

CELEBRATING 150 YEARS



UNION CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH



The 150 Year History of Union Creek Lutheran Church
Published August 2024

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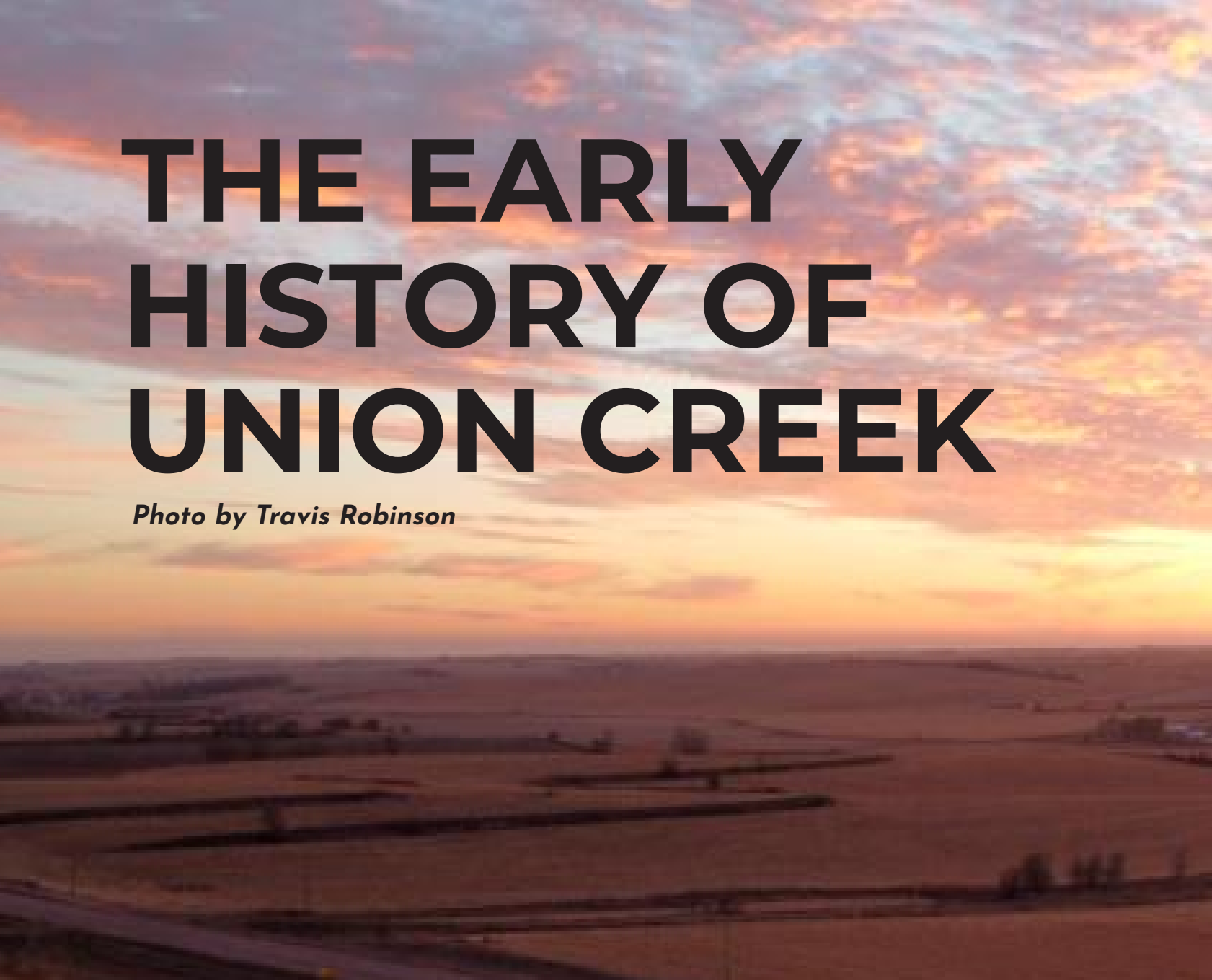
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THE EARLY HISTORY OF UNION CREEK

Photo by Travis Robinson

THE LAND

In 1858, a treaty between the Yankton Sioux Tribe and the United States government was signed in Washington. The treaty required the tribe to relinquish their lands within one year in what is now southeastern South Dakota. White immigration began in earnest in July 1859. From July 1859 through August 1862, the increase in population for Union County was steady.

The Pre-Emption Law was passed by Congress in 1841. Under this law, any American citizen could file on one hundred sixty acres of public land, pay fourteen dollars as a filing fee

and one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre, and receive the title at the end of six months.

The Homestead Law became law in 1862 and added incentives to western migration. Under this statute, residing on the piece of land was accepted in lieu of the one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre payment demanded under the Pre-Emption Act. Most Union County land titles from the government were secured under the Homestead Act.

In 1862, Union County was created and organized, although it was originally named Cole for Austin Cole, a member of the first territorial legislature. Two years later, in 1864, the boundaries were rearranged, and the name was changed to



Union due to the sentiment for the Union side in the Civil War.

As immigrants traveled westward, timber became scarcer as they approached the Great Plains. Congress hoped to overcome this obstacle to homesteading in the West by passing the Timber Culture Act. After amending the original act of 1873 in 1874 and again in 1878, the law finally allowed the head of a family who was twenty-one years old and an American citizen to file on one hundred sixty acres, eighty acres, forty acres, or even a smaller tract. For the one hundred sixty acres, he must plant ten acres of trees; for the eighty acres, he must plant five acres; and for the forty or fewer acres he must plant two and

one-half acres of trees. To fulfill the requirements, a settler had to keep them in healthy condition for eight years. Then, on proof by two witnesses that he complied with all the requirements of the law, he was granted title to the claim. Timber claims were limited to a single entry per person.

Most desirable Union County lands had been claimed under the Pre-Emption and Homestead Acts prior to the Timber Culture Act. Regardless, Union County furnished millions of year-old Ash, Maple, Cottonwood, and Hackberry saplings for counties lying further north and west. Early spring was tree harvest time for families living near the Missouri River. Children pulled the

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TIMBER CULTURE ACT

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small trees, tied them in bundles of one hundred, and the father would load one or two tons of the bundles in a wagon and drive to counties where tree-claimers paid him well for the trees.

Several factors worked against the success of the Timber Culture Act. First, the homesteader had to make his tree claim at a distance from his homestead, making it difficult for him to care

for the trees properly. Secondly, pioneers did not understand what varieties of trees were suitable for the prairie lands. Third, many saplings died when planted in the raw soil of the prairie. Fourth, the years from 1874 to 1880 were exceptionally dry. Therefore, only a small part of the lands originally filed as tree claims were patented as such by the government. Even the few who persevered and secured tree claim deeds found the expense of buying the land greater than it would have been through the Pre-Emption or Homestead Acts.

ORIGINS OF THE SWEDISH MIGRATION

Among Scandinavian immigrants, Swedes were the first to come to the United States, and they came in the greatest numbers. In the early 17th century, the nation of Sweden was a substantial power in Europe and joined other powerful nations in launching colonial enterprises in the New World; however, the Swedish migration to the United States in the 19th century was part of a mass exodus, not a colonial adventure.

In the 1830s and 1840s, small groups of farmers began to make the long trek to the United States in search of land. By the middle of the century, Sweden was in the throes of a national population crisis—the small country's population had doubled from 1750 to 1850 and was still growing. Tillable land became scarce, and famine swept the nation, killing 22 out of every 1,000 Swedes. Emigration regulations were eased, and the 1860s saw a massive movement of Swedes fleeing their homeland. Between 1861 and 1881, 150,000 traveled to the United States—two thirds of those emigrated in just five years between 1868 and 1873.

In addition to the population and famine

issues, a third crisis affected the small nation of Sweden. Small Swedish farms had been divided by inheritances for generations creating an unworkable division of farms. To correct this problem, new laws were enacted, giving the eldest child preferential inheritance rights, and leaving younger siblings to either work for their older, more fortunate siblings or seek a better life elsewhere. The thought of “free land in America” became a powerful incentive for young Swedes to leave their homeland.

Leaving their homeland proved challenging for several reasons. Sweden was a highly civilized country where people lived in homes considered substantial for the time; churches were hundreds of years old and well cared for by the State Lutheran Church of Sweden; the cost of the journey was prohibitive; and for many this challenge meant leaving family behind forever. In some areas of Sweden, only the older people were left on the ancestral farms. Stories were told of mothers collapsing in grief as their children left, taking grandchildren and unborn generations away from the old country.

THE JOURNEY: SWEDEN TO THE DAKOTA TERRITORY

Over 80% of Swedish emigrants in the late 1800s traveled via ship from Göteborg (Gothenburg), Sweden to Hull on the east coast of England. From Hull a train transported them to larger ports such as Liverpool to connect with a transatlantic steamship. The transatlantic crossing took approximately two weeks in an over-packed ship under unbearable conditions. Deaths on board ships and burials at sea were common.

Upon arrival in New York, emigrants were processed through Castle Garden, Manhattan which became the Emigrant Landing Depot, the first immigrant processing station in the state of New York. From 1855 through 1890, Castle Garden processed over 8 million immigrants. The larger, Ellis Island opened in 1892.

Most of these early Swedes spent their entire savings on the journey to the New World, forcing them to find work in New York before they could continue westward. Travelers often stopped in Chicago, again taking temporary work to recoup finances. Once funds were available, the journey continued via rail which ended at Council Bluffs. There was no bridge across the Missouri River there until March 1873. The last leg of the journey from Council Bluffs to Sioux City (gateway to Dakota Territory) was made on foot or for the more fortunate, via horses or oxen obtained in Council Bluffs.

HOMESTEAD CLAIMS IN IOWA WERE LIMITED TO 80 ACRES. ACROSS THE BIG SIOUX RIVER IN DAKOTA TERRITORY, A SETTLER COULD CLAIM UP TO 160 ACRES.

Although Iowa declared statehood in 1846, the western counties remained sparsely settled for years due to large tracts of land owned by the railroads and the cost to buy land from the railroad companies was \$2.50 per acre. In addition, homestead claims in Iowa were limited to 80 acres. Across the Big Sioux River in Dakota Territory, a settler could claim up to 160 acres. There was no bridge in this area and settlers

found the best place to cross the Big Sioux River was a ford just north of the present location of Chatsworth, Iowa. The other alternative was to cross the Big Sioux River at Sioux City and head north on foot.

