethel well. He had preached at both services in Rochester on February 14 and was well received by the congregation.

After the service on February 14, Reverend Tungseth asked to meet with the Trustees and Deacons to address some questions he still had.

- 1) He chose to occupy the home where Pastor Hansen was living.
- 2) He wished to clarify the position of Pastor Hansen after his retirement. To this question he was told Pastor Emeritus Hansen had no official position in the church and would serve at the request of Pastor Tungseth.
- 3) Reverend Tungseth also wished to be certain that the question of staff was in his hands. The Boards agreed that he had the right to choose his own staff.

A salary of \$8,000 per year was agreed and a three-week vacation offered after one year service.²⁸⁹ As a result of their experience with Reverend Hansen's retirement, the Board of Trustees established a pension fund for Pastor Tungseth. Both the church and Pastor Tungseth paid \$22.39 per month to this pension fund. Both Parish Worker, Miss Warner, and the church Secretary, Mrs. Beaver, resigned their positions by early June 1960 leaving staff appointments up to Pastor Tungseth.²⁹⁰

These arrangements were accepted, and Pastor Tungseth preached his first sermon at Bethel on July 10, 1960. He was installed by Lutheran Free Church President Reverend Stensvaag on July 24, 1960. Pastor Tungseth moved to Rochester with his wife Marjorie, and children, Paul, Karen, Miriam, and Marlene.

At the annual meeting on October 26, 1960, Pastor Tungseth reported that Jeanne Burmeister had been hired as Bethel secretary and Bonnie Martensen as Parish Worker. He also requested that a young assistant pastor be hired. After some discussion, it was recommended that Bethel seek an assistant pastor for a two-year term as they had previously done.²⁹¹

According to lifetime member June Hain, sometime about 1960 Bethel women began making quilts. The pictures from that time show about ten women working on quilts, but also taking time for coffee and a little bit of lunch. They appear to work in the basement of the church

which is the same area the quilters use today. A short summary of the Bethel Quilters is presented in Appendix 11.²⁹²



Philip Heide

Reverend Philip Heide accepted a call as assistant pastor of Bethel for a two-year term and was installed on July 17, 1961.²⁹³ Like many young pastors, Reverend Heide was short of funds so at the time of his arrival, the Board of Trustees voted to purchase a stole for his use and also to pay his salary for the month of June.²⁹⁴

Pastor Heide's duties at Bethel included that of youth director, oversight of much of the visitation carried out by the staff, and he was in charge of part of the teaching program of the church in addition to study for his preaching responsibilities.²⁹⁵

When Bethel member Andrew Urness retired and moved to Florida, he donated his Rochester home next to the church to Augsburg College with the understanding that the college would offer the property to Bethel congregation for \$50,000 to be paid at \$5,000 per year with no interest charges.²⁹⁶ This purchase agreement was accepted at a June 1961 meeting of the congregation. The property became the parsonage for Pastor Tungseth and gave the church room for future growth should that be desirable. When the church council later decided to sell the oriental rugs that were in the house and replace them with carpeting, they wrote a letter to Mr. Urness explaining their reasoning and received a letter in return stating that he had no objection to their sale.²⁹⁷

At the same June 1961 meeting, the congregation decided to change the church year back to a calendar year and to extend the terms of the present church officers for 3 months to make their terms align with the new church year. Thirdly they voted to sell the parsonage on 7th Avenue SW and build a new one. This resulted in a gain of about \$5,000 that was applied to the church debt.²⁹⁸ Pastor Heide and his family moved into the newly constructed parsonage in October 1962.²⁹⁹

In March 1962, Pastor Tungseth and Pastor Heide attended teacher training for the Bethel Bible series in Madison Wisconsin. By January 1963, a lay teacher class had begun at Bethel.³⁰⁰ The Bethel Bible series was taught at Bethel for many years and a significant number of people in the congregation took advantage of this opportunity to better understand the Bible.

At a special congregational meeting January 8, 1963, the Articles of Incorporation and by-laws of Bethel English Lutheran Church were revised. The revisions included a change to the management structure of the congregation to eliminate the Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees and combine their duties into a newly defined church council. Term limitations were established for officers and council members and the quorum changed from 40 active members to 100 active members. These changes were approved by a vote of 125 to 0.³⁰¹

Pastor Heide left after his two-year assignment ended in order to return to graduate school.³⁰² His last sermon at Bethel was June 23, 1963.³⁰³ He received a call to a small church in New

York and was accepted at the graduate school of Princeton University in Princeton, New Jersey.³⁰⁴



John Serkland

The search for a new assistant pastor began in March 1963 when Mr. John Serkland was interviewed by the Council. He was scheduled to graduate from Augsburg Seminary in the spring. In addition to his seminary degree, Mr. Serkland had two years of clinical training at Fairview Hospital in Minneapolis. He was also pursuing a doctorate in Philosophy at the University of Minnesota. He planned to continue his classes at the same time as serving at Bethel. Mr. Serkland was invited to preach at the service on March 31, 1963. A three-year letter of call was authorized at a special meeting of the congregation April 3, 1963.³⁰⁵

In 1963 Bethel joined the American Lutheran Church when the merger with the Lutheran Free Church was finalized. During 1963, the congregational name was changed from Bethel English Lutheran Church to Bethel Lutheran Church. The first appearance of this change is in the Council minutes for April 10, 1963, and it continues to be used in the minutes thereafter. The Articles of Incorporation as amended January 30, 1963, and ratified on October 13, 1963 mark the official change of the name of the congregation.³⁰⁶ As a result of the merger of the two church bodies, Augsburg Seminary and Luther Seminary were combined with Augsburg staff joining Luther Seminary in Saint Paul.³⁰⁷

At the January 1964 annual meeting, the new church council was organized. The Board of Deacons and the Board of Trustees were eliminated, and the governance of the congregation was combined into one body. The new council first met February 11, 1964. At this same meeting, Mrs. McKibben, who had been the Bethel organist for many years resigned and a search for a new organist began. After a lengthy search, Dale Mundahl was hired to be the Bethel organist. His first service was September 6, 1964. Dale grew up in Rochester and had served as organist for Zumbro Lutheran Church during his high school years. He continued his organ lessons at Luther College and was hired by the college to play the organ for daily chapel and Sunday services during his junior and senior years thus he was an experienced organist when he came to Bethel. There was initially some concern because he was so young and would probably move on in a short time. This did not happen as Dale served as Bethel's organist for the next 46 years³⁰⁸



Dale Mundahl

The 1964 annual meeting also approved a call for a full-time pastor as Minister of Evangelism to begin service after July 1, 1964.³⁰⁹ The Minister of Evangelism's duties were defined at the March council meeting as well as his potential salary which was to include participation in the American Lutheran Church pension plan.



Earl Dreyer

Reverend Earl Dreyer was chosen and invited to preach Sunday May 31.³¹⁰ At a special congregational meeting after the service, a call to Reverend Dreyer as full-time pastor of Visitation and Evangelism was approved. Rental of a house at 2535 Elmcroft Drive SW was arranged for Pastor Dreyer and his wife, Marnie, and children, Lynn, Beth, and David. He was installed on September 20, 1964.³¹¹

Teacher training for the Bethel Bible Series was completed in the first half of 1964 and classes were scheduled to begin November 4 with nine teachers and 254 Bethel members attending.³¹²

With the merger of the American Lutheran Church (ALC) approved, Bethel began to consider the use of a common liturgy and hymn book. The change to the new liturgy would place Bethel in unity with the liturgical service of the American Lutheran Church. Pastor Tungseth suggested that this be introduced gradually to allow congregation members to become accustomed to the new liturgy.³¹³ At the February 1965 annual meeting it was decided to use the new liturgy two Sundays each month and assess the desires of the congregation regarding liturgy at the next annual meeting.³¹⁴ One of the complaints about the new liturgical service was that it took too much time away from the sermon.³¹⁵ The congregation voted to accept the new liturgy by a vote of 89 to 41 at the 1966 annual meeting.³¹⁶ By April 1968, the council recommended that Pastor Tungseth chant the liturgy for communion services. This was tried during the Easter season and received many favorable comments.³¹⁷

The 1965 congregational meeting also authorized Bethel to enter a corporation of American Lutheran Churches in Rochester to establish and operate a Lutheran Retirement Home in the city. The 1967 budget included 30 cents per member to support this facility.³¹⁸

When three acres of the Graham estate across 3rd Avenue SE from the church were available for sale in 1965, a special congregational meeting on June 15, 1965, authorized the church council to borrow up to \$66,000 to purchase and improve the property. The purchase was funded by refinancing the mortgage on the church properties which resulted in a mortgage balance of \$206,000 with a 15-year payback period. Pastor Tungseth spoke regarding the need for the property and how it would be an asset to the church. There was a delay in the availability of this property due to problems defining the boundaries. While this was going on, the money from the loan was invested in bonds to draw interest.³¹⁹ Bethel finally received title to the property on December 29, 1969.³²⁰ These lots have been used for parking, “without disrupting nature’s beauty.” since their purchase.³²¹

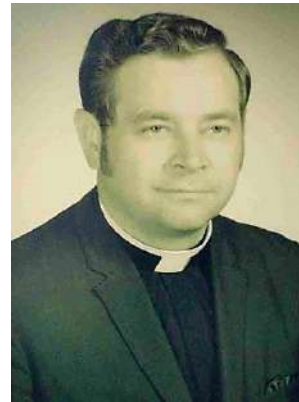


Robert Oudal

During 1965 there were several staff changes at Bethel. Carol Suddendorf retired as choir director effective September 1, 1965 and Robert Oudal was hired as her replacement. Mr. Oudal was a Bethel member and a respected Rochester music director having formed the Robert Oudal Chorale with 27 singers in 1962.³²² In July, Bonnie Martinson resigned as parish director and office secretary, Nancy Steffens, left in August. Marian Johnson was hired as an assistant to Pastor Tungseth to help with the administrative work and Marchetta Runkle was hired to complete the office staff.³²³

The parish education committee had been reviewing the education needs of Bethel children during 1965. As a result of that review the confirmation program was extended to include seventh graders making it a three-year program from seventh through ninth grades.

Pastor Serkland's three-year call ended in June 1966 and he left to continue his education at the University of Chicago. By late March the church council had reviewed several candidates to serve in place of Pastor Serkland and recommended that Reverend Roger Stensaas be called as Pastor of Education and Youth. Pastor Stensaas had graduated from Luther Seminary in 1960 and was then serving a two-congregation parish in Towner, North Dakota. He expressed a strong interest in this opportunity to concentrate on education and youth.³²⁴



Roger Stensaas

A special congregational meeting on April 17, 1966 approved sending a letter of call to Reverend Roger Stensaas as pastor with responsibility for youth and education starting August 1, 1966. By mid-August Pastor Stensaas had moved with his family to Rochester and begun his ministry at Bethel.

During the last months of 1966 an Adult Education Committee was formed to develop programs and classes for Bethel Adults. In addition to other classes, this committee assumed responsibility for the Bethel Bible Series. On October 19, 1966, ten adult education classes began, seven in the Bethel Bible Series, one on the Gospel of Mark, one of the Bible Book of Faith, and one marriage class led by Pastor Tungseth.³²⁵

The properties committee and the church council felt that the money used to rent a house for Pastor Dreyer could better be used to purchase land and construct a house for use as a parsonage. A special congregational meeting on May 7, 1967 authorized the purchase of land in the Meadow Park subdivision and construction of a four-bedroom house with the restriction that no more than \$25,000 be borrowed for the purpose. It was expected that volunteer work would be used to keep the cost at the limit proposed.³²⁶



Sandra Krueger

Marchetta Runkle resigned as office secretary on March 31, 1967, and Sandra Krueger was hired to replace her in June. During the interim, part time secretarial help was hired.³²⁷

Pastor Tungseth was a strong supporter of civil rights and encouraged Bethel to become informed regarding the situation regarding black people in the United States. On May 26, 1968 Mr. Earl McGee, a black Lutheran layman, spoke to the congregation at all three services.³²⁸

In September he presented a class on "Negro History and Minority Sensitivity."³²⁹ In October an invitation was extended to the NAACP to hold their October meeting at Bethel.³³⁰

By 1969 the number of people attending services and Sunday school caused significant crowding and the decision was made to hold three services and have three Sunday school sessions each week beginning in September of that year. This schedule continued through May of each year. Two services were held on Sundays during June, July, and August.³³¹ According to James Wigness, the Council chairman at that time, "the change presented problems in dealing with the short time between services, the need for more ushers...but the gains for the Sunday school have far outweighed the problems."³³² Mr. Wigness also praised the team ministry of the pastors and the positive effect this approach has on the ministry of Bethel.³³³

The one-hundred-year anniversary of the congregation was celebrated with a series of events beginning May 4, 1969, with a newspaper article in the Rochester Post Bulletin. On May 9, a TV Program showed a model of the first church building and pictures of the second and third buildings and included an interview with Pastor Tungseth. On Sunday May 11, a guest speaker Reverend Freeman Sveom who had been a Bethel confirmand in 1926, spoke on "The Church Reflects on the Past." There was special music by the choir and orchestra at the services that day.

Two weeks later Dr. Melford Knutson, president of the Southeastern Minnesota District of the ALC, spoke. This service included recognition of the 25th anniversary of the ordination of Pastor Tungseth. A special picture directory commemorating the centennial was distributed during May.

Centennial Sunday was set for June 15, 1969 with services at the Mayo Civic Auditorium and Arena. The speaker was Dr. John Stensvaag, former president of the Lutheran Free Church. Former Bethel Pastors Vaageness, Hansen, and Serkland attended and gave greetings and special music was arranged by the Robert Oudal the Bethel music director.³³⁴ At 3 P.M. that afternoon there was a Centennial Historical Program with Mrs. W. R. McKibben in charge.³³⁵



Beginning in 1970 the council approved a plan by Bethel member Lloyd Lawrence to light the cross above the altar at his own expense. Mr. Lawrence completed this project by the time of the May Council meeting when a letter of thanks was sent.³³⁶

The picture at left shows the lighted cross in the sanctuary with Christmas decorations around it. This cross was refinished without the lighting and moved to the new

sanctuary when it was built in 2004.

The process of hiring a parish worker began with the job description of duties included with the February 1971 Council minutes. Marlyn Borcharding accepted the position effective May 1, 1971. Since office space in the main church office was tight, Miss Borcharding and Pastor Stensaas occupied offices in the Youth Center on the upper floor of the education wing of the church.³³⁷

Preparation for early communion by fifth grade students proceeded during 1971. Pastor Tungseth presented a plan that included sermons to explain the rationale for early communion followed by communion preparation for eighth and ninth grade students with their parents. The first communion for this group was planned for the Advent season. Seventh grade students were prepared in a similar manner with their first communion on Ash Wednesday and finally fifth and sixth grade students were prepared and offered their first communion during Holy Week.³³⁸

Dean Smith, a student at Wartburg Seminary requested that he be considered for an internship at Bethel. After some consideration he was accepted and offered an intern position from September 1, 1972 to September 1, 1973. He accepted and began his internship September 1, 1972.³³⁹ From that date he received a salary and auto allowance listed as an educational stipend in the treasurer's report. Funding for the internship program was provided by interest paid on a loan Bethel had previously made to Augsburg College.³⁴⁰

Pastor Tungseth received a call to Salem Lutheran Church in West Saint Paul to begin as of November 1, 1972. In his announcement of this call, he expressed his gratitude for the years spent at Bethel. The council voted to release Pastor Tungseth from his call at Bethel so that he could accept this opportunity. Fifteen Bethel members were chosen to serve on a call committee for a new pastor.³⁴¹ Ardell Brede was elected chair of the committee and Gladys Roberts served as secretary.³⁴²

Chapter 4 Pastor Arthur Bagaason 1973 to 1986



Arthur Bagaason

A special congregational meeting was held on January 8, 1973 to consider a call to Reverend Arthur Bagaason who was presently pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Owatonna. At this meeting, the call committee explained the process they went through to choose a person to serve as Senior Pastor of Bethel. This included preparing a list of duties required of a senior pastor. They met with Bishop Agrimson to understand the call process and collect a list of names of pastors who were interested in a new call and who might fit Bethel's needs. Some members questioned why Pastor Dreyer was not considered for the position. Pastor Dreyer replied that when the call committee met with himself and Pastor Stensaas, he felt he could not answer regarding his desire for the position without knowing the job requirements. After consideration, the call committee felt they wanted Pastor Dreyer to remain in the position he now held as it was a very important function for the church, and he was doing an excellent job. After much more discussion, it was moved and seconded to issue a letter of call the Reverend Bagaason. The motion passed by a vote of 167 to 58.³⁴³ The letter of call was approved by the Church Council at their January meeting. Pastor Bagaason began service on May 1, 1973 and was installed as Bethel Pastor by Bishop Agrimson on June 24, 1973.³⁴⁴

At the beginning of Pastor Bagaason's ministry at Bethel, the idea of team ministry was proposed with the job title of all of the pastors defined by their letters of call rather than using Senior Pastor, Assistant Pastor, etc.³⁴⁵ Pastors Dreyer and Stensaas were officially thanked for all the work and time they had given during the interim period.³⁴⁶ Because Pastor Stensaas was not able to participate in educational opportunities because of the added workload, the Executive Committee voted to give him \$300 for further study. Pastor Stensaas resigned his position at Bethel in May 1973. He was later a long-time pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Coon Rapids, Minnesota.³⁴⁷

The Parish education committee recommended that the pastor who succeeded Pastor Stensaas give religious training to teachers and conduct worship services for the children and that a Parish Education Director be hired. They expected this person to be trained in current teaching methods and implement these methods in the Sunday school program.³⁴⁸

A call committee to replace Pastor Stensaas was selected by the church council with the approval of the congregation.³⁴⁹ A job description for Pastor of Youth and Education was approved. After several meetings during July and August, the call committee recommended a call to Reverend Paul Baker from Messiah Lutheran Church in Vancouver, Washington. Pastor Baker accepted the call and began his ministry at Bethel in mid-September.³⁵⁰ During his time at Bethel, Pastor Baker worked to develop an individualized confirmation program that allowed students to determine when they were ready to be



Paul Baker

confirmed.³⁵¹ This program included classes for seventh grade students with more individualized instruction in eighth and ninth grades. Sermon outlines were required from seventh and eighth grade students.³⁵² Pastor Baker was also responsible for the Adult Education program which he felt was one of the more important roles in religious education. While he was often frustrated with the low attendance at Adult Education programs, he was encouraged that so many members came to bible study and had taken the Bethel Bible series earlier.³⁵³



Barb Milburn

When Marlyn Borcharding resigned as Parish Worker effective November 1, 1973, Barbara Milburn was hired as Youth and Education Director. Her creative talents and enthusiasm were appreciated by the Sunday school students and older youth as well as the congregation in general. Barb began work in mid-November 1973 and continued in that position for the next 14 years.³⁵⁴

In September Pastor Dreyer announced his resignation to accept a call to Our Saviors Lutheran Church in Canby, Minnesota. His resignation was accepted and his last day at Bethel was October 31, 1973.³⁵⁵ Pastor Dreyer was given the full amount of the planned Education Stipend of \$1,000 with details to be worked out between him and the Executive committee to carefully consider the tax exposures.

Changes to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of Bethel were recommended by the Council and approved at a special meeting of the congregation on September 22, 1974. These changes reflect the fact that Bethel now had several pastors and the term administrative pastor now defined what had previously been senior pastor and reference to associate pastors was removed and the terms used in their letter of call became their job description to emphasize the team ministry that both Pastor Tungseth and Pastor Bagaason favored. Also, the quorum for legally called meetings was changed from 100 to 50 members.³⁵⁶



John Quello

A call committee of seven Bethel members was proposed by the Executive committee and approved by the Council at their September 18 meeting.³⁵⁷ The call committee recommended that a call as Pastor of Life and Growth be extended to Reverend John Quello, presently pastor of Saint Paul's Lutheran Church in Northeast Minneapolis. A congregational meeting held December 9 supported that call. Reverend Quello was installed as a Bethel Pastor on February 17, 1974.³⁵⁸ One of Pastor Quello's first reports to the council was in regard to TV broadcast of the 9:45 A.M. service which would be aired at 11:00 AM. Extra lighting would be needed to do this.³⁵⁹ His report to the 1977 annual meeting indicated that much of the cost of this ministry was met by donations and the cost had been reduced to \$50 per week.³⁶⁰

During 1974 the topic of pastor's retirement was addressed. A part of this discussion involved the sale of parsonages to the pastors occupying them with a housing allowance paid to them to

replace the free use of a parsonage. This would allow the pastors to gain equity over time. The first parsonage sale was the Meadow Park house purchased by Pastor Quello and his wife Eileen. This sale was approved at a congregational meeting on December 7, 1975.³⁶¹ In exchange for not being provided a parsonage, Pastor Quello's housing allowance was increased from \$100 to \$550 per month.³⁶² In the justification for the sale, it is stated that all of the other ALC churches in Rochester provide a housing allowance for their pastors. While this does place the property back on the tax rolls, "since the pastor and his family enjoy the benefits of police and fire protection and other services as well as the benefits of the public school system it seems to be appropriate to pay taxes on such property."³⁶³

Pastor Bagaason was closer to retirement age than the other pastors and the council decided to treat his retirement differently. Fifteen hundred dollars per year was budgeted beginning in 1975 to be placed in the ALC Tax Sheltered Annuity Fund in Pastor Bagaason's name. In addition, he could continue to stay in the 3rd Avenue parsonage until his retirement.³⁶⁴ However, during 1978 Pastor Bagaason purchased a home and began to receive a housing allowance to recognize that he was no longer living in a church owned property.³⁶⁵ The former parsonage at 836 3rd Ave SE was then used for Youth meetings, Sunday school, wedding receptions, circle meetings and other church related functions.³⁶⁶

During September 1975, Sandra Krueger, the office secretary was married and continued to work with her married name, Sandra Junge³⁶⁷ In March 1976 Marian Johnson's long term secretarial service to Bethel was terminated due to health problems.³⁶⁸ Mary Kraft was hired as receptionist secretary starting August 10, 1976, to replace Miss Johnson.³⁶⁹ When Sandra Junge resigned to have a baby, Gladys Roberts replaced her on the secretarial staff.³⁷⁰

As a result of the chaotic end to the United States participation in the Vietnamese war in 1975, several Vietnamese refugee families were settled in Rochester. The council discussed the issue of support for refugee families and decided to propose that the congregation support two families at that time.³⁷¹ The resettlement effort was coordinated by a committee chaired by James Wigness. By August, one of the families was self-supporting while the other still needed some assistance.³⁷² Both families moved to California during the summer of 1976 to escape the Minnesota cold weather.³⁷³

In March 1980 two Hmong refugee families were supported. Unlike the Vietnamese who came from an urban environment, the Hmong were from the hill country of northern Laos, spoke no English and were not used to an urban setting. The father of the family was able to find employment at the YMCA where he worked until September when the family moved to St Paul to be near relatives. A third Hmong family was supported in 1981.

In 1985 Bethel supported a family from Cambodia who had escaped the killings in their country and had spent time in a refugee camp in Thailand before coming to the United States. The support for the Cambodian families was coordinated by Jean Mortenson chair of the Bethel Social Mission Team, in a joint venture with Redeemer Lutheran in Rochester. Bethel families

responded with needed household items and financial support that enabled these families to settle in the United States.³⁷⁴

The congregation was encouraged to send letters and cards to present to Reverend and Mrs. Hansen on their 60th Wedding anniversary. These were presented to the at the 9 A.M. service on June 13, 1976.³⁷⁵ On August 15, an appreciation Sunday was held in honor of Pastor Bagaason's 25th Ordination anniversary. His brother, Carroll, was invited to speak and a pen and pencil set was presented as a token of Bethel's appreciation for his years of service.³⁷⁶

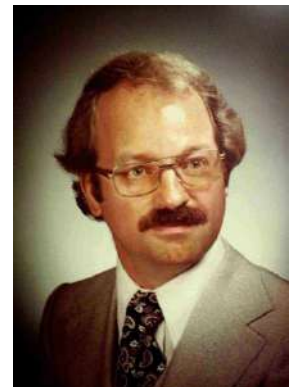


John Freidli

At the annual meeting in 1977, the need for a fourth pastor was discussed. A call committee was formed in February and recommended that a call be given to Reverend John Freidli of Lakewood, Colorado, as Pastor of Counselling and Visitation. Pastor Freidli had a Master of Theology in Psychology and Counselling and had 17 years' experience in churches in several areas of the country. This call was approved by the congregation at a special meeting May 15, 1977.³⁷⁷ Pastor Freidli began his ministry at Bethel in June 1977. He preached his first sermon to the congregation on July 7, 1977. Pastor Freidli and his wife, Ruth, chose to purchase their own home in Rochester and so he was given a housing

allowance to compensate. Pastor Freidli was concerned that Bethel have a family centered ministry and in addition to individual and marriage counselling, over the years he led many programs in marriage enrichment and family enrichment.³⁷⁸

Pastor Paul Baker left in November 1977 to accept a call in his home state of Arizona. Another call committee was formed and chose to call Reverend John Hinderlie as Pastor of Education and Youth. Pastor Hinderlie was a 1972 graduate of Luther Seminary and had recently returned from serving as pastor of a Lutheran church in West Germany. The call committee also noted that his wife, Diane, was a well-qualified musician. The congregation voted unanimously to call him.³⁷⁹ Pastor Hinderlie joined the Bethel pastoral staff and preached his first sermon on February 22, 1978. The Hinderlie family chose to live in the parsonage that Pastor Baker had vacated.



John Hinderlie

During 1977, Pastor Quello was granted a month's educational leave without pay to study at the Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Study in Jerusalem, Israel. He felt he had gained valuable insights from this study that would benefit his ministry for years to come.³⁸⁰

In 1978 Bethel began purchasing lots on the same block as the church with the view of future expansion.³⁸¹ The houses on the purchased lots were used as rental units and occasionally for refugee housing. The purchase of additional property to the east of the church building was approved in October 1987 and another in December 1979.³⁸² In November the sale of the parsonage at 2205 18th St NW to Pastor Hinderlie was approved.³⁸³ The Hinderlies signed the papers to close the sale in January 1979.³⁸⁴

Also, during 1978, the congregation voted to refurbish the fellowship hall to make the space more usable for classes, meetings, etc. The installation of portable walls, acoustical ceiling tiles, and air conditioning was approved at a cost of \$28,000.³⁸⁵



Bethel in June 1978³⁸⁶

Bethel property was inundated by flood waters during the 100-year flood on June 6, 1978. The whole church basement was filled with water. Pastor Quello, who was familiar with what flood waters could do to a building, went into the nearly full basement to do what could be done to make the cleanup and repair easier. Assisted by Pastor Hinderlie, they opened the doors to all the rooms so that the rooms could later be entered without forcing the doors and probably breaking them. In addition to

significant damage to the church, ninety Bethel families were affected by the flood.

After the flood waters abated, the cleanup and reconstruction began. First the silt needed to be removed and then the task of refinishing and repainting could begin. Estimates of damage were in the range of \$125,000 and thousands of hours of labor of all kinds were donated by members and friends. The church was able to obtain an SBA flood damage loan to help cover a part of the costs of refinishing the damaged area. As a result of the flood, Bethel became a part of the Rochester Area Churches Emergency Response that gave financial aid and comfort to flood victims.³⁸⁷ The construction of flood walls to safeguard the lower level of the church was completed during 1979. This would protect the building from another 100-year flood level.³⁸⁸

When Mrs. Hansen died in 1979, Reverend Hansen moved into the Stewartville Nursing Home, so a decision was made to sell the house he and his wife had been occupying since his retirement.³⁸⁹

Pastor John Quello resigned his position in November 1978 to enter a different form of ministry at Piper, Jaffery, & Hopwood. He and his wife, Eileen, remained in Rochester until January 1984 when they moved to Sioux Falls, South Dakota.³⁹⁰ By the end of 1978 a call committee had been formed and was interviewing candidates to fill the Life and Growth position on the staff.³⁹¹



Don Deines

In August 1979 a letter of call was sent to Reverend Donald Deines to fill the position of Pastor of Life and Growth. He graduated from Luther Seminary in 1971 and was presently serving a congregation in Underwood, Iowa.³⁹² Pastor Deines and his wife, Judy, had three children. Pastor Deines began his service at Bethel in October 1979.

One of the things that many of the Bethel pastors remarked on in their reports to the annual meeting was the joy of working together in a collegial team ministry and the freedom they enjoyed in their role

within the team. Pastor Deines first report to the annual meeting reflects this feeling, “I have come to the conclusion that I must be working on the best staff in the ALC. There is enjoyment as we work together and a real sense of team ministry and mutual respect. This type of team ministry is a treasure.”³⁹³

In February 1980, the Deines family moved from the Bethel parsonage into a home at 820 26th St NW purchased by Bethel and sold to Pastor Deines on a three-year contract for deed. This transaction had been agreed when Reverend Deines was interviewed prior to coming to Bethel.³⁹⁴

By the mid 1970’s space for Sunday school classes began to be a problem. This was somewhat alleviated when Pastor Bagaason moved out of the 3rd Avenue SE parsonage into his own home but was still an issue. Like earlier in the 1950’s, resolution of the space issue took time, but was eventually resolved by adding more space.³⁹⁵ In the meantime, room dividers were installed in some of the Sunday school rooms and in the fellowship hall in the basement to allow more classes to use that space.³⁹⁶

When Bethel began using the new liturgy in 1979 most of the congregation liked the change except it required following along in the book until the words of the liturgy became more familiar. One complaint in a letter to the church council regarded the change from “holy Christian church” to “holy catholic church” in the creed. Pastor Bagaason agreed to explain the change in Sunday morning services.³⁹⁷ The complaint against the new form was strong enough that some congregation members were inserting copies of the old form into the new hymn books. The executive committee decided to remove the copies as the insertion was done without council approval and the paper clips used to hold them in place were damaging the hymn books.³⁹⁸

After several discussions and meetings with those opposing the new creed wording, the Executive committee determined that most congregation members favored the new liturgy and felt that the issue was closed.³⁹⁹ The concern by some members continued and it was decided to send a letter to congregation members asking their opinion of the new creed.⁴⁰⁰ At the January 25, 1981 annual meeting a resolution “that Bethel Lutheran Congregation gives formal acceptance to the Lutheran Book of Worship in its entirety” was proposed. An amendment was offered to strike the words “in its entirety” and replace with “with replacement of and use of the traditional Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed as found printed in the red Service Book and Hymnal on pages 4 and 5.” After much discussion, the amendment failed by a vote of 148 to 67. Following the rejection of the amendment, the original resolution was passed.⁴⁰¹

The church mortgage was paid off in September 1980 and a special service was held on September 18 to burn the document.⁴⁰²

During 1981 the computer committee of Bethel recommended the purchase of a computer for word processing and record keeping. The computer was scheduled for delivery the week after Easter and would be located in Barb Milburn’s office while she would relocate to the parish house until a 3rd floor office was ready for her. A three-day word-processing class was offered to

any Bethel employee who would be using the computer.⁴⁰³ Congregational treasurer, David Sipple, advised the council that he planned to computerize the accounting system before his term was over.⁴⁰⁴ From that time on, computers were an integral part of the Bethel record keeping system.⁴⁰⁵

By the end of 1982 it was apparent that two areas of operations would need to be dealt with in the near future. The first was the need for a lay administrator to take some of the day-to-day administrative tasks from the pastoral staff to allow them more time to look after the spiritual needs of the congregation. At the October council meeting, Congregational President Bruce Odenbach presented a list of suggested duties of a lay administrator that were given to the council for their consideration. This was the first step in defining the tasks of the position before any interviews could be held with prospective administrators.⁴⁰⁶ Money for the lay administrator's salary was placed in the 1983 budget.⁴⁰⁷

At the same meeting, Myron Snesrud reporting for the Long-Range Planning Committee introduced Byron Stadsvold representing the architectural firm that had been engaged to design an addition to the church. The plans included a new unit on the south end of the present building with plans for an elevator, a new entrance, storage for choir robes, more meeting areas and new office space. Mr. Stadsvold suggested a time frame of 56 weeks from initial design to completion of construction.⁴⁰⁸

The Council decided that the lay administrator position was the most important issue and that it would be included in the Annual Meeting material but that the building addition information would take too much time to properly describe and should be presented to the congregation at a special meeting for that purpose.⁴⁰⁹ At their next meeting, the council went on record to support the concept of expansion as presented by the Long Range Planning Committee.⁴¹⁰ A search committee for the lay administrator began meeting in February. In preparing a job description it was suggested that the job title be "Business Manager."⁴¹¹ With the new business manager position, the Administrative Pastors job description also needed to be changed. The Personnel committee was working on making those changes.⁴¹² After interviewing several applicants, Mr. Loren Hansen was hired as Bethel Business Manager to begin July 1, 1983.⁴¹³

Pastor Hinderlie resigned his position at Bethel effective March 15, 1983 to accept a pastoral position at First Lutheran Church in St Louis Park, Minnesota. His resignation was accepted with regret.⁴¹⁴ Barb Milburn agreed to cover Pastor Hinderlie's educational responsibilities in the learning center in the interim.⁴¹⁵ The call committee to replace Pastor Hinderlie began meeting in March.⁴¹⁶

A congregational meeting on was held on August 28, 1983 to approve a letter of call to Reverend Rolf Torgerson-Bell as Bethel's Youth and Education Pastor. He was a recent graduate of Luther Seminary and had grown up in California.⁴¹⁷ He accepted immediately and was installed on October 16 which appropriately was Youth and Laity Sunday at Bethel.⁴¹⁸

The building project was presented to the congregation at the 1984 Annual meeting. Many of the questions from the congregation were answered at that time. A special meeting to approve the plans was announced for March 4, 1984.⁴¹⁹



Rolf Torgerson-Bell

That meeting was held to vote on the sale of the Parish house, proceeding with plans for the 1984 Building Addition and Renovation, and financing the proposed Building Addition. The presentation was made to show how the building program fits into the total mission of the church. The proposal to build passed by one vote over the two-thirds majority of voters needed giving the Long-Range planning committee and the church council the go ahead to proceed with final plans.⁴²⁰ By early April a Building Gifts and Pledges task force had been formed to assure funding for the building project approved in March.⁴²¹

An account was then set up at First National Bank to hold money for the building project. Pastor Bagaason, Loren Hansen, and Frank Ruhl were approved signers for any transactions through this account. Training sessions were begun to prepare people for Every Member canvassing for the project and pledges for a three-year building program gift began to come in.⁴²² The pledges from this fund drive amounted to less than half of the amount needed to build at that time. At a Special Congregational meeting in July, the members attending voted to table the motion to build until the church finances were in a better condition.⁴²³ At the 1988 congregational meeting, this motion was brought back to the floor for consideration. After discussion to clarify the issue and its ramifications for future plans, the motion was defeated. This freed the building committee to consider the space needs of the congregation without being tied to old plans.⁴²⁴

In order to build to the south of the church, the Parish House needed to be moved from its present site. It was decided that the house should be sold to someone who would move it off the property. The house was purchased by Charles and Sharon Silvernagel and was to be moved at their cost to another lot.⁴²⁵ They hoped to move the house off the property toward the south which the council approved providing they did not need to cut down any trees.⁴²⁶

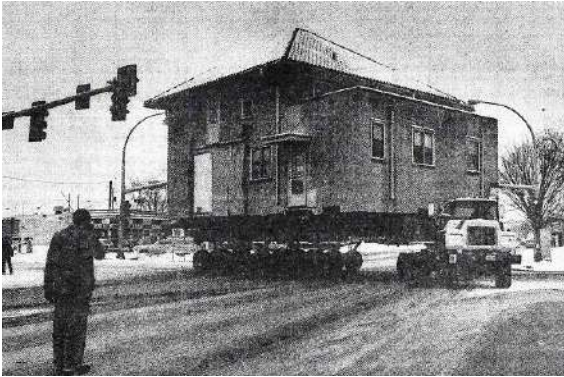


Photo from Rochester Post Bulletin⁴²⁷
 a significant addition to the house was erected.⁴³⁰

It was not until early September that the amount owed by the Silvernagel's for the parish house was paid. They arranged to move the house off the church lot beginning September 17.⁴²⁸ Because of the need for approvals from various levels of government and resolution of the issue of the weight of the house in moving over the 4th Street bridge, the Parish house was not finally moved until January 24, 1985.⁴²⁹ It was moved to their property at 3451 Hidden Hills NE and a

After an investigation by the Hand Bell committee, they proposed ordering three octaves of bells from the Schulmerich Company in April 1985. They wanted to order immediately to beat any price increase and to have the bells ready for fall services. The plan was to start with an adult group and expand to Junior and Senior high school students later. This plan was approved, and a Beacon article was planned to inform the congregation.⁴³¹ The hand bells were dedicated on September 29, 1985.⁴³²

Later in 1985, a concern with the worship schedule on Sunday mornings was expressed by both the Worship Committee and Adult Education. The worship committee wanted to encourage family worship instead of children being sent to Sunday school while their parents worshipped in the sanctuary. Adult Education was concerned with low attendance at the classes that were offered when parents went to worship while their children were in Sunday school.⁴³³

A change in the Sunday schedule was proposed with worship and education at 8 A.M. and 11 AM, worship only hour at 9 AM, and education only at 10 AM. This would allow families to worship together and then children could attend Sunday school while their parents attended the adult education program. After much discussion, the council approved this schedule for a one-year trial.⁴³⁴ By October the Adult Education committee reported a notable increase in class attendance due to the new schedule.⁴³⁵ A special congregational meeting confirmed that the new schedule should continue to be used in the fall of 1986.⁴³⁶

By November 1987, the Worship Committee noted that in spite of a very fine Adult Education program, attendance was not very good, and they recommended a return to the three service, three-hour program on Sunday mornings.⁴³⁷ The Adult Education Committee felt that there was still an increase over pre-1986 attendance and that their program had suffered from lack of pastoral support due to the resignation of Pastor Torgerson-Bell (see page 52).⁴³⁸

Pastor Bagaason announced in June 1985 that he planned to retire on June 1, 1986. In response to this announcement, the council formed a study committee to investigate the ministry needs of the congregation and to recommend qualifications for a replacement pastor. Pastor Bagaason's retirement decision was published in the July 22 issue of the Beacon.⁴³⁹ A call committee to find a new administrative pastor chaired by Jack Wiltsie was formed in January. At that time Pastor

Bagaason stated that he would definitely retire by June 1 but was willing to retire earlier if a new pastor could start before June 1.⁴⁴⁰

The annual meeting of the congregation was changed in 1986 from the usual evening meeting to Sunday afternoon with a lunch served at the church after the 11 A.M. service and the meeting immediately after the meal.⁴⁴¹ It was hoped that more people would be able to attend at the new time. This practice has continued to the present date with occasional modifications.