The procedure followed by the typical immigrant arriving in Sioux City with his family

can be described as follows: The head of the family, along with a companion or two, would walk into the territory to select the land he wished to occupy. After determining the legal description from the surveyor's stakes he would walk to the town of Vermillion where the U . S. Land Office was located. After visiting the courthouse to declare his intention to become a citizen (if he had not already done so) he would go to the Land Office to file his homestead claim. That completed he would start on the thirty-five mile walk back to Sioux City to rejoin his family. There he would buy a wagon, oxen, and other necessities and with his family proceed to the land he had chosen.

THE ARRIVAL: DAKOTA TERRITORY

Swedish settlers began arriving in Dakota Territory in the summer of 1867, settling in what became known as the Ahlsborg settlement. Within a short time all the free land in the immediate vicinity was occupied. Being hemmed in on all sides by other settlements, the Ahlsborg community was limited to about thirty families.

With the completion of the railroad to Sioux City in 1868, the number of new settlers increased greatly, putting pressure on the Swedes to find a larger area of unoccupied land. They began selecting homesteads in Clay County to the northwest of Ahlsborg and in the Union Creek Valley to the northeast in Union County.

The locations and the extent of these settlements are shown on the map of Clay and Union Counties. The largest of these was the Dalesburg community, covering an area of 37,500 acres or about 94 square miles. The Union Creek settlement consists of a less distinct area about half that size. The 1870 census recorded of the 380 Swedes in Dakota Territory, 181 were in Clay County and 141 in Union County.

The origins of the Swedish settlers in Union County in the 1870s are found in the membership records of Union Creek Lutheran Church and Big Springs Baptist Church. The membership records of Union Creek show the following pattern of distribution from various Swedish provinces: Västergötland 16, Närke 6, Medelpad 5, Västernorrland 4, Gästrikland 3, Värmland 2, Halland and Östergötland 1 each. Big Springs Baptist records show an overwhelming predominance of those from Dalarna.

In August 1868, the first Swedish immigrant families arrived in Sioux Valley Township, Union County, Dakota Territory. The weary travelers

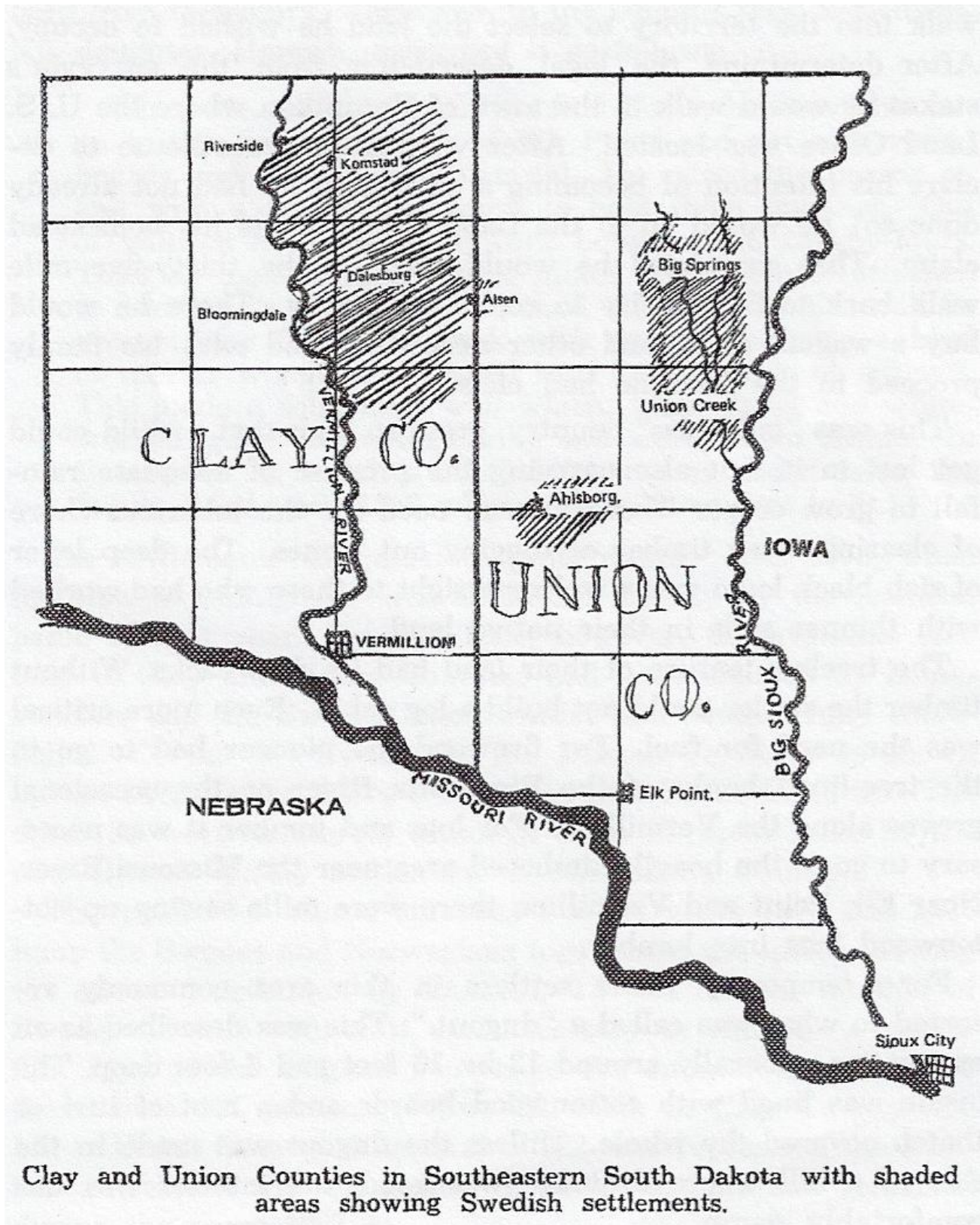
found Dakota Territory an open and endless prairie devoid of roads, fences, bridges, or trees; however, the East and West branches of the Union Creek made the area a favorable place to settle with excellent farmland and reliable water sources. This was “tall-grass” country, grass so high that a child could get lost in it, but also carrying the promise of adequate rainfall to grow crops. There was no need for the laborious chore of clearing away timber or digging out stones. The deep layer of rich black loam was a welcome sight to those who had worked with thinner soils in their native land. Most of the land was rolling with flat “bottom ground” along the many creeks cutting through the prairie and the land was surveyed and ready for settlement.

The rectangular system of surveys in the United States began with the passage of the Land Ordinance of 1785. The ordinance provided for Congress, or a Committee of the States, to appoint a surveyor for each state. These surveyors would act under the direction of the Geographer of the United States. The ordinance set out the basic six-mile square township to be subdivided into thirty-six sections of one square mile with 640 acres.

Surveyor’s stakes were driven into the ground to identify a property. After choosing a piece of land, the settler traveled to the territorial capital in Yankton (later Vermillion) to file his homestead claim. Occasionally, settlers would learn the piece of land had been filed on previously, requiring them to opt for another quarter section. The original “burnt” wooden survey stakes were eventually replaced with posts, rocks, iron stakes, or piles of small rocks.

For early pioneers, the first order of business was to build a shelter. Log cabins were rare as there

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Clay and Union Counties in Southeastern South Dakota with shaded areas showing Swedish settlements.

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were few trees to cut on the prairie. Occasionally, if finances allowed, a settler bought lumber from the sawmills south of Elk Point along the Missouri River to build a “shanty.” Above ground cabins would have been a luxury—one room, 12 x 14 feet, sealed from the relentless winter snow and winds. Most common were homes built out of the earth itself— “sod houses” if built above ground or “dugouts” if constructed into a bank or hill. One small window in the door admitted the only sunlight. Lard in a saucer or cup with a twisted rag wick provided light in the evenings.

These sod houses were cool in the summer and warm in the winter, but not without problems. During periods of heavy rain or snow, the weight could cause the entire soggy mess to collapse. Even more disconcerting to the pioneer women was the fact that the dirt walls and roofs were natural habitats for snakes, mice, gophers, and other small animals. As soon as possible, a new and improved dwelling was built. Some sod houses in the area were occupied until the 1890s before a more substantial home became a reality. A different type of temporary home was built by John Sellberg in the Union Creek settlement. His daughter, Hannah, described it as follows:

When Mr. Sellberg built his first home, he drove his oxen to the sawmill south of Elk Point and got cottonwood boards and other crude material. He raised the boards on end with a few two-by-fours to hold them together. Out of willows he made a network between the two-by-fours. Then he made a mill with a mixer in the center attached

to a long pole to which he hitched the oxen. In this mill he ground clay from the creek with grass, producing a kind of mortar which he pounded into the network of willows. This made a solid mud wall which, when dried and whitewashed, gave a nice appearance and warm room within. In this house,



JOHN SELLBERG

to which a small kitchen was later added, the family lived until 1883 when a new home was built.

Fuel was a constant topic of conversation among the early pioneers. Twisted prairie grass was commonly used for fuel unless the settler could make the trip to the Big Sioux River to spend a

day cutting firewood. One story is told of John Sellberg's efforts to keep a family in the Big Springs area from freezing by waking at 3:00 a.m. to make the trip to the river. He cut wood all day, delivered the wood to the needy family after midnight, then returned to his own home at daybreak. Mrs. Sellberg walked the floor all night, fearing her husband would be lost in the severe winter weather.

With money limited and no stores within a day's travel time, getting food was an ongoing concern for early settlers. (Akron, Alcester, and Beresford did not exist until after the railroads were established around 1882). Men and boys hunted prairie chickens, rabbits, and deer and fished in the Big Sioux River to provide meat for the family. It was reported that during this time a lone buffalo was killed by the Sioux tribe on a hill near the Sellberg farm. Mrs. Sellberg and her sister, Mrs. Olaf Ericson salvaged what was left behind. During this time, Mrs. Olaf Ericson confronted

her husband over breakfast with the news there would be no more bread as she was out of flour. Mr. Ericson said nothing, just started out walking. He walked to the home of Mr. Ross, the only settler with any money, and sold him a small calf. Mr. Ericson took the money from the sale, walked to a mill near Elk Point, and purchased a sack of flour. It was after dark when he returned to his cabin with the sack of flour on his back.

It is difficult to imagine the hardships these immigrants endured. No money, no conveniences, no medical care, and isolation from family and friends. The most basic daily activities presented monumental challenges. Frequently, men left their homes to seek work on the railroads or at the sawmills along the Missouri River while women remained on the homestead with the children, working the fields and gardens and tending the stock.