Chapter 5 Pastor John Braaten 1986 to 1996

A July 20, 1986 special congregational meeting approved a letter of call be sent to Reverend John Braaten presently serving a congregation at Mayville, North Dakota. He was a graduate of Luther College and Luther Seminary and was ordained in 1966. At various times he was Youth Minister, Education Pastor, and Administrative Pastor in the congregations he has served. Reverend Braaten and his wife Julie had three children, a daughter Heather age 14, and two sons, Jay age 20 and Jeff age 21.⁴⁴² In the interim



John Braaten

between the retirement of Pastor Bagaason and the arrival of Pastor Braaten, Business Manager Loren Hansen carried out many of the duties of the Administrative Pastor and Pastor Les Peterson of Stewartville served as Visitation Pastor on a part-time basis.⁴⁴³ Pastor Braaten's first day as Bethel's Pastor of Administration was September 16. He was installed on October 5, 1986.⁴⁴⁴ As part of his move to Rochester, Pastor Braaten requested financial assistance from the congregation to purchase a house. It was agreed that Bethel would offer a \$28,000 loan secured by a lake cottage owned by the Braatens. The source of funding for this loan was a Bethel Special Account for House purchases, sales, and rentals.⁴⁴⁵

In May 1986 Pastor Freidli and his wife, Ruth, planned to build a new house and requested that the congregation allow them to store their personal goods and live in the church owned house at 807 4th Ave SE. It was decided that they could use the house and garage for a monthly rental of \$400 on a month-to-month basis until their new house was ready with the understanding that the Sunday school would need to use the main floor for four classrooms during September and October. Pastor Freidli accepted the offer made by the Executive Committee.⁴⁴⁶

Bethel member Van Bredeson was ordained at the 10 A.M. worship service at Bethel on September 28, 1986. Mr. Bredeson had been supported by Bethel during his years at Luther Seminary. He requested former pastor John Hinderlie to preach the sermon at his ordination.⁴⁴⁷

Bethel received a letter from the Attorney for the Petrich estate regarding the sale of the house at 801 4th Avenue SE. The offer to sell contained the condition that the church only use the property as a parsonage or primary residence and that the property would revert to the estate heirs if used for other purposes. An attorney, Roger Peterson, reviewed this restriction for the church council and recommended that the church not purchase the property with that limitation. He commented that the restriction could be tested in court after purchase but recommended that Bethel rather make an offer on the property without the restraint. The property was later sold to another party with the restrictions removed.⁴⁴⁸

At the 1987 annual meeting, the congregation voted to approve a resolution that the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches merge to become the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The

constitution of the ALC required that congregations vote on the proposed merger with each ALC member congregation having one vote to approve or disapprove the merger. A no vote was not a vote to terminate membership in the ALC. The yes vote from Bethel was sent to the central offices of the ALC to be counted with all the others.⁴⁴⁹ The ELCA officially came into existence on January 1, 1988.⁴⁵⁰

At a special congregational meeting held March 15, 1987, the Bethel constitution article XII, 1 (a) was changed so that the congregational president no longer needed to have previously served on the church council for at least one year. Instead, the article was changed to require that the president have been a member of Bethel for at least two years and be an active participant in the life of Bethel. Previous Church Council service was preferred. Following the favorable vote on the constitutional change, Arnie Bigbee, who had not served on the church council, was elected congregational president.⁴⁵¹

Pastor Torgerson-Bell submitted his resignation letter to the Personnel Committee on August 4, 1987.⁴⁵² In his letter he expressed some disappointment with his dealings with Personnel in regard to salary and home ownership assistance which he did not feel was well enough defined in his letter of call. He also expressed his joy at working with the youth and people of Bethel and promised to do all in his power to make the pastoral transition as fluid and easy as possible. His last day of service at Bethel was October 20, but he had been on vacation or continuing education beginning September 8.⁴⁵³

At about the same time both Barb Milburn and Pastor Deines resigned. Farewell receptions were held for these three on successive Sundays beginning September 6. Before they left, Pastor Rolf and Barb recommended that two half-time positions be created for an Education coordinator and a Youth coordinator. The Personnel Committee began interviews immediately and offered the position of Education Coordinator to Jorgie Livingston.⁴⁵⁴ It was not until January 1989 that the part time Youth Director, Sue Langrens, was hired. She shared an office with Jorgie.⁴⁵⁵

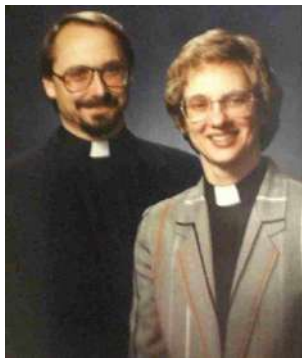
By mid-September two call committees had been formed to call a Pastor of Youth Ministries and a Pastor of Growth Ministries for Bethel. The call committee's first task was to provide a job description for each position.⁴⁵⁶ Additionally, in response to some of Pastor Torgerson-Bell's expressed disappointments a Housing Policy for Incoming Pastors was adopted, and the job descriptions of the pastors included approximate number of preaching assignments per year.⁴⁵⁷

In November Loren Hansen resigned as Business Manager effective January 31, 1988. This resignation raised a concern as this was the fourth staff member to resign in as many months. It also raised the question of who was responsible for hiring and firing lay staff members. The constitution could be interpreted to require congregational approval for such actions. It was agreed that the Personnel Committee should bring all recommendations to the Council and that further discussion between parties was desirable.⁴⁵⁸

In October 1987, Pastor Robert Onkka was introduced to the council. He was a retired pastor having last served a congregation in Zumbrota. Pastor Onkka was to be the Assisting Pastor during the interim until the new pastors could be called.⁴⁵⁹ His employment was continued on an ad hoc basis and he later took the position of part-time Assisting Pastor. His job was to help with visitation and also assist in any other area that was required. He was known for his friendly and outgoing manner and his brief reports at Annual meetings, “I still like it here,” or alternately “I like it here even better.”



Robert Onkka



Gary and Mary Sue
Dreier

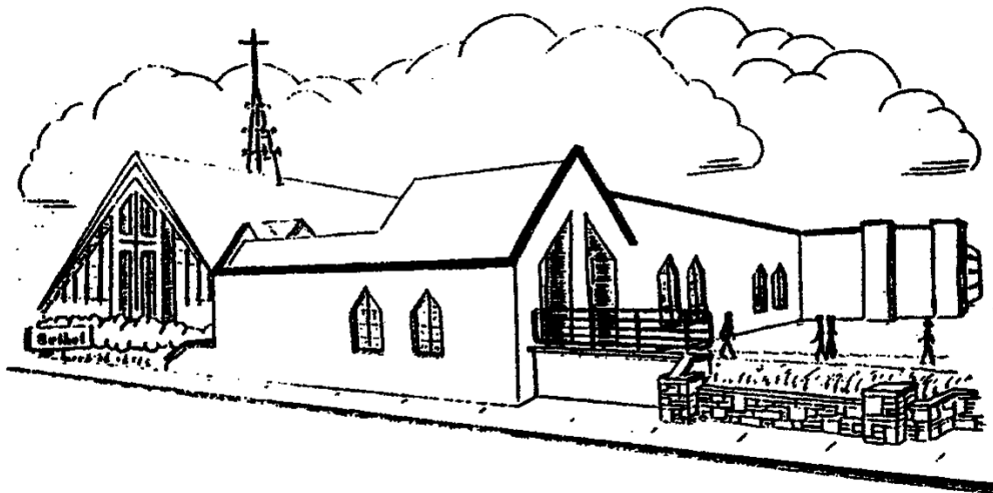
A special congregational meeting was called in January 1988 to approve the recommendation to call Gary and Mary Sue Dreier to share the position of Pastor of Growth Ministries at Bethel. They currently were co-pastors at Highland Prairie and Elstad Lutheran churches in Peterson, Minnesota. The motion to approve the call was passed unanimously by the congregation.⁴⁶⁰ The Dreiers began their ministry at Bethel on March 1, 1988, and were installed on March 20, 1988.⁴⁶¹

After defeating the tabled motion regarding the building project proposed in 1984, the 1988 annual congregational meeting addressed what should be done next with respect to building expansion. The motion was made to hire an architect with a cost up to \$15,000 to again study the space needs of Bethel and propose plans to meet them. There were many questions regarding the need for a new sanctuary, or just more space for education rooms, staff offices, and conference rooms. There was also a concern regarding the affordability of a new building with the present congregational giving patterns and the need to keep the congregation informed of all steps along the way. Following this discussion, the motion passed.⁴⁶² After many meetings with the building committee, staff, and congregation the chosen architect, B E Architects presented a preliminary project cost estimate of \$3,319,200.⁴⁶³ It was the opinion of the Building Committee that Bethel could raise about \$2,500,000 for a building project. A meeting was planned for Bethel committees, staff, and the council to explain the new design and discuss options.⁴⁶⁴

By the 1989 Annual meeting many of the staff members, pastor and lay alike, commented that the lack of space was inhibiting the ability of the church to fully carry out its mission. Arnie Bigbee, the congregational president stated the need clearly, “Our congregation has over 4,300 members making it the 17th largest in the ELCA. It is time to build a facility to enable us to carry out our mission in Rochester.” The building committee was given approval to proceed with the plans previously presented as well as employing the services of Lutheran Laity Movement to assist in the fund-raising program.⁴⁶⁵ When the total pledges plus the amount already in the building fund totaled \$1,321,574.96, the building committee was instructed to

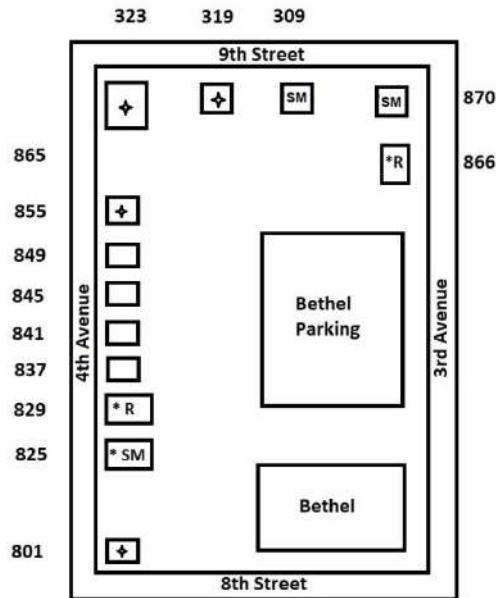
study alternatives that would partially finish the structure which could then be completed when more funds were available.⁴⁶⁶

This changed in 1990 when a special congregational meeting in May gave the go ahead for the complete project and the purchase of the Gile property on 4th Avenue which was needed to provide the space for the development.⁴⁶⁷ When there were problems obtaining the financing for the building, the congregation voted to rescind the previous approval and complete the project in two phases, the first to include a narthex, office space, and more class room space followed by phase two to build the new sanctuary. Finally, at a May 1991 special congregational meeting, additional funds were voted to complete phase 1 of the proposed addition.⁴⁶⁸ The new addition was ready for occupation and was dedicated on September 8, 1991.⁴⁶⁹ The new structure significantly improved handicapped access to Bethel by providing a ramped entry to the narthex and the installation of an elevator to move between floors.⁴⁷⁰ Bethel was certified as handicapped accessible by September 1992.⁴⁷¹



Sketch of 1991 Addition on the cover of the 125-year history

Since the Gile property space at 825 4th Avenue SE would not be needed until phase 2 of the building project, it was decided to use it as rental property in the meantime. The first rental was for temporary housing to a Laotian family who paid a nominal rent.⁴⁷² The Social Missions committee was authorized to use several of the houses on the block owned by Bethel for refugee housing. The remaining Bethel owned houses were rented at market rate.



Bethel Block in 1990

- * Bethel Owned
- R Rental SM Social Missions
- ✦ Bethel has first option to Buy

The figure at the left shows the church owned houses on the Bethel block as well as those with which the church had an option as first buyer in 1990.

In July 1992, Gladys Jensen offered her house at 829 4th Avenue SE to Bethel. The purchase of this property was accepted by the congregation in September 1992.⁴⁷³ This property purchase continued the Bethel process of acquiring property on the same block as the church to allow future expansion when the congregation decided it was necessary.⁴⁷⁴

At the annual meeting in 1994 the congregation approved the purchase of the Bruce property at 865 3rd Avenue SE to further enhance the expansion capabilities of the church parking needs.⁴⁷⁵ In January 1994 the back half of the land on 3rd Avenue across the street from the church was sold to the city of Rochester for \$200,000.⁴⁷⁶

After a long search by the call committee, Mark Granquist was chosen as Bethel's Pastor of Youth Ministries. He was a graduate of St. Olaf College and Yale Divinity School and was a candidate for Ph. D. from the University of Chicago Divinity School. He was currently interim worker at All Saints Lutheran Church in Minnetonka, Minnesota. He was not yet ordained as he had not received his first call. He began working at Bethel informally on August 1, 1988. Reverend Granquist was ordained on August 28 at his father's church, Messiah Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.⁴⁷⁷ A welcome reception was held for Pastor Granquist on September 18, 1988, when he was installed as a Bethel pastor.⁴⁷⁸



Mark Granquist

For many years, the personnel committee consisted of the council chair and vice chair, the congregation president, secretary, treasurer, and the administrative pastor. As the staff grew and the congregation officers had many other responsibilities, the personnel aspect of their function was not adequately performed. In late 1991 the executive committee proposed that the by-laws be changed to form a separate Personnel committee consisting of six lay members and the administrative pastor. The lay members were to be elected for three-year terms at the annual meetings.⁴⁷⁹ The church council approved this proposal at their November 17, 1991, meeting. It was approved by the congregation at the 1992 annual meeting along with other constitutional changes. The first personnel committee was elected at the same meeting with staggered terms to avoid complete turnover of the committee at one election. Two people were elected for a one-year term, two for a two-year term and two for a three-year term.⁴⁸⁰ Thereafter, two people

would be elected yearly for a three-year term. This committee was to elect a chairperson to serve as their council representative.

After some years without a parish administrator, the executive committee formulated a job description in preparation for interviewing and hiring a person to fill this position.⁴⁸¹ The desired qualifications included administrative experience, an awareness of the dynamics involved in volunteer activities, and especially, the ability to work with people.⁴⁸² After a review of applicants to the position and interview with several, the personnel committee offered the job to Chris Zabel. He accepted the position and his first day on the job was July 20, 1992.⁴⁸³

For some time prior to 1992, the interpreter for the deaf position was paid for by special donations for that purpose. At the budget meeting to prepare for the 1992 annual meeting, a paid position was added so the interpreter would not depend on donations for continued operation.⁴⁸⁴ With the acceptance of the budget as presented, the interpreter for the deaf became a funded position.⁴⁸⁵ Services for the interpreter above and beyond the regular worship service were still paid from the special fund.⁴⁸⁶

Effective June 8, 1992, Pastors Gary and Mary Sue Dreier resigned their call to Bethel. In their letter of resignation, they said they planned to take some time out for reflection before taking another call.⁴⁸⁷ The Dreiers later worked to form a mission congregation, which became the People of Hope congregation now located on west side of Rochester.⁴⁸⁸ At the June 16 council meeting a call committee to find a new pastor whose title was to be Pastor of Education and Evangelism was approved. The job description for this position was approved by the council at their April 20, 1993 meeting. Randy Olson was hired as an interim pastor to fill this position until a permanent call could be made.

Pastor Mark Granquist was awarded his Ph. D. in 1992 and resigned his call at Bethel in September of that year to accept a teaching position at St Olaf College, his alma mater. He joined the faculty of Luther Seminary as Professor of the History of Christianity in 2007.⁴⁸⁹

At the annual meeting in 1993 the Bethel Foundation Board of Trustees was made a part of the Bethel constitution responsible for the management of endowment funds. They first met March 11, 1993, as a subcommittee of the Executive committee with the plan that they become a permanent committee once the constitutional changes were ratified in 1994. Initially the members were elected for a one-year term.⁴⁹⁰ For more information on the Endowment Fund, see Appendix 8 below.



Linda Helberg

A letter of call to Reverend Linda Helberg was approved in April 1993. Pastor Helberg graduated from Luther Seminary in 1981. She served Holy Ghost Lutheran Church in Fredericksburg, Texas until 1988 when she was employed by the ELCA in Region IV as Deployed staff for the Ministry and Conference of Bishops. Since 1990 she had been Senior Pastor of Lutheran Church of our Redeemer in Watertown, South Dakota.⁴⁹¹

Pastor Helberg began service to Bethel on May 26, 1993 and was installed on June 13, 1993. She was instrumental in organizing later Bethel mission trips to Mexico and Tanzania. One outcome of her mission trips was an ongoing relationship between Bethel and Denny and Paula Loftstrom who formed International Health Partners and were active in developing medical treatment facilities in Tanzania. Their latest project is a pediatric care facility at Zinga, Tanzania. In the ensuing years, the Lofstroms frequently visited Bethel on their yearly fund-raising trips to the United States. An indication of the respect that the people she met in Tanzania had for Pastor Linda was a young couple who named their child after her – in Tanzania there is now a young man named Helberg who she met in 2007.⁴⁹² In 2013 Cristo Rey Lutheran congregation in Puerto Rico was added to the list of congregations supported by Bethel.⁴⁹³

In October 1993, Community Food Response (CFR), an organization that collects and distributes prepared but unserved food from retail establishments, schools, and other organizations began using Bethel as their distribution point for three days per week. In their first three days, they served 270 meals.⁴⁹⁴ In their first year of operation, the organization served 37,164 meals with about 80 people picking up meals for about 360 people each distribution day.⁴⁹⁵ Pastor Linda Helberg served on the CFR board in 1995. Community Food Response used the Bethel basement kitchen area to distribute food and owned several freezers to store food in which were kept in another part of the basement. Bethel provided the space and paid the electrical bill for the freezers while Community Food Response organized the volunteers that collected and distributed the food. By May 1997, the CFR program was distributing 300 meals each night they served and had a total distribution of about two tons of food a month.⁴⁹⁶

When the Covid-19 outbreak forced Bethel to close prevent further spread of the disease Community Food Response had to stop providing meals to the people that depended on them. By November 2021 that organization had found another distribution location and began providing meals from their location at 120 1st St NE in Rochester.⁴⁹⁷

An undated memo from the newly formed Personnel committee to the council reported that staff performance evaluation procedures were in place. The evaluations of lay staff members were to be given by their immediate supervisors while pastoral evaluations were made by the administrative pastor. The job performance evaluation of the administrative pastor was done by the Personnel Committee. They also reported that there were some concerns regarding the administrative performance of Pastor Braaten. The follow up regarding those concerns was not

recorded in the Personnel committee minutes as they were considered confidential.⁴⁹⁸ During 1994, the committee evaluated lay and pastoral staff based on their job descriptions and in consultation with the staff members, they reevaluated the job descriptions to assure accuracy for later evaluations.

At the May council meeting, Pastor Braaten announced that the Personnel Committee had asked him to look for another call. At that meeting the Personnel Committee representative stated that they had no major concerns regarding Pastor Braaten's ability to carry out his responsibilities in the areas of preaching, teaching, and counselling. The only concern was his administrative abilities.⁴⁹⁹ The next clear indication of Personnel Committee action was at a special council meeting September 7, 1994, with Bishop Nyckelmoe as a guest, when the council approved their recommendation to request the immediate resignation of Pastor Braaten, "so that Bethel may progress and better meet the needs of its' members."⁵⁰⁰

After sending out resumes to several congregations, Pastor Braaten received a call from Victory Lutheran Church in Mesa, Arizona, and sent his resignation letter to Bethel. His last day at Bethel was November 27, 1994, when a reception was held for him and his family between services.⁵⁰¹ In part because of the desire to keep personnel information confidential, there were many questions both from parishioners and council members regarding Pastor Braaten's new call and his departure from Bethel. The executive committee expressed the desire for a better means of communications from the personnel committee to all concerned as they carry out their responsibilities to the church.⁵⁰² The conflict between transparency and the need for confidentiality in personnel matters sometimes makes it difficult to meet this concern.

The 125th Anniversary of the Bethel congregation was celebrated in June 1994. June 5 was Senior citizens recognition Sunday and former Pastor Tungseth and his wife, Barbara, were guests at the morning services and a later reception in the narthex. June 12 was Younger generation emphasis Sunday and former Pastor Bagaason and his wife, Marion, were guests. The main Sunday of celebration was on June 19. On that day, the present Bethel pastors were honored and Bishop Nycklemoe and his wife, Ann, were guests of the congregation. A special offering taken that day was divided between the sister church in Tanzania and the Synod Disaster Relief.⁵⁰³

In 1994 the Mayo Clinic Park and Ride program began to use the Bethel parking lot on 3rd Avenue as a park and pick up point. This program paid for the use of Bethel parking during the week. The program was continued through 1995 with a payment of \$450 per month to Bethel.⁵⁰⁴ This program continued through 2012 or 2013 when the Olmsted Medical Group began to use the parking lot during the week.⁵⁰⁵

In December 1994, the council approved a contract with Bethany Samaritan to use Bethel facilities for an adult day care program. This program would use half of the nursery space from 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. Monday through Saturday. The program started February 1, 1995 paying a rent of \$600 per month. Bethany Samaritan agreed to pay for any facility changes needed for this program to use Bethel space.⁵⁰⁶

The Personnel Committee interviewed three pastors recommended by the Synod Bishop and chose to offer the interim pastor position to Pastor Lynn Zafke. He began his service to Bethel January 1, 1995 and continued until a new administrative pastor was called.⁵⁰⁷

In preparation for the Call Committee, it was decided to define the new pastor's position as Executive Pastor rather than Administrative Pastor since that title better fit the job description. A call committee was formed in January 1995 to begin the process of calling a new Executive Pastor.⁵⁰⁸ By May 1995 the job description for the Executive Pastor was completed and approved by the council and Personnel Committee. In addition, updated job descriptions for Pastor Freidli, the Pastor Counselling and Adult Ministries and Pastor Helberg, Visitation and Pastor of Youth Ministries and Outreach were prepared.⁵⁰⁹

Pastor Freidli submitted his letter of resignation from Bethel effective with his retirement May 1, 1996. At that time, he had served as a Bethel pastor for 18 years. After his retirement, Pastor Freidli continued to live in Rochester and has remained a Bethel member.

Chapter 6 Pastor Norman Wahl 1996 to 2020

At a special congregational meeting on April 14, 1996, Bethel members approved a letter of call to Reverend Norman Wahl.⁵¹⁰ Pastor Wahl was a graduate of Augsburg College and Luther Seminary and was ordained in 1979. Before coming to Bethel, he served as pastor of a parish in St. Charles, Minnesota. At the time of his call, Pastor Wahl was finishing his Doctorate of Ministry dissertation. He defended his dissertation on October 17, 1996 and was awarded his Doctor of Ministry from Luther Seminary at the June 1997 graduation.⁵¹¹



Norman Wahl

At the time he came to Bethel, Pastor Wahl's wife, Kathy, taught first grade in St. Charles. She continued teaching there until her retirement at the end of the 2018-2019 school year. Their son, Chris, was in college at the time of their move so did not spend much time in Rochester. Their daughter, Kari, was in high school and continued to attend St. Charles schools until graduation. Their younger son, Tim, attended Rochester schools after 5th grade. Pastor Wahl, Kathy, and Kari all sing in the choir and special music groups and have made a significant contribution to the Bethel music program.

After Pastor Wahl began his ministry at Bethel, he got to know church leaders by person-to-person interviews and learned the church procedures by attending council and other committee meetings. He and Pastor Helberg met to discuss job descriptions and their relative strengths to identify the main elements of their roles in the church. This activity also allowed them to recommend elements of the third pastor's job description as the call committee began their task.⁵¹²

At a September 8, 1996, special congregational meeting, the purchase of the property at 865 4th Avenue SE was approved. This property was expected to generate enough rental income to pay the cost of the loan needed for purchase as well as provide additional funds to the congregation.⁵¹³ The council authorized borrowing \$40,000 to complete the purchase of the property.⁵¹⁴



Julie Rogness

A call committee for Pastor of Educational and Youth Ministries was approved at the September 1996 Council meeting.⁵¹⁵ At a special congregational meeting on March 23, 1997, a call to Reverend Julie Rogness was approved. Pastor Rogness was a recent graduate of Luther Seminary and was ordained with over twenty Bethel members in attendance. She accepted the call and her first day at Bethel was May 1, 1997.⁵¹⁶ She was installed as a Bethel Pastor by Reverend Marilyn Hanson on May 11, 1997. At the May graduation at Luther Seminary, she received her Master of Divinity degree.

A search for a Bethel Music Director began early in 1997 and the job description for the position was approved by the Council at their April meeting.⁵¹⁷ In addition to planning the musical

program of the church and coordinating the choice of music with the pastors, the job description included to initiate, direct and/or arrange for the direction of the various Bethel musical groups. There was some concern among interested people when the paid choir directors were removed from the budget, but the council, the personnel committee, and the pastors felt a full-time music director was needed and that person would direct the choirs.⁵¹⁸ A special congregational meeting was called on June 8, 1997 by petition of congregational members. The proposal at this meeting was to reinstate the choir directors that were eliminated in the plan to hire a Music Director for the church. After much discussion pro and con, the congregation voted to defeat the motion.⁵¹⁹

Interviews were held with selected candidates during June.⁵²⁰ John Sall was hired as the new Music Director and met with the church council at their August meeting.⁵²¹ He was welcomed by the Worship committee when they met in September.⁵²² John resigned his position at Bethel in September 2001 to take a new job in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.⁵²³

One of the unusual things outside observers noted about Bethel was the dual executive arrangement in governing the congregation. The combination of a council chair, who was responsible to the council and presided at their meetings, and a congregational president, who represented the congregation and presided at congregational meetings was not a normal congregational organization. Depending on the personalities of the people involved that could lead to conflict among the church leaders.⁵²⁴ This structure was a carryover from Pastor Hansen's 1959 recommendation that a lay president rather than the pastor preside at congregational meetings and the 1964 formation of the Church Council from the combination of the Board of Trustees and the Board of Deacons. These boards had elected their own presiding officers and that tradition was continued when the Church Council was formed.

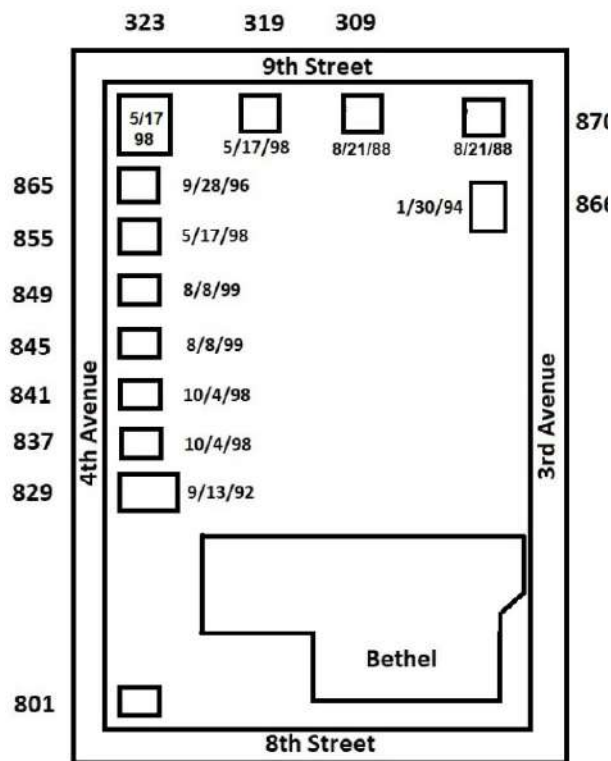
In February 1997 the council appointed an ad hoc committee to study, and if desirable to reorganize Bethel's committee and governance structure.⁵²⁵ They began their job by studying the governing structures of other churches.⁵²⁶ To further clarify their task, they asked the council to consider the needs of Bethel for the next 10 to 15 years.⁵²⁷ The ad hoc committee report dated March 15, 1998 was presented to the council at their May meeting.⁵²⁸ Council discussion began in June with a smaller group appointed to further discuss the recommendations of the ad hoc committee.⁵²⁹ The small group recommended the following constitutional changes

1. Eliminate the council chairperson and make the elected congregational president the chair of the council. It also called for the election of a congregational vice president. Both of these officers were to hold the same position on the church council.
2. Make the Executive pastor a member of the council with voice and vote and the other pastors, members without vote.
3. Establish four ministry boards with council representation to whom the various committees (later called teams) of the church reported.

Some of the benefits of the proposed changes were the elimination of the dual leadership structure and making the church council smaller and potentially more efficient.⁵³⁰ The constitutional and by law revisions to make this change were approved at the January 31, 1999 annual meeting and were ratified at the annual meeting on January 30, 2000.⁵³¹

In early 1998 the owners of homes at 855 and 849 4th Avenue were interested in selling their property to Bethel. At that time, the council also asked Chris Zabel to approach the owners of the two houses on 9th Street not owned by Bethel to see if they might be interested in selling in the near term. The reason for this request was that the council was planning to refinance the church loan and a single refinancing would save money in the long term.⁵³²

In May 1998, the congregation approved the purchase of the two remaining houses on 9th Street and the house at 855 4th Avenue SE. The total purchase price of these properties was \$199,500. In addition, the officers of the congregation were authorized to increase the mortgage on church properties up to \$900,000.⁵³³ The figure on the right shows the dates the congregation authorized the purchase of the various remaining properties on the block. In October the purchase of the houses at 837 and 841 4th Avenue SE was authorized for a total price of \$170,000 and additionally refinancing the mortgage up to \$1,060,000 was approved.⁵³⁴



Bethel Block in 2003

After some time considering the matter, the last two owners on 4th Avenue agreed to sell for a total of \$251,000. This purchase was approved at a special meeting of the congregation on August 8, 1999, along with approval to negotiate a 10-year mortgage loan of up to \$1,155,000 to refinance the church properties. These purchases completed Bethel's acquisition of all of the properties on the church block except the house at 801 4th Avenue SE which was not required for any long-term building plans.⁵³⁵ Until those plans were in place, the purchased properties would be used as rental property for income, or for the use of the Social Missions committee for refugee or other needed housing. See Appendix 7 for a review of Bethel property purchases that ultimately allowed the building of the present sanctuary with adequate parking.

In February 1999 Pastor Wahl was contacted by Luther Seminary regarding the possibility of an internship position at Bethel. The cost to Bethel would be about \$15,000 a year to support an intern during 1999 and 2000 school year. The intern being considered was Ramie Bakken whose husband was Pastor/Developer of Peace Lutheran church in Eyota. After some discussion, the council decided that Bethel should accept an intern if the pastoral staff was willing to take on the extra teaching involved and the money for the position could be found.⁵³⁶



Intern Ramie Bakken

The internship application was accepted by Luther Seminary and Ramie Bakken started her internship on September 1, 1999.⁵³⁷ During her year at Bethel she needed to experience the preaching, worship, teaching, visitation and counselling, and the administrative aspects of a large congregation pastoral experience. As a required special project in an area not presently carried out by the congregation, she chose a ministry to inactive

members.⁵³⁸ At that time the Bethel inactive members list had 141 people on it which gave her a large group to contact.⁵³⁹ Ramie Bakken ended her Bethel internship on August 30, 2000, to return to Luther Seminary.⁵⁴⁰ She was ordained at Bethel on July 13, 2003.⁵⁴¹

At the 2000 annual meeting it was reported that Bethel had applied for another intern for the 2000-2001 school year.⁵⁴² In August, intern Marie Anderson began her year at Bethel.⁵⁴³ Her internship was greatly appreciated during Pastor Wahl's sabbatical and in the interim finding a new candidate to replace Pastor Rogness (see page 64). The Bethel intern for the 2002-2003 school year was Mary Strom. Her initial project was to work with the bible study and confirmation classes.⁵⁴⁴ Sirianna Stromen Campbell was the Bethel intern for 2003-2004. She began her internship on September 1, 2003.⁵⁴⁵ Her initial projects were in the areas of family, youth, and drama.⁵⁴⁶ She left in September 2004 to complete her seminary training. Siri was ordained on December 3, 2005 at Mount Carmel in Minneapolis and began her ministry at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Rochester.⁵⁴⁷

During 1999, Pastor Helberg travelled to Tanzania as part of a synod group including Bishop Nycklemoe for a work trip and to gather information regarding the church in that country.⁵⁴⁸ From January to March 2000 Pastor Helberg and Bethel member Kathy Bolin taught at the Kiomboi Bible Institute in Tanzania. Pastor Helberg taught English, Church History and Genesis while Kathy Bolin helped theological students with their English.⁵⁴⁹ A commissioning service was held for them on January 2, 2000.⁵⁵⁰

In August 1999, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted An Agreement of Full Communion - Called to Common Mission - A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the Concordat of Agreement that defined the relationship with the Episcopal Church.⁵⁵¹ Pastor Wahl attended the Called to Common Mission celebration in Washington DC in January 2001.⁵⁵² In the ensuing years he regularly attended the Lutheran Episcopal Coordinating group meetings in locations around the country.

Planning for a new sanctuary began in October 1999 with a special meeting of various Bethel leadership groups with church architect and building consultant Darrell LeBaron from Station 19 Architects of Minneapolis.⁵⁵³ At the 2000 annual meeting, the property long range task force reported the need for more sanctuary space after consultation with the various affected committees at Bethel.⁵⁵⁴ In their June 20, 2000 report, the architects recommended that Bethel build a new 1000 seat sanctuary on the present property, convert the existing sanctuary into a

fellowship hall/multiuse facility, and remodel the existing building for greater efficiencies. The sketch attached to their report is essentially the existing Bethel space plan.⁵⁵⁵

The architect's report was discussed at the July Council meeting. The Sanctuary Task Force felt that now was a good time for Bethel to build as the church had adequate staff, real estate, and giving potential to support the project in the present economic environment.⁵⁵⁶ Two forums were held on November 19 where Roger Toulouse, a task force member, answered questions from congregation members who attended.⁵⁵⁷

By April 2001, the Bethel Facilities task force had been organized to further study Bethel's space needs.⁵⁵⁸ During the fall they met with several different focus groups to determine the opinion of Bethel people regarding the sanctuary addition. In March 2002, a special congregational meeting approved spending \$75,000 on plans and studies to provide the congregation with information regarding possible structural improvements.⁵⁵⁹

With the resignation of John Sall as Bethel Music Director in September 2001, a search team to find a new music director was formed. By the December 31, 2001, closing date for applications, twelve applications had arrived.⁵⁶⁰ Jonathon Stromen Campbell accepted the music director position and arranged to start on June 1, 2002. He received a BA from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa in 1998 and completed a Master of Sacred Music degree from Luther Seminary in 2002. At Luther he studied choral conducting and church music.⁵⁶¹ Jon was an active participant in the search for an appropriate organ for the new sanctuary spending many hours studying options. He resigned as Bethel Minister of Music in July 2006, his last day at Bethel was September 24, 2006. He took a music director position at Mount Olive Lutheran Church on a part time basis.⁵⁶² This was a natural move for him as his wife Siri was a pastor at Mount Olive.

In January 2002 Pastor Julie Rogness announced her resignation from Bethel to accept a position at St. James Lutheran in Burnsville, MN. Her last Sunday at Bethel was January 27. A call committee was formed with the goal of having a candidate in place by June 1.⁵⁶³



Paul Hauschild

A letter of call to Paul Hauschild as Pastor of Educational and Youth Ministries was approved at a special congregational meeting in May 2002.⁵⁶⁴ He began his ministry at Bethel in August 2002. Pastor Hauschild graduated from Concordia College in 1988 and Luther Seminary in 1992. He was ordained that same year. Before coming to Bethel, he served Evanger Lutheran, a rural church near Sergeant, Minnesota. Pastor Hauschild is the second Bethel pastor who has served as a military chaplain. He received an honorary discharge from the army reserve in December 2003.⁵⁶⁵ Pastor Paul stayed at Bethel for six years. He resigned in September 2008 to become lead pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Hayfield, Minnesota. His last day at Bethel was October 8, 2008.⁵⁶⁶ One of his passions was drama so he regularly participated in Bethel drama events and continued to return

regularly to Rochester to participate in the Lenten drama productions after his move to Hayfield.⁵⁶⁷

In 2003, Bethel was the only church in Minnesota to apply for a Total Quality Management (TQM) award. The Minnesota Quality award team completed its judging in March and Bethel was presented their Silver award.⁵⁶⁸ The TQM award team's executive summary is found in the May 2003 Council packet.

In late 2003 Bethel held sessions for interested members to discuss the ELCA homosexuality study. The sessions went well with the attendees not necessarily agreeing but keeping the discussion respectful.⁵⁶⁹ This study was preparation for the ELCA General Assembly in 2005 which addressed the issue.

In preparation for the possible construction of the new sanctuary, the properties team proposed demolition of the three houses on 9th Street in order to expand the parking lot. Two of these houses had structural problems and were not worth repairing. One could be used as a rental, but the team recommended razing it to gain the parking space.⁵⁷⁰ It was agreed not to take any action on this project until after the congregational vote to approve the new sanctuary.⁵⁷¹ By October 2003 the expansion project had been approved and was about to begin and four of Bethel's houses on 4th Avenue were removed. Two of them were demolished and two were moved off the property. In addition to the new narthex and sanctuary, a 24 by 24-foot maintenance garage was planned for the parking lot. The labor to build the garage was provided by the Men's Ministry team.⁵⁷²

A special congregational meeting in November 2002 approved a resolution to employ Resource Services, Inc. of Dallas, Texas to conduct a capital fundraising campaign to raise money for the new sanctuary. Two percent of the money raised would be used for mission programs to be determined by the Social Missions team. The fund-raising campaign was called Growing God's House.⁵⁷³ See Appendix 10 for a summary of some of the many activities of the Social Missions team.

At a June 2003 special congregational meeting the members authorized borrowing up to \$5.7 million dollars from Thrivent, the amount needed to complete the new building. Thrivent requested a change to the resolution to note that the interest rate would be established only at the time Bethel occupied the new building. This change was approved at the 2004 annual meeting.⁵⁷⁴

From time to time, it was found that various activities related to the new sanctuary were not funded. In many cases the need was presented to the congregation and donations arrived to fill it. That was the case with moving the stained-glass windows from the old sanctuary to the windows in the new narthex. Once the need was revealed, donations to cover the cost were in hand in four days.⁵⁷⁵ In like manner, the altar, pulpit, and lectern for the new sanctuary were purchased by member donations. The first service was held in the new sanctuary on November 21 and the dedication ceremony was November 28, 2004.⁵⁷⁶ The cornerstone of the new

building was laid April 16, 2005.⁵⁷⁷ Appendix 3 shows that the new sanctuary increased the average weekly attendance by about 90 members per week over the next three years.

The Epiphany service on January 6, 2005 was held in the new chapel constructed in the west end of the former narthex. A part of the remainder of the narthex formed a commons area in front of the church offices and the rest was part of the Bethel main street which led from the new sanctuary and narthex through the former building to the new fellowship hall now named Bethel hall. At the December council meeting, Pastor Helberg reported that the pews from the former sanctuary were at their destination in Saltillo, Mexico, having been transported to the border by Bethel member Steve Yaggy.⁵⁷⁸

Once the building was in use, one of the issues faced by the Properties team was temperature control in the various spaces within the building. In order to reduce costs, unoccupied spaces should be allowed to vary in temperature beyond the personal comfort range but kept within limits, so facilities were not damaged. In addition, they needed to be in the personal comfort range when occupied. This balancing took time and effort on the part of Properties.



View of Entrance, Nave, and Sanctuary of 2004 Addition

While the initial intent of the sanctuary project was to include an appropriate organ, it was decided that the time factor to build a new organ and the wide range of costs meant it could not be included in the original sanctuary construction and required more study. A resolution to support this study was passed at the 2004 annual meeting.⁵⁷⁹ In July 2004 the organ from the former sanctuary was purchased by First Lutheran of Lake City, Minnesota with the agreement that Bethel could keep using it until November.⁵⁸⁰

After an initial investigation, the Organ Team recommended the purchase of a Letourneau organ which was estimated to cost \$1.3 Million. Purchase was conditional on a successful funding campaign. Fund raising during the spring and summer of 2005 resulted in \$250,000 in pledges which were not enough to order the organ.⁵⁸¹ The Organ Team recommended the purchase of a smaller pipe organ for temporary use until the funding was available for the larger one. A

special congregational meeting in September 2005 approved the purchase of a temporary organ for a price not to exceed \$50,000 with an additional transportation and installation cost not to exceed \$10,000.⁵⁸² In October Bethel's offer of \$40,000 for a Van Dahlen Organ was accepted. It was installed by early November 2005.⁵⁸³

Mission trips to both Tanzania and Mexico were a regular occurrence with Pastor Linda Helberg usually leading the Bethel group on the trip. Both winter and summer trips to Rio Bravo or Saltillo, Mexico, were made on a yearly basis. At the 2003 annual meeting Pastor Helberg reported the upcoming February 2004 visit would be the tenth trip that Bethel people had made to Mexico.⁵⁸⁴ The Bible school activity led by Bethel members in Mexico resulted in 27 families joining churches there in 2005.⁵⁸⁵ In addition to missions outside the Bethel area, there was concern for local people who were served through Community Food Response, Meals on Wheels, Channel One and many other local opportunities for service.

In the fall of 2004, Augsburg College began to use Bethel facilities for a Rochester program with most of their students being Mayo employees working on degree programs. As part of their contract, Augsburg agreed to pay the cost of refitting rooms for their purposes with the expectation that some classrooms would continue to be used by the Sunday school on Sunday morning. Their contract called for a yearly rental of about \$30,000.⁵⁸⁶ With an expansion of their use of Bethel facilities, Augsburg paid a bit more than \$80,000 per year rental.⁵⁸⁷ In 2005, Augsburg needed more space and made use of the new chapel. To accommodate their needs, new chairs were purchased by Augsburg and the Properties team made some facilities adjustments.⁵⁸⁸ This association with Augsburg continued the connection that goes back at least to March 25, 1875 when a collection was taken for Augsburg and sent to Professor Sven Oftedal.⁵⁸⁹ In addition to an institutional connection, Pastor Wahl served on the Augsburg Board of Regents from 2007 until 2019.⁵⁹⁰



The Bell Tower Courtyard

modest design plan was requested. In the meantime, the bell was displayed in the new entry along with bell tower plans when they were developed.⁵⁹¹

In early 2005, Pastor Wahl noticed an article in the Lutheran Magazine about a church in Boston that was disbanding and had items that would be given to churches that could use them. He sent an application describing the use Bethel had for a bell and in July 2005 reported that he had won a bell. The Bethel bell fund had sufficient funds to pay the shipping costs to Rochester.

A study of possible designs and costs of a bell tower on the west lawn started in November 2006. The initial design by Station 19 architects cost too much so a more

A set of quotes from 2010 indicates that the bell tower was constructed in that year and finished by Labor Day. Architectural drawings dated July 15, 2010 show the structure of 19 feet 7 inches at the top with a 3-foot 4-inch cross above it.⁵⁹² Bethel member Larry Vomhof donated his time

to construct the base for the tower and the tower itself was completed in 2010 at an approximate cost of \$40,000.⁵⁹³ A line attached to the bell clapper going down the inside of a tower leg allows the bell to be rung when desired. In 2019 the bell was only rung for funerals. A speaker for an electronic carillon is attached to the tower and allows bell music to be played at appropriate times.

The bell itself is inscribed in Latin, “AD HONOREM DEI ET BEATE MARIE VIRGINUS,” with a second line, “OPUS JOAN BAPT JUSTINIANI FULG A D MDCCCXXXVII “. The translation as best I can determine is “To honor God and the blessed Virgin Mary, the work of Joan Baptiste Justinian (cast/struck?) AD 1857.”

Once the initial construction of the new sanctuary was complete, the loan payments needed to be made each month. That required a second fund raising campaign, called Growing God’s House II, to assure the sufficient funds were available to make payments. The goal of the campaign was to raise \$1,300,000 over a 3-year period to cover the difference between the previous loan payments and the new ones. After the three years it was anticipated that the payments would be picked up by the yearly budget. Grant Winfrey agreed to lead the campaign which was successful and exceeded its goal.⁵⁹⁴ The total three-year commitment by 681 Bethel giving units was \$1,571,839.⁵⁹⁵

With the resignation of Music Director Jon Stromen Campbell in July 2006, a search team was formed to find a new Minister of Music.⁵⁹⁶ In the interim, Gary Thorn directed all of the Bethel choir groups.⁵⁹⁷ The search team met for several months and interviewed applicants for the position. By November, Dr. Gary Thorn was chosen as Bethel’s new Minister of Music.

Gary grew up in Dodge Center. His interest in music developed early as he had directed church choirs at Faith Lutheran in Dodge Center since 9th grade. He received a bachelor’s degree in music education from St. Cloud State. He then moved on to Mankato for a master’s degree and finally a Doctor of Musical Arts in conducting from the University of Minnesota. After graduation he directed various church music groups at St Johns in Owatonna and St Johns in Kasson in addition to teaching instrumental and choral music first at Dodge Center High School, then Stewartville and finally Kingsland schools before he came to Bethel.⁵⁹⁸ He was installed as Bethel’s Minister of Music on December 10, 2006.⁵⁹⁹

In late 2006, a new ELCA hymnal, Evangelical Lutheran Worship, was issued and reviewed by Bethel pastors and members. Several hymnals were purchased and placed in the narthex for members to review and leave written comments if they so desired. There were only ten comments submitted, four positive and six negative. The main concern was the change to the Psalms from the previous masculine to more gender-neutral language. The Worship and Music team recommended that Bethel order the new hymnals and the council supported that action with one member in opposition. 750 hymnals were ordered for use by the congregation.⁶⁰⁰

During 2007 there was a new effort to find an appropriate and affordable organ for the new sanctuary. After investigating several new and used options, The Organ team proposed that Bethel purchase a used Wicks organ at a cost of \$399,967 installed.

This organ was built in 1964 and had been used by the Wicks company as a demo model being kept in a climate-controlled space and in impeccable condition.

The organ came with a 10-year warranty. A special congregational meeting on November 4, 2007, approved the purchase of the Wicks Pipe Organ contingent on receiving approximately \$400,000 in funds or commitments to be paid on or before September 1, 2008 and that the purchase then be approved at the 2008 annual meeting. They also approved the marketing of the present Van Dahlen organ which was later sold for \$50,000 to Holy Cross church in North Carolina.⁶⁰¹



The Wicks Pipe Organ at Bethel

By the 2008 annual meeting sufficient funds had been received and the purchase was approved.

The organ was initially expected to be ready by Rally day in September, but there were several delays. When the Van Dahlen organ was sold in November and the new one was still not delivered, the Wicks Company loaned Bethel an electronic organ to use for Advent and Christmas.⁶⁰² The organ finally arrived for installation on January 5, 2009. The construction of the supporting structure and the placement of 4850 pipes took some time and a great deal of careful installation. Bethel members volunteered to help carry the organ parts into the sanctuary and under the watchful eye of Wicks employees provided labor to assemble parts of the organ. The installation was complete by early February with only a few minor problems yet to address.⁶⁰³ The organ was dedicated at all services on May 16 and 17. A dedicatory recital was held later on May 17.⁶⁰⁴ A video of the organ assembly in fast time can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVqxmKoU4l0>.

Once the organ was installed one of the challenges faced by the properties team was to maintain the temperature and humidity in the sanctuary in order to prevent the organ from going out of tune due to environmental changes. With the temperature variations that are typical in Rochester, maintaining a constant temperature was not possible. The challenge was partially met by installing a dehumidifier within the organ itself to limit one of the environmental variables. With respect to temperature, it was decided to limit the variation to a maximum of 84 degrees F to a minimum of 64 degrees F.⁶⁰⁵

The organ is tuned by professional personnel twice a year, in the spring and fall. In between tunings, if organist Jim Bahler notices a note out of tune, Bethel Music Minister can often retune it as Wicks personnel have instructed him how pipes can be tuned in some cases.⁶⁰⁶



The Augsburg-Bethel Sign was changed to reflect the new name.⁶⁰⁸ The old Bethel sign in front of Bethel Hall remained in place and is still there today.

In June 2007, Pastor Linda Helberg announced her retirement with her last service at Bethel to be August 19, 2007. The council accepted her resignation “with joy and concern.” In the interim before a new pastor could be chosen, Pastors Wahl and Hauschild shared Pastor Helberg’s responsibilities with assistance from Pastor Onkka.⁶⁰⁹ In addition, Lissa Kahl from Austin, Minnesota, was hired as an interim part-time pastor.⁶¹⁰ She began her service to Bethel on September 4, 2007. April 2008 was Pastor Kahl’s last month of ministry at Bethel.

At a special congregational meeting on February 24, 2008, the congregation voted overwhelmingly to extend a call to Reverend Anjanette Rist as Pastor of Visitation, Outreach, and Mission. She was ordained in 1999 and served First Lutheran Church, Fremont, Nebraska for eight years prior her call to Bethel. She was a graduate of Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota and Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Prior to attending seminary, she served for four years as a Youth Director at Messiah Lutheran Church, Auburn, Washington and spent a year working in the Lutheran Volunteer Corps in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1990-91. Pastor Rist’s husband, Karl, was also an ordained ELCA pastor and was called to serve at Hosanna Lutheran Church, Rochester shortly after Pastor Anjanette began serving at Bethel. The Rist family included their two children, Sela (age 6) and Erick (age 3). Pastor Rist began her ministry at Bethel on May 1, 2008.⁶¹¹



Anjanette Bandel

Pastor Anjanette and Pastor Karl Rist were divorced in August of 2010 and the congregation was extremely supportive of Pastor Anjanette in the midst of these difficult circumstances and transitions for her family. Pastor Anjanette and Pastor Karl remained committed co-parents to their children and supportive colleagues in ministry as Pastor Karl later left the ELCA and was ordained to serve in the United Church of Christ.⁶¹²

Pastor Anjanette was married on February 4, 2012, to Warren Bandel who is a professional musician in the Rochester area. He teaches private trumpet lessons and plays in multiple ensembles including Classic Brass.⁶¹³ Pastor Bandel enthusiastically continued the Bethel

tradition of mission trips to Mexico, Tanzania, and locations within the United States. She was also active in promoting local mission activity.

During 2008, the Bethel Worship services began to be available for viewing on the Bethel website. This provided another avenue of outreach and was well worth the \$150 for needed supplies and equipment. Over the course of a year, each worship service was accessed about 50 times.⁶¹⁴ In addition to 9 A.M. Sunday worship services, Adult education classes, and occasional concerts and other events are available on the Bethel website. Some of the more popular Adult education classes have been accessed 30 to 50 times in the years they have been available. The most popular class has had 200 accesses in the 6 years between 2012 and 2019.

One of the plans when the new sanctuary was built was to have projection screens in front of the sanctuary to show information similar to that contained in the hymn books enabling the congregation to follow along without having to find proper pages. After some delay, the screens were first used on Rally Day 2008.⁶¹⁵ Projectionists were trained in the use of the Easy Worship program which enabled them to advance slides in sync with the service. When the projection at worship services first began, a worship committee study showed that about 10 per cent of the congregation did not like the screens. The same survey also showed that there were those that still wanted the old liturgy and the old version of the Lord's Prayer.⁶¹⁶

With the resignation of Pastor Hauschild in September 2008, Reverend Jeff Wallager served as an interim pastor helping where he was needed. Pastor Wallager most recently had completed an internship in Chaplaincy at Mayo. He left Bethel on March 31, 2009 to take a position at Heartland Hospice. A call committee to find a replacement Pastor of Education and Youth was formed in November 2008.⁶¹⁷



Andrew Nelson A special congregational on July 9, 2009, voted by an overwhelming majority to call Andrew Nelson as Pastor of Education and Youth Ministries. He was contacted via telephone and accepted with gratitude and honor. Mr. Nelson was a graduate of Luther College and of Luther Seminary in 2009. This was his first call since seminary graduation. In addition to his seminary education, he attended the Clinical Pastoral Education program at Abbot Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis. His seminary internship was at St Olaf College and St John's Lutheran Church in Northfield. His wife, Jessica Pleuss, was a Ph. D. student at the University of Minnesota Institute of Child Development and was working on her dissertation.⁶¹⁸ Pastor Nelson was ordained on September 6, 2009 at his home church, United Lutheran Church in Red Wing,⁶¹⁹ He was installed at Bethel on September 19 and 20.⁶²⁰

After 22 years of service to Bethel, mostly as Pastor of Visitation, Pastor Onkka resigned effective October 15, 2009. He remained a member of Bethel after his retirement and served faithfully as a greeter in the Narthex.⁶²¹

With the resignation of Pastor Onkka, Roy Satre became Bethel's Pastor of Visitation.⁶²² Pastor Satre stepped down from his position in August 2013. At that time Pastor Linda Helberg was convinced to leave retirement and return to Bethel as the new Pastor of Visitation.



Roy Satre

In August and September of 2008, the congregation held meetings to study the ELCA draft statement on Sexuality. The three pastors rotated leading these three sessions and copies of the draft were available for interested people.

The September sessions were part of the Adult Education program for the year.⁶²³ The 2009 ELCA Church wide Assembly adopted a Social Statement Human Sexuality a Gift and Trust. Resolutions implementing the social statement were also adopted. They included "that the ELCA commit itself to finding ways to allow congregations that choose to do so to recognize, support and hold publicly accountable lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships and commit itself to finding a way for people in such publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships to serve as rostered leaders of this church."⁶²⁴

These resolutions were disturbing to some people in the Bethel congregation and the council prepared for disagreement by requiring all 2010 annual meeting resolutions be submitted to the church council by January 15. They also held information meetings for the congregation before the annual meeting.⁶²⁵ The requirement that proposed resolutions be review by the church council before the annual meeting was made a part of the by-laws by congregational vote at the 2018 annual meeting.⁶²⁶

The annual meeting acted on four resolutions previously approved by the council. The first was a general statement of respect for all people which passed by a significant margin of 225 to 11. The second called for Bethel to follow the pre 2009 ELCA guideline for Pastors, interns and lay ministers. That document required that homosexual individuals in ministry remain celibate. Resolution 2 passed by a vote of 160 to 77. The third resolution required Bethel pastors to decline to officiate at homosexual unions or marriages and that such events would not be allowed on Bethel property. This resolution passed by a vote of 163 to 74.⁶²⁷ The final resolution called for the Bethel council to appoint a committee to evaluate its relationship with the ELCA and determine whether to join another Lutheran group. This committee was to report to the next annual meeting. This resolution failed by a vote of 120 against and 110 votes for passage. The first three resolutions guided Bethel's selection of ordained leaders for the next thirteen years.⁶²⁸ A resolution similar to resolution four was presented at the 2011 annual meeting and was again narrowly defeated.⁶²⁹

The results of the 2009 ELCA decision and the 2010 Bethel annual meeting did affect the average worship attendance and financial giving, however the remaining Bethel members increased their giving to compensate for some large donors who left the congregation due to the above decisions.⁶³⁰ To the authors knowledge, most of these people left because of the rejection of the fourth resolution. While annual income was not significantly affected, the average Sunday

morning attendance declined by about 6.5 percent. The total giving to the congregational budget decreased by 1.5 percent compared to the previous year, but other income such as rent increased and giving to special projects remained high.⁶³¹

In May 2010 Bethel began an outreach ministry called “Coffee and a Prayer” which is a project of the Neighborhood Outreach team. This has become the most visible of the Bethel outreach programs. From 7:30 to 8:30 A.M. every Wednesday, summer and winter, rain or shine, three volunteers and a Bethel pastor greet people driving by with a wave and if they care to stop, they receive a cup of hot coffee or cocoa, or a bottle of water, and time for a prayer for whatever concerns they may have. For the volunteers this is a way to show that Jesus love is for all, for the pastors who each take a rotation, it is a way to interact with the community in a unique way.⁶³² This outreach program was halted at the beginning of the Covid pandemic and has not yet been restarted.



Photos from <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2015/02/11/prayer-to-go#gallery>

In addition to Coffee and a Prayer, the Neighborhood Outreach team collects and distributes hats and mittens and other needed clothing to the neighborhood schools, Franklin and Riverside, both of which have children that need extra clothing. The Christmas sharing trees provide some of the clothing for the schools. Neighborhood Outreach also provides food baskets to give to the families of some of the children at Thanksgiving and other holiday times when they might not otherwise have enough to eat.⁶³³

Dale Mundahl retired as Bethel organist on June 30, 2010 after more than 45 years at the keyboard.⁶³⁴ The Worship and Music team recommended that Jim Bahler become full time organist in addition to playing for the Saturday night services. A special recognition ceremony was held in the fall after Pastor Wahl returned from his sabbatical.⁶³⁵ Dale Mundahl’s retirement was recognized with coffee between services on October 10, 2010.⁶³⁶

In March 2011, the Rochester Christian Sudanese community began using Bethel facilities for worship on a three-month trial. About 400 Sudanese from around the area attended a prayer service held to commemorate their new nation of South Sudan.⁶³⁷ By May 40 to 50 people were attending their weekly worship services at Bethel and the council noted that their presence had

been less intrusive than originally expected.⁶³⁸ The agreement to host the Sudanese group ended in July 2011.

The 2012 annual meeting saw the congregation voting to invest \$5,000 of Thrivent Choice Dollars to one of three local charities, Community Food Response, Good Earth Village or Lutheran Social Service. Thrivent Choice Dollars are received by Bethel when a Thrivent member directs their charity dollars to the church. Thrivent has chosen this means of spending some of the charity money that they are required to give as a non-profit organization. Voting members were allowed to vote for one of the three charities. As a result of the vote, Community Food Response received \$2,500, Good Earth Village \$1,500, and Lutheran Social Services \$1,000.⁶³⁹ This vote on the application of \$5,000 of Thrivent Choice Dollars to different charitable organizations has become an annual event.

The 2012 annual meeting was held in Bethel Hall between services and drew about twice as many members as at normal annual meetings, 350 versus the more usual 150 to 175. If there are no major resolutions or issues that need more time for discussion, the consensus was to continue that meeting format.⁶⁴⁰

In March 2012, Pastor Nelson reported that he would be moving to Sioux City, Iowa as his wife had accepted a professorship at Morningside College in that city.⁶⁴¹ The council approved the formation of a call committee at their next meeting and began the selection of people to serve on that committee.⁶⁴² Pastor Nelson's last day at Bethel was August 5, 2012.⁶⁴³ In the interim while the call committee was interviewing candidates, Pastor Satre helped support Pastors Wahl and Bandel.⁶⁴⁴



Jason Burggraff

A special congregational meeting called on October 28, 2012 approved a call to Reverend Jason Burggraff as Bethel's Pastor of Children, Family and Youth Ministry.⁶⁴⁵ He grew up in Moorhead, Minnesota and attended Montana State University on a four-year Presidential Scholarship to study Cello and Mechanical Engineering. Pastor Burggraff graduated with a Master of Divinity from Luther Seminary in 2007 and accepted his first pastoral call at First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. His experience as a cellist has added to Bethel's music ministry. He was recently married to Erin Hewitt and looked forward to coming to Rochester where his new family lived. Pastor Burggraff's first weekend at Bethel was December 15 and 16 when he was welcomed and also had preaching duties.

By April 2014, plans for a third service to be held at 10:10 A.M. in the chapel were proceeding. This was planned as a contemporary service with a fulltime worship leader who would organize volunteers and plan the services. The focus was to serve the 18 to 35 age group as well as families looking for a relaxed type of service near Sunday school time.⁶⁴⁶ James Driessen was hired as worship leader for the service, now called Gate of Life. He began work at Bethel on August 5 with plans for the first Gate of Life service on September 7.⁶⁴⁷ The chapel area was

arranged for this service with the projection and music set up needed for their band. This meant that the Sunday school music time and the Jubilate choir rehearsals would need to move to another location.⁶⁴⁸ Weekly attendance at the Gate of Life service during fall 2014 averaged about 50 people. Good things were reported to be happening at this service.⁶⁴⁹

In 2012, a group of Bethel members led by Avis Hagen and Marlys Shores, began exploring a possible Parish Nurse Ministry at Bethel. A pilot program was approved in early 2014. The pilot program was changed to a staff position in 2016 and the hours have expanded from 12 to 15 hours per month to the current 25 hours per month. Bethel's first parish nurse, Kathy Ferguson, began in January 2015.⁶⁵⁰ Kathy was a Mayo Clinic employee for 35 years and retired from her role as a Nursing Education Specialist in 2014. She attended Parish Nurse training through Concordia College and was commissioned as a Parish Nurse on March 19, 2015.⁶⁵¹

The roles of the parish nurse include integration of faith and health, health educator, counselor, and advocate, referral advisor, developer of support groups, and volunteer coordinator. In fulfilling these roles, the parish nurse provides blood pressure screening, facilitates grief support groups, coordinates various exercise activity groups, visits Bethel members in their homes and by telephone to consult with them regarding health concerns and access to health care, writes articles on a variety of health-related topics, promotes blood donations by Bethel members, coordinates flu shots at the church, and coordinates Bethel's health fair, among other health related activities.

The Bethel Health Cabinet was established in 2013 as part of the development of the Parish Nurse Ministry. This group consists of eleven Bethel members from a variety of health and wellness careers. The Health Cabinet oversees the Parish Nurse Ministry and is committed to improving the health and wellness of the Bethel congregation and the surrounding community. The role of the Health Cabinet is to help Bethel reach people before they are in a crisis situation so that problems can be reversed before professional attention is required. It assists individuals and families in becoming more responsible for maintaining and improving their own health. The cabinet also helps influence the congregation so that stewardship of health is expressed in all areas of church activity.⁶⁵²

By December 2014, a group of eight people led by Pastor Bandel began planning for a columbarium at Bethel. Conversations with staff and interested members began in 2015 as the group gathered information regarding interest. A brief presentation was made at the 2015 annual meeting to introduce the idea.⁶⁵³ The initial plan called for the columbarium to be located on the 3rd Avenue side of the property. This location turned out to be a significant concern for some.⁶⁵⁴ Information sessions were held for interested congregation members as well as a brochure and slides in the worship announcements.⁶⁵⁵

At the 2016 annual meeting, the congregation authorized the establishment of "a Columbarium Memorial Garden Team to design, communicate, construct, operate and maintain a Columbarium and Memorial Garden at 810 3rd Ave SE. Rochester, Minnesota."⁶⁵⁶ In subsequent communications with the church council, the team agreed that their by-laws would need to be

approved at a congregational meeting prior to beginning construction and because of concerns with shared space on the west lawn, they also agree to consider other locations on the church property for the columbarium and memorial garden.⁶⁵⁷

After a series of meetings, the Columbarium Team reluctantly agreed to move the location from the west to the east lawn of the church as preferred by the council. In return the church council offered to offset the additional cost of landscaping on the east side.⁶⁵⁸

The by-laws of the Columbarium Team were approved at the January 29, 2017, annual meeting. With that approval, construction drawings were prepared. Preliminary investigation showed that the planned brass front plates weathered making the inscription difficult to read. After some discussion, it was decided to use granite front plates.

The columbarium construction began in May 2018 and it was dedicated on November 4, 2018, with Pastors Wahl, Bandel, and Burggraaf participating in the dedication.⁶⁵⁹ A fourth unit, Unit D to the right of Unit B was constructed during the summer of 2020 making room for a total of 100 niches.⁶⁶⁰ The decorative fencing around the air conditioning units on the east side of the sanctuary was a gift in memory of Helen Mundahl.



Bethel Columbarium on the East Lawn with units labelled and the memorial garden in the center

Gary Thorn retired as Bethel Minister of Music on February 28, 2017 after ten years in that position.⁶⁶¹ After a search, Brock Besse was hired as the Bethel Minister of Music to begin his service on June 5, 2017.⁶⁶²

Brock Besse studied music performance on the pipe organ with a minor in music education at Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska. He next studied organ at Dana College in Blaire, Nebraska and completed his Master of Fine Arts at the University of Minnesota. Prior to coming to Bethel, Brock was Minister of Music & Worship at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Rochester. During his time in Rochester, he developed the Rochester Pops Orchestra & Chorale which just completed its fourth full season. In addition to directing the Bethel musical groups, Brock is an accomplished musician and regularly plays piano introductions for worship services and acts as substitute organist when the regular organist, Jim Bahler, cannot attend.

Chris Zabel resigned his position as Business Administrator during March 2017.⁶⁶³ Terra O'Brien was introduced as the new Business Administrator at the August council meeting.⁶⁶⁴ Terra was a graduate of Minnesota School of Business and had previously worked at the Mayo Clinic. She started at Bethel in July of 2017. As the Business Administrator, she handles the finances of the church, was involved with budget preparation, and served as the human resources representative, among many other duties.

Terra and her family were Bethel members prior to her appointment as the Business Administrator. She had volunteered by teaching Sunday School, volunteered with Food for Kidz and Samaritan Bethany. She and her husband Dave have two sons, Jackson and Grady.

Bethel's Christian Education is split into three options for Sunday mornings: Sunday School for three-year-old to 4th grade, Forum 56 for 5th and 6th grade, and Anchored which includes 7th - 12th grade. Sunday Morning Education is offered at 9:00 and 10:30 during the school year. During the 2018-2019 school year there were 257 students in Sunday School, 63 in Forum 56 and 51 in the Anchored program.

Sunday School is a traditional setting with children divided by grades with teachers and assistants for each class. There are typically two classes for each grade at 9:00 and one class at 10:30, in 2018-19, there were 52 volunteers who worked on Sunday mornings. The number of volunteers involved in each class varies from 1 teacher to 3 or 4 teachers and assistants sharing duties. Since 2004, a variety of options for curriculum have been used, even some written by Bethel staff for Beginners and 1st Grade. Sunday School and Forum 56 currently use a curriculum called Growing in Christ.

Forum 56 and Anchored meet together at the beginning of the hour for a bit of social time and games. Forum 56 remains in Youth Hall for large group and small group time led by Julie Allhiser assisted by parent volunteers. Every other Sunday Forum 56 meets with the Sunday School classes in Youth Hall for Gathering Time which includes singing a variety of songs, as well as learning about fun things happening at Bethel and about the seasons of the church and other Lutheran teachings.

Many volunteers share God's love with our children and youth each week. Some are brand new and teach or assist for a year or two. Others have been committed to the teaching ministry for many years. During the 2018-2019 school year, one teacher completed her 46th (and final) year of teaching Sunday School at Bethel.⁶⁶⁵

The Bethel Confirmation Program begins with sixth Grade students who receive an orientation in the middle of their school year. Sixth graders are asked to get started with just a few sermon notes and service hours that spring. During the summer after sixth grade, the students attend confirmation camp with the seventh graders.

Seventh and eighth grade students attend weekly Wednesday evening classes with Pastors, Staff and Volunteers. One year they study bible stories and the second year Catechism and Martin Luther. These students are usually formed into fourteen to sixteen small groups with an adult volunteer group leader plus about four volunteers that help with Wednesday night pizza.

Ninth grade students choose a mentor and usually have at least monthly contact. This is an opportunity for students to build one-on-one relationships with more mature Christians in their lives. During this time students may work on their Faith Project for Confirmation or they and their mentor may choose other religious activities.

The tenth-grade students meet in the fall to assure they have completed all the required activities and to prepare for their faith interview with the pastor. This interview includes a presentation of the faith project they have completed. On Reformation Day in October, the tenth-grade students attend their “affirmation of baptism” service which concludes their confirmation program.⁶⁶⁶

The High School Ministry at Bethel is a relational, small group-based ministry that has a variety of outreach and fellowship events throughout the year. These opportunities include lock-ins, ski trips, mission trips, attending concerts and youth conferences, and much more.

During the school year, there are two different opportunities for small group bible studies each week. The Sunday Morning program named “Anchored” meets during the school year at 9 A.M. and 10:30 AM. This program is intended to build relationships and discuss biblical concepts. Anchored uses resources provided through the ELCA that ties biblical teaching to current events. The Wednesday Night youth group called “Elevate” meets every week after Confirmation and looks into the Bible at a deeper level including how that relates to the lives of youth. The youth are involved in service projects several times during the year.⁶⁶⁷

The Bethel Women, formerly called the ladies aid, continue to be involved in the life of the church in many ways. Since Bethel membership is so large, the Bethel Women divide into circles who meet monthly for devotions and projects. Some circles meet in the church and others in members’ homes.

During 2018, their income from various projects was \$26,346.94. About half of that income came from their fall and spring rummage sales which draws people from all over the community. Items left after the sale is over are donated to local groups that can use them. Some examples of this are craft items given to the local school kindergartens and linens, clothing and household items given to the Rochester Outreach Center. Their monetary donations totaling \$18,799.88 were given locally to places such as the Women’s Shelter and the Dorothy Day house, regionally to organizations like Minnesota Food Share and SE Area Christians, and around the world both with donations to Christo Rey Lutheran in Puerto Rico and the Bethel Tanzania Mission trip as well as through the ELCA Disaster Response and various Lutheran World Relief projects.⁶⁶⁸

In January 2007, Avis Hagen organized a Prayer Shawl Ministry. This was started with a group of women who each donated \$20.00 to purchase start-up materials. The first prayer shawl presentation was given on January 26, 2007. Since that time, they have been supported by member donations and bequests and by mid-2021 had donated over 1,500 prayer shawls to people in need of comfort.⁶⁶⁹ The Bethel Quilters are also a part of the Bethel Women organization. Their story is told in Appendix 11 below.

In addition to special events such as the rummage sale, the Bethel Women also have a Mission of the Month to aid charitable organizations. In January 2018 they collected paper products for the local Hope Lodge. In April, the Women’s Shelter received paper products and diapers while in October the Dorothy Day house received winter wear, paper products, and cleaning supplies.⁶⁷⁰

Through all of this the Bethel women continue the 150 plus-year tradition of the women before them doing whatever needs to be done whether in terms of service, gifts in kind, or monetary donations. The needs in the community change, but they are there to do what is needed.

In honor of Bethel's 150th Anniversary, a special congregational meeting in June 2017 approved a resolution to commit Bethel to raise \$100,000 in the next two to four years to support a project in Bihar, India.⁶⁷¹ Lutheran World Relief is a partner in this project and their intent is for ten Lutheran Churches to commit \$100,000 each to the project. The goal of the Bihar project is to teach the women of the area a trade and how to sustain trade across many villages.⁶⁷² Some of the specific projects included improved health and hygiene for the people in Bihar, livestock management and improved farming practices.⁶⁷³ A Bihar team was formed to follow up on the Bethel commitment. The Bethel challenge was to meet the project commitment by the anniversary celebration in June 2019.⁶⁷⁴ Two people from the team, Art Larson and Paul Christian travelled to Bihar to see the project firsthand.⁶⁷⁵ By the April 2019 council meeting the project goal had been surpassed and a total of \$103,460 will be given by Bethel.⁶⁷⁶

Planning for the 150th Anniversary celebration started in the fall 2017. One of the first plans was a large event at the Rochester Event center to be held October 20, 2019.⁶⁷⁷ Some of the other events have included a float in the Rochester fest parade featuring the Bethel Brass, a Bethel day at a Honkers Baseball game and special services on dates to remember. The anniversary committee also sold anniversary t-shirts and Christmas ornaments as remembrances to interested members. The celebration at the Rochester Event Center was attended by present Bethel pastors, staff, and congregation members in addition to many former pastors and staff. The dinner and program for the night were enjoyed by all who attended.