ORIGINS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Martin Luther, the founder of Protestantism and the Lutheran Church, nailed ninety-five theses, or opinions, of dissent to the door of the Catholic church in Wittenberg, Germany on October 31, 1517, sparking the Protestant Reformation. Luther taught his followers the Bible was the only authority for a life in the Christian faith. In 1522 Luther translated the New Testament into German making it accessible to common people. Although the term "Lutheran" was used for the new church, Luther proposed calling it Evangelical. Catholic authorities coined "Lutheran" as a derogatory term, but Luther's followers wore it as a badge of pride.

The Lutheran Church bases its doctrine on the Augsburg Confession, the primary confession of faith of the Lutheran Church and one of the most important documents of the Protestant Reformation. The Augsburg Confession was written in both German and Latin and presented at the Diet of Augsburg on June 25, 1530.

Lutherans accept the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed as true declarations of faith. The Swedish Lutheran Church sent ordained pastors to America to minister to the Lutherans who had emigrated there and to organize the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Synod at Rock Island, Illinois in 1860.

THE EARLY CHURCH

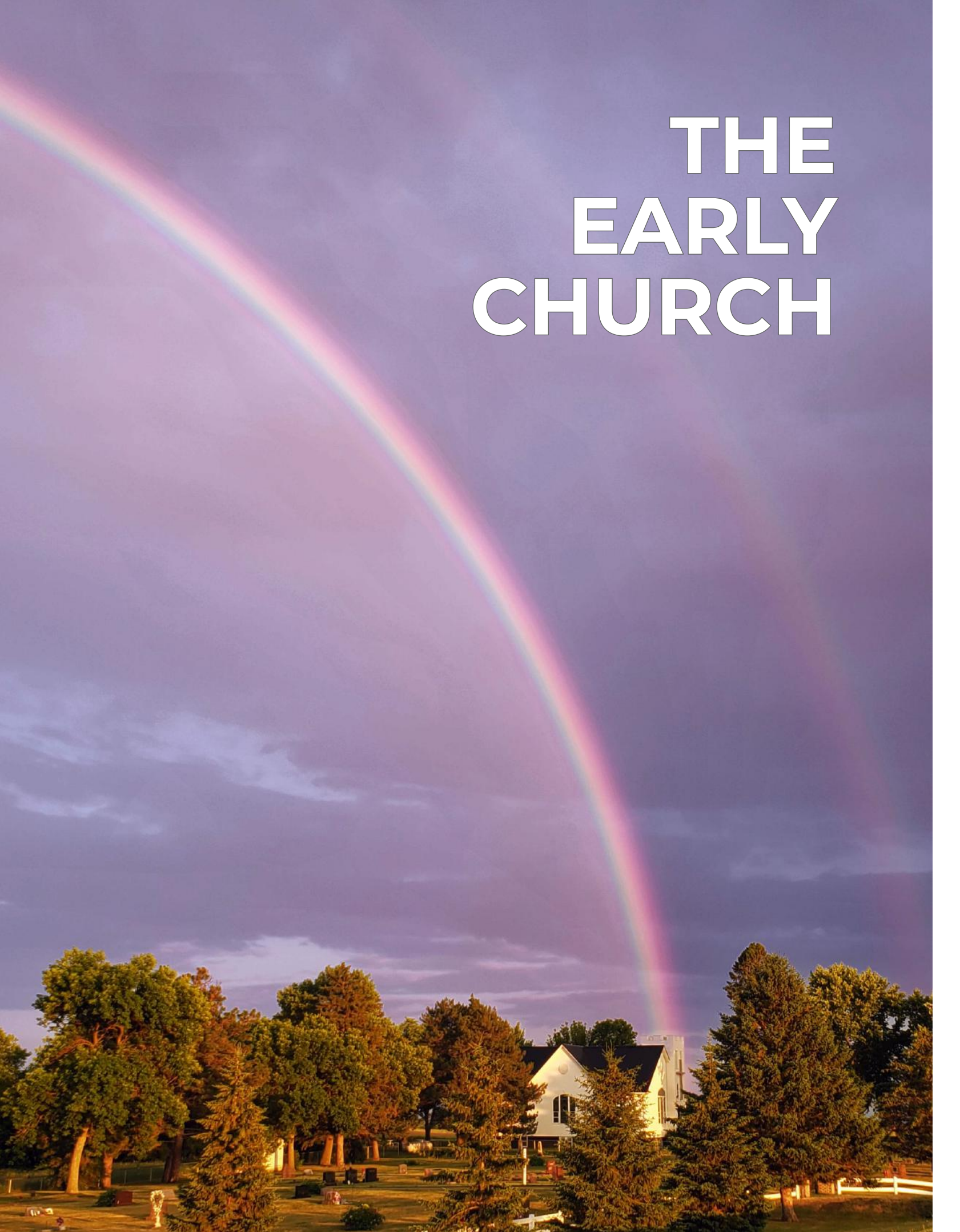


Photo by Joni Noble

IN THE UNION CREEK SETTLEMENT

The Swedes of the area had been brought up in the strict State Lutheran Church in Sweden—baptized as infants and confirmed as young adults—and the church united people spiritually, socially, and politically. The Lutheran Church in Sweden was controlled as a “High Church,” with the King of Sweden as the titular head of the church. The King appointed Bishops who handled year-to-year operations.

Christianity was introduced to Scandinavia by St. Ansgar who was sent as a missionary to Denmark, later moving on to Norway and Sweden. He built the first Christian church in Sweden in Birka, west of present-day Stockholm, in the year 829. Birka was the Viking capitol of Sweden at the time. The churches, originally set up as Catholic churches, converted to the Lutheran faith during the Reformation in the 1500s. There was some discontent with the strictness of the State Lutheran Church and some people left to become Baptists or joined other “free” churches. This trend carried over with the emigration to America. Traditionally, wherever there is a Lutheran church in a Swedish community, there is usually a Baptist or “free” church in that community as well.

As the Swedish immigrants arrived in the

Union Creek area, two groups were loosely established. Those who were Baptist settled primarily in Big Springs Township, while Lutherans settled in Sioux Valley Township. The entire area was known as the Union Creek Settlement.

Soon after arriving, the immigrants began conducting religious services in their humble dwellings. Sod houses, cabins, and claim shanties were the “churches.” The Swedish Lutheran Churches furnished Postillas—books with a Lutheran

worship service and sermons for every Sunday of the year and had provided them with legal proof of baptisms, confirmations, marriages as well the name of the Swedish Parish

they had left behind. Through their trials and bouts of homesickness the people did not forget their God, or their religious training received in the Lutheran Churches in Sweden. They faithfully read the hymnals, bibles, and psalm books brought with them from their homeland.

John Sellberg, a well-educated and talented man, led the early worship services in 1868 and 1869. Sellberg was a fine musician having taught music in Sweden and used his violin to accompany the singing. These first Lutheran services also served as important social events. The women would bring whatever they could spare for lunch: molasses cake made from home cooked sorghum and raisins and “coffee” made from browned wheat or barley. Adults would discuss news and their latest challenges on the prairie. Young men would gather and laugh with the young ladies. Small children played games together. With no organized schools, these church gatherings provided young people with their only opportunity for social interactions. The Swedish language was the only language spoken in the community. Only if they traveled outside of the community could they gain experience in speaking the English language, and those trips were rare.

ORGANIZATION OF UNION CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Swedish people of Union Creek Settlement wished to start an official church soon after arriving. In Sweden, the church was provided by the state. In this new country with no state church, and with complete religious freedom, the task fell to the immigrants themselves.

The first official Lutheran service led by an ordained pastor in the Union Creek community was in 1869 when a Rev. Olson of the Norwegian Wisconsin Synod preached in one of the homes. There was some thought of also organizing a Norwegian Lutheran Church, but with most of the community members being Swedish, the idea was dropped. Loyalty to the Swedish Lutheran Church was solid. In 1870, Rev. Sven G. Larson of the Augustana Synod held services in the Union Creek community. At this service, Rev. Larson baptized children, including Olaf Anderson, the first child born in the community and son of Anders Gustaf and Marta Anderson.

The transition from worshipping in private homes to a formally organized Lutheran Church required specific procedural actions. First, the church needed to adopt a constitution, approved by the Swedish Augustana Lutheran Synod, and secondly hold a formal election to appoint officers of the church. The group met these criteria on January 10, 1874. The entire Constitution (a total of 11

Articles written in Swedish and copied in long hand by John Sellberg) was entered on 18 pages in the original record book. Prior to adopting the constitution, devotions were read. The scripture lessons were from 1 Corinthians 14:40, "Let all things be done decently, and in order," and Colossians 2:5, "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."

Per Gustaf Wiberg was elected the first President and John Sellberg was elected the first Secretary-Treasurer. The first Deacons were John Sellberg, J. M. Peterson, Hans Anderson, and Andrew Wallin. The first Trustees were John Sellberg, J. M. Peterson, and Per Gustaf Wiberg. At this time, it was not possible to call or support a pastor, but meetings were conducted, and sermons read.

The first Swedish Lutheran congregation in Dakota Territory was organized at Ahlsborg at a meeting held January 11, 1870, in the home of John Albin. A year later, January 3, 1871, the Dalesburg Lutheran congregation was formed at a meeting in Andrew Bolin's dugout. The congregation at Union Creek was organized January 10, 1874, at a meeting called by John Sellberg and P. G. Wiberg. When the Ahlsborg congregation dissolved in 1978, Union Creek became the second oldest Swedish Lutheran Church in South Dakota.

"Let all things be done decently, and in order,"
(1 Corinthians 14:40)

"For though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."
(Colossians 2:5)



REV. C. L. BECKSTROM
1874-1876

In the fall of 1874, Rev. C. L. Beckstrom, the pastor at Dalesburg, was called to preach at Union Creek once per month. Swedish-born Pastor Beckstrom was ordained June 11, 1871. Beckstrom received a salary of \$25 a year for his service to Union Creek. Beckstrom also served Ahlsborg Lutheran Church.

**Scripture lessons from
the January 10, 1874
meeting, formally
organizing Union Creek
Lutheran Church**

CHARTER MEMBERS

In the original record book, the following are listed as Charter Members of Union Creek Lutheran Church.