Pastor Norman Wahl's final services at Bethel were October 10 and 11, 2020. A special service was held on October 11 to commemorate his 41 years of ministry, 24 of which were at Bethel. He received the title Pastor Emeritus when he returned to Bethel after his one year required leave from the church.⁶⁷⁸

The Covid-19 pandemic began in Minnesota in early March 2020. Under the leadership of Pastor Wahl and after his retirement in October 2020, of Pastor Bandel, Bethel reacted to the pandemic to continue to minister the congregation and community in the best possible way. Since the pandemic lasted for over two years, the Covid story at Bethel is told in Appendix 12 to provide a continuous narration of the many changes that the congregation faced during that time.

Chapter 7 Pastor Anjanette Bandel 2020 - Present

After a review of available candidates in consultation with the SE Minnesota Synod, the call committee voted to call Pastor Anjanette Bandel as executive pastor. A special congregational meeting was held June 7, 2020 to officially approve the call to Pastor Bandel. Due to the Covid pandemic this was a virtual meeting via Zoom which required special adjustments to meet the Bethel Constitutional requirements for a written ballot (See Appendix 12 Page 108 for more details of these adjustments.). Some members were not able to come to Bethel to cast their ballots so it was not until the next Sunday that the results that Pastor Bandel was called and accepted the call were announced to the congregation.⁶⁷⁹



Pastor Bandel

Changes to the pastoral job descriptions and titles were discussed during the summer and were announced at the September Council meeting. Pastor Bandel would be Lead Pastor, Pastor Burggraff would become Associate Pastor Education, and a pastor yet to be called would be fill the position of Associate Pastor Generational Ministries. Pastor Bandel was installed at the worship services November 14 and 15, 2020.⁶⁸⁰

Pastor Robert Onkka died on October 9, 2020. Pastor Onkka served Bethel from 1987 when he became assisting pastor during a pastoral vacancy and then as visitation pastor until he retired in 2009. His funeral was held at Bethel on October 12⁶⁸¹. This was for family only because of the pandemic restrictions regarding large assemblies. Had that not been the case, there would have been a large crowd attending as Bob was very popular with the members of Bethel.



Nathan Luong

A special congregational meeting was called on January 10, 2021 for the purpose of approving a call to Pastor Nathan Luong as Associate Pastor of Generational Ministries. Like the meeting in June that called Pastor Bandel, this was held via Zoom due to the continuing pandemic restrictions.⁶⁸² Pastor Nate's first day at Bethel was on February 23 and his first sermons at were February 27 and 28, 2021.⁶⁸³ He had been ordained in 2015 and served churches in Saint Peter and Sleepy Eye prior to coming to Bethel. He was installed by Pastor Emily Carson of the SE Minnesota Synod as Bethel's Pastor of Generational Ministries on March 14, 2021.

Pastor Nate came to Bethel with excellent qualifications and many members were impressed with his sermons. However, he resigned unexpectedly from Bethel on August 17, 2021. He received 12 weeks' severance pay with his resignation.⁶⁸⁴

Nathan Luong resigned from the ELCA pastoral ministry in May 2022. At the beginning of June Bishop Hassanally called an information meeting for Bethel members and provided more details

about Pastor Luong's resignations and the reasons behind them. This meeting allowed congregation members to understand the issues that up to that time had confused many of them.⁶⁸⁵

A call committee was soon formed to find a new Associate Pastor of Generational Ministries to serve Bethel. They began meeting in November 2021. It took a long time for the call committee to find an applicant as many of the ELCA pastoral candidates were unwilling to abide by limitations on their pastoral service contained in the 2010 resolutions on homosexuality (see page 72.)⁶⁸⁶ The Bethel Ministry Site Profile was sent to 34 candidates on the synod availability list. Twenty-one of these candidates said no to having their Rostered Ministers Profile sent to the Bethel call committee. Three more of the remaining candidates withdrew from the call process. The reason given by many of the pastoral candidates who did not interview was that while the ministry opportunity was exciting, they could not in good conscience continue the call process given the continuing resolutions surrounding human sexuality⁶⁸⁷ Three or four of the candidates that were interviewed said they did not agree with the 2010 resolutions but that they were willing to serve within the limitation of the resolutions while perhaps hoping they could be changed.⁶⁸⁸

In the interval before a candidate was found, Pastor Byron Meline was called as interim pastor of Generational Ministries. Reverend Meline graduated from Luther Seminary in 1981. He served parishes in North Dakota and Minnesota during the ensuing years. He was called to Zion Lutheran in Stewartville in 2009 and served there until his retirement June 30, 2021. After a year away from active ministry, he was ready when Bethel called for assistance on July 1, 2022.⁶⁸⁹

Lisa Hawe was called at a special congregational meeting on September 25, 2022. She graduated from Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD with a BS in Elementary Education in 1991. After graduation she worked in the Tentmaker Youth Ministry program, was on full time staff at Okoboji Lutheran Bible camp as program director for day camps and youth ministry teams for three years and then was Youth and Family Minister at United Lutheran Church in Red Wing for 14 years. Following this time, she took an adult ministry position called "Director of Faith and Community at United Lutheran. She graduated with a Master of Divinity from Luther Seminary in 2021.⁶⁹⁰



Lisa Hawe

Since this was her first call, Pastor Hawe's ordination was held at United Lutheran Church in Red Wing, MN on November 19 with many Bethel members in attendance. Once ordained Pastor Hawe began serving Bethel on December 5, 2022 and was installed at services on December 10 and 11, 2022.

In the fall of 2021, a project to replace the stucco on the walls of the 1991 addition was begun. At the same time, the windows in that part of the building were inspected for damage. The

reasons for this replacement were that there was potential for mold forming on some of the walls due to water leakage through the stucco and there was air leakage through the frames of many of the windows. Once the project began, it was discovered that all of the windows needed to be replaced. The project was not completed until the spring of 2022 due to some of the contractor's employees contracting Covid and the prohibitive cost of heating to continue the project during the winter. In addition to replacement, the stucco was painted to match the rest of the building.



Bethel 3rd Avenue view after Stucco replacement project

Property Team members Barth Crane, Greg Kelm, and Don Lamberg along with Properties Supervisor Mike Schad provided oversight of the project for Bethel. Mike served as the day-to-day interface with the contractor with respect to scheduling of their activities to minimize the impact on Bethel programs. As a member of the Bethel Staff, he was able to coordinate and keep the staff informed of progress. He also provided general quality oversight, and covered the unexpected small jobs needed to keep the project moving.⁶⁹¹

At the 2022 Annual meeting the congregation approved refinancing the Bethel mortgage. By June this had been completed resulting in a new monthly payment of \$21,209 instead of \$37,250 previously.⁶⁹² The plan was to use the savings to pay off the mortgage early.

During June 2022 the Properties Team began planning for an antiphonal organ addition to the original Wicks organ in the Bethel sanctuary.⁶⁹³ This was to be constructed on the south wall of the sanctuary and would require significant properties planning for the necessary changes to support the new equipment. A single benefactor agreed to fund this project which was planned for installation in June 2024.⁶⁹⁴

Josie Bellrichard was hired as Bethel's Communications Coordinator working with Rachel Hasley. She started work on July 18, 2022.⁶⁹⁵ Both women work 25 hours per week with Rachel working from home and Josie in the office Tuesday and Thursday and working off-site

Monday and Friday. Rather than splitting the work so each concentrated on specific communications tasks, they work on what is required each day and communicate on task progress through a spread sheet. That way both are able to cover any of the communications tasks when the other is on vacation or otherwise not able to work.⁶⁹⁶ When Josie was hired as communications coordinator, Cindy Bahler continued as Bethel's wedding coordinator but was no longer a part of the communications staff.

During the summer 2022 the Properties Team concluded a review of Safety and Security at Bethel. The resulting plan provided a safe and secure public area by installing cameras, door locks and badge reader doors in appropriate locations. A separate secure area within the facility was also provided for Bethel staff and congregation members. During normal hours, the narthex, sanctuary, and office area are open to visitors but the office area could be secured during an emergency and is locked during off hours.⁶⁹⁷

Kathy Ferguson retired at the end of August 2022 and a search for a new Parish Nurse began.⁶⁹⁸ Jeanne Townsend was hired for the position in October⁶⁹⁹ Jeanne had been a Bethel member since 1980 and was actively involved as a Sunday school teacher, confirmation mentor as well as many other activities within the church. She has one daughter and son-in-law who have given her a special "sunshine" named Levi. During her nursing career she had worked at Faribault State School and the Rochester State Hospital prior to moving to the Mayo Clinic.⁷⁰⁰ After accepting the position, she received training in the responsibilities of a Parish Nurse and began serving at Bethel on November 1, 2022.⁷⁰¹

Building Supervisor Mike Schad died suddenly while at work at Bethel on November 15, 2022.⁷⁰² A search for a replacement began immediately and during the interval much of the professional work that had been done by Mike was contracted out as it required licensure to do the inspections and oversee any repair work needed. It was not until February 23, 2023 that Daniel O'Dell was hired as Bethel's Building Supervisor.⁷⁰³

In the late 1940's the Bethel staff consisted of the pastor, a secretary and finally a parish worker. Since then, it has grown by the addition of pastors and also lay staff. By 2019, the pastoral staff had grown to three full time and one part time pastor and a lay staff of about twenty-five individuals, many of whom work part time. The actual number of lay staff varies over time as people leave and new people are hired. The pastors have been introduced in the previous pages but most of the lay staff through the years have not. Not because they are unimportant, but in order to keep the narrative less cluttered.

In November 2022 Pastor Jason Burggraff received a call from First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, SD to serve as their senior pastor. This was the church he served before coming to Bethel so they knew him well. He accepted the call and his last sermon to the Bethel congregations was delivered at services on December 3 and 4. His last official day at Bethel was December 31, 2022.⁷⁰⁴ Pastor Byron Meline agreed to continue to serve as interim Associate Pastor of Education until a full-time replacement could be called.

Before forming a new call committee, the church council decided to deal with the 2010 resolutions that created a such challenging situation for the recent call committee as well as making the hire of lay staff more difficult.⁷⁰⁵ Eight information meetings were held at various dates and times to inform congregation members of the reasons that the congregation needed to reassess the position of the members regarding the 2010 resolutions.

These meetings were for information only and not for discussion of personal opinions regarding the resolutions. The meeting content included a description of the resolutions, when they were adopted, who were affected and how they affect the Bethel call process and continuing ministry and mission. It was noted that the resolutions were not included in the constitution or by-laws and thus could be changed by majority vote of the church council or in a special meeting of the congregation.⁷⁰⁶

A letter dated February 16, 2023 was sent to all Bethel member households by the church council. This letter announced the special meeting to be held March 12, 2023 at 11:45 A.M. in the Bethel sanctuary. The sole purpose of the meeting was to address the question of keeping or dissolving resolutions 2010-02 and 2010-03. Included were a copy of the “Resolved” parts of the resolutions under consideration and instructions of how to access the hybrid meeting on-line or by telephone. The schedule and purpose of the above-mentioned information meetings was also provided.⁷⁰⁷

The special congregational meeting was held on March 12, 2023. Bethel members who attended were required to register prior to entering the meeting. This registration granted the person the right to vote. A registration card was given to each member to be handed back with their votes. This process provided assurance that the votes were cast by Bethel members and also provided anonymity for their votes. Since there were people at the meeting via on-line or phone, it took some time to gather and verify their votes. Thus, the vote count was done on Thursday March 16 and audited the same day. The result of the vote was 136 to keep the resolutions and 357 to dissolve them. With that vote, the Bethel call committee could be formed with the knowledge that the 2010 resolutions would no longer affect the call process and Bethel pastors would operate under ELCA rules regarding human sexuality. In reaction to this vote, six members have left the Bethel Congregation.⁷⁰⁸

The text message that informed Bethel members of the result of the vote ended with the statement, “We are a congregation of varied opinions and theological interpretations, yet what unites us will always be the Good News of Jesus Christ.”

Terra O’Brien left Bethel to pursue another opportunity at the end of June 2023. Isabella Larson became Bethel’s Business Administrator June 27, 2023. She was born in Denver, CO and moved throughout the west with her family as her father was an ELCA Pastor and military chaplain. She spent 22 years in Europe when her husband was stationed there. She lives in Lake City and has four grown children. Prior to becoming Bethels Business Administrator she work for a law firm.

The Bethel lay staff at the time of publication of the second edition of this history in 2023 are listed below. Current staff pictures are on the wall outside the office next to the display cases.

The staff associated with weekend worship; Brock Besse Minister of Worship and Music, Merle Savage, Assistant Music director and also Cantor, James Bahler, Principal organist with Brock as back up organist, Melissa Almer and Becky Wulff as hearing interpreters at the 9 A.M. Sunday Services, and Michele Nyman as Gate of Life Worship coordinator. The nursery coordinator who makes sure the youngest children have a place to go if their parents prefer is presently open.

Children and Youth Education at Bethel is coordinated by Julie Alhiser, Director of Middle School Ministry, Susan Larson, Director of Children's Ministry, and Kari Tollefson, Children's Ministry Assistant. The Director of High School Youth Ministry position is presently open when Kelsie Watkins left to return to family in Montana. Adult education is presently supervised by interim Pastor Byron Meline assisted by the Adult Education team for the Sunday Forum and the other pastors as bible study leaders.

The financial affairs of the church are overseen by Isabella Larson the Business Administrator. A group of regular volunteers counts and records Sunday offerings on Monday mornings.

Rachel Hasley is the Bethel Director of Communications assisted by Josie Bellrichard, Sheri Kallembach the Bethel Member Coordinator and Jeanie Townsend the Parish Nurse. Cindy Bahler serves as Bethel Wedding Coordinator.

Bethel is also blessed with an able and dedicated office staff. Janet Hoffmann is the administrative secretary, Connie Post serves as membership secretary, and Cheri Brinson is the receptionist. Michele Pretzer and Wendy Lewis serve as weekend receptionists.

Bethel property is overseen by the Properties team assisted by Properties Supervisor Daniel O'Dell and Custodial Supervisor Tony Wright.⁷⁰⁹

The people above are the ones who, in cooperation with the Bethel pastors, keep things moving smoothly.

The Bethel mission statement is "We the people of Bethel, called by God, commit ourselves to proclaim the Gospel, to prepare our members for outreach and service, and to minister to human needs." The story in the preceding pages has shown only some of the many ways in which the Bethel congregation has acted to meet this mission today, for the past 150 plus years, and is prepared to continue in the years to come.

Appendix 1 Speculation regarding pre-1869 activities

The October 1875 issue of the *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende* which was a publication of the Synod of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Norwegian Synod), published an article titled, “Message from Rochester” written by J. A. Thorsen.⁷¹⁰ Reverend Thorsen was pastor of the Rochester Evangelical Lutheran Congregation (later Zumbro Lutheran Church) from 1869 to 1879.⁷¹¹ This message described Reverend Thorsen’s view of the relationship between the two Norwegian Lutheran churches from the mid 1865 when Zumbro was established, until the letter was written, probably in mid-1875.

Reverend Thorsen stated that his church stands “with the old teachings rather than the modern Christianity surrounding the other church.”⁷¹² Thus, the other church in Rochester did not agree with some of the teaching of the Norwegian Synod, nor did their first pastor, Reverend N. E. S. Jensen. At the time of the writing of the article it was noted the “the other congregation is led by a conference pastor.” The conference refers to the Conference of Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which was founded in 1870. The article states that Reverend Jensen “needed to resign his position at Highland Prairie ... as his teachings were different from the synod’s.”⁷¹³ It is not clear from the letter how Reverend Jensen’s teaching diverted from that of the Norwegian Synod.⁷¹⁴ The Bethel 1869 Secretary book says that Reverend Jensen was voluntarily seeking someone to take over the Highland Prairie church.⁷¹⁵

Reverend Jensen served Saint Olaf church in Rock Dell from 1860 to 1861 so it is possible that one or more of the new church members knew him from that time period.⁷¹⁶ The Norwegians in Rochester were served by Pastor Steen of Saint Olaf congregation who also ministered to groups in Bear Creek and Rochester possibly as early as 1861 until he left Rock Dell in 1869.⁷¹⁷

It appears that Reverend Steen met with only one congregation in Rochester, so it is possible that in the spring of 1869 there was a split between the Norwegian Lutherans in Rochester. Reverend Thorson notes in his message that “a congregational meeting was held (spring 1869) where a majority of the voting members accepted Jensen as their pastor.”⁷¹⁸ It is not clear from the article if that congregational meeting was of the Rochester Evangelical Lutheran congregation or of some other group that was just organizing. All of the Bethel histories report this meeting as the organizational meeting of a new church body.

David Dunn’s *History of the Zumbro Lutheran Church* reported that in 1869, a number of the congregation had reportedly joined a church referred to as Jensen’s.⁷¹⁹ Though he speculates that was a church in Fillmore County, it is more likely this refers to the Rochester church that became Bethel. Six of twenty-one charter members of the church that later became Zumbro signed the original constitution of Bethel of which they are also charter members. Four other Zumbro charter members appear on the 1875 Bethel membership list which indicates they joined between 1870 and 1875.⁷²⁰ This shows several of the original Bethel members came from Zumbro and that church continued to lose a few members in the ensuing six years. This loss of membership may explain the angry tone of Reverend Thorsen’s 1875 article.

In the fall of 1874, there was a meeting of the two congregations to discuss differences. Pastor Thorsen felt that there should only be one “true” Norwegian Lutheran Church in Rochester and that was his church while Pastor Gjertsen disagreed.⁷²¹ The synod group claimed that the other church was illegitimate as there was no constitution that could be produced from the time that Pastor Steen met with Rochester Norwegians.

Thus, Bethel Lutheran Church was founded by a group of Scandinavians, mostly Norwegians, who disagreed with the teachings of the Norwegian Synod. They appear to have met with Pastor Steen from St Olaf possibly as early as 1861. In 1869 they decided to form their own church which associated with the Conference of Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America when it formed in 1870. The synodical separation of Norwegian Lutheran churches in Rochester continued until 1963 when Bethel became a part of the American Lutheran Church.

Appendix 2 Bethel Membership Information

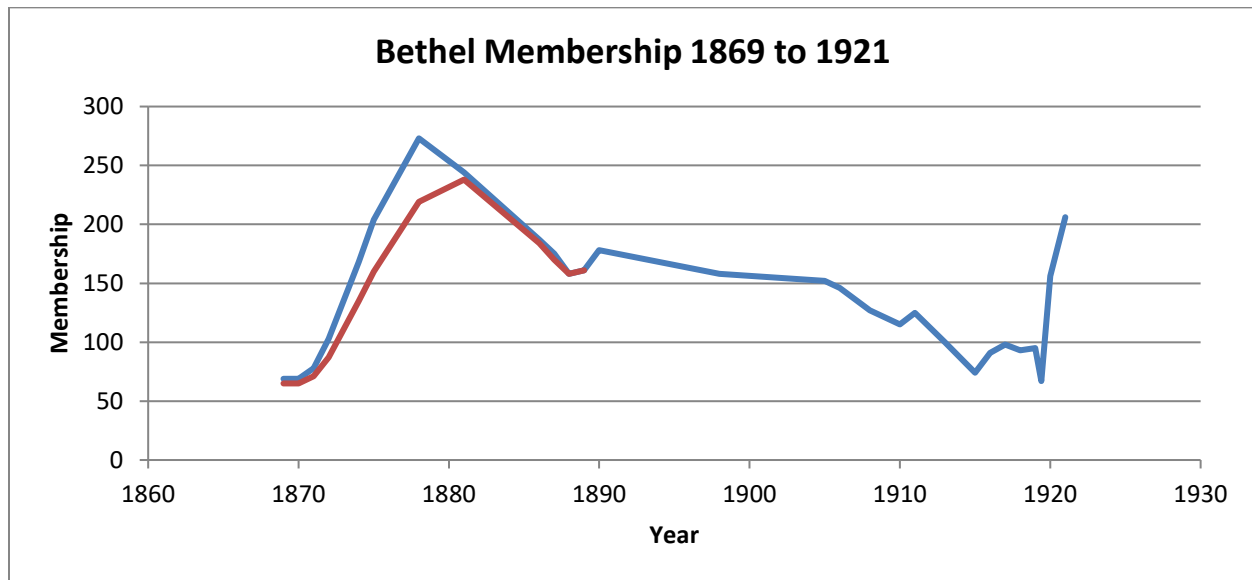


Figure A2-1 Bethel Membership to 1921

The membership numbers in figure A2-1 above are approximate as the dates when people left are usually not clear in the records of the congregation with the exception of a few people listed as having funerals at Bethel. The upper (blue) line up to 1881 is a maximum possible membership as this assumes that all of the people who later moved did so after that date. If we assume that they left the same year they joined, a minimum membership is shown in red up to 1881. The most likely membership during this time is closer to the upper line than the lower.

In addition, some of the membership numbers include children and others may not. For those years where the count is known to only include contributing members, a multiplying factor of 1.5 is used to account for children and other non-contributing members. The Rochester city directory has membership numbers for some years, but these seem to be rounded to the nearest 10 so should be used with care and only where more accurate information from congregational records is not clear.

Membership increased at a steady rate at least until about 1878 as we have funeral data for the years 1875 to 1879 giving some idea of losses. There is no record of people leaving for reasons other than death until the 1885 to 1890 period. By 1889 when a new membership list was started, the membership had dropped to 161 and continued to drop until 1916 when it began to increase again. The Zumbro Lutheran Church history by David Dunn also shows similar low membership in the late 1890's to early 1900's.⁷²²

The 1929 history stated that the congregation split in late 1871 when 27 members left the congregation. This has been repeated in all subsequent histories. This conclusion seems to be a mistranslation of the record of the December 10, 1871 meeting. Instead of a list of 27 people

resigning at that time, it is actually a list of new members being received into the congregation. Figures A2-1 and A2-2 reflect that change from the first edition.

The sharp drop in 1919 is due to an estimated 35 members being cast out of the congregation during a dispute over pastoral performance. The sharp rise by 1920 indicates a recovery when the conflict was resolved with the arrival of a new pastor. The depth of the drop is approximate due to lack of information regarding when some of the people left the congregation.

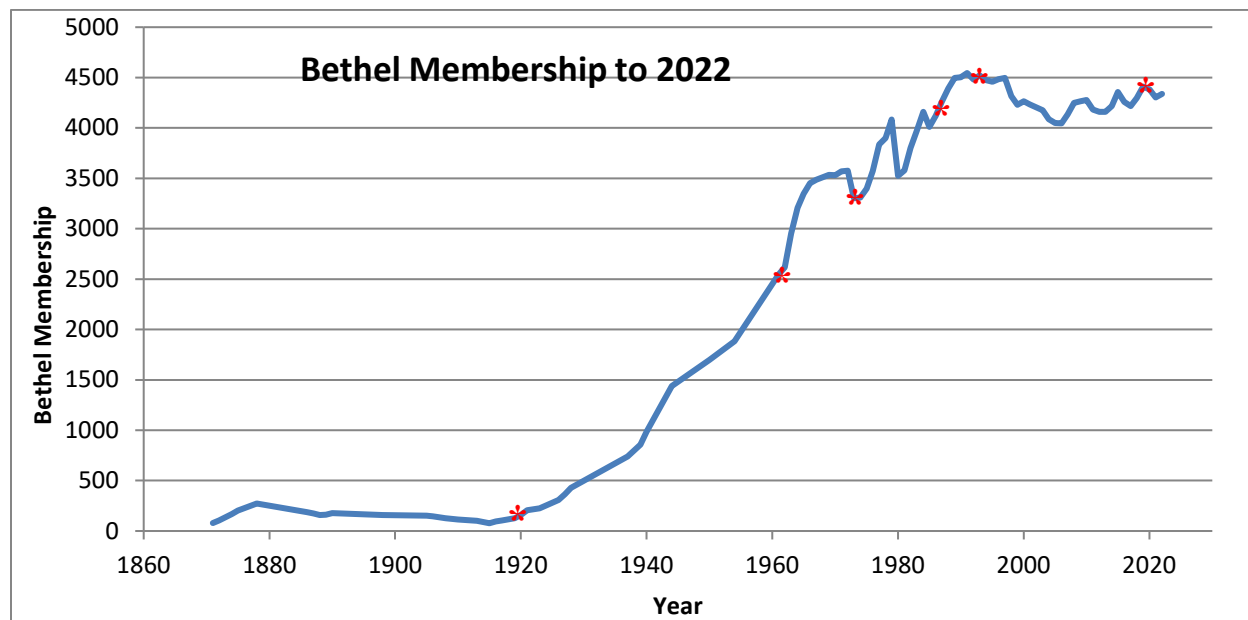


Figure A2-2 Membership to 2022

The asterisks on Figure A2-2 above show when a new senior or administrative pastor came to Bethel. In Pastor Hansen's case, he was the only pastor from 1920 to 1953. After that there were associate pastors, or later, pastors whose title was described in their letter of call.

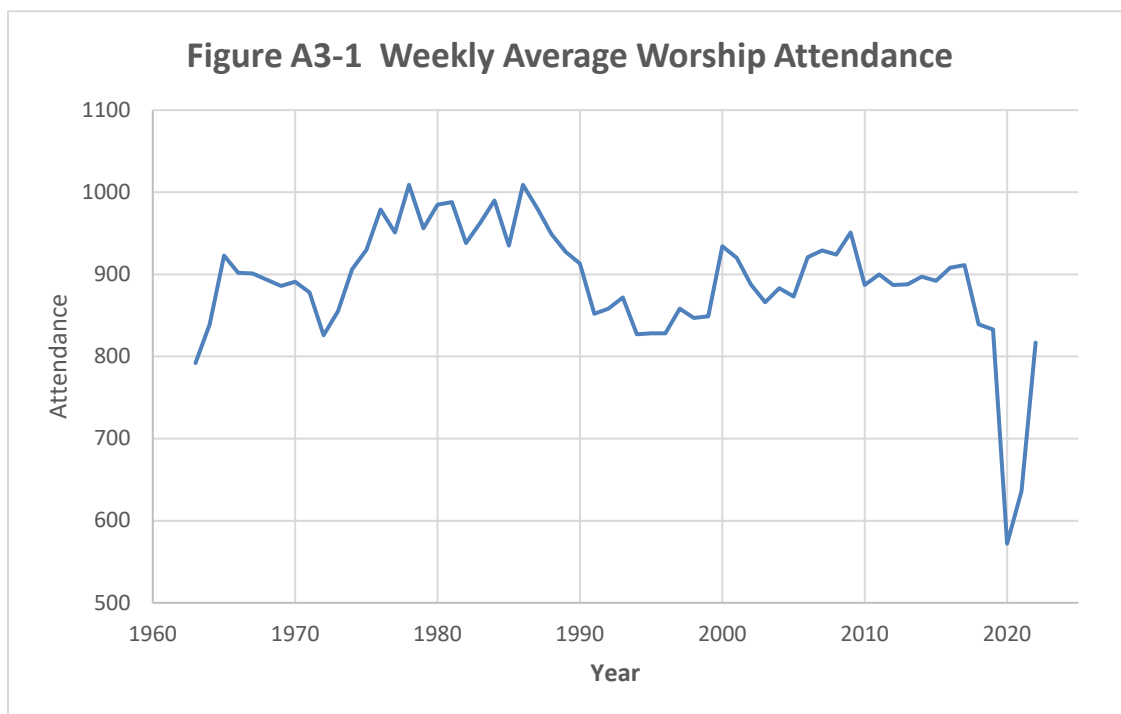
This figure clearly shows the positive influence Pastor Hansen had on Bethel membership. The average of 60 new members per year continued from 1920 to the end of his time at Bethel in 1960 when there were about 2500 members. The membership growth continued under Pastors Tungseth, Bagaason, and Braaten until it leveled out at about 4500 members in 1990.

When Pastor Bagaason came to Bethel, a large number of people who had not contributed or attended communion for three years were identified and were changed to inactive membership as the constitution requires. This explains the sharp downward membership count in 1972 and also in 1980. Removal of inactive members occurred at other times, but not in the numbers experienced in those years. When Pastor Wahl arrived in 1996, there was again a significant number of people changed to inactive membership. This membership review has continued on a yearly basis to the present time. Since 2007 Bethel baptized membership has varied from about 4100 to 4400. While stable membership may not be ideal, Bethel has not been part of the trend toward lower membership in many mainline protestant churches today who experienced a 12.5% reduction in membership between 2007 and 2014.⁷²³

Appendix 3 Weekly Worship Attendance

Weekly attendance at worship services is one indication of an active congregation. Weekly attendance numbers begin to be available with the yearly statistics in 1961 and continue from that date. Figure A3-1 shows the yearly average worship attendance based on usher counts at each service. The pre-2020 numbers vary from a low of 709 in 1961 to a high of 1009 in 1978 and 1986.

The ushers count the number of people at all of the services on a weekend. Worship service attendance peaked in the mid-1970s to mid-1980s, dropped in the 1990s and then rose slightly after about 2000 remaining approximately constant from then until the Covid pandemic changed things in 2020.



Prior to 2020 the weekly figure included Saturday night, two Sunday services in the sanctuary, and the Gate of Life service in the chapel, since 2020 online worship attendance is also included. The in-person worship count is done one time in the service hour so people going in or out might not be counted. According to Duane Saase, the 9 A.M. ushers on his team count all of the people in the sanctuary including musicians and pastors. He felt their count was accurate to plus/minus 10 due to problems with people standing and sitting and small children not seen.⁷²⁴ Some of the 10:30 A.M. ushers do not count the pastors or the choir and musicians that play at both services while other usher teams count everyone.⁷²⁵ None of the ushers contacted mentioned counting the people in the projection booth. Another variable is whether Christmas Eve and Christmas in a given year occur on a weekend. If so, they are included in the weekly worship count. This

factor adds 2000 to 2400 to the yearly total, which adds about 40 to the average weekly attendance.

The attendance drop from 2017 to 2018 is partly due to Christmas services being on a weekend in both 2016 and 2017 and not in the next two years. Another factor is an indication of at least one snowstorm day in December 2018 when attendance at all services was unusually low.⁷²⁶ The very sharp drop in 2020 is related to the Covid pandemic and is discussed in Appendix 12.

Another way of looking at attendance is shown in Figure A3-2 which plots the per cent of confirmed members who attend in a given week. Note that the percentage in this figure is based on confirmed membership. While some children attend both worship services and Sunday school, most only attend Sunday school while their parents attend services.

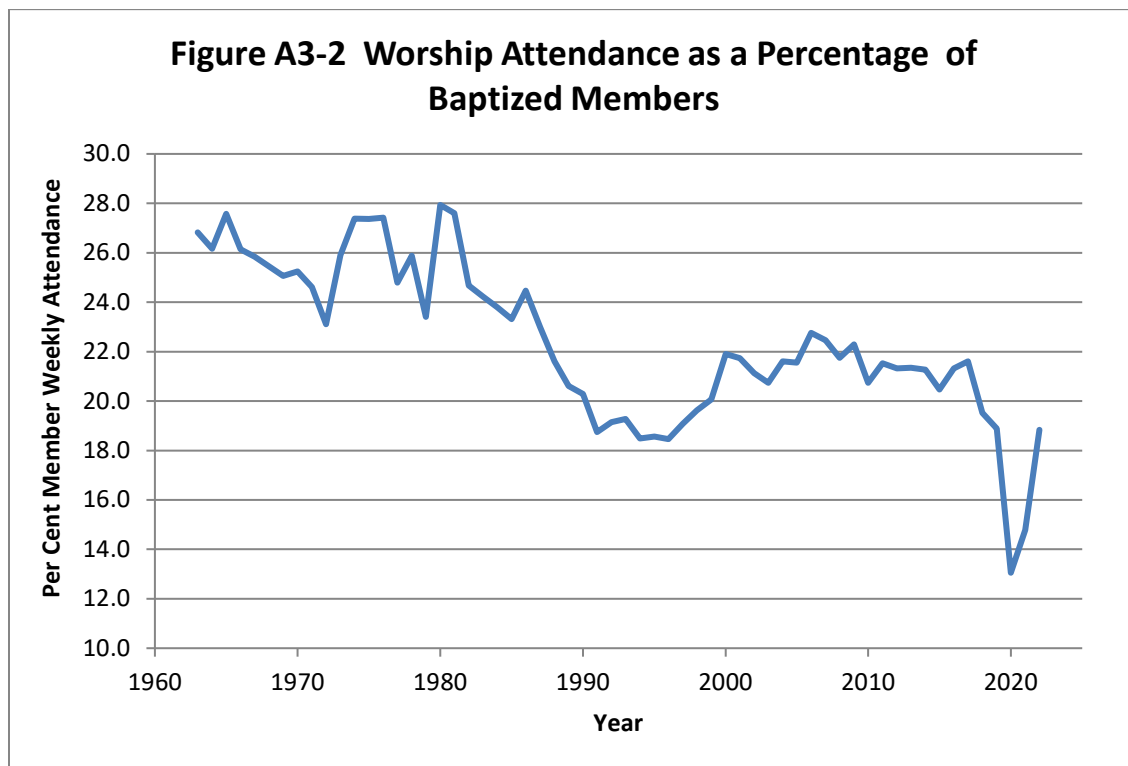


Figure A3-2 shows a drop in member attendance from 1963 to 1994 of about 0.6% per year. There is a rise of about 0.8% per year from 1996 to about 2001. After 2001 the percentage of confirmed members attending worship services each week is fairly constant at about 28% until 2018 when it began dropping again. For comparison an average for mainline protestant churches is about 33%.⁷²⁷ This number, however, is from a 2014 survey whose margin of error is plus/minus 2% while the error on the count for Bethel numbers is likely in the range of plus 2%/minus 4%.. The sharp drop in 2020 is again Covid related. The next two or three years will show if the Covid pandemic has had a lasting effect on worship attendance.

Appendix 4: Bethel Church Locations

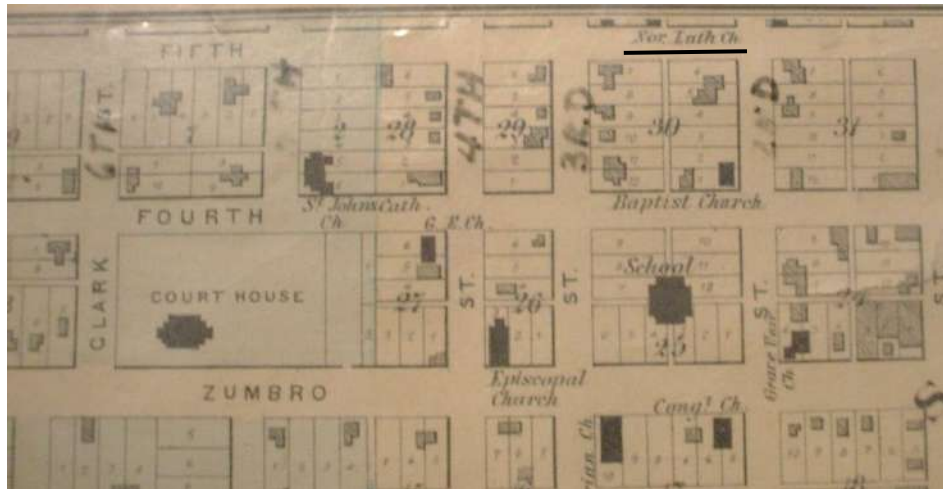


Figure A4-1: Location of Bethel congregation from 1870 to 1957

- 1) 1871 location on Zumbro Street, now 2nd Street SE. This location is identified as behind the Northern Hotel in the 1922 history and on Zumbro Street in the Church Directory of the Rochester Post dated March 4, 1871. In the directory it is called First Scandinavian Lutheran and the Pastor is identified as N. Jensen. The Rochester Post identifies the Baptist Church that was purchased by Bethel on Zumbro Street one block east from Broadway.
- 2) 1872 to 1882 location on Fifth Street, now Center Street. This location is identified as “on Center Street between the present nurse’s home and the Salem Evangelical church and across the street from the Damon Hotel.” The Damon Hotel was at the present site of the Kahler Hotel across from Methodist Hospital. Figure A3-2 on the next page shows the location with an underline on an 1878 map. Methodist Hospital presently occupies that whole block.
- 3) 1882 to 1957 location at 214 3rd Avenue SW. The parsonage purchased in 1876 is in the same quarter block as the church.
- 4) The church location number 4 is described in the 1954 Bethel History and repeated in the 1999 History, “the congregation purchased an old Baptist church located on what is now 2nd Street NW between 1st and 2nd Avenues.” The histories give no citation, and I cannot verify the location. The Baptist Church that was purchased in 1871 was on what is now 2nd Street SE

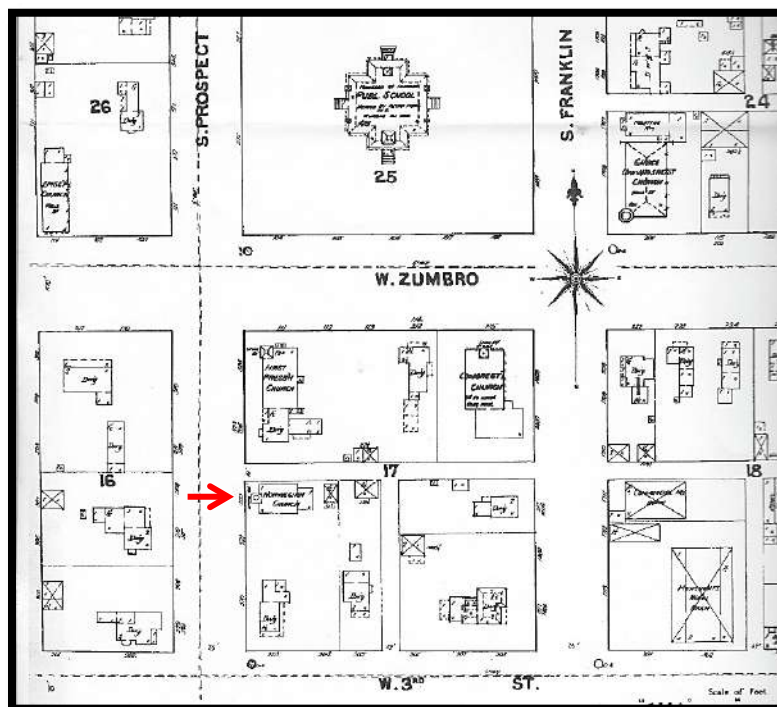
about one block from Broadway which would be between 1st and 2nd Avenue SE (position 1 on the map.) I believe this is a misunderstanding of the initial location of the church building.

Figure A4-2: Location of Bethel from 1871 to 1882



1878 Rochester Map showing Bethel location. On this map, Bethel is identified as Nor. Luth. Ch. underlined at the top of the picture. This is on the present site of Methodist Hospital.

Figure A4-3: Location of Bethel from 1882 to 1957



Bethel was on Prospect Street, Present 3rd Avenue SW and is indicated by the red arrow. The Mayo Guggenheim building presently occupies all of the lots on that half of block 17. The church parsonage is on the same lot at the bottom of the picture.

Appendix 5 Hans Urseth 1892 Hymn

251. Alone With Thee.

H. A. URSETH, 1892.

(Det spreides mer.)

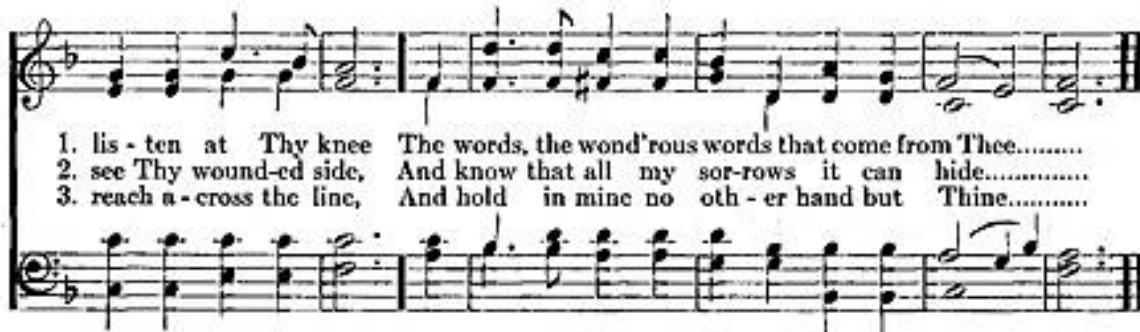
J. G. CONRADI, b. 1831.



1. A - lone with Thee, O Lord, when day is dead And all its fad - ed
 2. A - lone with Thee, dear Lamb of Cal - va - ry, Who shed Thy blood, and
 3. A - lone with Thee I on - ly pray to be When light and way I



1. splen-dors on have fled,..... I fond - ly dwell, and
 2. died, and lives for me,..... I long to stay to
 3. can no long - er see,..... That I may safe - ly



1. lis - ten at Thy knee The words, the wond'rous words that come from Thee.....
 2. see Thy wound-ed side, And know that all my sor-rows it can hide.....
 3. reach a - cross the line, And hold in mine no oth - er hand but Thine.....

Appendix 6 Norwegian to English changes

All of the Lutheran groups that came to the United States began as foreign language organizations. In one way or another they all faced the decision “when or do we change our church language to English?” Bethel began as a Norwegian language church and remained so officially until the congregation voted to change to English in 1920. However, as early as 1875 there were occasional evening services in English. When Hans Urseth began his ministry in 1895, there began to be English evening services on a regular basis.

Note that all of the 1893 entries in figure A6-1 on the next page are in Norwegian while beginning on line 18, the July 2, 1895 entry on figure A6-2, the second line is in English and every time there was an evening service, or an evening service and YPS (Young Peoples Society), it is written in English. All other entries are in Norwegian. I take this to mean that events that are recorded in English were presented in that language. The written records varied from Norwegian to English and back to Norwegian between 1895 and 1912.

In March 1906 when Reverend Oftedal was at Bethel, the records return to all Norwegian, but the notations for evening service, YPS and some other meetings contain the note “og Engl, or just “Eng” which indicates that these services continued in the English language even though the record of them was in Norwegian.

By January 1, 1907, the Congregational meeting minutes changed from Norwegian to English and remained that way. On October 14, 1907, the church record book changed to English. The notations regarding Sunday services say morning and evening as usual which I take to mean that the morning services continued to be in Norwegian and the other events were in English. At the 1907 annual meeting, the question of language was addressed, and it was decided that the morning services should continue in Norwegian. At the beginning of 1912, figure A6-3 shows the church records return to Norwegian with the notation in Norwegian when an event was in English.

There was some conflict in the period from 1916 to 1919 when the use of Norwegian was stressed by Pastor Rodvik. In this he was opposed by some of the membership, particularly the young people.

This issue was finally resolved when a congregational vote in 1920 established English as the language of the church for all activities. While several members resigned after that decision, that was the final word on the matter and when the new church building was erected in the mid-1920s, the congregation was called Bethel English Lutheran Evangelical Church. That name remained until 1963 when we simply became Bethel Lutheran Church.

Aantal Gudejt.	Dato.	De udførte Forretninger.
1	11-93	Nyårsdag: Aftensang. Nyls. Rasmussen den 7 ^{de} Kurf. 12. Mændene 6, 13 ^{de} Kurf. 14 ^{de}
3	15-93	2 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
5	29-93	3 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
6	13-93	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
7	13-93	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
8	13-93	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
9	13-93	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
12	24-93	2 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
13	13-93	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
14	13-93	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
15	13-93	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
17	24-93	2 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
18	13-93	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
19	13-93	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
21	13-93	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
22	13-93	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}

Figure A6-1 1893 Record Page All in Norwegian language

Aantal Gudejt.	Dato.	De udførte Forretninger.
1	1-95	Nyårsdag: formiddag og aften (Korset af eng. H. A. Urseth).
4	4-95	Korset af eng. H. A. Urseth.
6	7-95	3 ^{de} sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
8	11-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
10	16-95	2 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
11	16-95	2 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
12	16-95	2 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
14	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
15	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
16	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
17	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
18	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
19	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
20	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
21	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
22	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
23	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
24	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
25	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
26	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}
27	14-95	1 ^{de} Sønd. af N. N. Kong. Høstmesse, Aftensang. Kurf. 21, 28. Mændene 7 ^{de} . Begravelse den 2 ^{de}

Figure A6-2 1895 Record Page with Evening Service, Etc. in English beginning with entry 18 on June 2

Appendix 7 The Bethel Block

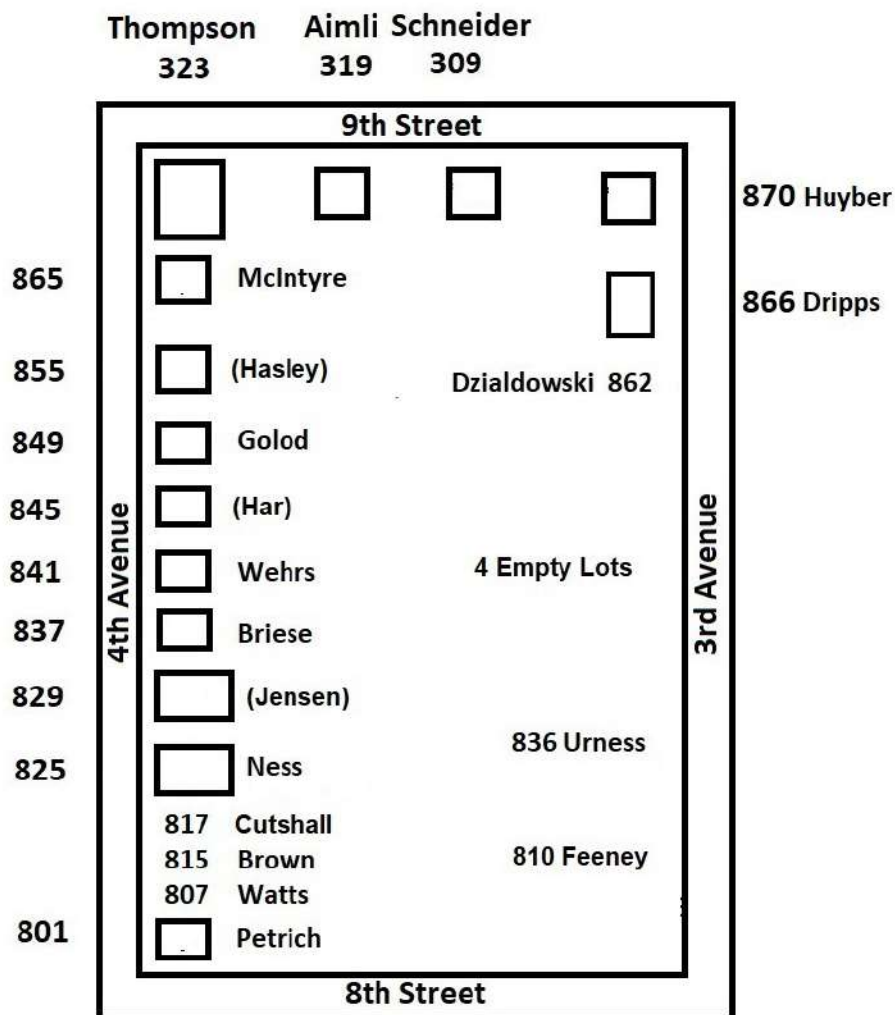


Figure A7-1 The Bethel Block in 1954

The figure above shows the lots on the Bethel block prior to any purchase by the church. The table on the next page shows the dates that Bethel purchased the properties on the block along with the purchase price where it is known. The names on Figure A6-1 are those listed in the Rochester Directory for 1954. Those with names in parenthesis were likely empty lots at that time. In later years houses owned by the people in parenthesis were built on those lots. In several cases, the owners in 1954 were not the people from whom Bethel purchased the property due to prior sales.

By 2004 when the new sanctuary was built, Bethel owned all of the lots on the block except 801 4th Avenue SE. This property had been offered at various times, but either with restrictions that the church was not willing to accept, or at a price above market value which the church was not willing to pay.

Bethel Property Purchase History

Property	Date Purchased	Cost
3 rd Avenue		
810 Feeney	March 1955	\$20,000
836 Urness	June 1961	\$50,000
8XX-8YY 4 Empty Lots	July 1956	\$16,200
862 Dzialdowski	January 1978	\$15,000
866 Dripps	January 1994	\$60,000
870 Huyber	August 21, 1988	\$41,500
4 th Avenue		
801 Petrich	Not Purchased	
807 Watts	November 10, 1985	\$53,000
815 Brown	December 16, 1979	Agree Fair Price
817 Cutshall	October 25, 1978	\$52,500
825 Ness	May 1990	\$77,367
829 Empty Lot (Jensen)	September 1992	Contract for Deed
837 Briese	October 1998	\$170,000
841 Wehrs	October 1998	
845 Empty Lot (Har)	August 1999	\$251,000
849 Golod	August 1999	
855 Empty Lot (Nichols)	May 1998	*\$199,500
865 McIntyre	September 1996	\$58,000
9 th Street		
309 Schneider	August 21, 1988	\$25,000
319 Aimli	May 1998	*Sold with 855 4 th Ave
323 Thompson	May 1998	

In the case of 815 and 829 4th Avenue SE, the church records indicate that the congregation approved the purchase of the property but does not give a purchase price.

Appendix 8 Bethel Endowment Fund

In 1980 Bethel congregation received a bequest from the McKenzie estate in an initial amount of \$5,075.63. These funds were placed in a special account called McKenzie Estate special account. When the final settlement of the estate was made, in 1983, the total amount was \$30,476.85. \$4,216.48 of this was disbursed for use by the congregation and the remaining \$26,260.37 was kept in the special account now called an endowment. In the following year, another special account called McKenzie Estate Income was created to gather the income from the original account.

During 1983, a third account called Scholarship Account was added to those called endowment making the endowment total \$39,260.37. By 1989, there were four funds in the endowment category with a total value of \$63,640.20. An endowment initially given in honor of Stan Egger was renamed the Adult Education account as that was the purpose of the original grant. In 1992 a Youth Activities endowment was added. In 1993 the undesignated account was added.

The Bethel Foundation structure was planned as a proposed amendment to the Bethel Constitution in 1993. In addition, the congregation voted to form a Bethel Foundation committee in order to experience the benefits of the foundation until it became a legally constituted part of the constitution.⁷²⁸ It was later discovered that the voice vote taken at the annual meeting was not valid to make constitution changes as that required a written vote. The Foundation Board continued to act as an Ad Hoc committee until this issue was resolved.

During 1993 the Foundation Board addressed the question whether they should be a foundation separate from Bethel or an Endowment Team which would report to the congregation and be a part of the church organization. As a part of the organization the fund assets would not be protected from any judgements against Bethel whereas those in a separate foundation would be protected.⁷²⁹

In a July 29, 1993 letter to Council chair Paul Wittmer, the Foundation committee reported that they had decided not to form a foundation, but instead establish a formal Endowment Fund. The fund was to begin with the assets of the Adult Education, Youth Activities, Scholarship, and the McKenzie Estate Endowments. They requested that the assets of the Music Endowment special account be controlled by the Worship Committee. The plan was to ask the congregation to ratify these actions at the 1994 annual meeting.⁷³⁰ During the months leading up to the annual meeting, the Endowment Committee dealt with development of investment guidelines for the fund assets.

The Bethel Endowment Team became an official standing committee of the congregation with Council representation by change to Article VII of the by-laws when constitutional changes were ratified at the annual meeting in 1994. At this meeting, six endowment committee members were elected with staggered terms of one, two, and three years to officially form the first committee.⁷³¹

During 1994 the committee explored the use of an outside fund manager to assist with fund management and asset investment strategy. Until that decision was made, the funds remained at Piper Jaffery invested in mutual Funds.⁷³² By May 1994 the funds were moved to accounts with Lutheran Brotherhood. Among the reasons for the choice of Lutheran Brotherhood were their stability, investment philosophy, and their historical performance.⁷³³

By 1995 there were six separate endowment accounts, five for special purposes and one undesignated. In May 1996, the Endowment team requested that the McKenzie Estate Endowment name be changed to the Spiritual Emphasis Endowment which reflects the purpose of the money donated to this fund.⁷³⁴

In 2001, the Robert Onkka Seminary Scholarship endowment was formed in honor of the 50th Anniversary of Pastor Onkka's ordination in 1951. A part of the \$10,000 required to start a new endowment fund was designated from the R. Onkka Endowment special account.⁷³⁵ By 2019 there are eleven separate endowment funds, ten of them are special purpose funds.

One of the concerns for endowment funds is that the availability of funds is dependent on the total value of the endowment being greater than the donated value. If the fund value is lower than the donated value, no money can be distributed. This happened for a couple months early in 2009 during a steep market decline when the market value dropped to about \$805,000 while the donated amount was about \$837,000.⁷³⁶ From that time on, the market value of the fund grew to exceed the donated amount so there has been no problem in that regard. The figure below shows the fund balance over the years.

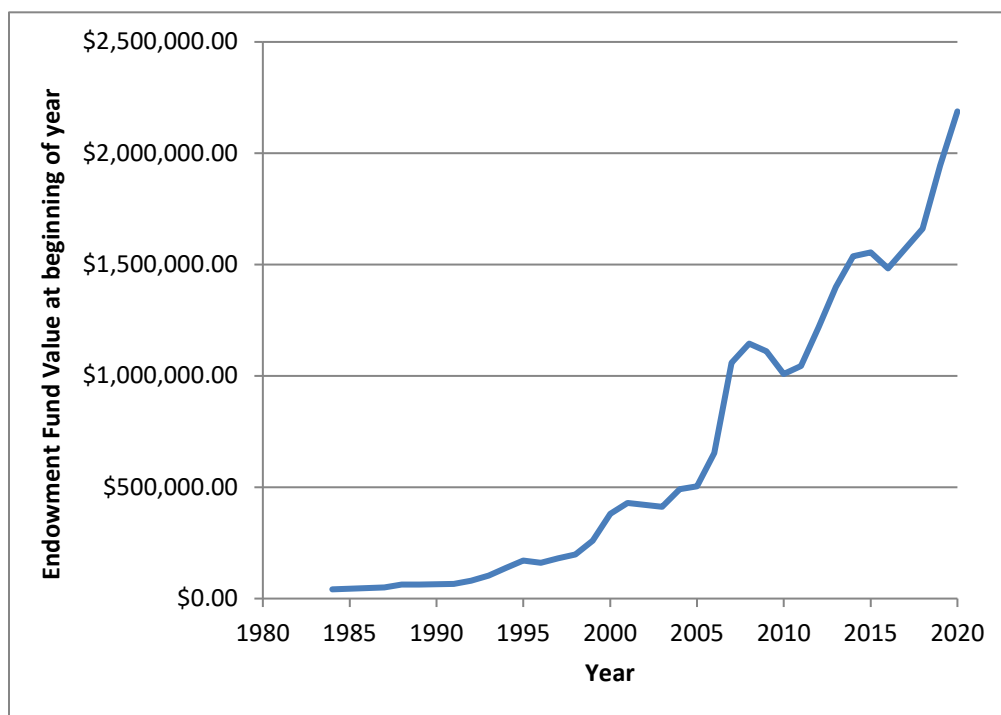


Figure A8-1 Beginning of year Endowment Fund Values

Appendix 9 Drama

The Bethel Drama Committee (now Team) was formed to present religious drama to provide a visual sense of the stories in the Bible. In addition to full scale drama presentations, the group also presented a few dinner theater events over the years. One example was “Uncle Phil’s Diner” which was presented in February 2006.⁷³⁷

The Last Supper Drama began playing at Bethel in 1995. By 1997 over 1500 people had enjoyed the performance.⁷³⁸ At the September 1997 Council meeting the Drama Committee requested funding for the Last Supper production as the costs were getting beyond the ability of individuals to pay. They were requested to submit a budget request for the next year.⁷³⁹ In October they began making plans for the production of The Promise in 1998.⁷⁴⁰ The drama productions during Lent in the first couple years drew over 1500 people. By 2004, attendance was 300 people at two performances.⁷⁴¹

Once the new sanctuary was finished providing space for large productions, the Drama team reported on plans to produce “The Promise” with a cast of about 300 and the need for \$10,000 to \$12,000 in seed money to finance the first production. They expected that ticket sales would allow the money to be repaid quickly and the production would become self-supporting in subsequent years.⁷⁴² After investigating the request, the council agreed to lend the Drama team \$10,000 from the Equity fund.⁷⁴³

Single acts of the Promise were performed at worship services during 2005 and 2006 from Advent season through Lent.⁷⁴⁴ In 2006, the Drama team became the Promise Board.

In September 2006 the Promise Board came to the council with a request for a further loan of \$8,500 to \$11,000. This was needed due to a misunderstanding between the board and the church council regarding the previous \$10,000 loan – the council believed that to be a one-time loan while the board thought it was that much for each of three years. After much discussion the council agreed to loan an additional \$10,000 with a strict pay back schedule.⁷⁴⁵

There were some problems finding enough actors, particularly men for the roles in the Promise production. Also, it was hard to get actors for eight productions, so the number was reduced to six for the 2007 production season.⁷⁴⁶

In its first year of production, the Promise sold 3450 tickets with a gross income of \$32,999. The Promise Board used some of the money to make a payment on the startup loans from Bethel and the remainder for new lighting, staging, maintenance and storage of their costumes, etc.⁷⁴⁷ In addition to beginning to repay the loans from Bethel, the Drama team presented \$1,000 checks to four different charities at worship services on November 22, 2009.⁷⁴⁸

In 2012, the Drama team presented a new play called “The Miracle” with six performances during the Lenten season.⁷⁴⁹ In 2016 the Promise was again presented during lent. Total attendance that year was 1,425.⁷⁵⁰ In 2019 a new drama called the Choice was produced.

Appendix 10 Social Missions Projects⁷⁵¹

The Social Missions Team at Bethel is the focus of both local and outside mission giving. They coordinate many projects which provide financial and material assistance to people in need. They also designate the Bethel budgeted mission giving.

Beginning in 1985, the Social Missions Team worked to support refugee families. This effort continued through the years and some of the houses on the Bethel block were designated as Social Missions houses to be used to support the refugee program. For many years Rod Daniels represented the team working with various refugee families. In later years, Jean Mortenson, chair of the Social Missions team headed the effort.

During the Advent season, Christmas trees were placed in the narthex to enable congregation members to donate to various programs. That year the sharing trees asked for items and prayers for the people of Tanzania. In later years, the sharing trees were used to collect hats and mittens for local schools to give to children that come without and for small gifts to “support our troops” which were packed and sent to appropriate locations for distribution.

In November 2003, the Social Missions Team coordinated the shipment of seventy-eight manual controlled hospital beds that had been replaced at Samaritan Bethany to Tanzania. A shipping container was purchased and for a time was parked at the end of the Bethel parking lot. When the beds were ready to be packed Bethel member Steve Yaggy volunteered the services of his trucking company to assist volunteers to package the beds and fit them into the container and then transported the container to Global Health Ministries in Minneapolis where it was filled with other useful medical equipment before being shipped.⁷⁵² Once it arrived at its destination, the container was emptied and then used as an office. Lacking a crane or other means to remove the container from the truck that delivered it, it was simply securely tied to a tree and the truck moved off leaving it behind.

For many years during March, the Social Missions Team has worked on Minnesota Food Share to collect food for Channel One to be given to those in need of extra food. There is typically a challenge given to the congregation which if achieved, one of the pastors will do something usually ridiculous. In 2003 they collected one hundred forty pounds of food and \$3,003 was donated. That enabled Channel 1 to provide 15,127 meals to those in need. In that year, Pastor Hauschild agreed to dye his hair green if 5,000 meals or cash equivalent were provided.



Pastor Wahl contemplating wearing a Cheese Head

One of the more interesting challenges was when Pastor Wahl who is an avid Vikings fan, agreed to wear a Packers Cheese Head if the goal of 4,000 boxes of Mac and Cheese was achieved. Not thrilled by the idea of actually being touched by Packers paraphernalia, when he appeared to carry out his promise, he first put on a Vikings cap to protect him from contamination and then donned the Cheese Head over the top. A good time was had by all and Channel One benefited from a

total of \$2,998.01 and 1,629 boxes of mac and cheese which calculated to 4,627 boxes. Minnesota Food share month is an annual event at Bethel that benefits many in the local area.

In 2004 the team ran its first plant sale which was planned to help fund a project called, Restoring the Soil, Planting Seeds of Hope, a land restoration project for the Lutheran Institute in Kiomboi, Tanzania. This first sale earned \$5,300 including a Thrivent match. The next year they supported Iambi Hospital in Tanzania with \$3,860. This sale was a yearly project helping various charities both locally and internationally until 2015.

Another project, the Food for Kidz program, has packed meals for children given both locally and nationally. The Food for Kidz organization provides the packaging equipment and the food while the Bethel group organizes labor coming from all over Rochester and beyond and pays for the food. This once-a-year project began in 2007 and has continued to today, packing up to 100,000 or more meals in a day.

Beginning in 2010 the group sponsored two “Christmas in July” trees. The first year one tree was used for donations of lunch items for Channel One and the second for Support our troops items. Recently they have been used to gather items used during the Rochester Mission Trip.

The Rochester Mission Trip was started by Social Missions in 2011 and has been a yearly event since that time. This is a two-to-three-day occasion for congregation members to assist charitable groups within the city. The activities are divided into morning, afternoon, and evening projects so people can choose one activity or more during the event.⁷⁵³ The projects are suitable for all ages and draw many interested congregation members to assist.

In June 2012, a new policy regarding payment of travel costs for staff accompanying mission trips was adopted by the council. This change had been requested earlier by the Social Missions team and was written by Pastor Wahl.⁷⁵⁴ The purpose of the policy was to document the financial assistance that staff members could expect when accompanying mission trips, many of which are organized or supported by Social Missions.

In addition to their own projects, the Social Missions team designates mission dollars from the congregation’s annual budget as well as money that is earned by the team or from donations made and intended for missions. In a given year they designate around \$100,000, about sixty percent of which is not in the Bethel budget.

Appendix 11 The Bethel Quilters⁷⁵⁵

Starting about 1960 the women of Bethel began making quilts. According to June Hain, there were about 8 women making quilts when they first started. They worked in the old fellowship hall in the church basement which is the same area they work in today. In addition to working hard on quilts, the women took time for coffee and fellowship. That has not changed either and the lunches are something to behold. A picture from the 1970's shows them having a noon meal together so quilting times seem to have varied with the years. The present group works from 8 A.M. to 11 A.M. on Tuesday mornings.

A picture dated 1977 shows quilts that were made for Lutheran World Relief. In addition, layettes, sewing and health kits, school kits, and nursing home items are shown so they apparently worked on more than just quilts at that time as they do today.

In 1985 the quilts were made for the Good Earth Village auction. A note on the same page says that over 100 quilts were donated and sold at the auction. The next few pages of the picture book show an outdoor auction, so this probably took place at the Good Earth Village site. The 1998 picture of quilts sold at this auction list prices of \$60 to \$185 for a quilt. In addition to regular sized quilts, baby quilts were on display for the 2000 auction.

On October 16, 1986, the quilters took a trip to the Lutheran World Relief center in Minneapolis. Pictures taken that day show the quilts being packed in boxes to be shipped to sites where they could be distributed. One picture shows a truck loaded with bales of quilts "headed to the east coast."

Twelve women are listed as quilters on an early 1990's list. They are shown working on quilts at a table and also holding up some of the quilts they have made.

In addition to Lutheran World Relief, there are thank you notes from many other organizations, some of which are Sharing and Caring Hands in Minneapolis, Habitat for Humanity in Lee County Florida delivered by Dick and Gerry Prochaska, the Ronald McDonald House, a benefit auction for Chad Wood, Camp Knutson, and many other good causes. In 2005, the quilts donated to Kamp Knutson sold for a total of \$1,355.

In 1996 there began to be displays of quilts on Thank Offering Sunday. A quilters picture from 2002 shows 19 women so the group had grown through the years.

On November 3 and 4, 2007 the Bethel Friendly Quilters sale earned \$2,374. They donated much of that to the Rushford Lutheran Church Women to help in recovery from a flood they had suffered that year. The pictures show the quilts displayed in the Narthex.

The quilters 2012 roster had 36 women listed along with the treat schedule. Today there are about 40 women on the list. Not everyone is there every week, but they continue to produce an impressive number of quilts and other items for good causes locally and around the world.

During 2018, they donated 536 quilts along with 204 pillowcases, 212 school kits plus baby care kits, personal care kits, and dress kits.

Appendix 12 The Covid Story

The first Covid-19 case was identified in Wuhan, China on December 24, 2019. The disease was found in the United States by January 20, 2020 with the first death on February 6, 2020.⁷⁵⁶ By March 1, the first case was discovered in Minnesota and quickly spread throughout the state. Governor Walz issued a State of Emergency on March 16 closing all non-essential businesses. A shelter in place order was issued on March 25.⁷⁵⁷

Bethel responded quickly to the emergency. On March 15, all in-person services and meetings were canceled. The Sunday services were only available on-line, and it was announced that mid-week Lenten services would also be on-line only.⁷⁵⁸ By the end of April all church meetings and education were conducted via Zoom which enabled people with computers and smart phones to meet electronically.⁷⁵⁹

A mortgage relief program from Thrivent Insurance Company allowed the church to pay mortgage interest only from April to July 15 and a Federal Paycheck Protection Program Loan provided for a loan of up to 2.5 times the monthly staff salaries to organizations that continued to pay staff salaries during this period. Bethel met this requirement as staff worked mostly on-line during this period.⁷⁶⁰ \$197,500 was received from the IRS in August 2022. \$82,500 of this was applied to the Stucco project, \$90,000 was used for a security upgrade, and \$25,000 was used for roof repair and other repair projects.⁷⁶¹

As Bethel investigated new ways to present worship services and other group activities the need for better audio-visual equipment was identified. In particular, better cameras and higher speed internet were needed to present real time services on-line.⁷⁶² At the June 20, 2020 council meeting, Pastor Wahl reported that Bethel's first baptism via Zoom would be administered in the next month.⁷⁶³ That was the baptism of Leo John Machen with his parents, sponsors, and other family members in attendance at the 8:00 A.M. service on July 19.⁷⁶⁴ Baptisms and weddings continued at this service throughout the summer with immediate family only witnessing the ceremony in-person.⁷⁶⁵

By June 28, 2020, the equipment update had proceeded so that the worship service could be live streamed.⁷⁶⁶ This service was recorded with livestream at an 8 A.M. service and the same service was available online shortly after the end of that service. At 9:30 A.M. that morning a worship service with 50 attendees was modeled to prepare for future in-person opportunities. Registration was required and seating was restricted to every third pew to promote social distancing. Masks were required for anyone in the Bethel facility and cleaning routines were developed to protect the people using the facility.⁷⁶⁷ Figure A12-1 is a screen shot from the May 16, 2021 service that shows the social distancing and masking by congregation members.

Limited attendance Sunday services at 9:30 A.M. began during July 2020 and the Saturday night service was added in August. Through the summer, the number of attendees at worship services rose from the initial 50 to 150 by September 13.⁷⁶⁸ Once in-person worship began, Merle Savage became the Bethel Cantor. He sang most of the verses of hymns and the liturgy

responses to limit congregational singing which could be a major source of spread of the virus. While in-person services and meetings were allowed through this time, there were still restrictions on food and coffee service.⁷⁶⁹



Figure A12-1 May 15, 2021 Worship screen shot. Attendance data shows 135 people attended this service, 37 of whom are visible in the picture.

In August 2020 printed versions of the Bethel E-news were made available in a box outside the front door for members who did not have a computer. A phone messaging system was set up to inform those members of important events and changes to scheduled events.⁷⁷⁰

One way to gather for services and communion was found by using a short-range FM radio transmitting on FM 88.1 to people in their cars in the Bethel parking lot. This began with the Ascension Day service on May 21, 2020. This service was attended by 120 cars and an estimated 240 people. Wednesday communion services became a regular feature in the parking lot beginning the first week in June with services at 9 A.M. Noon, and 4 P.M. led by Bethel pastors and a 7 P.M. service featuring the Gate of Life leadership. These four services continued to be attended by a total of about 250 communicants two Wednesdays each month.⁷⁷¹

Communion was administered to the people in their cars. A team of two servers wearing appropriate masks and gloves administered the communion elements by first placing the wafer on a plate which was passed to the communion recipient and then offering the wine in a plastic cup which was retained by the person receiving it. This enabled the recipients and administrators to maintain social distancing throughout the service and did not require special cleanup of the communion utensils. These mid-week parking lot services continued until May 16, 2021.⁷⁷²

Figure A12-2 below is a photo of one of those drive up services. The altar cross and podium were located on a moveable platform in front of the entrance to the narthex.



Figure A12-2 Cars parked for Bethel parking lot services
(Photo from Salt and Pepper Photography)

Also, during May 2020, a Reengagement Task Force led by Pastor Anjanette Bandel was created to follow the course of the disease in Olmsted county and make recommendations regarding procedures to safely engage in the work of the church during this time.⁷⁷³ Beginning June 1, 2020, the Bethel office was opened on a limited basis from 9 A.M. until Noon. Safety protocols were posted on the entry doors for those wishing to enter at this time.⁷⁷⁴ When possible, during the summer and fall, Bethel teams met outdoors instead of on-line.⁷⁷⁵

After investigating means of meeting virtually and being able to vote while meeting Bethel constitutional written ballot requirements, a virtual meeting was held on June 7 for the purpose of calling a new executive pastor.⁷⁷⁶ The meeting was held via Zoom with most of the attendees on their computers with audio and video and a few were connected by phone without video. A list of those attending the meeting was taken and then those people voted either by coming to the Bethel parking lot where their names were checked off and they were given a ballot, or by sending a ballot by mail. Four hundred members met in this zoom meeting and 395 of them came to the Bethel parking lot to cast their ballot. The remaining five home bound members cast their ballots by mail. The next Sunday it was announced that Pastor Anjanette Bandel had been elected as Bethel's new executive pastor.⁷⁷⁷

On July 4, the Neighborhood Outreach team prepared 300 hot dog lunches that could be picked up in the Bethel parking lot and used for picnics in lieu of a Bethel gathering. One hundred seventy five of those lunches were distributed and the remainder were delivered to shut ins, homeless, and a hospice.⁷⁷⁸

Rather than meeting indoors, the 6:30 A.M. bible study group met in the Columbarium area which provided space for social distancing. Masks were required and each person brought a bible and their own chair.⁷⁷⁹

Reservations for small group meetings began to be considered starting July 6, 2020. Considerations for granting approval were the number of people involved so that a room could be assigned to ensure proper social distancing and to plan cleanup of the space after the meeting was completed.⁷⁸⁰

The annual Rochester Mission Trip in early August 2020 was changed to feature at-home projects and limited attendance service projects at Bethel and at organizations in the community. Seventy-five participants completed at home projects for Rochester schools, Children's Cancer program, Ronald McDonald House, Paws and Claws, and the Dorothy Day House. Small groups of people also went to Channel One, Samaritan Bethany, and Family Service Rochester to engage in on-site projects.⁷⁸¹

The restrictions on meetings and the understanding that singing was a significant source of the spread of the virus had an impact on the Bethel music program. At first special music during the services consisted of instrumental numbers such as the piano-cello duet on March 22 or a soloist with or without piano accompaniment like Brock Besse's solo at the Easter sunrise service on April 12, 2020. The Easter festival service provided the first use of technology (Zoom video) to present choral music without the choir being present in one place. Figure A12-3 shows the presentation screen as the choir sang the anthem. This also allowed the singers to record and review their selections before sending them for inclusion in the anthem.



Figure A12-3 Screen shot of Bethel Choir Easter April 20, 2020. Melissa Almer, the sign language interpreter is in the lower right of the screen

Music practice continued to be held on Wednesday evening via zoom. The choir was able to practice the upcoming music and then individuals taped their parts of the service at home. When taping their parts, each individual had their own particular notes in their earphone so they could know what and when to sing allowing synchronization of the parts when by Bethel's Minister of Music, Brock Besse combined them to produce the anthem.⁷⁸²

Not all choir members chose to sing in this manner. Twenty choir members rehearsed and sang the Easter hymn, "Thine is the Glory." This was played on the Bethel screens at the service and much appreciated by those watching it on their computers or on TV. While the use of instrumental and vocal solos and duets continued live, the choir, and later the Bethel Brass began to appear at Sunday services via video edited by Brock. During the summer, the choir was able to practice outdoors instead of via Zoom which was appreciated.

The editing of individual recordings into an anthem also allowed some experimentation with music delivery such as when Matt Wallace played all six parts of the selection on his euphonium for the worship service on July 12, 2020.⁷⁸³

Vacation Bible School in 2020 was held via Zoom.⁷⁸⁴ There was no Confirmation Camp that year due to the Covid restrictions but teaching packets were prepared for the students who would have attended.⁷⁸⁵ In early September 2020, the confirmation program for 7th and 8th graders kicked off with seventy-one students and their parents attending the meeting either virtually or in-person. In addition to on-line classes, the fall Sunday School met in Bethel Hall with family groups in small units limited to a total of sixteen groups while the older students continued to meet via Zoom.⁷⁸⁶ The Children Youth and Family team had a drive through for Sunday School students to pick up materials for the coming year.⁷⁸⁷ Plans were also in place to move to online in case the Covid situation in Olmsted county got worse.⁷⁸⁸

The limited space and air volume in Room 115 was a concern so that by October the Adult Education Sunday Forum was moved to the chapel which had more air volume and allowed more space for proper social distancing.⁷⁸⁹ The restrictions on food and beverage service meant that the Forum attendees did not have their usual coffee and cookie with the presentations.