- » Anders Anderson, wife Martha
- » Charles Anderson*
- » Johannes Anderson*, wife Maja Stina*,
and 2 children
- » Hans Anderson, wife Johanna, and 3 children
- » Anders Gustaf Anderson, wife Marta*,
and 2 children
- » Carl Johan Arvidson*
- » Nils Anderson Cedar*
- » August Erikson
- » Lars Erikson*, wife Christina Carolina*,
and 2 children
- » Olaf Erikson*, wife Catherina*, and 2 children
- » Eric Johansson*
- » Anders Johnson*
- » A. G. Johnson*, wife Amalia*
- » John Johnson*, wife Emma Christina*
- » Wrald Jorgenson, wife Anna, and 2 children
- » Otto Lieff
- » John Moline, wife Maria Stina
- » Olaus Nilson*, wife Anna*, and 2 children
- » Carl Olson
- » Hans Olson
- » Peter Pärson
- » John Henrik Peterson*, wife Stina Lisa*,
and 2 children
- » John Mauritz Peterson*
- » Peter Peterson, wife Brita Stina
- » John Sellberg*, wife Brita*, and 2 children
- » Peter Skoglund
- » Lars Skallinder
- » Anders Shöberg, wife Karin, and 2 children
- » Anders Vallin
- » John Vallin
- » A. G. Wästerdahl
- » O. F. Wästerdahl
- » Per Gustaf Wiberg*, wife Sophia*

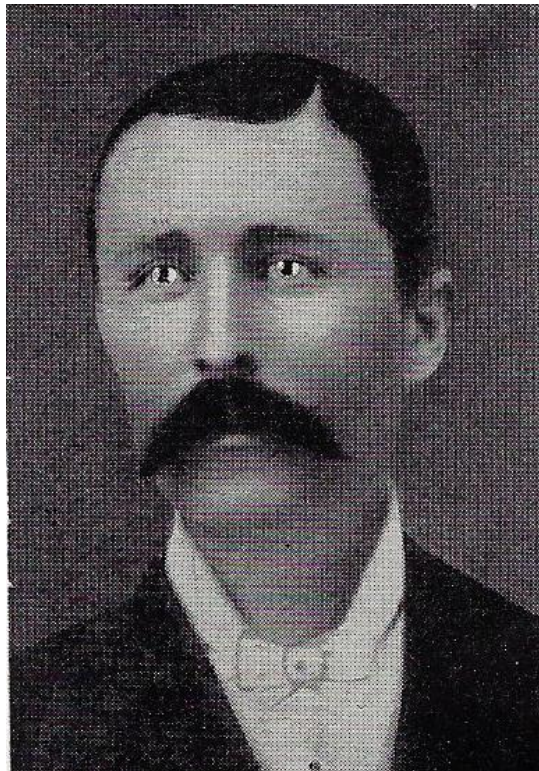
**indicates burial in Union Creek Cemetery*

ACQUISITION OF THE CHURCH LAND

As mentioned at the beginning of this history, the Congress of the United States passed the Timber Culture Act in 1873 with amendments in 1874 and 1878 to “encourage the planting of trees on the Western Prairie.” After most of the 160 acres homesteads were claimed, many odd pieces of land, mostly 40-acre plots, remained. In Sweden, many rural churches own farmland called the “Prest Gaard” or Priest Farm. Union Creek Lutheran Church’s founders wanted one of the “40s”, but churches could not apply for the land—only an individual could implement the procedure. John Mauritz Peterson, a charter member, signed up on behalf of the church. The tree seedlings were acquired and planted by church members. In the fall of 1874, according to the agreement between John Mauritz Peterson and Union Creek Lutheran Church, Peterson would be reimbursed \$50 for his work in obtaining the 40 acres.

The church farmed the land in 1875. At the annual meeting on January 4, 1876, it was reported that the church had harvested 183 “bussels” of wheat. Union Creek was now the owner of 40 acres of Dakota Territory land and a physical location for their proposed church and cemetery. Although

Pastor Beckstrom left the parish in 1876, leaving a pastoral vacancy for the next two years, these hardy pioneers went forward with their plans.



JOHN MAURITZ PETERSON

The following information was taken from the minutes of early church meetings 1874-1877.

September 6, 1874: the leaders met to appoint a committee of Olaus Nilson, Olof Ericson, Anders Shoberg, and Hans Anderson to select a place for church and cemetery. Later that day, it was reported that the NW corner of the 40 acres taken out as a timber claim on the church’s behalf would be the sight.

September 28, 1874: it was recorded that they would have the church and cemetery on the 3 acres of the NW corner of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$.

January 4, 1876: The proceeds from the 183 bushels of wheat harvested in 1875 was used to pay the \$50 for the timber claim to J. M. Peterson as per contract, \$4.50 threshing bill, pastor’s wages and tree plants. J. M. Peterson was to buy 2,000 cottonwood plants.

January 4, 1877: John Sellberg, Gustaf Anderson, and Hans Anderson gave 1,000 trees and John M. Peterson and C. J. Arvidson each gave 500 trees. All total, 4,000 cottonwood trees were planted.

THE EARLY CONGREGATION

Union Creek at its organization in 1874 had 45 confirmed adults and 19 baptized children. Other members joined as they moved to the community and babies were born:

- » Pedar Halvardson*, wife Karen Hedvik*,
and 3 children
- » Karl Johan Moline, wife Klara Lovisa,
and 2 children
(Karl was the son of John Moline)
- » Peter Shoulberg*, wife Elsa*
(purchased the farm now occupied by
Kirk and Felicia Miller)
- » John and Peter Skallinder
(confirmed sons of Lars Skallinder)
- » Hans and Johanna Anderson,
a son and a daughter
- » Lars and Christina Caroline Erikson, a son
- » Olaf and Catherina Erikson, a son
- » Wrald and Anna Jorgensen, a daughter
- » Olaus and Anna Nilson, a son
- » Anders and Karin Shoberg, a son
- » Per Gustaf and Sophia Wiberg, a son

(* indicates burial in Union Creek Cemetery)



PETER SHOULBERG

*“Här är Himmelens port, Här ä ross got att vara.”
(Here is Heaven’s Gate, Here it is good for us to be.)*

- Dedication text for The First Church

Timber-Culture Certificate No. 622
APPLICATION 1432

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

Whereas There has been deposited in the GENERAL LAND OFFICE of the United States a CERTIFICATE OF THE REGISTER of the LAND OFFICE at Yankton Dakota Territory, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Acts of Congress approved March 3, 1873, March 13, 1874, and June 14, 1878, "To encourage the Growth of Timber on the Western Prairies," the claim of John Sellberg

has been established and duly consummated, in conformity to law, for the South West quarter of the North East quarter of Section twenty three in Township ninety three North of Range forty nine West of the Fifth Principal Meridian in Dakota Territory contain- ing forty acres.

according to the OFFICIAL PLAT of the Survey of the said Land, returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE by the SURVEYOR GENERAL:

Now know ye, That there is, therefore, granted by the United States unto the said John Sellberg the tract of Land above described: To have and to hold the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said John Sellberg and to his

heirs and assigns forever; subject to any vested and accrued water rights for mining, agricultural, manufacturing, or other purposes, and rights to ditches and reservoirs used in connection with such water rights, as may be recognized and acknowledged by the local customs, laws, and decisions of courts, and also subject to the right of the proprietor of a vein or lode to extract and remove his ore therefrom, should the same be found to penetrate or intersect the premises hereby granted, as provided by law.

In testimony whereof I, Benjamin Harrison, President of the United States of America, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the seal of the GENERAL LAND OFFICE to be hereunto affixed.



Given under my hand, at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, the thirteenth day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States the one hundred and fourteenth

By the President: Benjamin Harrison
By John Maynard and John, Secretary.

RECORDED, Vol. 5, Page 241.
(11023-10 M.)

Recorder of the General Land Office.
Ed. Atkins



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

Homestead Certificate No. 473

APPLICATION 1378

WHEREAS

These has been deposited in the General Land Office of the United States a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at Sioux Falls Dakota Territory, whereby it appears that pursuant to the Act of Congress approved 20th May, 1862, "To secure Homesteads to actual Settlers on the Public Domain," and the act supplemental thereto, the claim of John Hellberg has been established and duly consummated, in conformity to law, for the east half of the north West quarter and the east half of the south West quarter of section twenty three, in Township nine, of Range forty nine, in the district of lands subject to sale at Sioux Falls Dakota Territory, containing one hundred and sixty acres.

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Land, returned to the General Land Office by the Surveyor General.

Now know ye, That there is, therefore, granted by the United States unto the said John Hellberg the tract of Land above described. To have and to hold the said tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereto, unto the said John Hellberg and to his heirs and assigns forever.

In witness whereof, I, Allyson S. Grant, President of the United States of America, have caused these letters to be made public, and the Seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

Given under my hand, at the City of Washington, the twelfth day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy four, and of the Independence of the United States the seventy eighth.

BY THE PRESIDENT:

McPherson

By

McPherson

Secretary.

Recorded, Vol. 1, Page 441

Recorder of the General Land Office.



THE FIRST CHURCH

By the year 1877, membership had grown to 53 confirmed members and 32 baptized children. None of the modest pioneer homes were large enough to hold them all and plans began to build a permanent church building on the 40 acres owned by the church. The church was to be built in the northwest corner of the property near the dirt trail that passed by the land. No one today remembers the exact location of the building, but according to a photo the location was near the present-day Hultgren cemetery plot. A fence was erected around 3 acres with a wooden gate facing west.

Dimensions for the first church were 20 feet

wide, 32 feet long with a 10-foot ceiling. The lumber used was cottonwood hauled by oxen or horse teams from sawmills near the Missouri River south of Elk Point. The design was simple: one door facing west and three windows on each side. Once inside, there was a wall with two openings into the main room. Labor was provided by the church members, some of whom had been experienced carpenters in Sweden. Services began in the building as soon as the walls and roof were built even though the inside work was incomplete.

Interior work was completed as money became available. The years between 1877 and 1880 were extremely dry and the grasshoppers came every

year, sometimes completely stripping the fields of grain. Regardless, farmers brought sacks of wheat or other grain and stored them inside the church, then the church would sell the grain to raise money. Peter Shoulberg owned two cows in 1877—he sold one cow and gave the money to the church.

Progress continued with one-inch rough cottonwood boards cut for “pews.” A stove, stove pipe, and bricks for a chimney were purchased and installed. The pulpit was a large wooden box, probably a box used by a member on the journey from Sweden to America. The box was set on edge and covered with a cloth. The inside walls were finished with “wainscoting” boards. Church members hung two pictures on the north wall: Martin Luther and Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden

1611-1632. During the religious wars in Europe, Adolphus was credited with saving the Lutheran faith in Scandinavia and Germany.