As the fall 2020 music program began, five groups were practicing virtually and two in-person.⁷⁹⁰ The Handbells and the orfestra met in-person with the required social distancing in the fall. This is possible for small music groups such as these as there is no singing involved to spread the virus.⁷⁹¹ Wednesday May 26, the first in-person choir practice took place outside in the Bethel courtyard.⁷⁹² Figure A12-4 below shows them practicing in the Bethel courtyard.



Figure A12-4 First outdoor choir practice

Through the summer of 2020 the 8 A.M. service was available for the Rochester deaf community to attend with the ALS interpreter and for baptisms. Beginning October 4 this service was opened to Bethel members by reservation, like the Saturday 6 P.M. and Sunday 9:30 A.M. services. This was done to allow more people to personally attend the celebrations of Pastor Wahl's ministry at Bethel prior to his retirement in October.⁷⁹³ Drive-in Communion continued through January 2021.⁷⁹⁴ Restrictions for funerals and weddings were in place to allow a limited number of people at the event while providing proper social distancing. Another restriction was with regard to food service which needed to be catered and carefully served.

The Food for Kidz program did not meet at Bethel in the fall of 2020 due to lack of proper space in the Bethel facilities. Fund raising for this program was low so the Bethel team cooperated with Gloria Dei and Holy Spirit Churches to raise funds. The Southern Minnesota area Food for Kidz organization recommended financial support be provided and a limited number of volunteers could come to their facility in Stewartville to work.⁷⁹⁵

To provide better quality to the livestream services HD cameras were installed in September 2020. These cameras would also provide better picture quality for on-line presentations at Bethel meetings and other online events.⁷⁹⁶

When the Covid cases and hospitalizations in Olmsted County increased significantly in November 2020 the Bethel Sunday School moved to all online. To brighten the Christmas season the Children Youth and Families team organized a live drive through nativity scene in the Bethel parking lot on December 19, 2020. A collection for Channel 1 at this event resulted in \$2516.00 donated to the organization which would provide 10,000 meals. At the same time, all remaining Adult Education Sunday Forum classes were cancelled and rescheduled to the 2021/2022 class year.⁷⁹⁷ In-person worship was also cancelled until January 16, 2021 when seating was again restricted to promote social distancing.⁷⁹⁸

Figure A12-5 below shows the weekly count of cases per 100,000 population in Olmsted County. This information along with vaccinations and hospitalizations was used to determine Bethel's facility rules for the following period.

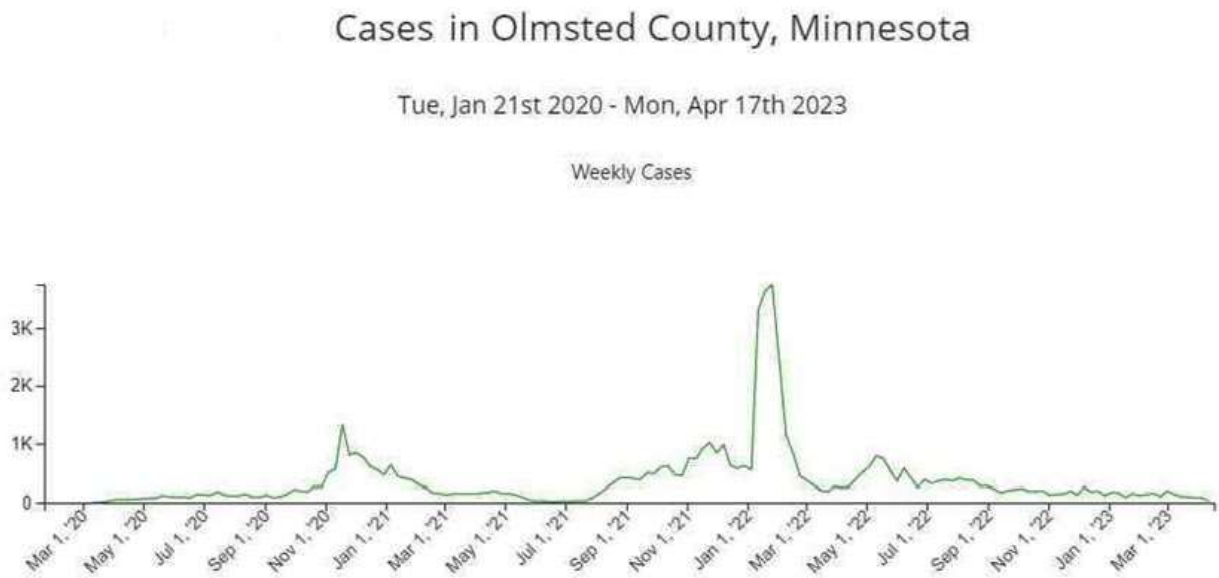


Figure A12-5 Covid cases in Olmsted County per 100,000 people

Downloaded from <https://Covid.cdc.gov/Covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home> 18 April 2023

By February 2021, an application was sent for Bethel staff to receive the Covid vaccine. This application was approved and on April 5, Parish Nurse Kathy Ferguson sent an email to all on-site staff providing a link which allowed them to register for the Covid vaccine from Olmsted County Public Health services.⁷⁹⁹

In March the Gate of Life service resumed on Sunday at 10:30 A.M. with drive in services the second and fourth Sundays of each month. Lenten plans included drive-in communion at 9:00 A.M. and 12:00 P.M. plus services at 5:30 P.M. in livestream video with limited in-person attendance. Registration was required for the in-person services. A virtual Bethel brass number was planned for Easter Sunday with the hand bells playing in-person.⁸⁰⁰ The Easter services were attended by nearly 1600 people about two thirds of whom were on-line.⁸⁰¹ This compares with an average of 2250 attendees at pre-Covid Easter services.⁸⁰²

May 19, 2021 was the last Wednesday drive in service with communion. At the beginning of May more baptisms were performed at regular services and the 8:00 A.M. family baptism service that had been used due to Covid restrictions was phased out. Also at that time, the pastors began to greet worshipers at the outside doorway after each service. Hymnals were placed back in the pew racks and the ushers began to hand out bulletins to worshipers. By mid-May the maximum in-person limit for worship was raised to 200 and pre-registration was no longer required for those services.⁸⁰³ To accommodate more people, the center pews were no longer restricted but to protect unvaccinated children and to allow more congregational singing, masks were still required.⁸⁰⁴

Also in May, Pastor Burggraff resumed in-person bible studies and he announced that visitation opportunities were opening up as the Covid restrictions were relaxed. During the weekend of May 29-30, 2021, there was no longer a limit to worship attendance. By June masks were recommended but not required for the Bethel facility. Beginning on June 20, communion services were held inside with the servers wearing masks. The last drive-in service was held in the Bethel parking lot on July 4, 2021.⁸⁰⁵

As shown on figure A12-5 above, the Covid case count began to rise again toward the end of July 2021 so masks were again required in the Bethel facility. However, because there were a considerable number of people who were now fully vaccinated, in-person attendance was not restricted and the worship schedule returned to per-Covid hours⁸⁰⁶

During July, 2021, Pastor Bandel began holding lawn chair book events near the columbarium. In addition, the restrictions on food service were relaxed so that coffee and cookies could be served outdoors after services and food service at weddings and funerals resumed.⁸⁰⁷

Music activities for the chancel choir, Bethel brass, blessings, sing for joy, bells, and orchestra continued but the children's choir and the orchestra did not practice due to social distancing problems with these groups.⁸⁰⁸ In addition the Social Mission team postponed the Fall 2021 Food for Kidz fill event until March 12, 2022.⁸⁰⁹ The first full pack event was held at Bethel November 5, 2022

Since the Olmsted county Covid case count remained high into the fall 2021, many other planned events were cancelled. In addition, the number of hymn verses sung by the congregation were reduced to limit the spread of the virus. Congregational singing was not eliminated since singing is such an important part of Lutheran Worship.⁸¹⁰

During October 2022 Pastor Bandel conducted Confirmation interviews via Zoom but Young In Spirit met for the first time since February 2020 and Staff Recognition was held at the November 13 and 14 services.⁸¹¹ The traditional Thanksgiving meal served by Bethel was canceled but the Neighborhood Outreach Team provided gift cards for the area schools to aid families in need for the holiday. Thirty \$50.00 gift cards were distributed to the local schools for this purpose.⁸¹²

The high vaccination rates did allow some activities to continue with due allowance for social distancing. Rally day in September proceeded as planned and in October Children's Ministry hosted a drive in "Trunk or Treat event" that was held in the Bethel parking lot. Bibles were presented to the second-grade students on September 25 and 26 and first communion was served to forty fifth and sixth grade students on November 20 and 21. For students that had completed the confirmation program, an Affirmation of Baptism service was held on October 31, 2021.⁸¹³

During December 2021 the Christmas Concert of music groups from Rochester churches was held on December 15 and the Children's Christmas Program was held on December 19 and 20 with careful planning on the part of Children's Ministry to provide social distancing during this event. With the high Covid case counts in the area, worship attendance was about one-half pre-Covid numbers. The live stream of the services offered a good option for those who still wished

to worship at 9:00 A.M. with an average of 180 people participating either by livestream or watching the service on YouTube later on Sunday.⁸¹⁴ Christmas Eve and the Christmas Day services were held with parishioners in attendance and was also available by livestream.⁸¹⁵ A total of almost 1500 people attended during this time.⁸¹⁶

The figures A12-6 and A12-7 below illustrate the many ways of presenting the worship service that developed over the period that the Covid pandemic limited social interaction to various degrees. Figure A12-6 shows attendance at the various means of worship during 2020. From January through March 5, 2020 normal worship services were held, from then until June 5 only on-line worship was available. Starting June 5, a Wednesday drive in service began and in July in-person worship returned. With high Covid transmission in Olmsted county returning in November only on-line and drive in worship was permitted.

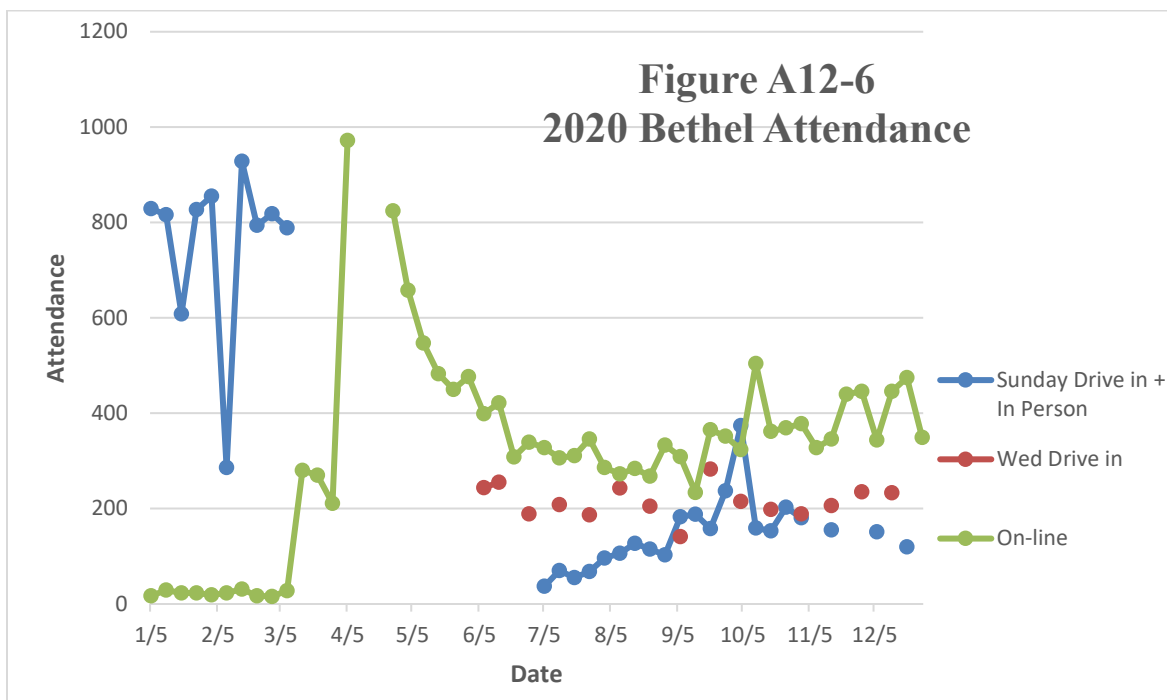
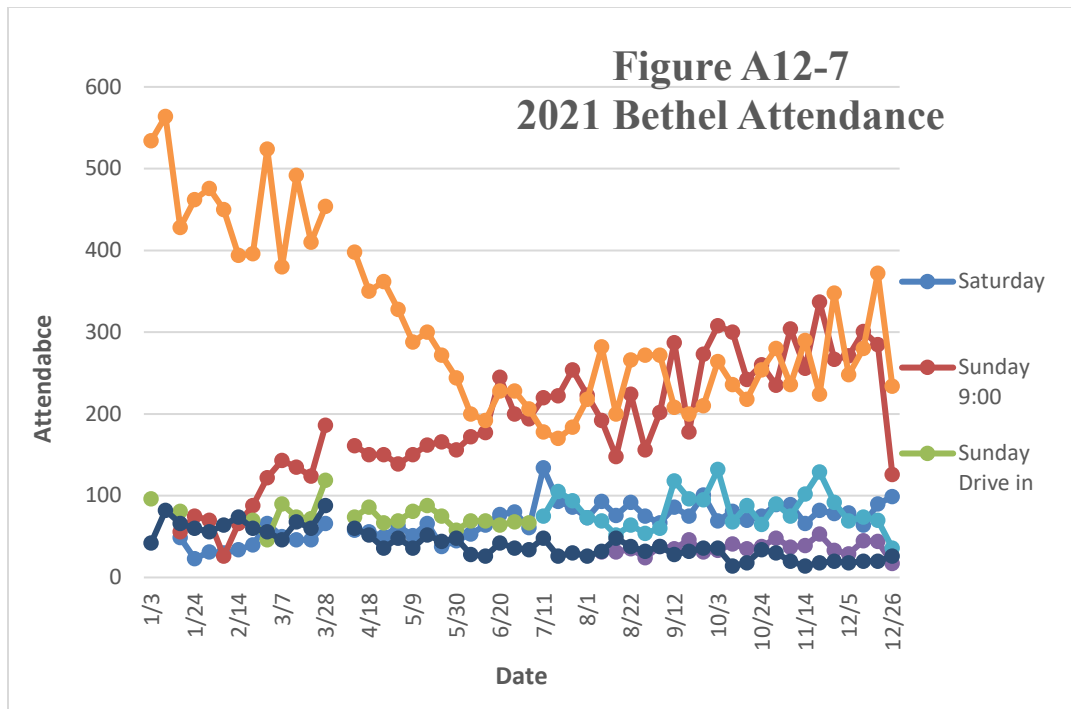


Figure A12-7 shows a similar chart of worship attendance at the various offerings in 2021. Note that as worshippers returned to the Sunday 9 A.M. service and later to the other services that were available pre-Covid, the number of people watching online decreased. Beginning about August attendance at both the 9 A.M. in-person service and the YouTube on-line service increased slightly.



Because the Covid case count in Olmsted County remained high and there was a masking mandate for the city of Rochester, masking remained in effect and the pews were again restricted to every third row for social distancing. Limited fellowship after services and for funerals and weddings continued to be allowed.⁸¹⁷ Offering plates began to be passed by the ushers again beginning with the Ash Wednesday 2022 services. The children's offering at services also resumed at that time.⁸¹⁸

The Rochester food shelves opened again early in 2022, so Social Missions planned to feature Minnesota Food Share again during March.⁸¹⁹ Since Channel One restricted offerings to monetary gifts, envelopes were placed in the pew racks during March.⁸²⁰

By April 2022, the cases in Olmsted County were much lower and it was decided that masks could again become an option in the Bethel facility. Ropes remained in place in some of the side aisle pews for people that did not feel comfortable without the social distancing that provided. With the lower-case levels and higher vaccination rates the Re-engagement team decided they no longer needed to meet on a weekly basis. Also, the in-person children's word returned to Bethel services on March 15, 2022.⁸²¹ At their July meeting, the Health Cabinet noted that Covid levels in Olmsted County were now low and the mask signs were removed from the front door.⁸²²

In April 2022 Augsburg began reducing their use of the Bethel facility due to increases in remote learning. This reduced the rental income significantly as their monthly rental changed from \$7200 to \$2750 per month.⁸²³ Terra O'Brien, the Bethel Business Administrator then began looking for other tenants to use the space made available by this move.

Planning for Vacation Bible School was back to the Pre-Covid model for the 2022-2023 school year. This included on site classes with Good Earth Village councilors and one day at the

camp.⁸²⁴ Also, the Childrens Ministry team prepared a video to encourage children to return to in-person Sunday School for the 2022-2023 school year. Increased Sunday school registration indicated that the children were returning to in-person classes and their parents were volunteering to teach.⁸²⁵ Confirmation camp for 2022 was held at Good Earth Village. There were four other churches sharing the camp with Bethel during this week. This year the students were at the camp during the day but returned home at night.⁸²⁶

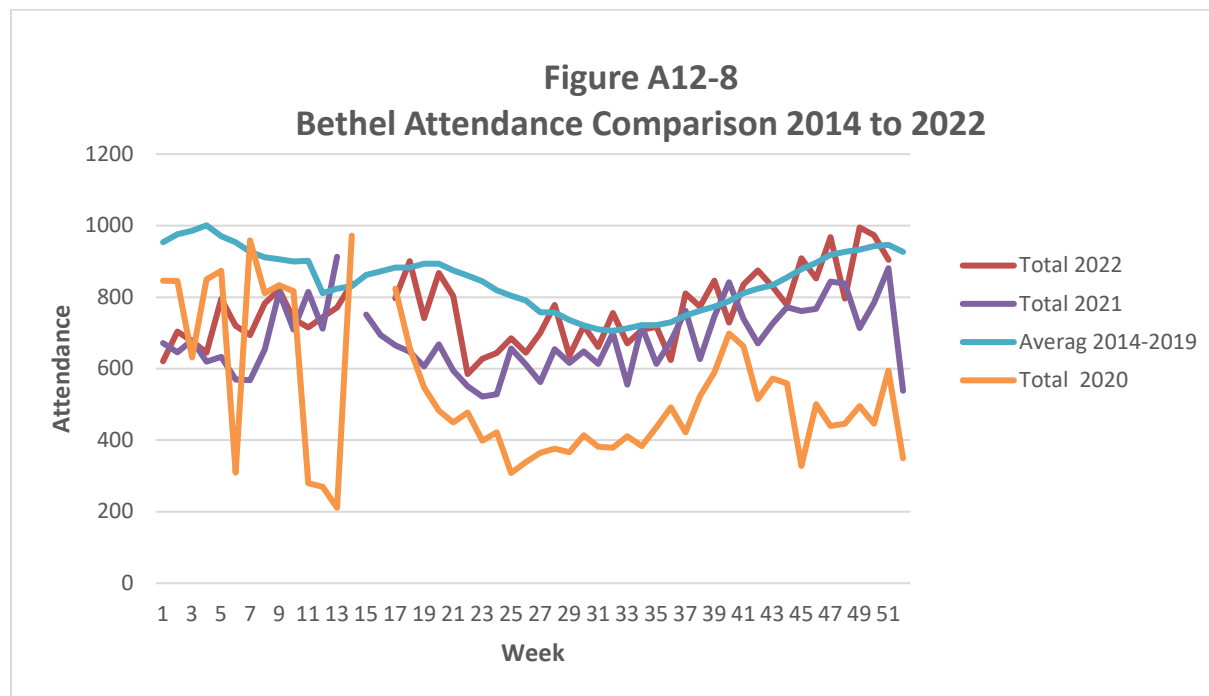
At the May Council meeting Pastor Bandel noted that three of five weddings officiated by Bethel Pastors during 2022 were scheduled off-site.⁸²⁷ This is a change from pre-Covid years and is probably a combination of a social change in wedding planning, cost, and experience during the Covid years.⁸²⁸ Off-site weddings are also more popular because of the desire to serve alcohol at wedding receptions.

By the fall of 2022, most of the Children Youth, and Families programs were back to near normal. The challenge remaining was for families to feel comfortable to bring their children back to in-person classes.⁸²⁹ Congregational activities began to feel normal for the Pastoral staff at Easter 2023.

The Title 42 Emergency Health Authority ended on May 12, 2023. This marked the end of Covid-19 emergency act by the United States Government and indicated the end of the Covid restrictions in the United States.

One remaining concern has been to track any changes in worship attendance by the people in the congregation due to the pandemic with regard to numbers and the mode of attendance.

Figure A12-8 below shows the Bethel worship attendance from 2014 through 2022.



The 2014 to 2019 average data does not include on-line viewers as that data was not included in the attendance reports. Looking at the on-line views at that time it appears that about 30 people viewed the videos each week, which would increase the attendance by about 3 per cent.

The drop in attendance in the sixth week of 2020 was due to a snowstorm but the drop beginning in week 11 was due to the beginning of the Covid pandemic. There was significant variation in attendance after the pandemic began as people searched for a means to worship that was comfortable for them. Attendance in 2020 was significantly below the average attendance in previous years as is shown in Figure A3-1 above. The large increase in attendance beginning with week 14 of 2020 was due to many members finding the worship service on YouTube in time for Easter worship.⁸³⁰ Attendance improved in the succeeding years as more means of worship were provided. Except for lower attendance in January to March in 2021 and 2022, total worship attendance appears to have returned to normal.

While membership did not decrease during the pandemic, Figures A3-1 and A3-2 show a significant drop in attendance and thus the per cent of members attending each week in 2020 due to the beginning of the Covid pandemic. As time went on, Bethel members found the on-line worship services and then with the introduction of a vaccine they began to feel more comfortable returning to in-person worship. By 2022, the weekly average attendance was similar to previous years but the mode of attendance has changed as many members continue to follow the on-line worship services rather than return to in-person worship. We will need to follow attendance patterns in the next few years to better understand any permanent changes that may have occurred due to this pandemic.

Bibliography

1. 1875 Bethel Record Book. The record books contain listings of baptisms, confirmations, funerals, marriages, membership, people leaving the church, and a record of pastoral acts from 1875 to 1890.
2. 1891 Bethel Record Book. This book contains church records from 1891 to 1915.
3. 1916 Bethel Record Book. The pastoral notes in this book date from 2 January 1916 to 6 September 1919. There are two membership lists, the first from 1916 to 1919 and the second a 1920 update by Reverend Huset. Baptism, confirmation, weddings, and funerals were continued by Pastor Hansen up to February 1961.
4. 1961-1963, 1964, 1965, 1966 Council Books.
5. 1979 1980 Bethel Council Book.
6. 1980 1981 Bethel Council Book Untitled on cover.
7. 1984 to 1987 Council Reports.
8. 1988 Council minutes book.
9. 1989 to 1994 Council Reports books
10. 1995 to 2023 Council Packets books
11. Amended Articles of Incorporation Bethel Lutheran Church, Original Copy.
12. Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922. This history states it was written when Bethel had been an organization for fifty-three years so that would make the year 1922. According to Pastor Hansen's note the history appeared in 1921. At the October 25, 1915 business meeting a church history committee of six people including Pastor Rodvik, Mr. and Mrs. Hanson, Charli Emerson, Mrs. Tollefson, and Andrew Nelson was elected. This history may have been the result of their efforts. I assume this was to be in preparation for the 1919 50th Anniversary of the congregation. The committee may have collected the data for the history, but it reads like one person wrote the final draft.
13. Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1929.
14. Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1954.
15. Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1999. This is an update to the 1923 history with some differences in the early years plus additional information after 1923. This history was found on the Bethel web site at <http://www.bethellutheran.org/history-of-bethel/> downloaded 6 March 2019.
16. Anonymous, The Burning of the Mortgage of Bethel Lutheran Church, 1942. This article provides significant information regarding the calling of Pastor Hansen and the support given by the Ladies Aid in paying off the mortgage.
17. Anonymous, Refugee Resettlement book. This book contains an anonymous account of the resettlement activities carried out by Bethel people for Vietnamese and Hmong in the 1970's and later information of the resettlement aid to Cambodian families in 1985.
18. Bethel Annuals for 1937, 1939, 1940, and 1962-3. Some of the Bethel Annuals are Mimeographed books that are included in the Bethel business meeting minutes for 1918 to

- 1942 as Exhibit “A” in the page following the Annual Meeting Minutes for many of the years that Pastor Hansen was at Bethel. Other annuals are more polished printed documents.
19. Bethel business meeting minutes for 1918 to 1942. This book contains church business meeting minutes and for some periods the minutes of the Board of Trustees.
 20. Bethel business meeting minutes for 1942 to 1956.
 21. Bethel Lutheran Church Council book for 1956 to 1960. This book contains the minutes of congregational annual and special meetings from 1956 to 1960 and copies of the reports presented at those meetings.
 22. Bethel English Lutheran Church Annual Report. 1927.
 23. Bethel English Lutheran Church Annual Meeting report January 13, 1963.
 24. Bethel Health Cabinet Minutes. These minutes are found in the Council Books and relate to Bethel’s reactions to the Covid pandemic.
 25. Bethel Lutheran Church Official Directory and Handbook, December 1921.
 26. Bethel Quilters picture books. These two picture books tell the Bethel Quilters story from 1960 to the present. They are presently in the possession of Jean Mortenson.
 27. Bethel Reengagement Task Force Updates. These are found in the Council Books during the Covid Pandemic.
 28. Bethel’s Refugee Story in red photo book untitled on cover.
 29. Bethel Social Missions Team Minutes found in various Council Books.
 30. Bethel Women 2019 Yearbook.
 31. Bethel Worship and Music Team Minutes found in various Council Books
 32. Blegen, Theodore, Norwegian Migration to America, The American Transition, Haskell House, NY, 1940. It is of interest to note that Theodore Blegen is the son of Bethel Pastor John Blegen.
 33. Church Council Monthly Reports 1982.
 34. Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887. This is the earliest record book available. It contains the original constitution in both Norwegian and English.
 35. Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917. The first 8 pages of this record book contain the constitution effective in 1888. The records are in Norwegian until January 7, 1907. From then on, the minutes are in English.
 36. Conversations with and e-mails from various Bethel staff members whose names are noted in the endnotes.
 37. Council books from 1960 to 2023. These books contain meeting minutes from Church council meetings, Annual meetings, Executive committee meetings and other material pertinent to the year listed in the book. The book for 1977 is missing so events in that year are from annual reports and other sources.
 38. Council Reports Annual Report 1983.
 39. Daily Journal (1960 to 2002). This journal is the equivalent of the pastoral notes in the older record books. Beginning in 1960, there were separate books for Baptisms, Marriages, Funerals, etc. instead of having all the information in a single book.

40. Daily Post and Record Newspaper. This is available on microfilm at the Olmsted County Historical Society.
41. Dunn, David. History of Zumbro Lutheran Church. Undated but written for 100th Anniversary in 1965. This booklet does not have page numbers so only a general reference can be given.
42. Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende, October 1875.
43. Findings of the Board of Organization of the Lutheran Free Church pertaining to the controversy in Bethel Lutheran Congregation, Rochester, Minn. Dated February 6, 1919.
44. <http://www.ancestry.com>. Information about several Bethel pastors comes from this site.
45. <http://www.weststolaf.org/stolafHistory.cfm>. Early St. Olaf Church History
46. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/> This online encyclopedia provided information on various topics for this history.
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48. <https://vimeo.com>. This is the storage location for Bethel worship videos dating from January 3, 2016 to the present.
49. <https://www.augsburg.edu/about/history/>.
50. Ladies Aid Minutes 1915 to 1919.
51. Lutheran World Almanac for 1922.
52. Nelson, E. Clifford, Ed. The Lutherans in North America, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1975.
53. Pamphlet, "Introducing Lisa Hawe," prepared by the call committee for the September 22, 2022 congregational meeting.
54. Pastor A G Hansen pastoral letter dated October 5, 1956.
55. Pastor A G Hansen personal Journal. This journal contains financial and church records from 1916 when he served congregations in and near Tioga, ND to 1932.
56. Reverend Hansen's personal record book. This book covers pastoral acts and other information from Pastor Hansen's ministry at Bethel covering the years 1920 to 1960. The baptism, confirmation, and other records in this book are identical to those in the 1916 Bethel record book, which Pastor Hansen continued to use.
57. Rochester City and Olmsted County Directories. The directory for 1896 was published by Interstate Directory Company of Wabasha, Minnesota, the directory for 1904 was published by C O Weber Co of Rochester, Minnesota, later years directories were published by Keitor Directory Company of St Paul, Minnesota, Norfolk, Nebraska, and Rochester, Minnesota. They contain lists of Rochester churches and businesses with information such as location, pastor's name, and times of services.
58. Rochester Post Bulletin is cited on several different dates. The paper is available on microfilm at the Olmsted County Historical Society.
59. Rochester Post Newspaper is cited on several different dates. This is available on microfilm at the Olmsted County Historical Society.
60. Skree, Jim, Email attachment sent Wed, May 5, 2021.
61. Strifert, Mrs. V. E., Sec to the Congregation, History of Bethel on its 75th Anniversary, 1944.

62. Torgerson-Bell Letter to Personnel Committee dated August 4, 1987.
63. Trustees Minutes 1952 to 1956
64. Trustees Minutes 1956-1960.
65. United States 1870 Census Records for the state of Minnesota.
66. Wolf, Richard C, Lutherans in North America, Lutheran Church Press, Philadelphia, 1965.

End Notes

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- ¹ I have included only pastors who had a call to serve Bethel in this list. There were many other men, especially in the first 50 years, who had an agreement to preach during a pastoral vacancy but had no specific call. Also intern pastors who are not included.
- ² Photo of Pastor Jensen was taken in 1868 and was provided by Jim Skree who is co-archivist at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Houston, MN. The remaining pastoral photos in this history are from a collection of past Pastors of Bethel in the hallway outside the church office. Unless otherwise noted, all the pastor's pictures come from the authors photos of these pictures. These pastoral pictures were first placed in the Bethel lounge as part of the 100-year celebration according to the May 20, 1969, Council minutes.
- ³ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 1.
- ⁴ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 33.
- ⁵ Most of the information regarding Pastor Jensen's activities prior to coming to Bethel in 1869 was provided courtesy of Jim Skree in an attachment to an email dated May 5, 2021.
- ⁶ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 13, 23. There are 21 signatures after the Norwegian version of the constitution and 49 members who pledged for the support of the congregation are listed on page 23.
- ⁷ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 5. The original constitution added the phrase "of the unaltered Augsburg Confession."
- ⁸ Rochester Post, January 28, 1871. The 1929 Bethel History says that the church name after a split in 1871 was "First Independent Lutheran Congregation of Rochester." This is repeated in all the later histories. There is no concrete evidence in the Bethel records of such a split. See Note 27 below for details.
- ⁹ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1929.
- ¹⁰ 1922 Constitution and Bylaws of Bethel English Lutheran Church. End note in the 1961-1963 Council book.
- ¹¹ 1870 Census for State of Minnesota, Houston County city of Houston, Book S, page 1110. Skree email attachment. In addition to his wife and family, Pastor Jensen's sister, Sina, lived with them. The census record lists Hanna's age as 28 and Sina's as 42 which originally led me to believe that Sina was his wife and Hanna was a younger helper for Sina.
- ¹² Since Bethel remained associated with Augsburg Seminary, I use the term "associated" with the Conference as it was not until 1877 that there is a clear reference to the Conference membership in Bethel records (see page 5).
- ¹³ Lutherans in North America, Nelson, Ed, Fortress, Philadelphia, 1975, pp. 189, 280, A History of Luther Seminary, Granquist, Mark, Fortress, 2019, page 70.
- ¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheran_Free_Church
- ¹⁵ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page-29. Rochester Post January 28, 1871. In the Church Bulletin in the paper, the Baptist church is described as "on Zumbro Street one block east of Broadway."
- ¹⁶ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 29.
- ¹⁷ Rochester Street and Avenue identification changed in 1918 from the original street names to the present-day quadrant system with Broadway and Center Street (previously 5th Street North) as axes.
- ¹⁸ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 32.
- ¹⁹ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 27.
- ²⁰ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, pages 29-32. The records do not indicate why the reorganization was necessary. This may have been to legalize the purchase, or as the 1939 history relates, there may have been some dissent within the congregation at this time regarding the building purchase and financial obligations related to it.
- ²¹ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922. Rochester Post, September 9, 1871 and October 7, 1871, The Damon Hotel was at the present location of the Kahler Hotel. The church was located on what is now Methodist Hospital property just across the street from the Kahler Hotel.

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- ²² Picture from a Plate associated with the 100-year anniversary of Bethel. This picture is from before the parlor was added in 1910.
- ²³ Rochester Post, March 4, 1871 church directory on an inside page. This is the first appearance of a Lutheran church in the newspaper Church Directory. The church name in the directory is First Scandinavian Lutheran and the pastor is listed as N Jensen. We know that Zumbro, organized in 1866, and Trinity, organized in 1867, were in existence at this time, but do not appear in the paper until later.
- ²⁴ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page-32-33.
- ²⁵ Skree Email attachment, Pastor Jensen died in January 1875 and was buried at Hillside Cemetery in Houston. His family returned to Norway shortly thereafter.
- ²⁶ Note that while the picture of Pastor Amundsen at the left has his name as Amundson, 1869 Congregational Record book consistently spelled it Amundsen which is how it is spelled here.
- ²⁷ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page-35, 38.
- ²⁸ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page-36. The minutes of this meeting may have been the source of the story that began with the 1929 history that the congregation split. This history gives a date of February 14, 1871 for the split in which 27 people resigned. This story has been repeated in the histories since, including the first edition of this one. Although this was near the time of the reorganization likely related to the building purchase, only one member is noted to have resigned and it is not clear whether that was a resignation from the church, or just from his position as church warden. There is a list of 27 people associated with this December meeting, but they were being welcomed as members of the church, not resigning.
- ²⁹ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page-37. It is not clear in the notes whether this preaching arrangement was a onetime engagement or if it was to be allowed on some regular basis.
- ³⁰ Rochester Post, May 9, 1874, page 3, col 2.
- ³¹ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 41. This vote result shows a significant resistance at this time to cooperation between the Norwegian Lutheran congregations in Rochester. See Appendix 1 for more on this topic.
- ³² Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 42.
- ³³ Rochester Post Newspaper. Saturday September 5, 1874 and Saturday September 12, 1874.
- ³⁴ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 42.
- ³⁵ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, page 279.
- ³⁶ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, pp. 133-135.
- ³⁷ <https://www.augsburg.edu/about/history/>
- ³⁸ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, p. 277.
- ³⁹ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, p. 278.
- ⁴⁰ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, pp. 277 and 278.
- ⁴¹ Anonymous History of Bethel, 1922.
- ⁴² Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 48.
- ⁴³ Anonymous History of Bethel, 1929.
- ⁴⁴ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, p. 281.
- ⁴⁵ Nelson, E. Clifford, Ed. The Lutherans in North America, p. 190.
- ⁴⁶ Olmsted County Marriage Records on microfilm at the Olmsted County Historical Museum, 1872 to 1880, box 4 file number 195316. Page 414 of section F. Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891. It is interesting to speculate how a pastor begins courting a younger member of his congregation. Certainly, her family had to approve and the congregation likely watched with interest.
- ⁴⁷ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, page 8.

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- ⁴⁸ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, pp. 132-135. It is common practice for small congregations who cannot afford a full-time pastor to team with others in a parish agreement to share costs.
- ⁴⁹ Many small congregations cooperated in a parish arrangement because they could not afford to pay a pastor on their own. Once a congregation reaches a size that can support a pastor on their own, they often withdraw from the parish.
- ⁵⁰ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, page 136.
- ⁵¹ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 79.
- ⁵² Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 83.
- ⁵³ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, page 277.
- ⁵⁴ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 18.
- ⁵⁵ Nelson, E. Clifford, Ed. Lutherans in North America, p. 296.
- ⁵⁶ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, pages 117, 201 to 211, and 261 to 262.
- ⁵⁷ Interestingly, the Bethel pastors, their wives, and their children are not on the membership lists of the congregation until Pastor Hansen came to Bethel in 1920.
- ⁵⁸ The reductions in pastoral salary likely indicate a loss of membership needed to pay the pastor.
- ⁵⁹ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, pages 58, 62, 70, 75, 82.
- ⁶⁰ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 87.
- ⁶¹ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, pages 85 and 88.
- ⁶² Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922.
- ⁶³ https://www.naha.stolaf.edu/pubs/nas/volume26/vol26_8.htm#r16, downloaded 28 Mar 2019.
- ⁶⁴ <https://www.augsburg.edu/about/history/>
- ⁶⁵ Nelson, E. Clifford, Ed. The Lutherans in North America. Page 287
- ⁶⁶ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, pp. 37, 66.
- ⁶⁷ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 83. At the February 1882 meeting the congregation discussed how often they wanted services and what to pay the pastors who provided them. They decided to pay \$14 per service and to collect pledges from members to provide the money.
- ⁶⁸ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, pp. 137-138.
- ⁶⁹ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922.
- ⁷⁰ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 99.
- ⁷¹ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, See record of baptisms, marriages, communions, and the pastor record for the year 1894.
- ⁷² Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 98.
- ⁷³ https://nbl.snl.no/John_H_Blegen. Note that the date that a pastor announces his resignation and the date that they leave the congregation are often not the same. Many pastors announce their resignation along with the date they will leave, often months later, to give the congregation time to call a new pastor.
- ⁷⁴ https://www.naha.stolaf.edu/pubs/nas/volume26/vol26_8.htm.
- ⁷⁵ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 94.
- ⁷⁶ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, page 138. Pastor Blegen gave about two months' notice when he resigned in July. When it is specifically mentioned, later pastors gave several months' notice. When Reverend Hansen accepted the call to Bethel, He returned to his parish in Tioga for over two months which is likely the

time he gave his old congregations to search for a new pastor. In 1959, Pastor Peterson gave a three month notice which seemed to be expected at that time.

⁷⁷ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, page 11.

⁷⁸ Ladies Aid Minutes 1915 to 1919. January 3, 1918, January 2, 1919, and April 3, 1919.

⁷⁹ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, pp. 14 and 17. While the Bethel picture spelling of his name is Anderson, the baptism records spell it Andersen so that is what I have used in the text.

⁸⁰ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, page 100.

⁸¹ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, page 291.

⁸² Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887, insert in page 108.

⁸³ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 1. The 1922 history indicates that the congregation “awarded” Pastor Andersen the trip. This implies to me that they paid for it. The records merely indicate that they approved his request for leave to take the trip.

⁸⁴ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922.

⁸⁵ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887 page 30. This meeting was January 7, 1891. The current situation mentioned in the minutes may refer to the unsettled situation between Augsburg and the newly formed United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America regarding college and seminary support.

⁸⁶ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 35-41. The 1922 history implies that the new parsonage was offered as an inducement for Pastor Anderson to remain at Bethel. Since the new parsonage was only first mentioned in the records six months after his announcement of the call to Chicago, that seems unlikely.

⁸⁷ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, pp 14, 17. Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 p. 1.

⁸⁸ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922.

⁸⁹ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 44.

⁹⁰ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922.

⁹¹ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 44, 50.

⁹² The handwriting in the pastoral notes at the end of both the 1875 and 1891 records changes on October 4, 1885 and again on May 23, 1894 which is likely when Pastor Andersen began and ended his time at Bethel.

⁹³ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 50.

⁹⁴ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 page 124.

⁹⁵ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 52.

⁹⁶ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 56.

⁹⁷ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 57.

⁹⁸ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922.

⁹⁹ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916, pp. 65 to 71.

¹⁰⁰ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922. The YPS first appears in the pastoral records on August 25, 1895. Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916, page 125.

¹⁰¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Young_People's_Society_of_Christian_Endavour.

¹⁰² Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916, pp. 125 through 130 and beyond.

¹⁰³ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 57. This appears to mean a basement useable for gatherings as a basement furnace is mentioned in other meetings.

¹⁰⁴ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 64.

¹⁰⁵ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916, p. 3.

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- ¹⁰⁶ Dr. Christiansen attended Augsburg College beginning in 1892 so they probably became friends while they were both at Augsburg.
- ¹⁰⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/F._Melius_Christiansen#cite_note-auto-1
- ¹⁰⁸ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922.
- ¹⁰⁹ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 65.
- ¹¹⁰ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 77-80.
- ¹¹¹ Lutherans in North America, Nelson, Ed, p. 341.
- ¹¹² Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 40.
- ¹¹³ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 48.
- ¹¹⁴ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 57, 64, 65.
- ¹¹⁵ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 70, 72.
- ¹¹⁶ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 77-83.
- ¹¹⁷ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 126. By continuing to seek pastors with the advice of Professor Sverdrup or other Augsburg leaders and choosing pastors trained at Augsburg in 1899 and again in 1903/1904, they really had made a choice without formalizing it.
- ¹¹⁸ Constitution and By-Laws of the Bethel English Lutheran Church Filed March 14, 1922, page 4 Article XII Church Connection.
- ¹¹⁹ Lutherans in North America, Nelson, Ed, p. 337.
- ¹²⁰ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 71. He announced his decision to the congregation with a one-day notice before he needed to prepare for his teaching duties. Since his letter of call (see page 11) required three months' notice, both Pastor Urseth and the congregation needed to be flexible if he were to accept this teaching call.
- ¹²¹ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 70.
- ¹²² Blegen, Theodore, Norwegian Migration to America, Haskell, New York, 1940. p. 534, Lutherans in North America, Nelson, Ed, p. 341.
- ¹²³ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 73.
- ¹²⁴ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 74.
- ¹²⁵ <https://augsburg.planmylegacy.org/auggies-give/auggie-entrepreneur-honors-grandfather>
- ¹²⁶ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 76.
- ¹²⁷ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, page 130. I expect that Pastor Falk Gjertsen was there in place of his brother and former Bethel pastor Gerhard who died in 1896.
- ¹²⁸ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 89.
- ¹²⁹ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 92-93.
- ¹³⁰ Ancestry.com record for Olaf Jorgen Flagstad.
- ¹³¹ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 p. 15.
- ¹³² Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922.
- ¹³³ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 100. Like Pastor Urseth, Pastor Flagstad's letter of call (see page 12) required a three month notice from either pastor or congregation to terminate a call. Thus, the agreement to stay until January 1 seems reasonable.
- ¹³⁴ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 102. The continued connection to the United Church indicates that Bethel had still not committed to either the Lutheran Free Church or to the UNLCA.

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- ¹³⁵ A History of Luther Seminary, Granquist, Mark, Fortress, 2019, page 83.
- ¹³⁶ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 106-107.
- ¹³⁷ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 104-105.
- ¹³⁸ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922.
- ¹³⁹ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, page 127. This is the first example in which she gave the report for the Junior Endeavor Society. She also does this in succeeding years.
- ¹⁴⁰ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 109, 117.
- ¹⁴¹ <https://www.trinitylutheranchurch.org/about/anniversary-books/>, 150 Year Anniversary Book, p. 12. Trinity installed a pipe organ in their church in 1905 which may have disrupted their worship enough that they needed a different place for a few weeks.
- ¹⁴² Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 117, 118.
- ¹⁴³ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 p. 114.
- ¹⁴⁴ <https://www.earnestlycontending.com/KT/bios/billysunday.html>.
- ¹⁴⁵ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922. Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 121, February 1906 congregational meeting. There were usually one or two new members per year during this period.
- ¹⁴⁶ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 p. 139.
- ¹⁴⁷ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 129-130.
- ¹⁴⁸ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 pp. 135-154.
- ¹⁴⁹ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 pp. 135-154.
- ¹⁵⁰ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 129. Minutes of May 27, 1908 business meeting.
- ¹⁵¹ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 132. Minutes of February 22, 1909 business meeting.
- ¹⁵² Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 133. Minutes of March 15, 1909 business meeting.
- ¹⁵³ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 135. Minutes of January 10, 1910 Trustees meeting.
- ¹⁵⁴ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 p. 144.
- ¹⁵⁵ Congregational Meetings 1888 – 1917, pages 142-143. Minutes of February 23, 1911 congregational meeting.
- ¹⁵⁶ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 144. Minutes of April 12, 1911 congregational meeting.
- ¹⁵⁷ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 146. Minutes of July 19, 1911 congregational meeting.
- ¹⁵⁸ Bethel Record Book beginning in 1916. 1916 to 1919 membership records, p. 193.
- ¹⁵⁹ <https://www.trinitylutheranchurch.org/about/anniversary-books/>, 100 Year Anniversary Book, p. 9.
- ¹⁶⁰ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 148. Minutes of January 12, 1912 congregational meeting.
- ¹⁶¹ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 p. 7.
- ¹⁶² Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 150. Minutes of September 23, 1912 congregational meeting.
- ¹⁶³ Rochester Post and Record, January 7, 1913, Page 8, col 4.
- ¹⁶⁴ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 p. 154.
- ¹⁶⁵ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 p. 71.
- ¹⁶⁶ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 p. 7.
- ¹⁶⁷ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, pages 155-6, Minutes of February 14 and April 14, 1914 business meetings.
- ¹⁶⁸ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 p. 7.

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- ¹⁶⁹ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 pp. 99 to 103.
- ¹⁷⁰ Bethel Record Book 1891 – 1916 p.155. One of the positive aspects of Bethel's close association with Augsburg Seminary was the availability of ordained clergy for ordination and installation services. Dunn, David. History of Zumbro Lutheran Church reported in one instance in 1901, a Zumbro pastor, Reverend Quaman installed himself as the expected qualified clergy member could not make the service.
- ¹⁷¹ Bethel Record Book beginning in 1916. pp 192 to 195.
- ¹⁷² Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922.
- ¹⁷³ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922. Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 162, Minutes of February 27, 1916 business meeting.
- ¹⁷⁴ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 165, Minutes of April 2, 1916 business meeting.
- ¹⁷⁵ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 165, Minutes of April 2, 1916 business meeting.
- ¹⁷⁶ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, page 169, Minutes of May 26, 1917 business meeting.
- ¹⁷⁷ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, pages 166, 180, Minutes of April 30, 1916 and October 29, 1917 business meetings.
- ¹⁷⁸ Findings of the Board of Organization of the Lutheran Free Church pertaining to the controversy in Bethel Lutheran Congregation, Rochester, Minn.
- ¹⁷⁹ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, Minutes of October 29, 1917 business meeting.
- ¹⁸⁰ Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922.
- ¹⁸¹ Bethel Business meeting minutes April 29, 1918.
- ¹⁸² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-German_sentiment
- ¹⁸³ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, Minutes of April 30, 1916 business meeting.
- ¹⁸⁴ Congregational Meetings 1888-1917, Page 171 Minutes of February 26, 1917 business meeting and Bethel Record Book beginning in 1916. pp 266-267.
- ¹⁸⁵ Ladies Aid Minutes for 1915 to 1919. April 3, 1919
- ¹⁸⁶ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. pp 1-3, January 14, 1918.
- ¹⁸⁷ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p 6, March 25, 1918.
- ¹⁸⁸ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p 5, March 25, 1918.
- ¹⁸⁹ The present Robert's Rules of Order states that tabled motions expire at the next regularly called meeting if not acted upon. Telephone conversation with Bethel member and regular parliamentarian Ron Jensen, May 13, 2020. While those rules may not have been available in 1918, the result was the same.
- ¹⁹⁰ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p 7, April 29, 1918.
- ¹⁹¹ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p 9, May 27, 1918.
- ¹⁹² Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. pp 11-12.
- ¹⁹³ Findings of the Board of Organization of the Lutheran Free Church pertaining to the controversy in Bethel Lutheran Congregation, Rochester, Minn. Subsequent events show that a peace offering was made and likely rejected. There was no reconciliation and the people opposed to Pastor Rodvik were removed from the congregation. Once he left they returned and many of his supporters left.
- ¹⁹⁴ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. pp 11 to 14. There is no record of when the inner mission began to support the congregation. The only note I have found is an income item from the inner mission of \$5.10 in the 1904 treasurers report contained in the Jan 1916 annual meeting minutes.
- ¹⁹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_flu#Around_the_globe
- ¹⁹⁶ <http://www.mnopedia.org/event/influenza-epidemic-minnesota-1918>

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- ¹⁹⁷ Rochester Post Bulletin, October 19, 1918, page 2, col 5.
- ¹⁹⁸ Bethel Record Book beginning in 1916. October and November 1918, page 271.
- ¹⁹⁹ Rochester Post Bulletin, October 26, 1918, page 2, col 5.
- ²⁰⁰ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. P 23, May 5, 1919.
- ²⁰¹ Bethel Record Book beginning in 1916. June 1919., page 273.
- ²⁰² Bethel Business Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. May 26, 1919.
- ²⁰³ Bethel Record Book beginning in 1916. June 1919. page 273. Pastor Rodvik and his wife Anna were married on June 12, 1919. The 1921 Rochester City Directory says Rev Rodvik moved to Litchville, ND.
- ²⁰⁴ <http://www.ancestry.com/family tree/person/tree/95393959/person/250023300422/facts>. Pastor Rodvik appears to have served churches in North Dakota, Michigan, and Iowa after leaving Bethel.
- ²⁰⁵ Lutheran World Almanac for 1921.
- ²⁰⁶ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. May 26, 1919.
- ²⁰⁷ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. page 27, August 25, 1919. Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1922. The author of this history implies that the members were ejected in August and were thus among those who supported Pastor Rodvik. The opposite seems to be true. The members were ejected in March 1919 and were those who opposed Pastor Rodvik.
- ²⁰⁸ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. page 20, March 31, 1919. If the wording of the peace offering was like the description in the meeting minutes, it is understandable that it was rejected.
- ²⁰⁹ <http://oursaviorscloquet.org/who-we-are/our-story>.
- ²¹⁰ Daily Post and Record, Sept 3, 1919.
- ²¹¹ From ancestry.com courtesy of Jim Deutschle. Pastro Huset leftr the army in 1930 and was later Pator of First Lutheran Church in Columbia Heights, Mn as well as their city manager. Huset Park in Columbia Heights is named after him.
- ²¹² Bethel Business Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. page 30, October 27, 1920.
- ²¹³ Dunn, David. History of Zumbro Lutheran Church.
- ²¹⁴ The 1923 Bethel History states that the church membership at the time Pastor A G Hansen began his ministry was 35. Subsequent histories have repeated that number as do some of Pastor Hansen's communications. The membership lists in the church records show 158 members at that time, 110 of whom were confirmed members. In his pastoral letter of October 5, 1956, Pastor Hanson mentions 35 members who he remembers were at a 1921 business meeting in which the building of the new church was approved. 35 confirmed members out of a total of 110 (32%) is not unreasonable for church business meeting attendance. That may be the source of the 35 members of the histories.
- ²¹⁵ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. page 37, January 12, 1920.
- ²¹⁶ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. page 46, May 31, 1920.
- ²¹⁷ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. page 49, July 28, 1920.
- ²¹⁸ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. page 54, Sept 22, 1920.
- ²¹⁹ 1944 History of Bethel
- ²²⁰ 1944 History of Bethel, Daily Post and Record, Sept 3, 1919..
- ²²¹ Pastor A G Hansen personal Journal. Pages 3-8.
- ²²² Photo of Reverend Hansen from the 1921 Bethel Directory.
- ²²³ It is not clear how the call process worked in the Lutheran Free Church. The Bethel Records and Business meeting minutes do not indicate any input for a level higher than the local congregation.

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- ²²⁴ \$1600 per year is almost twice what Pastor Huset received from Bethel. The larger salary clearly shows that not only has the congregation grown significantly in the past year, but they were confident that growth would continue in the future.
- ²²⁵ Burning of the Mortgage of Bethel Lutheran Church. It is not clear who invited Pastor Hansen to come to Rochester, or who paid for his transportation. My impression is that Pastor Huset had conferred with the congregational leaders who then invited Pastor Hansen to come to Rochester for a meeting since he was expected. I believe he knew that a call was being considered, but from this article, he appeared to be surprised by the speed of the decision.
- ²²⁶ Pastor Hansen's Personal Journal. Pages 3-8.
- ²²⁷ Bethel Business meeting minutes November 29, 1920.
- ²²⁸ Bethel Record Book beginning in 1916. P. 7.
- ²²⁹ Bethel Business meeting minutes June 21, 1921.
- ²³⁰ Bethel Church business meeting minutes October 3, October 31, and November 28, 1921.
- ²³¹ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. pp 63-73.
- ²³² Anonymous, History of Bethel, 1999. The annual meeting on January 9, 1922 was held in the church basement, their first meeting in that location.
- ²³³ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. pp 74.
- ²³⁴ Rochester Daily Post and Record, October 21, 1922, and Rochester Daily Bulletin, October 21, 1922, p. 4.
- ²³⁵ September 19, 1972 Church Council meeting minutes in the 1972 Council Book
- ²³⁶ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 97.
- ²³⁷ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 137.
- ²³⁸ Burning of the Mortgage of Bethel Lutheran Church.
- ²³⁹ Rochester Post and Record, Saturday January 24, 1925 and Monday, January 6, 1925. Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. pp. 113 and 115.
- ²⁴⁰ Bethel Directory and Handbook, December 1921.
- ²⁴¹ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 34.
- ²⁴² Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 58.
- ²⁴³ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 135.
- ²⁴⁴ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 131.
- ²⁴⁵ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 145.
- ²⁴⁶ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 176.
- ²⁴⁷ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 202.
- ²⁴⁸ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 235.
- ²⁴⁹ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 254.
- ²⁵⁰ Granquist, Mark, Email note dated July 7, 2021.
- ²⁵¹ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 129.
- ²⁵² Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. pp. 168 to 172.
- ²⁵³ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. pp. 202 and 203.
- ²⁵⁴ Pastor Hansen's personal record book. p. 1.
- ²⁵⁵ Bethel Annual Meeting Minutes 1918 to 1942. p. 225.

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- ²⁵⁶ Bethel Annual for 1937. Note: All the Annuals and Annual Reports are available in a box labelled Annual Reports in the Bethel Archives as well as other listed locations.
- ²⁵⁷ Bethel Annual for 1939.
- ²⁵⁸ Bethel Annual for 1940.
- ²⁵⁹ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes for 1943, p. 11.
- ²⁶⁰ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes for 1943, p. 11.
- ²⁶¹ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes for 1942 and 1944, pp. 5 and 19.
- ²⁶² Strifert, V.E. Mrs., History of Bethel, 1944. This history was written to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Bethel congregation.
- ²⁶³ Rochester Post Bulletin, Wed, May 10, 1944.
- ²⁶⁴ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes for 1945 to 49, pp 29, 35, 51, 57, and 71.
- ²⁶⁵ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes for 1952, pp 87 to 89.
- ²⁶⁶ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes for 1953, pp. 91 to 97.
- ²⁶⁷ Ionia Olson February 22, 1955 letter to Rev Hansen, the Board of Trustees, and the Board of Deacons in the Trustees Minutes 1952 to 1956 page 70.
- ²⁶⁸ These lots were immediately adjacent to the Andrew Urness property so the church may have learned of their availability from him.
- ²⁶⁹ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes for 1954, pp 99 to 110.
- ²⁷⁰ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes for 1955, p. 113.
- ²⁷¹ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes for 1955, p. 114.
- ²⁷² Bethel Business Meeting Minutes for 1955, pp. 116 and 121.
- ²⁷³ Bethel Business Meeting Minutes for 1955, p. 129.
- ²⁷⁴ Wolf, Lutherans in North America. P. 127
- ²⁷⁵ The reason for the need for an endorsement was that the contractor chosen by the congregation, Bethel member Carl Hutchings, was not certified to construct a building of this size.
- ²⁷⁶ Trustee's minutes 1956-1960, Meeting minutes July 8, 1957.
- ²⁷⁷ 1956 to 1957 Report of the Board of Trustees in the 1956 to 1960 Council book.
- ²⁷⁸ Rochester Post Bulletin, June 14, 1957, Page 10, col, 1.
- ²⁷⁹ January 19, 1958 Special Meeting minutes in the 1956 to 1960 Council book.
- ²⁸⁰ April 12, 1958 Special Meeting minutes in the 1956 to 1960 Council book.
- ²⁸¹ July 13, 1958 Special Meeting minutes in the 1956 to 1960 Council book.
- ²⁸² Trustees Minutes 1957-1960, Minutes of August 5 meeting held at Reverend Peterson's home.
- ²⁸³ Peterson Resignation letter dated October 3, 1959 in the 1956 to 1960 Council book.
- ²⁸⁴ October 13, 1959 Special Meeting minutes in the 1956 to 1960 Council book. This is my interpretation based on the minutes of these meetings.
- ²⁸⁵ October 13, 1959 Special Meeting minutes in the 1956 to 1960 Council book.
- ²⁸⁶ Both pastors sent letters to the council agreeing with this action. Reverend Hansen's letter dated October 31, 1959 stated his agreement to retire on or before June 1, 1959 and asked that a suitable retirement package be arranged before his retirement. Reverend Peterson's letter dated November 11, 1959 stated his support of the council action and agreement to resign.

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- ²⁸⁷ The minutes do not give the date of this meeting but do note it was held on Monday at 8 PM. Due to the urgency of the matter before them, I assume it was held the next Monday which would have been October 19.
- ²⁸⁸ November 27, 1959 Annual Meeting minutes in the 1956 to 1960 Council book.
- ²⁸⁹ Pulpit committee report in the 1956 to 1960 Council book.
- ²⁹⁰ Trustee's minutes 1956-1960, Meeting minutes July 20, 1960.
- ²⁹¹ October 26, 1960 Annual Meeting minutes in the 1956 to 1960 Council book.
- ²⁹² July 16, 2019 conversation with June Hain.
- ²⁹³ Special Deacons Meeting Minutes June 20, 1961 in the 1961-1963 Council Book.
- ²⁹⁴ Board of Trustees Meeting June 13, 1961 in the Trustees Minutes 1957 – 1963.
- ²⁹⁵ Pastor Heide's report in Bethel English Lutheran Church Annual Meeting report January 13, 1963.
- ²⁹⁶ Rochester Post Bulletin, February 14, 1986, page 24 Obituary of Andrew Urness.
- ²⁹⁷ October 15, 1968 and November 19, 1968 Council minutes in the 1968 Council Book.
- ²⁹⁸ Minutes of October 11 Special Congregational Meeting in the 1961-1963 Council Book.
- ²⁹⁹ Council meeting minutes for October 10, 1962 in the 1961-1963 Council Book.
- ³⁰⁰ Council meeting minutes for February 11, 1962, March 13, 1962, and February 13, 1963 in the 1961-1963 Council Book.
- ³⁰¹ Special Congregational meeting minutes for January 10, 1963. These changes were affirmed at the January 8, 1964 special meeting.
- ³⁰² Bethel Annual for 1962-63.
- ³⁰³ Council meeting minutes for May 9, 1963 in the 1961-1963 Council Book.
- ³⁰⁴ Council meeting minutes for June 18, 1963 in the 1961-1963 Council Book.
- ³⁰⁵ March 14, 1963 Council meeting minutes, March 23 special Council meeting minutes, and April 3, 1963 special congregational meeting minutes in the 1961-1963 Council Book.
- ³⁰⁶ Amended Articles of Incorporation Bethel Lutheran Church, Original Copy.
- ³⁰⁷ <https://www.augsburg.edu/about/history/>
- ³⁰⁸ <https://www.ranfranzandvinefh.com/obituaries/dale-luther-mundahl> Dale Luther Mundahl Obituary
- ³⁰⁹ February 5, 1964 Annual Meeting of Bethel Lutheran Church minutes in the 1964 Council Book.
- ³¹⁰ May 4, 1964 Special Council meeting minutes in the 1964 Council Book.
- ³¹¹ May 31, 1964 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1964 Council Book.
- ³¹² September 9, 1964 Council meeting minutes in the 1964 Council Book.
- ³¹³ September 9, 1964 Council meeting minutes in the 1964 Council Book.
- ³¹⁴ February 7, 1965 Annual Meeting minutes in the 1966 Council Book.
- ³¹⁵ May 17, 1966 Council meeting minutes in the 1966 Council Book.
- ³¹⁶ February 6, 1966 Annual Meeting minutes in the 1967 Council Book.
- ³¹⁷ April 16, 1968 Council meeting minutes in the 1968 Council Book.
- ³¹⁸ November 8, 1966 Executive Committee meeting minutes in the 1966 Council Book.
- ³¹⁹ February 6, 1966 Annual Meeting Report from the President in the 1967 Council Book.
- ³²⁰ Congregational Presidents report to the January 25, 1970 Annual meeting in the 1970 Council Book.

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- ³²¹ Ardell Brede, Report of the Chairman of the Council in the January 31, 1971 Annual meeting booklet. At times in the ensuing years this lot was leased to the Mayo Clinic and later Olsted Medical Group for day time parking.
- ³²² www.postbulletin.com/dedication-support-give-voice-to-oudal-chorale/article_35c10831-76ff-5524-8128-7b491f231c7d.html.
- ³²³ June 15, 1965 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1965 Council Book.
- ³²⁴ March 22, 1966 Executive Council meeting minutes in the 1966 Council Book.
- ³²⁵ September 18, 1966 Council meeting minutes in the 1966 Council Book.
- ³²⁶ May 7, 1967 Special Congregational meeting minutes in 1968 Council Book.
- ³²⁷ May 16, 1967 Council Treasures report for April and August 1, 1967 Council Treasures report for June in the 1967 Council Book.
- ³²⁸ May 21, 1968 Council Minutes in the 1968 Council Book.
- ³²⁹ September 10, 1968 Executive Committee minutes in the 1968 Council Book.
- ³³⁰ October 8, 1968 Executive Committee minutes in the 1968 Council Book.
- ³³¹ Daily Journal (1960 to 2002).
- ³³² Council Chairman's report to the January 25, 1970 Annual meeting in the 1970 Council Book.
- ³³³ Council Chairman's report to the January 25, 1970 Annual meeting in the 1970 Council Book.
- ³³⁴ An audio recording of this service is available in the Bethel Archives.
- ³³⁵ Centennial Plans – Bethel Lutheran Church under the May 1969 tab in the 1969 Council Book.
- ³³⁶ February 17, 1970 Council minutes in the 1970 Council Book.
- ³³⁷ April 20, 1971 Council minutes in the 1971 Council Book.
- ³³⁸ September 28, 1971 Council minutes in the 1971 Council Book.
- ³³⁹ August 15, 1972 Council minutes in the 1972 Council Book
- ³⁴⁰ February 8, 1972 Annual meeting minutes in the 1974 Council Book
- ³⁴¹ September 24, 1972 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1972 Annual meeting report.
- ³⁴² September 19, 1972 Council Meeting minutes in the 1972 Council Book.
- ³⁴³ January 7, 1973 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1972 Council Book.
- ³⁴⁴ June 17, 1973 Council meeting minutes in the 1973 Council Book.
- ³⁴⁵ April 17, 1973 Council meeting minutes in the 1973 Council Book.
- ³⁴⁶ May 1, 1973 Special Council meeting minutes in the 1973 Council Book.
- ³⁴⁷ <http://www.startribune.com/obituaries/detail/68791/>
- ³⁴⁸ May 15, 1973 Council meeting minutes in the 1973 Council Book.
- ³⁴⁹ June 17, 1973 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1973 Council Book.
- ³⁵⁰ June through September Council, Executive Committee and Call committee minutes in the 1973 Council Book.
- ³⁵¹ History of Bethel, 1999.
- ³⁵² May 21, 1974 Council meeting minutes in the 1974 Council Book.
- ³⁵³ January 23, 1977 Annual meeting Pastor Baker's Report in the Bethel Annual Reports Book.
- ³⁵⁴ History of Bethel, 1999. The history states that Marlyn Borcharding resigned in 1972, however, pay records in the treasurer's reports indicate she was paid through October 1973 and Barb Milburn was paid for a partial month in November 1973.

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- ³⁵⁵ September 4, 1973 Executive committee minutes in the 1973 Council Book.
- ³⁵⁶ Brede, Ardell, Letter to Bethel members and Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws insert under the August tab of the 1974 Council Book.
- ³⁵⁷ September 11, 1973 Executive committee minutes and September 18, 1973 Council meeting minutes in the 1973 Council Book.
- ³⁵⁸ November 30, 1973 Church Council meeting minutes in the 1973 Council Book.
- ³⁵⁹ September 17, 1974 Council meeting minutes in the 1974 Council Book.
- ³⁶⁰ January 23, 1977 Annual meeting reports in the 1977 Council Book.
- ³⁶¹ December 18, 1975 Council meeting minutes in the 1975 Council Book.
- ³⁶² February 29, 1974 Treasurers Report in the 1976 Council Book.
- ³⁶³ Sale of Meadow Park Parsonage to pastor Quello in the Old church council records dated back to 1973 book.
- ³⁶⁴ September 17, 1974 Council meeting minutes in the 1974 Council Book.
- ³⁶⁵ November 19, 1978 Council meeting minutes in the 1978 Council Book.
- ³⁶⁶ January 27, 1980 Pastor Bagaason's report in the Annual meeting report.
- ³⁶⁷ September 1975 and October 1975 Treasurers report in the 1975 Council Book.
- ³⁶⁸ March 17, 1976 Special Council Meeting minutes in the 1976 Council Book.
- ³⁶⁹ August 5, 1976 Executive Committee meeting minutes in the 1976 Council Book.
- ³⁷⁰ January 22, 1978 Pastor Bagaason's report in the Annual meeting report.
- ³⁷¹ June 17, 1975 Council meeting minutes in the 1975 Council Book.
- ³⁷² August 19, 1975 Council meeting minutes in the 1975 Council Book.
- ³⁷³ January 23, 1977 Pastor Bagaason's report in the Annual meeting report.
- ³⁷⁴ Excerpts from a book on the Refugee families.
- ³⁷⁵ April 20, 1976 Council meeting minutes in the 1976 Council Book.
- ³⁷⁶ June 29, 1975 Executive Committee meeting minutes in the 1976 Council Book.
- ³⁷⁷ May 15, 1977 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the Bethel Annual reports book.
- ³⁷⁸ Pastor Freidli's comments in the 1981 Annual report in the 1980-81 Council book.
- ³⁷⁹ January 8, 1978 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the Bethel Annual reports book.
- ³⁸⁰ January 22, 1978 Pastor Quello's report in the Annual meeting report.
- ³⁸¹ January 22, 1978 Annual meeting minutes in the Bethel Annual reports book.
- ³⁸² October 25, 1978 and December 16, 1979 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the Bethel Annual reports book.
- ³⁸³ November 12, 1978 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the Bethel Annual reports book.
- ³⁸⁴ January 9, 1979 Executive committee meeting minutes in the 1979 1980 Bethel Council book.
- ³⁸⁵ June 11, 1978 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the Bethel Annual reports book.
- ³⁸⁶ Photo from July 6, 1978 Rochester Post Bulletin page 12, col 3-6.
- ³⁸⁷ January 29, 1979 Pastor Bagaason's report in the Annual meeting report.
- ³⁸⁸ September 18, 1979 Council meeting minutes in the 1979 1980 Bethel Council book.
- ³⁸⁹ July 1, 1979 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the Bethel Annual reports book.

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- ³⁹⁰ December 20, 1983 Council meeting minutes in the 1984 Council packets book.
- ³⁹¹ January 27, 1980 Pastor Bagaason's report in the Annual meeting report.
- ³⁹² August 5, 1979 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the Bethel Annual reports book.
- ³⁹³ January 27, 1980 Pastor Deines' report in the Annual meeting report for an example of this feeling. This is only one example of statements by Bethel pastors with regard to the team spirit and job satisfaction of the staff under the guidance of Pastor Bagaason.
- ³⁹⁴ January 15, 1980 Council meeting minutes in the 1980-81 Council book.
- ³⁹⁵ January 27, 1980 See Pastor Hinderlie's report in the Annual meeting report for an example of this problem.
- ³⁹⁶ December 18, 1979 Council meeting minutes in the 1979 1980 Bethel Council book.
- ³⁹⁷ March 20, 1979 Council meeting minutes in the 1979 1980 Bethel Council book.
- ³⁹⁸ July 16, 1979 Executive committee minutes in the 1979 1980 Bethel Council book.
- ³⁹⁹ April 20, 1980 Executive committee minutes in the 1979 1980 Bethel Council book.
- ⁴⁰⁰ August 19, 1980 Council meeting minutes in the 1979 1980 Bethel Council book.
- ⁴⁰¹ January 25, 1981 Annual meeting minutes in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁴⁰² August 19, 1980 Council meeting minutes in the 1979 1980 Bethel Council book.
- ⁴⁰³ April 2, 1981 Executive committee meeting minutes in the 1980-81 Council book.
- ⁴⁰⁴ April 20, 1982 Council meeting minutes in the Church Council Monthly Reports 1982.
- ⁴⁰⁵ The rapid change in electronic formats has made it necessary to plan for the movement of electronic data from one media to another as electronic advancements require change to the systems used. It is still sometime necessary to keep paper records to make sure they are available to researchers in the future. The records that were produced by Mr Sipple can no longer be easily accessed as large floppy drives are no longer generally available.
- ⁴⁰⁶ October 19, 1982 Council meeting minutes in the Church Council Monthly Reports 1982
- ⁴⁰⁷ Correction to November 6, 1982 Executive committee meeting minutes in the November 16, 1982 Council meeting minutes in the Church Council Monthly Reports 1982.
- ⁴⁰⁸ December 21, 1982 Council meeting minutes in the Church Council Monthly Reports 1982.
- ⁴⁰⁹ November 16, 1982 Council meeting minutes in the Church Council Monthly Reports 1982.
- ⁴¹⁰ December 21, 1982 Council meeting minutes in the Church Council Monthly Reports 1982.
- ⁴¹¹ March 3, 1983 Executive Board minutes in the Council packets Annual Report 1983 book.
- ⁴¹² March 13, 1983 Council meeting minutes in the Council packets Annual Report 1983 book. At this time, the Personnel Committee was a part of the Executive Committee duties.
- ⁴¹³ June 9, 1983 Executive Committee meeting minutes in the Council packets Annual Report 1983 book
- ⁴¹⁴ February 10, 1983 Council meeting minutes in the Council packets Annual Report 1983 book.
- ⁴¹⁵ March 3, 1983 Executive Board minutes in the Council packets Annual Report 1983 book.
- ⁴¹⁶ March 13, 1983 Council meeting minutes in the Council packets Annual Report 1983 book.
- ⁴¹⁷ August 16, 1983 Council Meeting minutes in Council packets Annual Report 1983 book.
- ⁴¹⁸ October 6, 1983 Executive Board minutes in the Council packets Annual Report 1983 book.
- ⁴¹⁹ April 17, 1984 Council meeting minutes in the 1984 Council packets book.
- ⁴²⁰ April 17, 1984 Council meeting minutes in the 1984 Council packets book.
- ⁴²¹ April 5, 1984 Executive Board meeting minutes in the 1984 Council packets book.

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- ⁴²² May 15, 1984 Council meeting minutes in the 1984 Council packets book.
- ⁴²³ August 21, 1984 Council meeting minutes in the 1984 Council packets book.
- ⁴²⁴ January 24, 1988 Annual meeting minutes in the in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁴²⁵ March 3, 1985 Special congregational meeting minutes in the January 23, 1985 Annual meeting report in the 1986 Council packets book.
- ⁴²⁶ May 14, 1984 Council meeting minutes in the 1984 Council packets book.
- ⁴²⁷ Rochester Post Bulletin January xx, 1985 p xx, col x to y.
- ⁴²⁸ September 6, 1984 Executive Committee meeting minutes in the 1984 Council packets book.
- ⁴²⁹ February 7, 1985 Council meeting minutes in the 1985 Council packets book.
- ⁴³⁰ The May 18, 2016 Google Earth view of the property shows the original red tile roof and a very significant addition to the house.
- ⁴³¹ April 16, 1985 Council meeting minutes in the 1985 Council packets book.
- ⁴³² September 5, 1985 Executive Committee meeting minutes in the 1985 Council packets book.
- ⁴³³ This concern about the low attendance at Adult Education had been expressed before and has continued to be an issue up to today.
- ⁴³⁴ April 16, 1985 Council meeting minutes in the 1985 Council packets book.
- ⁴³⁵ October 14, 1985 Council meeting minutes in the 1985 Council packets book.
- ⁴³⁶ May 14, 1986 Special congregational meeting minutes in the 1986 Council packets book.
- ⁴³⁷ November 3, 1987 Worship Committee minutes in the November 17, 1987 Council meeting minutes in the 1987 Council packets book.
- ⁴³⁸ December 1, 1987 Adult Education Committee minutes in the December 15, 1987 Council meeting minutes in the 1987 Council packets book.
- ⁴³⁹ June 18, 1985 Council meeting minutes and July 11, 1985 Executive committee meeting minutes in the 1985 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁴⁰ January 9, 1986 Special Executive Committee meeting minutes in the 1985 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁴¹ January 2, 1986 Executive Committee meeting minutes in the 1985 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁴² July 30, 1986 Special congregational meeting minutes in the 1986 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁴³ May 20, 1986 Council meeting minutes in the 1986 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁴⁴ September 4, 1986 Executive committee meeting minutes in the 1986 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁴⁵ August 19, 1986 Council meeting minutes in the 1986 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁴⁶ May 1, 1986 Executive Committee meeting minutes in the 1986 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁴⁷ September 4, 1986 Executive committee meeting minutes in the 1986 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁴⁸ October 21, 1986 and November 18, 1986 Council meeting minutes in the 1986 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁴⁹ January 25, 1987 Annual meeting minutes in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁴⁵⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Lutheran_Church_in_America
- ⁴⁵¹ March 15, 1987 Special congregational meeting minutes in the 1987 Council packets book. The constitution at the time required that any change pass by a majority vote and did not require ratification at a later meeting. The present Bethel constitution would require that any constitutional change be ratified at the next annual meeting.
- ⁴⁵² Note that the Personnel Committee at this time was the Executive Committee.
- ⁴⁵³ Torgerson-Bell Letter to Personnel Committee dated August 4, 1987.