When the little church was completed, the dedication text was “Här är Himmelens port, Här ä ross got att vara.” (Here is Heaven’s Gate, Here it is good for us to be). Two scriptures were read at the dedication. In Genesis 28:17b Jacob dreamed of a ladder set between earth and heaven with angels of God ascending and descending on it. Upon awakening, Jacob said, “how awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.” The second scripture reading was Matthew 17:4a which is Peter’s account of Jesus’ transfiguration, “Then Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord it is good for us to be here.’”



PASTORS 1878-1896



REV. S. A. LINDHOLM
1878-1879

Following the departure of Pastor Beckstrom in 1876, the church was without a pastor for two years until Rev. S. A. Lindholm came to Dalesburg in 1878 bringing his young bride with him. Mrs. Lindholm was a fine musician and Union Creek's small choir organized by John Mauritz Peterson welcomed her help. The roads at that time were more accurately "trails." Pastor Lindholm often told of one trip between Union Creek and Dalesburg when the wheels of the wagon dropped into a hole, resulting in Mrs. Lindholm being tossed out of the wagon. Rev. Lindholm's health made it difficult for him to stand during the long drives in a lumber wagon between Dalesburg and Union Creek, and he and his wife left a year later. Union Creek's confirmation class was forced to ride in a lumber wagon to Dalesburg to finish their final classes.

REV. C. J. CARLSON
1880-1885

In 1880 Swedish-born Rev. C. J. Carlson accepted a call to Dalesburg and agreed to preach at Union Creek. Rev. Carlson had been ordained in Des Moines, Iowa on June 20, 1880. Once again, one member drove a team and lumber wagon to Dalesburg to pick him up and another member took him back. A few years later Pastor Carlson bought a small pony and along with his wife and two daughters would crowd into a little buggy and drive the 25 miles to Union Creek. At times, Pastor Carlson would get out and walk up the hills to make the trip easier on the pony. Through Pastor Carlson's efforts, Union Creek was incorporated in 1880. Also at this time, the Trustees voted to take out an insurance policy on the church—the cost was \$6.00 but the congregation was unable to raise the money. One member, recently returned from work on the railroad, had enough money but was unwilling to lend it to the church fearing the congregation would never be able to repay the loan. Pastor Carlson resigned in 1885.





CONFIRMATION CLASS OF SEPTEMBER 28, 1884

During Rev. C. J. Carlson's time, Union Creek's first confirmation class was recognized. On August 13, 1882, Johan Erik Erikson and Anna Fredrika Anerson were confirmed.

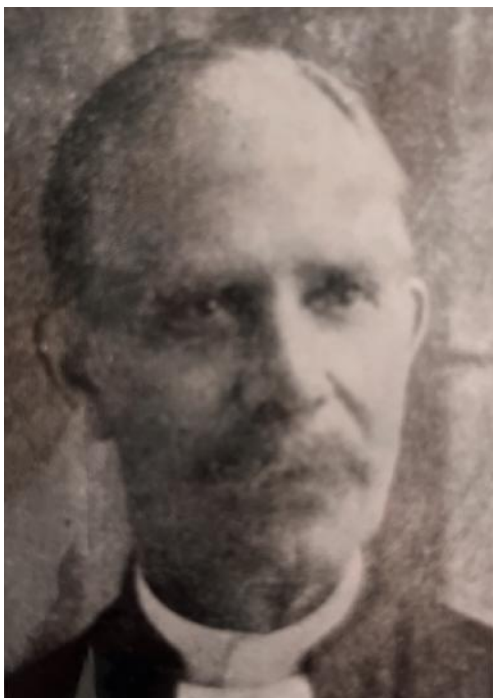
The first known photograph of a confirmation class at Union Creek was the class of September 28, 1884. The only young people identified are in the third row, beginning with the second from the left: Ingeborg Nilson, Cora Louisa Peterson, Anna Sofia Peterson, and Pastor C.J. Nelson in the front row.

REV. S. A. SUNDBERG, 1885-1886

In 1885 Union Creek Lutheran Church and Ahlsborg Lutheran Church were united into one parish. (As mentioned earlier, Dalesburg was the first Swedish Lutheran Church in Dakota Territory; Ahlsborg was second; and Union Creek was the third). By this time Dalesburg was a much larger church and had their own pastor. Dalesburg was approximately 25 miles away and it was not practical to expect any pastor to commute on a regular basis. Ahlsborg, even smaller than Union Creek, was located two miles south and one mile west of Spink, only 12 miles from Union Creek. In 1885, Rev. S. Anders Sundberg was called to be the pastor of the Union Creek-Ahlsborg Parish. Pastor Sundberg, born in Sweden, was ordained June 23, 1878, at Princeton, Illinois. The lack of a parsonage became a problem for Pastor Sundberg's large family. For a time, they made their home with Charles Anderson, a single man and charter member who lived a quarter mile south of Union Creek on the west side of the road, but this only lasted one year before the family moved on.



One important and historic event happened during Pastor Sundberg's time at Union Creek. On August 25, 1885, "a festival was to be held for an organ." Up to this time, from worship in homes to worship in the little church building, there was no organ or piano. The violin, played by John Sellberg, was the only instrumental accompaniment available. At the annual meeting of the Congregation on January 4, 1886, it was decided that "the organ that is in the church, sent by the Moline Organ Company, should be kept and paid for." This oak pump organ was used in all three Union Creek buildings. The organist had to pump the bellows with her feet. This organ was used for 69 years until being replaced in 1955 by a Baldwin electric organ.



PASTOR LAWRENCE ERIC SJÖLINDER 1888-1897

From 1886 to 1888 Union Creek was without a full-time pastor and services were led by theological students. Pastor Lawrence Eric Sjölander who was ordained on June 22, 1888, in Dalesburg, Illinois, accepted a call in 1888 to serve Union Creek Lutheran and Nathanael Lutheran Churches. By this time, Ahlsborg had rejoined with Dalesburg. Nathanael Lutheran Church was organized in 1885 and was then located in Lincoln County, about 13 miles straight north of Union Creek. Pastor Sjölander had previously served Union Creek as a student, so he was familiar to members.

By 1889, with the pastor and his mother also living in the Charles Anderson home south of the church, it became clear the parish needed a parsonage. Through negotiations with Nathanael, John Sellberg persuaded the congregation to build the parsonage at Union Creek, citing the availability of land. The churches agreed to share the cost equally. The

house was built for \$753.74, and a well was dug at a cost of \$33.65. Pastor Sjölander and his mother moved into the new parsonage upon completion, and he continued to serve Union Creek for eight years. While here, he met his and married his wife.

Another notable achievement during Pastor Sjölander's pastorate was the organization of the Union Creek Ladies Sewing Society on February

10, 1893. The inaugural meeting was held in the home of Nils Cedar (later the Ray and Audrey Ericson farm). Ten men and women were present. Mrs. Peter Shoulberg was elected president and Mrs. John M. Peterson (Mary Sellberg) was elected vice-president. John Sellberg was elected secretary-treasurer, a position he held until his death in 1908.



Parsonage Built 1889

UNION CREEK PARSONAGE, PHOTO DATE UNKNOWN

PERSONAL INFORMATION ON THOSE IN ATTENDANCE AT THE ORGANIZATION OF UNION CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH

This information was found in Dennis Hultgren's papers. It appears that the list was completed through personal correspondence and interviews with families of charter members. This information did not appear in the 1949 or 1999 history books. I include the list as close to the original writing as possible with some editing for clarity. This may not be a complete list of founding members.

Anderson, Gustaf: Grandfather to Stanley Anderson, S. Dak. Stanley lived on the same farm. Was relative of Lunds, 1st baptism Olaf.

Anderson, Hans: Hans owned the Ernest Johnson farm north of the Shoulberg farm.

Anderson, Johannes: Wife Mary. Father to A. G. Johnson, C. J. Johnson, and Johannes Anderson. Grandfather to Ella Widmark. Second charter member buried in Union Creek Cemetery (5th burial). Died in 1881.

Arvidson, C. J. (Charlie): Lived in a dugout on the Alfred Sommervold farm. He also owned a farm by the Big Sioux River which was later owned by H. A. Landsdowne. Charlie was a cousin to Per Johan Hultgren and is buried in the Union Creek Cemetery.

Cedar, Nils: Nils was a bachelor. Owned the farm now the home of Raymond Erison. He was active in the church and buried in the Union Creek Cemetery.

Ericson, August: Lived in a dugout on Jacob's farm (Clara Sorlie). He was a first cousin to Mrs. Otto Lieff. Was one of three who walked and looked for a location for the Big Springs Baptist Church but was a Lutheran so came to Union Creek. He drowned in the Big Sioux River. He was the first man buried in the new Big Springs Cemetery by the church. Prior burials had been made in the old

Baptist cemetery 3 ½ miles north of Union Creek.

Ericson, Lars: Relative to Otto Lieff and Selma Ericson's father. He owned the farm south of the farm that was owned by Merl Fickbohm and Dennis Hultgren. Lars was active in the church and buried in the Union Creek Cemetery. His father, Eric Johansson, homesteaded the Hultgren farm in 1873.

Ericson, Olaf: He owned the farm across the creek west from Sellbergs. Olaf was the father of John (grandfather to Dorothy Borgman), William, Martin, Mrs. Louise Harker, and Mrs. Adina Hultgren. Olaf is buried in the Union Creek Cemetery. Olaf's wife was the last Union Creek Charter Member to die at age 98.

Johnson, A. G.: Brother of C. J. Johnson of Big Springs. Was an undertaker and furniture dealer at Calliope (Hawarden) and Akron. He was also brother to Pete Anderson (father of Ella Widmark) that lived on the west in 40 north of the church

Johnson, Eric: Lived on Dennis Hultgren farm. Born 1801, died 1879.

Lieff, Otto: Albert Lieff's father. Albert, at the time Dennis compiled this list, was 95 and still living on the old homestead.

Nilson, Olaus: Was an officer and active member. He owned the farm (now abandoned) known as the August Nilson farm, Section 17 & 20 Sioux Valley Township. Olaus was Sigmond Nilson and Mrs. Frank Jacobs' grandfather. It was reported he went to church in a lumber wagon with a board for a seat.

Olson, Charles: Mrs. Lew Ely's father. Owned the John Willms farm. Grandfather to Arthur R. Olson (Big Springs). Hans Olson's brother.

Olsen, Hans: Brother to Charles. Father to Eddie, William, and Mrs. Martin Johnson (Mother

to Russell and Lowell Johnson), all Big Springs' Baptist. Lived on Elton Shedd farm.

Pärson (Person), Peter: Lived somewhere in the Ella Lewison area.