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- ⁴⁵⁴ August 18, 1987 Special congregational meeting minutes in the 1987 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁵⁵ February 3, 1989 Executive committee meeting minutes in the 1988 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁵⁶ September 15, 1987 Council meeting minutes in the 1989 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁵⁷ September 15, 1987 Council meeting minutes Appendix A, B, and C in the 1987 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁵⁸ November 17, 1987 Council meeting minutes in the 1987 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁵⁹ October 20, 1987 Council meeting minutes in the 1987 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁶⁰ January 3, 1988 Special congregational meeting minutes in the 1988 Council minutes book.
- ⁴⁶¹ March 7, 1988 Executive committee meeting minutes in the 1988 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁶² January 24, 1988 Annual meeting minutes in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁴⁶³ October 24, 1988 Preliminary Project Cost Estimate from B E Architects in the 1988 Council minutes book.
- ⁴⁶⁴ October 24, 1988 Building Committee meeting minutes in the 1988 Council minutes book. As with so many building projects at Bethel, Roger Toulouse led the building team through this long difficult process.
- ⁴⁶⁵ January 29, 1989 Annual meeting report in the 1988 Council minutes book.
- ⁴⁶⁶ June 25, 1989 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1990 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁶⁷ May 20, 1990 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1990 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁶⁸ May 19, 1991 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1991 Council book.
- ⁴⁶⁹ September 14, 1991 Rochester Post Bulletin page 7C, col 1-5.
- ⁴⁷⁰ October 28, 1990 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1992 Council Report book.
- ⁴⁷¹ September 3, 1992 Council meeting minutes in the 1992 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁷² January 3, 1990 Budget retreat minutes in the 1991 Council book.
- ⁴⁷³ September 13, 1992 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1994 Council book.
- ⁴⁷⁴ June 16, 1992 Council meeting minutes in the 1992 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁷⁵ January 30, 1994 Annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁴⁷⁶ January 6, 1994 Executive Committee minutes in the 1994 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁷⁷ Email note from Mark Granquist, June 14, 2021.
- ⁴⁷⁸ June 5, 1988 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1990 Council book.
- ⁴⁷⁹ November 7, 1991 Executive committee meeting minutes in the 1991 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁸⁰ February 3, 1993 Annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁴⁸¹ November 7, 1991 Executive committee meeting minutes in the 1991 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁸² Parish administrator job description draft in the 1991 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁸³ July 2, 1992 Executive committee minutes in the 1992 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁸⁴ January 11, 1992 special council meeting minutes budget for 1992 in the 1992 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁸⁵ February 3, 1992 Annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁴⁸⁶ September 15, 1992 Council meeting minutes in the 1992 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁸⁷ April 21, 1992 Council meeting minutes and July 2, 1992 Executive Committee minutes in the 1992 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁸⁸ July 1, 1993 Executive Committee minutes in the 1993 Council packets book.

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- ⁴⁸⁹ September 3, 1992 Executive Committee minutes in the 1992 Council packets book and https://www.luthersem.edu/faculty/fac_home.aspx?contact_id=mgranquist001.
- ⁴⁹⁰ March 11, 1993 Bethel Foundation Board of Trustees meeting minutes in the 1993 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁹¹ April 18, 1993 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1995 Council Packets book.
- ⁴⁹² February 20, 2007 Council meeting minutes in the 2007 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁹³ August 20, 2013 Council meeting minutes in the 2013 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁹⁴ October 7, 1993 Executive Committee minutes in the 1993 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁹⁵ October 18, 1994 Council meeting minutes in the 1994 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁹⁶ May 20, 1997 Council meeting minutes in the 1997 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁹⁷ Conversation with Terra O'Brien November 15, 2022,.
- ⁴⁹⁸ Undated Memo from Personnel Committee to Church Council, Page 24 of May Council Packet in 1993 Council packets book.
- ⁴⁹⁹ May 17, 1994 Council meeting minutes in the 1994 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁰⁰ September 7, 1994 Special Council meeting minutes in the 1994 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁰¹ October 26, 1994 Personnel Committee meeting summary in the 1994 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁰² January 5, 1995 Executive Committee minutes in the 1995 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁰³ May 17, 1994 Council meeting minutes in the 1994 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁰⁴ October 6, 1994 Council meeting minutes in the 1994 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁰⁵ August 13, 2019 conversation with Terra O'Brien November 15, 2022.
- ⁵⁰⁶ December 20, 1994 Council meeting minutes in the 1995 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁰⁷ December 20, 1994 Council meeting minutes in the 1995 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁰⁸ January 13, 1995 Council meeting minutes in the 1995 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁰⁹ May 16, 1995 Council packet pages 24 to 29.
- ⁵¹⁰ April 14, 1996 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1996 Council Packets book.
- ⁵¹¹ <http://www.bethellutheran.org/staff/>
- ⁵¹² July and August Council, Executive committee, and personnel committee minutes in the 1996 Council Packets book.
- ⁵¹³ May 21, 1996 Council Meeting Minutes and September 8, 1996 Special congregational meeting minutes in the 1996 Council Packets book.
- ⁵¹⁴ October 15, 1996 Council meeting minutes in the 199 Council packets book.
- ⁵¹⁵ September 17, 1996 Council meeting minutes in the 199 Council packets book.
- ⁵¹⁶ March 18, 1997 Council meeting minutes and April 2, 1997 Executive committee minutes in the 1997 Council Packets book.
- ⁵¹⁷ April 15, 1997 Council meeting minutes in the 1997 Council packets book.
- ⁵¹⁸ March 12, 1997 response from Church Council, Executive Committee, and Personnel committee to Musicians letter.
- ⁵¹⁹ April 14, 1996 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1996 Council Packets book.
- ⁵²⁰ June 8, 1997 Worship committee minutes in the 1997 Council packets book.
- ⁵²¹ August 19, 1997 Council meeting minutes in the 1997 Council packets book.

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- ⁵²² September 2, 1997 Worship committee minutes in the 1997 Council packets book.
- ⁵²³ September 18, 2001 Council meeting minutes in the 2001 Council packets book.
- ⁵²⁴ As far as I know there never was any conflict, but the potential remained.
- ⁵²⁵ February 17, 1997 Council meeting minutes in the 1997 Council packets book and March 1997 Council Packet page 34.
- ⁵²⁶ June 17, 1997 Council meeting minutes in the 1997 Council packets book.
- ⁵²⁷ October 21, 1997 Council meeting minutes in the 1997 Council packets book.
- ⁵²⁸ May 19, 1998 Council packet in the 1997 Council packets book pages 27-31.
- ⁵²⁹ June 16, 1998 Council meeting minutes in the 1998 Council packets book.
- ⁵³⁰ October 20, 1998 Council packet in the 1998 Council packets book pages 33-48.
- ⁵³¹ January 31, 1999 Annual meeting report and January 30, 2000 Annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁵³² February 24, 1998 Council meeting minutes in the 1998 Council packets book.
- ⁵³³ May 17, 1998 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1999 Annual Report in the 1999 Council Packets book.
- ⁵³⁴ October 4, 1998 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1999 Annual Report in the 1999 Council Packets book.
- ⁵³⁵ August 8, 1999 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 1999 Council Packets book.
- ⁵³⁶ February 16, 1999 Council meeting minutes in the 1999 Council packets book.
- ⁵³⁷ June 15, 1999 Council meeting minutes in the 1999 Council packets book.
- ⁵³⁸ November 16, 1999 Council meeting minutes in the 1999 Council packets book.
- ⁵³⁹ December 21, 1999 Council packet in the 1999 Council packets book pages 38-41.
- ⁵⁴⁰ July 18, 2000 Council meeting minutes in the 2000 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁴¹ June 17, 2003 Council meeting minutes in the 2003 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁴² January 30, 2000 Annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁵⁴³ July 17, 2001 Council meeting minutes in the 2001 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁴⁴ September 17, 2002 Council meeting minutes in the 2002 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁴⁵ April 15, 2003 Council meeting minutes in the 2003 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁴⁶ October 21, 2003 Council meeting minutes in the 2003 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁴⁷ November 15, 2005 Council meeting minutes in the 2005 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁴⁸ May 5, 1999 Executive Committee minutes in the 1999 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁴⁹ September 21, 1999 Council meeting minutes in the 1999 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁵⁰ January 5, 2000 Executive Committee minutes in the 2000 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁵¹ <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/agreement-full-communion-called-common-mission>
- ⁵⁵² January 16, 2001 Council meeting minutes in the 2001 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁵³ October 6, 1999 Executive Committee minutes in the 1999 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁵⁴ January 30, 2000 Annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁵⁵⁵ Report of the Sanctuary Task force in the June 20, 2000 Council packet in the 2000 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁵⁶ July 18, 2000 Council meeting minutes in the 2000 Council packets book.

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- ⁵⁵⁷ October 17, 2000 Council meeting minutes in the 2000 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁵⁸ April 17, 2001 Council meeting minutes in the 2001 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁵⁹ November 19, 2002 Council meeting minutes in the 2002 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁶⁰ November 20, 2001 Council meeting minutes in the 2001 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁶¹ <https://lutheranarts.org/composers-2/178-jon-strommen-campbell>
- ⁵⁶² July 18, 2006 Council meeting minutes in the 2006 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁶³ January 15, 2002 Council meeting minutes in the 2002 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁶⁴ May 12, 2002 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 2002 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁶⁵ December 15, 2003 Council meeting minutes in the 2004 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁶⁶ September 16, 2008 Council meeting minutes in the 2008 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁶⁷ July 3, 2019 telephone conversation with Pastor Paul Hauschild.
- ⁵⁶⁸ April 15, 2003 Council meeting minutes in the 2003 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁶⁹ November 18, 2003 Council meeting minutes in the 2003 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁷⁰ August 20, 2002 Council packet in the 2002 Council packets book page 13.
- ⁵⁷¹ August 20, 2002 Council meeting minutes in the 2002 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁷² October 27, 2003 Properties Team minutes in the November 18, 2003 Council Packet on page 12 in the 2003 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁷³ November 3, 2002 Special Congregational meeting minutes in the 2003 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁷⁴ January 25, 2004 annual meeting minutes in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁵⁷⁵ April 20, 2004 Council meeting minutes in the 2004 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁷⁶ November 16, 2004 Council meeting minutes in the 2004 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁷⁷ April 19, 2005 Council meeting minutes in the 2005 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁷⁸ December 21, 2004 Council meeting minutes in the 2004 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁷⁹ January 25, 2004 annual meeting minutes in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁵⁸⁰ July 20, 2004 Council meeting minutes in the 2004 Council packets book. Note from Cindy Bahler dated 9 Feb 2024 noted that the organ was sold to First Lutheran in Lake City, not Faith Lutheran in Wabasha as was originally stated.
- ⁵⁸¹ July 2005 Organ Fund Raising team report in the July 19, 2005 Council packet in the 2005 Council packet book.
- ⁵⁸² September 18, 2005 special congregational meeting minutes in the 2005 Council packet book.
- ⁵⁸³ October 25, 2005 Council meeting minutes in the 2005 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁸⁴ January 30, 2003 Pastor of Visitation Outreach and Mission annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁵⁸⁵ May 2, 2006 Social Missions meeting report in the May 16, 2006 Council Packet book page 16.
- ⁵⁸⁶ August 30, 2004 Properties Team minutes in the September 21, 2004 Council Packet on page 12 in the 2004 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁸⁷ August 23, 2019 Email from Terra O'Brien.
- ⁵⁸⁸ September 22, 2005 Properties Team meeting minutes in the October 25, 2005 Council packet in the 2005 Council packet book.
- ⁵⁸⁹ Bethel Record Book from 1875 to 1891, page 277.
- ⁵⁹⁰ August 22, 2019 Conversation with Pastor Wahl.

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- ⁵⁹¹ November 23, 2006 Council meeting minutes in the 2006 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁹² Information in a folder from the Facilities Committee files on the Bell Tower provided by Bill Freytag the Bethel Properties Supervisor. This folder has correspondence, architect's drawings, cost estimates, etc. of several versions of the tower. The design chosen appears to have been constructed in 2010.
- ⁵⁹³ August 7, 2019 conversation with Pastor Norman Wahl. The dates and cost are approximate as the data in the records is not clear.
- ⁵⁹⁴ June 20, 2006 Council meeting minutes in the 2006 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁹⁵ July 18, 2006 Council meeting minutes in the 2006 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁹⁶ August 22 2006 Council meeting minutes in the 2006 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁹⁷ September 17 2006 Council meeting minutes in the 2006 Council packets book.
- ⁵⁹⁸ July 8, 2019 telephone conversation with Gary Thorn.
- ⁵⁹⁹ November 21 2006 Council meeting minutes in the 2006 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁰⁰ December 19 2006 Council meeting minutes in the 2006 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁰¹ November 4, 2007 Special congregational meeting minutes in the 2008 annual meeting report pages 5-7.
February 9, 2008 Council meeting minutes in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁶⁰² July 8, 2019 telephone conversation with Gary Thorn.
- ⁶⁰³ February 3, 2009 Worship and Music meeting minutes in the March 24, 2009 Council packet page 23.
- ⁶⁰⁴ April 21, 2009 Council meeting minutes in the 2009 Council packet.
- ⁶⁰⁵ July 7, 2019 conversation with Gary Thorn.
- ⁶⁰⁶ July 23, 2019 conversation with Brock Besse.
- ⁶⁰⁷ January 28, 2007 Annual meeting minutes in the 2008 Annual report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁶⁰⁸ October 18, 2017 Properties Team meeting minutes in the November 21, 2017 Council packet book page 13.
- ⁶⁰⁹ June 19, 2007 Council meeting minutes in the July 17, 2007 Council packet.
- ⁶¹⁰ August 23, 2007 Council meeting minutes in the July 17, 2007 Council packet.
- ⁶¹¹ February 24, 2008 Special congregational meeting minutes in the 2008 Council packet. page 4.
- ⁶¹² Information from Pastor Anjanette Bandel July 7, 2019.
- ⁶¹³ <http://www.bethellutheran.org/staff/>
- ⁶¹⁴ Statistics from Vimeo.com viewed July 7, 2019.
- ⁶¹⁵ September 16, 2008 Council meeting minutes in the 2008 Council packets book.
- ⁶¹⁶ September 7, 2010 Worship Team meeting minutes in the October 19, 2010 Council packet book page 15.
- ⁶¹⁷ October 21, 2008 Council meeting minutes in the 2008 Council packets book.
- ⁶¹⁸ July 26, 2009 Special congregational meeting minutes in the 2009 Council packet. page 3.
- ⁶¹⁹ August 18, 2009 Council meeting minutes in the 2009 Council packets book.
- ⁶²⁰ September 1, 2009 Worship Team meeting minutes in the 2009 Council packets book page 15.
- ⁶²¹ September 19, 2009 letter from Robert Onkka to Marshall Tweed, Congregational President in the October 20, 2009 Council packet, page 15.
- ⁶²² October 10, 2009 Council meeting minutes in the 2009 Council packets book.
- ⁶²³ June 17, 2008 Council meeting minutes in the 2008 Council packets book.
- ⁶²⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009_ELCA_Churchwide_Assembly

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- ⁶²⁵ November 17, 2009 Council meeting minutes in the 2009 Council packets book.
- ⁶²⁶ 2018 Annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁶²⁷ Full disclosure – I was in the minority on both of these votes.
- ⁶²⁸ January 31, 2010 annual meeting minutes and January 30, 2011 Annual report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁶²⁹ January 30, 2011 Annual report in the 2011 Council packet book.
- ⁶³⁰ The reason most of the people left was in protest over not leaving the ELCA which accepted homosexual ministerial staff in committed relationships.
- ⁶³¹ Executive Pastor’s report in the January 30, 2011 annual meeting report, page 7 in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁶³² Spring 2017 Bethel Beacon at http://www.bethellutheran.org/pdf_files/beacon/BeaconSpring2017.pdf
- ⁶³³ These are among the projects listed in the December 11, 2018 Neighborhood Outreach team meeting minutes in the 2019 Council packets book.
- ⁶³⁴ So far as I can tell Dale’s 45 years and 9 months of service on the Bethel Staff are the longest in Bethel’s more than 150 years of existence.
- ⁶³⁵ June 15, 2010 Council meeting minutes in the 2010 Council packets book.
- ⁶³⁶ August 17, 2010 Council meeting minutes in the 2010 Council packets book.
- ⁶³⁷ March 15, 2011 Council meeting minutes in the 2011 Council packets book.
- ⁶³⁸ May 17, 2011 Council meeting minutes in the 2011 Council packets book.
- ⁶³⁹ February 29, 2012 Annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁶⁴⁰ February 21, 2012 Council meeting minutes in the 2012 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁴¹ March 20, 2012 Council meeting minutes in the 2012 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁴² April 17, 2012 Council meeting minutes in the 2012 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁴³ July 17, 2012 Council meeting minutes in the 2012 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁴⁴ August 21, 2012 Council meeting minutes in the 2012 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁴⁵ October 28, 2012 Special congregational meeting minutes in the 2012 Council Packets book.
- ⁶⁴⁶ April 15, 2014 Council meeting minutes in the 2014 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁴⁷ August 19, 2014 Council meeting minutes in the 2014 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁴⁸ September 16, 2014 Council meeting minutes in the 2014 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁴⁹ October 21, 2014 Council meeting minutes in the 2014 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁵⁰ November 18, 2014 Council meeting minutes in the 2014 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁵¹ March 17, 2015 Council meeting minutes in the 2015 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁵² July 31, 2019 Email from Kathy Ferguson. The paragraphs describing the Parish Nurse and Health Cabinet are summarized from this Email.
- ⁶⁵³ December 16, 2014 Council meeting minutes in the 2015 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁵⁴ June 16, 2015 Council Packet pages 14 and 15 in the 2015 Council packets book..
- ⁶⁵⁵ July 16, 2015 Columbarium meeting minutes in the July 21, 2015 Council packet.
- ⁶⁵⁶ January 31, 2016 Annual meeting minutes in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁶⁵⁷ May 17, 2016 Annual meeting minutes in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁶⁵⁸ November 16, 2016 Annual meeting minutes in the Annual Reports box book.

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- ⁶⁵⁹ November 18, 2018 Columbarium meeting minutes in the December 18, 2018 Council packet, page 14.
- ⁶⁶⁰ Columbarium Team Minutes August 25, 2020 in the September 15, 2020 Council Packet.
- ⁶⁶¹ January 3, 2017 Worship and Music team meeting minutes in the 2017 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁶² May 16, 2017 Council meeting minutes in the 2017 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁶³ April 3, 2017 Council Special electronic meeting minutes in the 2017 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁶⁴ August 15, 2017 Council meeting minutes in the 2017 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁶⁵ July 23, 2019 Email from Susan Larson. The four paragraphs describing the Sunday school are a summary taken from this Email.
- ⁶⁶⁶ August 1, 2019 Email from Julie Allhiser describing the Confirmation Program at Bethel.
- ⁶⁶⁷ August 13, 2019 Email from Tyler Schonrock describing the Bethel High School Youth program.
- ⁶⁶⁸ Bethel Women 2019 Yearbook, pp. 3-4.
- ⁶⁶⁹ Prayer Shaw Record dated 7/28/2019 in possession of Linda Bakken.
- ⁶⁷⁰ Bethel Women 2019 Yearbook.
- ⁶⁷¹ June 25, 2017 Special congregational meeting minutes in the 2017 Council Packets book.
- ⁶⁷² February 20, 2017 Council meeting minutes in the 2017 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁷³ Month dd, 2018 Annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box.
- ⁶⁷⁴ March 20, 2018 Council meeting minutes in the 2018 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁷⁵ October 17, 2017 Council meeting minutes in the 2017 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁷⁶ April 23, 2019 Council meeting minutes in the 2019 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁷⁷ November 21, 2017 Council meeting minutes in the 2017 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁷⁸ August 18, 2020 Council meeting minutes in the 2020 Council packets book and September 15, 2020 Council minutes in the 2020 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁷⁹ <https://vimeo.com/428995192>. Announcements, June 14, 2020.
- ⁶⁸⁰ October 10, 2020 Council meeting minutes in the 2020 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁸¹ Council Minutes November 17, 2020 in the December 15, 2020 Council Packet.
- ⁶⁸² This meeting was announced to the congregation t the December 27, 2020 service and again the next week.
- ⁶⁸³ December 15, 2020 Council meeting minutes in the 2021 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁸⁴ August 17, 2021 Council meeting minutes in the 2021 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁸⁵ While there was concern expressed both at Bethel and the ELCA Synod regarding Pastor Luong's relations with young women, he continued to deny that his actions were inappropriate. In December he was charged with three counts of third-degree criminal sexual conduct. His first court appearance was scheduled for Dec. 23. (<https://bringmethenews.com/minnesota-news/minnesota-pastor-accused-of-criminal-sexual-conduct-with-17-year-old-girl>.)
- ⁶⁸⁶ The Bethel constitution chapter 9.02 requires that only a member of the roster of ministers of word and sacrament or a candidate for the roster of ministers of word and sacrament who has been recommended by the Synodical Bishop may be called as a pastor of this congregation.
- ⁶⁸⁷ Comment from Rev Barb Steed Assistant to the Bishop of the SE MN Synod of the ELCA in a slide shown during the information meetings for members prior to a vote to keep or dissolve the 2010 resolution -02 and -03. On the next slide she further stated that because of the resolutions no candidate at any stage of the call process identified as homosexual.

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- ⁶⁸⁸ Conversation with Jodi Dettmann, Call Committee Chair, April 11, 2023. Note that the words following “perhaps” are speculation on the part of the author.
- ⁶⁸⁹ Conversation with Pastor Meline, April 18, 2023.
- ⁶⁹⁰ Taken from an information pamphlet given to members attending the September 25, 2022 congregational meeting.
- ⁶⁹¹ Conversation with Barth Crane, Bethel Properties Team chair March 28, 2023.
- ⁶⁹² Council Minutes June 21, 2022 in the July 16, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁶⁹³ An antiphonal organ is an enclosed division of a pipe organ situated some distance from the main enclosure. It is intended to provide additional sound a distance from the main pipes and enhance and support congregational singing as well as provide a variety of sounds appropriate for worship and concerts.
- ⁶⁹⁴ Properties Team minutes June 21, 2022 in the July 16, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁶⁹⁵ July 19, 2022 Council meeting minutes in the 2022 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁹⁶ Conversation with Josie Bellrichard November 15, 2022.
- ⁶⁹⁷ Properties Team minutes July 21, 2022 in the August 16, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁶⁹⁸ April 19, 2022 Council meeting minutes in the 2022 Council packets book.
- ⁶⁹⁹ October 18, 2022 Council meeting minutes in the 2022 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁰⁰ Email from Jeanne Townsend, July 31, 2023.
- ⁷⁰¹ Conversation with Terra O’Brien November 14, 2022.
- ⁷⁰² November 15, 2022 Council meeting minutes in the 2022 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁰³ February 23, 2023 Council meeting minutes in the 2023 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁰⁴ November 15, 2022 Council meeting minutes in the 2022 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁰⁵ . November 15, 2022 Council meeting minutes in the 2022 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁰⁶ The previous three paragraphs are a summary of Continuing Resolutions 2010-02 and 22010-03 Information meeting Script which was graciously lent to the author by Pastor Anjanette Bandel.
- ⁷⁰⁷ Dunn, David. History of Zumbro Lutheran Church.
- ⁷⁰⁸ . April 18, 2023 Council meeting minutes in the 2023 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁰⁹ Staff names were taken from the Bethel website Staff section on May 7, 2021.
- ⁷¹⁰ Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende, October 1875, pp. 630-633.
- ⁷¹¹ Letter dated February 16, 023 to Bethel Members from the Bethel Church Council.
- ⁷¹² Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende, October 1875, p. 630.
- ⁷¹³ Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende, October 1875, p. 630. Skree, Email attachment, actually, Reverend Jensen was well liked by many in his former congregation members, but he had a problem with alcohol which eventually led to his probation and then exit from his first congregations. There is no indication in the Bethel records that alcohol was a problem during his ministry here.
- ⁷¹⁴ When it was formed, the Norwegian synod adopted the liturgy of the State Church of Norway. Many Norwegian settlers objected to the state church which may be the differences that are noted here.
- ⁷¹⁵ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887 p. 1.
- ⁷¹⁶ Skree, Email attachment. According to an Autobiography of Kristian Magelsesesen, who was Pastor Jensen’s replacement, he was already in place at the time Pastor Jensen left these congregations.
- ⁷¹⁷ Early St. Olaf Church History, <http://www.weststolaf.org/stolafHistory.cfm>. Skree, Email attachment. According to a letter from Pastor Jensen’s wife Hanna after her return to Norway, at one time Pastor Jensen was

serving as many as 18 congregations. Due to lack of Lutheran pastors at this time he may have helped new congregations get organized and hold services until they could find another pastor.

⁷¹⁸ Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende, October 1875, p. 630.

⁷¹⁹ Dunn, David. History of Zumbro Lutheran Church.

⁷²⁰ 1875 Bethel Record Book, pp. 201-204. The identification of these men is based on the fact that their names are identical in the record of Zumbro Charter members and in the Bethel Record book.

⁷²¹ Congregational Meetings 1869 to 1887. P 42. Pastor Gjertsen was sent a letter of call in August so a fall meeting would be soon after he began his service at Bethel.

⁷²² Dunn, David. History of Zumbro Lutheran Church.

⁷²³ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/18/mainline-protestants-make-up-shrinking-number-of-u-s-adults/>

⁷²⁴ June 26, 2019 telephone conversation with Duane Saase.

⁷²⁵ June 27, 2019 telephone conversation with Steve Skree, July 13, 2019 conversation with Allen Anderson both of whom usher at 10:30 services.

⁷²⁶ It would be interesting to continue this data for 2019 and 2020, however, attendance in those years had been influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic and would not provide equivalent information. Covid-19 long term effects will need to be examined once attendance has stabilized which will likely take 2 or 3 years.

⁷²⁷ From <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/religious-tradition/mainline-protestant/> reviewed 30 July 2019. This is from a 2014 survey, so the numbers have likely dropped since then.

⁷²⁸ January 30, 1993 Annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box. The constitution requires that constitutional changes made at one meeting are not in effect until ratified at the next annual meeting.

⁷²⁹ June 23, 1993 Foundation Board of Trustees meeting minutes in the 1993 Council packets book.

⁷³⁰ July 29, 1993 memo from the Endowment Fund Committee to Paul Wittmer, Council chair in the 1993 Council packets book.

⁷³¹ January 30, 1994 Annual meeting report in the Annual Reports box.

⁷³² February 23, 1994 Endowment Fund Committee meeting minutes in the 1994 Council packets book.

⁷³³ May 17, 1994 Council meeting minutes in the 1994 Council packets book.

⁷³⁴ May 21, 1996 Council meeting minutes in the 1996 Council packets book.

⁷³⁵ April 17, 2001 Council meeting minutes in the 2001 Council packets book.

⁷³⁶ April 15, 2009 Endowment team meeting minutes in the 2009 Council packets book.

⁷³⁷ February 7, 2006 Worship Team meeting minutes in the 2006 Council packets book.

⁷³⁸ January 25, 1998 Annual Report statistical summary on page 16.

⁷³⁹ September 16, 1997 Council meeting minutes in the 1997 Council packets book.

⁷⁴⁰ October 7, 1997 Drama committee meeting minutes in the 1997 Council packets book.

⁷⁴¹ May 15, 2001 Drama team meeting minutes in the May 15, 2001 Council Packet, page 12.

⁷⁴² March 15, 2005 Council meeting minutes in the 2005 Council packets book.

⁷⁴³ May 17, 2005 Council meeting minutes in the 2005 Council packets book.

⁷⁴⁴ November 1, 2005 Worship committee meeting minutes in the 2005 Council packets book.

⁷⁴⁵ September 17, 2006 Council meeting minutes in the 2006 Council packets book. The 2005 minutes describe this as seed money with no indication of additional funding.

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- ⁷⁴⁶ December 12, 2006 Promise Board meeting minutes in the January 16, 2007 Council packet page 13.
- ⁷⁴⁷ May 17, 2007 Council meeting minutes in the 2007 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁴⁸ November 17, 2009 Council meeting minutes in the 2009 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁴⁹ February 21, 2012 Council meeting minutes in the 2012 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁵⁰ April 19, 2016 Council meeting minutes in the 2016 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁵¹ The details in the appendix are taken from Social Missions Team minutes in the possession of Linda Bakken.
- ⁷⁵² March 2, 2004 Social Missions minutes in the March 16, 2004 Council packet book, page 12.
- ⁷⁵³ September 18, 2012 appendix to Council meeting minutes in the 2012 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁵⁴ June 26, 2012 Council meeting minutes in the 2012 Council packets book.
- ⁷⁵⁵ This Appendix is my interpretation of pictures and short titles in two books kept by the quilters, the first dates from about 1960 to 2002 and the second from 2002 to the present.
- ⁷⁵⁶ [En.wikipedia.com/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic](https://en.wikipedia.com/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic).
- ⁷⁵⁷ [En.wikipedia.com/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Minnesota](https://en.wikipedia.com/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_Minnesota).
- ⁷⁵⁸ <https://vimeo.com/397776042>. Announcements. The vimeo.com references are the videos of the weekly Bethel services. Announcements at services include both verbal announcements and the weekly spotlight.
- ⁷⁵⁹ <https://vimeo.com/412028474>. Announcements, April 16, 2020.
- ⁷⁶⁰ Council Minutes April 21, 2020. In the May 19, 2020 Council Packet.
- ⁷⁶¹ Council Minutes August 16, 2022. In the September 20, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁷⁶² Council Minutes April 21, 2020. In the May 19, 2020 Council Packet.
- ⁷⁶³ Council Minutes June 16, 2020 in the July 21, 2020 Council Packet.
- ⁷⁶⁴ <https://vimeo.com/439736556>. Baptism Service, July 19, 2020
- ⁷⁶⁵ Council Minutes August 18, 2020 in the September 15, 2020 Council Packet.
- ⁷⁶⁶ Council Minutes July 21, 2020 in the August 18, 2020 Council Packet. In a live stream video, the service is both recorded and broadcast on-line for viewers.
- ⁷⁶⁷ <https://vimeo.com/433342643>. Announcements, June 28, 2020
- ⁷⁶⁸ Wahl, Pastor Norman, Summary of Bethel adaptation to the Coronavirus pandemic. March 2020. In Bethel the Archives.
- ⁷⁶⁹ Council Minutes August 18, 2020 in the September 15, 2020 Council Packet.
- ⁷⁷⁰ Council Minutes July 21, 2020 in the August 18, 2020 Council Packet
- ⁷⁷¹ <https://vimeo.com/422150793>. Announcements, May 24, 2020.
- ⁷⁷² Attendance information on excel spread sheet prepared by Connie Post, Membership Secretary.
- ⁷⁷³ Council Minutes May 19, 2020 in the June 16, 2020 Council Packet.
- ⁷⁷⁴ <https://vimeo.com/424520069>. Announcements, May 31, 2020.
- ⁷⁷⁵ Council Minutes June 16, 2020 in the July 21, 2020 Council Packet.
- ⁷⁷⁶ <https://vimeo.com/426730783>. Announcements, June 7, 2020. The Bethel By-Laws Part VI The Annual Meeting, item 6.3 requires a written ballot to call a pastor.
- ⁷⁷⁷ <https://vimeo.com/428995192>. Announcements, June 14, 2020.
- ⁷⁷⁸ <https://vimeo.com/439736556>. Announcements, July 19, 2020.
- ⁷⁷⁹ <https://vimeo.com/433342643>. Announcements, June 28, 2020.

⁷⁸⁰ <https://vimeo.com/435486038>. Announcements, July 5, 2020.

⁷⁸¹ <https://vimeo.com/450800501>. Announcements, August 23, 2020.

⁷⁸² Conversation with Connie Post May 26, 2021.

⁷⁸³ This can be viewed at vimeo.com/437603712.

⁷⁸⁴ Council Minutes June 16, 2020 in the July 21, 2020 Council Packet.

⁷⁸⁵ Council Minutes July 21, 2020 in the August 18, 2020 Council Packet.

⁷⁸⁶ Council Minutes August 18, 2020 in the September 15, 2020 Council Packet and Council Minutes September 15, 2020 in the October 10, 2020 Council Packet.

⁷⁸⁷ <https://vimeo.com/455235686>. Announcements, September 6, 2020.

⁷⁸⁸ Council Minutes October 10, 2020 in the November 17, 2020 Council Packet.

⁷⁸⁹ Council Minutes October 10, 2020 in the November 17, 2020 Council Packet.

⁷⁹⁰ <https://vimeo.com/457471390>. Announcements, September 13, 2020.

⁷⁹¹ Council Minutes August 18, 2020 in the September 15, 2020 Council Packet.

⁷⁹² Conversation with Brock Besse May 26, 2021.

⁷⁹³ <https://vimeo.com/462413402>. Announcements, September 27, 2020.

⁷⁹⁴ Council Minutes October 10, 2020 in the November 17, 2020 Council Packet.

⁷⁹⁵ Social Missions Minutes in the September 15, 2020 Council Packet.

⁷⁹⁶ Council Minutes September 15, 2020 in the October 20, 2020 Council Packet.

⁷⁹⁷ Council Minutes December 15, 2020 in the January 19, 2021 Council Packet.

⁷⁹⁸ Council Minutes January 7, 2021 in the February 16, 2021 Council Packet.

⁷⁹⁹ Conversation with Office Staff July 11, 2023.

⁸⁰⁰ Council Minutes March 16, 2021 in the April 20, 2021 Council Packet.

⁸⁰¹ Attendance data from Connie Post, Bethel Membership Secretary.

⁸⁰² Excel Spreadsheet titled “Comparison Of Saturday/Sunday Attendance 2013-2019 from Connie Post, Bethel membership secretary.

⁸⁰³ Council Minutes April 20, 2021 in the May 18, 2021 Council Packet. Part of the reason more personal involvement was allowed was the vaccination rates in Olmsted County had increased significantly since the first of the year.

⁸⁰⁴ Reengagement Task Force Update May 27, 2021.

⁸⁰⁵ Council Minutes June 15, 2021 in the July 20, 2021 Council Packet.

⁸⁰⁶ Council Minutes August 17, 2021 in the September 21, 2021 Council Packet.

⁸⁰⁷ Council Minutes July 20, 2021 in the August 17, 2021 Council Packet.

⁸⁰⁸ Worship and Music Team Minutes September 1, 2021 in the October 19, 2021 Council Packet.

⁸⁰⁹ Social Missions Minutes October 5, 2021 in the October 19, 2021 Council Packet.

⁸¹⁰ Council Minutes September 21, 2021 in the October 19 Council Packet.

⁸¹¹ Council Minutes October 19, 2021 in the November 16, 2021 Council Packet.

⁸¹² Council Minutes September 21, 2021 in the October 19 Council Packet.

⁸¹³ Council Minutes September 21, 2021 in the October 19 Council Packet and Council Minutes October 19, 2021 in the November 16, 2021 Council Packet.

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- ⁸¹⁴ Council Minutes November 16, 2021 in the December 21, 2021 Council Packet. The council minutes say that the 180 average is livestream but the data actually also includes those that watch the recorded service later on Sunday.
- ⁸¹⁵ Worship and Music Team Minutes December 9, 2021 in the December 21, 2021 Council Packet.
- ⁸¹⁶ 2021 Worship attendance Excel worksheet from Membership Secretary Connie Post.
- ⁸¹⁷ Council Minutes December 21, 2021 in the January 18, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁸¹⁸ Council Minutes February 15, 2022 in the March 15, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁸¹⁹ Social Missions Team Minutes January 4, 2022 in the January 18, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁸²⁰ Social Missions Team Minutes February 1, 2022 in the March 15, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁸²¹ Council Minutes March 15, 2022 in the April 19, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁸²² Health Cabined minutes July 7, 2022 in the August 16, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁸²³ Conversation with Terra Obrien May 9, 2023.
- ⁸²⁴ Conversation with Susan Larson, Bethel Children's Ministry leader May 9, 2023.
- ⁸²⁵ Children's Ministry Team minutes April 7, 2022 in the May 17, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁸²⁶ Council Minutes June 21, 2022 in the July 16, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁸²⁷ Council Minutes May 14, 2022 in the June 21, 2022 Council Packet.
- ⁸²⁸ Conversation with Connie Post May 9 2022.
- ⁸²⁹ Conversation with Susan Larson, Children's Ministry Coordinator, May 16, 2023.
- ⁸³⁰ Note that the measurement error for on-line services is much higher than in-person worship services. There is a small error in the usher count due to people movement during the count. The number of people watching the on-line service is an estimate. YouTube and Vimeo statistics report the number of unique views but more than one person is likely watching on the same TV or computer screen. A multiplying factor of two is used as the best estimate of the people that are watching each worship service. This assumes that a married couple will watch together and that single viewers are matched by other family members watching with some of the married couples.