Peterson, John Henrik: Lived on the farm 2 miles north of Big Springs, on what was known as the Carl Ericson farm. John was Carl Ericson's grandfather. Also was grandfather to Mrs. Stroshane in Alcester. Active in church. Buried in church cemetery.

Peterson, John M.: Active in the church. He owned the farm north of Sellbergs. John took out the timber claim on the church's behalf and sold the 40 acres to the church. He is buried in the Union Creek Cemetery.

Schobert (Schoeberg), Andrew: Lived on the Bradley farm by West Union School, later occupied by Vincent Feauto. Andrew had a daughter, Hulda, confirmed with Wille and Martin Ericson.

Sellberg, John: Leader and active member. John owned the farm east of Lloyd Fickbohm and north, back in field. He was the first settler in the area,

arriving in 1868. John was father to Hannah Sellberg and Mrs. J. M. Peterson (Mary). He is buried in Union Creek Cemetery.

Skoglund, J. P.: Homesteaded farm known as the Henry Johnson farm also known as "Green Acres" owned by the Henry Borman's of Chicago.

Wallin, Andrew: Come to the United States on the same boat as Olaf Ericson family. He owned the Art Olson 80, north of Minnie Anderson's 80 and the Art Wang farm across the road west.

Wallin, John: Brother of Andrew who owned the Seely farm. Came to the USA in 1869 with the Olaf Ericsons and brother Andrew. A son, Harry, lived out west in 1969.

Westerdahl, A.G. and O. T.: Not able to find any information.

Wiberg, P. G.: Very active member. Was first president of the church. Lived on the farm now owned by Max Vreugdenhil. He was the father of Adolph Wiberg and grandfather of Mrs. Leonard Fickbohm and Wibergs of Spink and Oldham, South Dakota. He is buried in Union Creek Cemetery.

RECOLLECTIONS FROM LOUISE HARKER

This information is also from Dennis Hultgren's papers. Louise was 17 years old when the second church was built so many of her recollections are of the first church.

Homemade pews. Pulpit was a large box set on edge and covered with a cloth, open on the back where Pastor stood. This space used to store cleaning articles and other things needed in the church as there was very little storage space.

The men sat on the south side and the women sat on the north. This was also followed in the second church until families gradually started sitting together. The first couple that sat together on the north side, were John and Elmer Hultgren, with their new brides Esther Othelia and Adina Wilhelmina in about 1911.

Louise rode a bicycle around in 1898 to collect money for the new bell. The heating stove was in the northwest corner of the old church. Louise recalls singing duets with Pastor Wallin in the choir. She was confirmed in the first church.

Louise recalled the Anderson brothers carpenter team who built the Peter Shoulberg and John Hultgren houses in about 1892. John Anderson had a very long beard in 1899, and kept it stuffed inside his vest when he was working to keep it out of the way.

She remembered pull down lamps in the ceiling of the first church. The baptismal font was inside of a table made from 2 boxes and the basin was taken out only at baptism time. Coats and overcoats were put in a corner. Louise wore hand knit stockings over her shoes to keep warm.

Louise told the story of how her father, Olaf Ericson, left his wife Christina and baby John in Council Bluffs at the end of the railroad. Olaf walked, carrying their spinning wheel, from Council Bluffs up to the Missouri River, then up the Big Sioux River, and on to Union Creek, to find the Sellberg who was already settled in the area. Olaf built a log cabin and then returned to Council Bluffs to get his family. He kept the land around the cabin plowed as a protection against prairie fires.





*Photo by Travis Robinson
April 22, 2023*



DEDICATION OF THE SECOND CHURCH, SUMMER 1898

THE SECOND CHURCH

In 1897 the congregation of Union Creek voted to build a new church. The original building, over twenty years old, was too small and not in the most desirable location in the northwest corner of the church's 40 acres. The area south of the church had been used as a cemetery since 1878 and parking, even during horse and buggy days, was almost nonexistent. Additionally, the building was close to the road.

The decision was made to build the new church south of the cemetery. This decision opened an

entirely new area for use by the congregation. The location was excellent—level, high and dry. The parsonage, built in 1889, was located on a high spot in that area as well. As a bonus asset, the location granted a fine view of the beautiful Union Creek valley to the southwest. Again, the wisdom of the founding fathers in acquiring 40 acres of land was justified.

The new building was quite large for the time but did not have a basement. The church also featured a bell tower complete with a new bell donated

by the Ladies of the Swedish Lutheran Sewing Society. The group purchased the bell in November 1899 at a cost of \$190.75. The bell is 4 feet in diameter with a clapper 6 inches in diameter and continues to call people to worship today. There was a chancel, but no altar. The small pulpit from the first church was placed in the center of the chancel. A circular communion kneeling rail was built and installed. A marble baptismal font was placed in the church and oak church pews were bought. Brass kerosene lights were hung from the ceiling and wall-bracketed kerosene lamps with reflectors hung on the walls. The heating stove was set in the middle of the pews on the north side. The organ from the original building was moved to the

front of this new church. To complete the church, Gothic windows were installed. This second church was built at a cost of \$2,500 and was dedicated in the summer 1898.

The first church building now stood unused north of the cemetery. The decision was made to use it as a meeting hall, and it was moved to a location east of the new church and named Luther Hall. Now there was a place for ladies' meetings, lunches after funerals, and assorted social gatherings. A spacious lawn gave children a place to run and play. Two additions were added: one for a stage area to the right of the original building and another in the rear for a kitchen area which also had its own entrance on the south side.



INTERIOR OF THE SECOND CHURCH



THE CHURCH BELL

Dedication plaque on the bell donated by the Ladies of the Swedish Lutheran Sewing Society. This bell continues to call people to worship today. **Photo by Brad Vreugdenhil and Rylen Calentine.**



Photo by Joni Noble

Photo by Sherri McKee



PASTORS 1897-1925



PASTOR ERIC G. ANDERSON, 1897-1899

Soon after Pastor Sjölander's departure, Pastor Eric G. Anderson was called; however, he served only a brief time before his health failed and he died at Union Creek on December 28, 1898. Pastor Anderson had lost his wife to illness before arriving at Union Creek and had not been in good health for some time. A gift of money was collected and given to his family following his death but there is no record of where the family went, although it is assumed they went to live with relatives. Pastor Anderson had formerly lived in Verona, Missouri.

Three students served the congregation during the four-year pastoral vacancy: Gustaf Anderson, F.O. Lindner, and Olaf Wallin. Pastor A. M. Broline of Dalesburg aided with pastor care needs of the church as vice-pastor. In 1902 a call was extended to student Olaf Wallin, effective on his ordination.

PASTOR OLAF WALLIN, 1902-1905

In preparation for the arrival of Pastor Wallin, the decision was made to enlarge the parsonage by adding a kitchen and pantry onto the east side. Nathanael Lutheran agreed to pay half the cost and the parsonage was ready for the Wallin family.

Pastor and Mrs. Wallin arrived at Union Creek in July 1902. Pastor Wallin was born in Sweden and had been ordained June 15, 1902, at Ishpeming, Michigan. After arriving at his new parish, Pastor Wallin learned Nathanael Lutheran Church had been destroyed in a windstorm on May 24, 1902. Pastor Wallin, recently married and in his first pastoral position, now had the added duty of leading the Nathanael congregation in their rebuilding plans. His first sermon at Nathanael was at the site of the ruined church.

It is interesting to note that Pastor Wallin was born in 1874, the year Union Creek Lutheran Church was organized. The pastor and his wife began their service in a young congregation of the same age. Pastor Wallin remained in the parish until September 1905, when they moved to Valley Springs, South Dakota. (South Dakota had achieved statehood in 1889).

Student A.H. Franzen served the two congregations in 1906.



REV. CARL HJALMAR NELSON, 1907-1913

In January 1907 a call was extended to theological student Carl Hjalmar Nelson, effective on his ordination. C. H. Nelson was ordained June 15, 1907, at New Britain, Connecticut. In August of 1907 Pastor and Mrs. Nelson moved into the Union Creek parsonage.

Pastor Nelson was a fine musician, and both taught and organized musical groups in the churches and the community. The Union Creek Orchestra featuring violins, mandolins, and guitars was organized and directed by Pastor Nelson. He also organized the Luther League at a meeting held February 12, 1908. This group, primarily for the younger people, was attended by all ages. Many good times were held by this group in Luther Hall. The group also sponsored the annual church picnic with help from the congregation. Luther Hall needed updates by this time and the Luther League paid for a new foundation under the building in 1910.

The congregation was saddened by the death of Pastor and Mrs. Nelson's infant daughter January 19, 1909. Mabel Christine Nelson is buried in the Union Creek Cemetery. Mrs. Nelson would sometimes walk over to the grave and play her violin in sorrow for their great loss.

In 1910 the interior of the church underwent extensive renovations. An addition was built on the east side with an entrance for the pastor. Inside the chancel was enlarged and a new altar was built surrounded by fancy filigree. Tall

pillars were placed on each side of the chancel. A new high pulpit was installed on the north side. The old pulpit was moved to Luther Hall. These improvements enhanced the church and aligned its design with the traditional Lutheran churches in Sweden.



Pastor Nelson was a busy man who made things happen. In 1910 he was instrumental in the organization of the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Akron, Iowa. Several of the charter members of Immanuel were transfers from Union Creek. Pastor Nelson is recorded as Immanuel's first pastor. Immanuel used both Swedish and English in their services while Union Creek only used Swedish at this time.

Next, Pastor Nelson encouraged the Nathanael congregation to purchase a parsonage in Alcester, South Dakota to equalize the distance between the two churches. There was no Lutheran church

in Alcester at the time and Pastor Nelson saw the potential for Nathanael to expand there in the future. In 1910, Nathanael did purchase a house in Alcester to be used as a parsonage. Pastor and Mrs. Nelson moved into this parsonage in September 1910. No called or ordained pastor ever lived in the Union Creek parsonage again. Pastor Nelson continued to serve the Union Creek and Nathanael parish while also assisting Immanuel Lutheran in Akron. In the spring of 1913, he accepted a call to a church in New Haven, Connecticut.



UNION CREEK ORCHESTRA, CIRCA 1910

*Front Row, left to right: Authur Ericson,
Albert Johnson, Walfrid Anderson*

*Second Row, left to right: Adina Ericson, Rev. C. H. Nelson,
Esther Ericson, Michael Hultgren, Hannah Sellberg*

*Third Row, left to right: Johnny Johnson,
unknown, Bertil Shoulberg, Conrad Johnson*

REV. EMIL JOHANNES JOHNSON, 1914-1925

In 1914 Rev. Johnson became the pastor of Union Creek and Nathanael Lutheran Churches. Pastor Johnson was the first United States-born pastor to serve Union Creek. He was ordained on June 14, 1914, at Sycamore, New York. Pastor and Mrs. Johnson moved into the Alcester parsonage in July 1914. A new era was beginning. Earlier pastors drove horses and buggies. In fact, there was a provision in all calls for a certain sum allocated to “feed the horses.” Now, that sum was allotted to “purchase gasoline for pastor’s Model T touring car.” Pastor Johnson’s car had button-on side curtains. In 1914 there were many miles to travel but none of those miles were gravel roads. Most roads were not even graded properly. If you did get stuck, you put on chains. Despite the poor road conditions and weather, Pastor Johnson and his wife never missed getting to church.

In May of 1914, the Union Creek Cemetery Association was organized. This association continues to maintain a well-kept cemetery north of the church. With the perpetual care fund and other dues, it remains a place of beauty and peace. The names of many pioneers of Union Creek Lutheran Church grace the headstones and to them we are indebted for the spiritual and Christian heritage we enjoy here at Union Creek today. To the memory of these men and women we bow our heads in reverence.

In 1916 a 32-volt light plant was installed and an area under Luther Hall was dug out to house the engine and batteries. This project was paid for by the Luther League and Ladies Aid groups. The Luther League furnished the fuel needed for the 31 years the system was in use. For the first time the church and Luther Hall were lit by electricity. The Ladies Aid paid to extend electricity to the parsonage in 1918. Although it was noisy in Luther Hall when the engine was running, this 32-volt light plant was used until the rural electric system was connected in 1947.

In 1918 Nathanael Lutheran Church made the decision to purchase the closed Methodist



Church in Alcester, giving them two places of worship: the original in rural Lincoln County and one in Alcester. Pastor Johnson now served three churches. Union Creek’s services were at 11:00 a.m. every other Sunday and Sunday evenings on alternate weeks. By this time, the Nathanael town church offered services in English while Union Creek conducted all services in Swedish. This change became more important as people of other nationalities moved into the community. Phasing out Swedish speaking services began by offering English speaking services every other Sunday. Although the exact date is not documented, Swedish was completely replaced by English after 1920. In retrospect, it may have been better for the church if this change had been embraced sooner.

In December 1918, the Women's Missionary Society was organized. This group kept the worldview of church work before the eyes of the local congregation.

In 1924 Union Creek Lutheran Church celebrated its 50th anniversary.

In 1925 Pastor Emil Johnson resigned and accepted a call to the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Omaha, Nebraska. This was also the year the second church was destroyed in a windstorm ("cyclone" was the word used to describe the event even though the wreckage was in one area and not scattered the way a tornado usually left a scene.) Members did not discover the damage until the next morning when they at once began cleanup, salvaging any lumber that could be put to future use. Although the building was destroyed many

items were salvaged: the altar, pulpit, organ, piano, communion rail, baptismal font, most of the pews, and other important articles were carried from the wreckage. A large statue of Christ (purchased in 1912) was ruined. Pieces of filigree were salvaged and later used to decorate our present hymn board. The large decorative pillars in our present church were also saved.

Luther Hall was still standing, and a meeting was held there to decide the course of rebuilding. The congregation agreed to rebuild as soon as possible. With the pastorate now vacant, regular services were held in Luther Hall. The pews, altar and other items from the ruined church were moved into Luther Hall. Students Gottfred Berg and Philip Holmberg were appointed to lead worship services in 1925 and 1926.



1925 STORM WRECKAGE

This view shows the wreckage contained in one area following the 1925 storm.





1925 STORM WRECKAGE

Top Left: The pulpit, and two pillars are visible in the wreckage. These items are still used in the present-day church.

Bottom Left: View from the south following the 1925 storm. Note the lights hanging from the curved ceiling, the fence and two flags placed in the debris.

Bottom Right: This photo was taken from the North.



ARTIFACTS FROM THE SECOND CHURCH



The decorative pillars on either side of the altar are from the second church. July 2024



Pieces of filigree, recovered from wreckage of the second church, used to decorate the hymn board. (Photo 2024.)



Marble baptismal font.
(Photo 2024)



A piece of the 1912 Statue of Christ recovered from the second church storm damage.
(Photo 2024.)

Dedication of the third church, August 1926.



THE THIRD CHURCH

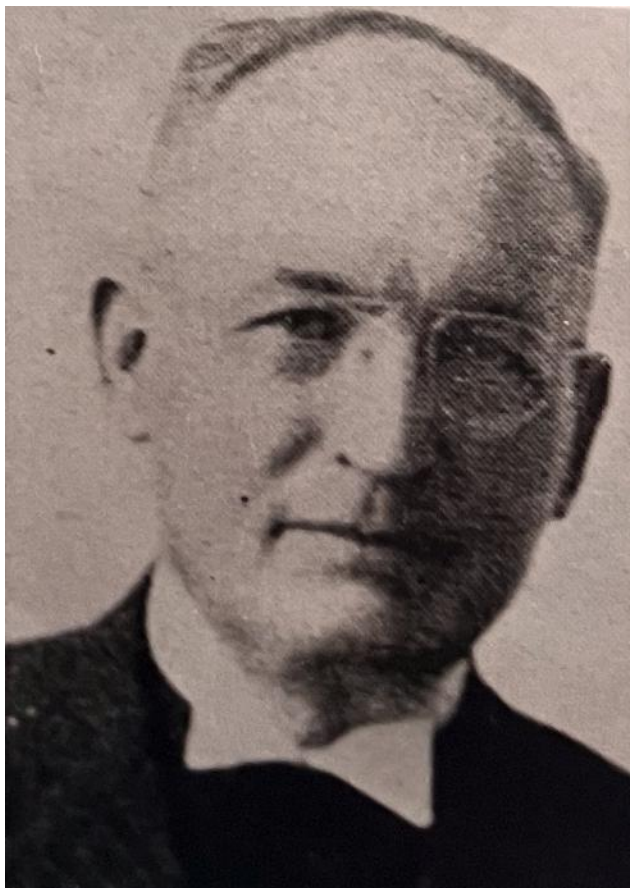
The first step in building the third church was digging a basement. Volunteers from Union Creek and other congregations came with horses and scrapers to carry out the task. The foundation and cornerstone were finished, and work progressed quickly to get everything covered before winter. This third building was much larger than the previous structure. Heat was now provided by a wood and coal furnace found in the basement. The basement had a concrete floor and several windows but was not finished. A large square tower with a “battlement” top served as the main entrance. A unique feature for the time was the “mother’s room” in the upper bell tower complete with a rocking chair so a mother could rock her child and still watch the worship service through windows that opened into the church. The large bell purchased by the Union Creek Ladies Sewing Society in November 1899, was reinstalled in the new church.

The pulpit was lowered by removing part of the base and placed in the church. The altar, communion rail, baptismal font, organ, and the two pillars were also moved in. A new piano was donated, and all new pews were purchased. Beautiful stained-glass windows were ordered and the priceless stained-glass window of “Jesus in Gethsemane” was placed in the west wall.

The windows in the four corners of the sanctuary have a theme: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the four gospels. The two large windows depict “the Light of the World” and “The Bread of Life.” The large “Ascension of Christ” painting was bought by the Luther League. This piece of art was painted by Birger Sandzén, a Swedish immigrant who was Professor of Art at Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas. Union Creek is also fortunate to own two of Sandzén’s original drawings of Swedish landscapes which are hung downstairs today. There is no record of how the church came to own these two drawings.

The cost of this third and present building was approximately \$11,000. Door-to-door solicitations were organized to raise funds. Seventy-five individuals and 20 Akron businesses donated over \$6,500 in cash; individual donations of \$500, \$300, and \$200 were pledged; and even children signed their names to the list with small cash donations. This list is still in our possession with the original signatures of the donors. Volunteer labor lowered the cost. These donations, added to the insurance payment, covered the cost of construction and the new furnishings. In the end, the design of this new church was beautiful both inside and out. In August 1926, the church was dedicated without debt.

*Original interior of
the third church.*



PASTOR DAVID J EDWARD 1926-1939

Shortly before the dedication of the third church, Pastor David J. Edward accepted a call to serve Union Creek and Nathanael Lutheran Churches. The Edwards moved here from Elfsborg Lutheran Church in Pomeroy, Iowa. Pastor Edward was born in Sweden and came to the United States with his parents in 1892. He was ordained on June 12, 1921, in Chicago, Illinois. The prosperity of the 1920s soon developed into the Great Depression of the 1930s. Many area farmers lost their land and everything they owned. Placing one dollar into the church collection plate was considered a very generous gift. Albert Anderson, the church treasurer, dreaded facing the pastor each Sunday because rarely was there enough money to pay his salary. In an act of kindness and necessity, Pastor Edward voluntarily took a cut in his salary. In 1939 (after serving Union Creek for 13 years, the longest of any pastor to date) Pastor Edward, his wife Mabel and their daughter Miriam moved to Holmes, Minnesota.

- UNION CREEK BUILDING FUND -

Treasurer's Report, August 1, 1926.

R E C E I P T S .

Rec'd from Insurance Co., - - - - -	\$ 3167.75
" Donations - - - - -	6468.01
" for Windows sold - - - - -	7.50
" " Rocks Sold - - - - -	25.50
" " Windmill - - - - -	15.00
" " Old Wire - - - - -	3.00
Total Receipts - - - - -	<u>\$ 9686.76</u>

D I S B U R S E M E N T S .

Lumber and Building Material - - - - -	\$ 3654.00
C.M. Hilliker, for Cement Blocks - - - - -	256.34
Carpenter Labor - - - - -	1907.15
Mason Work - - - - -	244.65
Painter and Paint - - - - -	544.43
Anderson Bros., Batteries - - - - -	237.40
Welding Bell - - - - -	16.00
McGraw Co., - Fixtures and Supplies - - - - -	180.64
W.C. Anderson, - Furnace and Deck - - - - -	466.00
Cleaning Carpet - - - - -	6.80
Redmond Bros., - Compensation Insurance - - - - -	48.40
Mrs. Gassman - Boarding Men - - - - -	8.00
Town of Akron, - For Post - - - - -	8.50
Big Sioux Gravel Co., - Sand - - - - -	5.00
O.B. Akers - Freight and Express - - - - -	108.89
Forman, Ford & Co., Minneapolis, - Windows - - - - -	832.76
Northwestern Altar Mfg. Co., Pews - - - - -	704.62
Anderson & Shoulberg - Hauling - - - - -	193.00
Akron Truck Co., - Hauling - - - - -	50.00
Frame for Painting - - - - -	15.00
J.B. Cunningham - Spouting - - - - -	17.55
Victor Anderson - Putting up Spouting - - - - -	5.00
H.A. Ervin - Insurance - - - - -	7.00
Albert Heider - Irons - - - - -	5.60
B. Shoulberg - Hinge - - - - -	3.00
Davidson Bros. - Framing Pictures - - - - -	12.00
Tuning Piano and Organ - - - - -	53.10
Total Disbursements - - - - -	<u>\$9590.83</u>

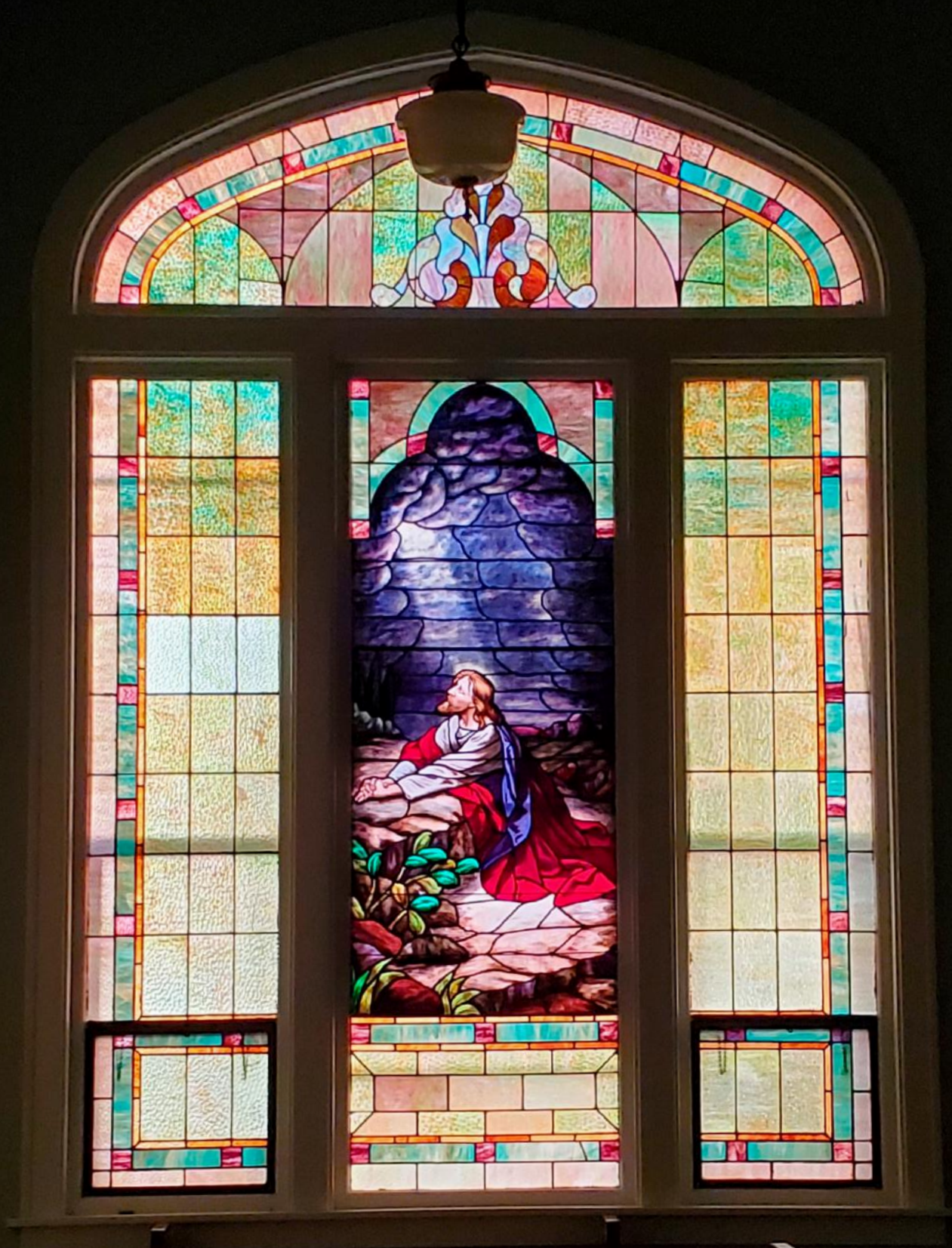
Total Receipts - - - - -	\$ 9686.76
" Disbursements - - - - -	9590.83
Balance on Hand - - - - -	<u>\$ 95.93</u>

Jan, 1st. 1927

<i>Receipts - - - - -</i>	<i>\$ 10,255.75</i>
<i>Disbursements - - - - -</i>	<i>\$ 9,975.66</i>
<i>Balance on hand</i>	<u><i>\$ 280.09</i></u>

THE COST TO REBUILD

The 1926 Union Creek Building Fund Treasurer's report, showing many of the costs incurred to rebuild the church after the 1925 storm.



Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane Window

Photo by Joni Noble

4806

FORMAN, FORD & Co

ESTABLISHED 1888

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

JOBBER OF
PLATE, WINDOW AND PICTURE
GLASS, LINSEED OIL,
VARNISHES AND BRUSHES
MANUFACTURERS OF MIRRORS,
FRAMED LOOKING GLASSES,
STAINED ART GLASS AND PURE
PAINTS FOR ALL PURPOSES.

DATE 2/19/26

ORDER NO.

SHIPPED VIA Milw.

Union Creek Luthern Church
Alcester, So. Dak.

TERMS

30 Days
F.O.B. Minneapolis

INTEREST CHARGED ON ALL ACCOUNTS PAST DUE—GOODS SHIPPED AT PURCHASER'S RISK

Leaded Art and Stained Glass
Ten Steel Pivot Ventilators
Six Medallion Emblems and Memo Painted
Subject-----'Gethsemane'

As Contract.

849.75

Shipped to

Union Creek Luthern Church
Akron Iowa.

% O. M. Ericson.

pd.

GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE WINDOW INVOICES

Above: Forman, Ford & Co quote for the new window.
Right: Final invoice with a 2% cash pay discount.

FORMAN, FORD & Co.

ESTABLISHED 1883.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA.

IN ACCOUNT WITH

Union Creek Lutheran Church,

Abcester, S. D.

MAKE ALL REMITTANCES DIRECT TO THE HOUSE IN MINNEAPOLIS, ST. PAUL, OR CHICAGO, DRAFTS.

<i>Feb 19</i>	BALANCE RENDERED	<i>30d</i>	<i>84975</i>
	ADSE AS PER BILL		

Gentlemen:- I am deducting 2% on this bill for cash, and trust this will be satisfactory - Am enclosing check for \$832.76.

H. R. Anderson
Treas.

H. R. Anderson
Box 111 -
Akron - Iowa -
Dls 16.99

According to terms of sale there is \$ *84975* past due
\$ _____ due *3/19*
IF NOT CORRECT please advise us at once
AFTER MATURITY we warrant ourselves at liberty to draw without further notice
Yours respectfully, **FORMAN, FORD & CO.**



THE LORD IS MY LIGHT
SOUTH WINDOW
Six window photos taken July 2024



**I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE
NORTH WINDOW**



**ST. LUCAS WINDOW
NORTHWEST CORNER**



**ST. JOHANNES WINDOW
SOUTHWEST CORNER**



**ST. MATTHEUS WINDOW
SOUTHEAST CORNER**



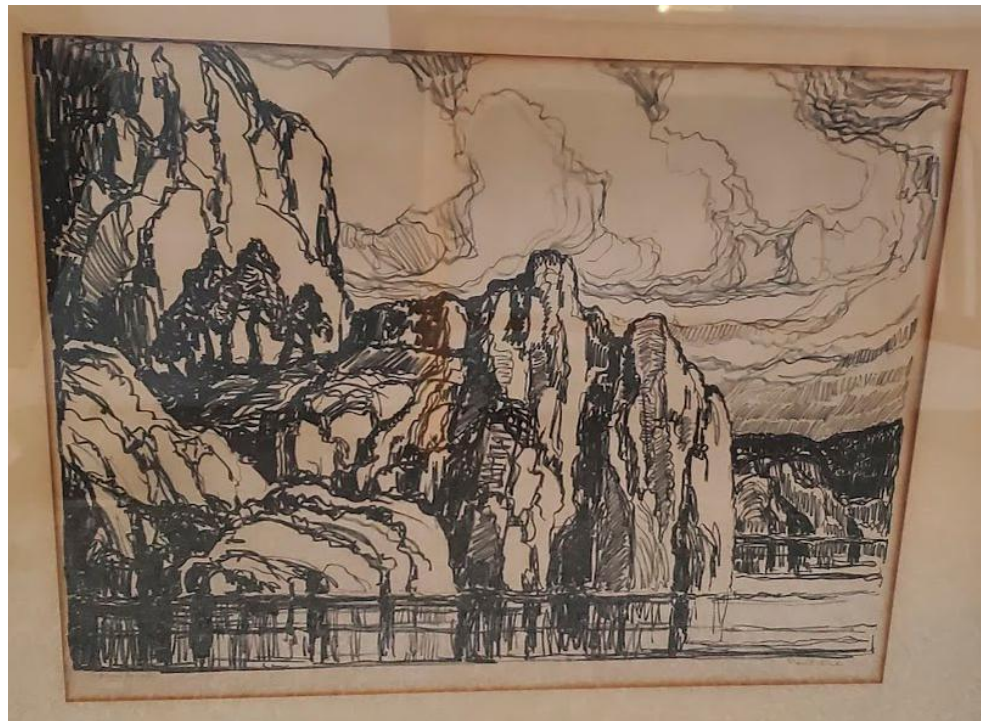
**ST. MARCUS WINDOW
NORTHEAST CORNER**

ORIGINAL SANDZÉN DRAWINGS OF SWEDISH LANDSCAPES



Birger Sandzén was born in Blidsberg, Sweden in 1871. He studied art in Stockholm with Anders Zorn and Richard Berg and for approximately three months in Paris with Edmond François Aman-Jean. In 1894, he came to Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, to teach languages and assist in the art department and vocal music department. He remained at Bethany for the remainder of his career, becoming the principal art instructor in 1899 and retiring in 1946. Throughout this period, and after he retired as Professor Emeritus, he was a prolific painter and printmaker until his death in 1954.

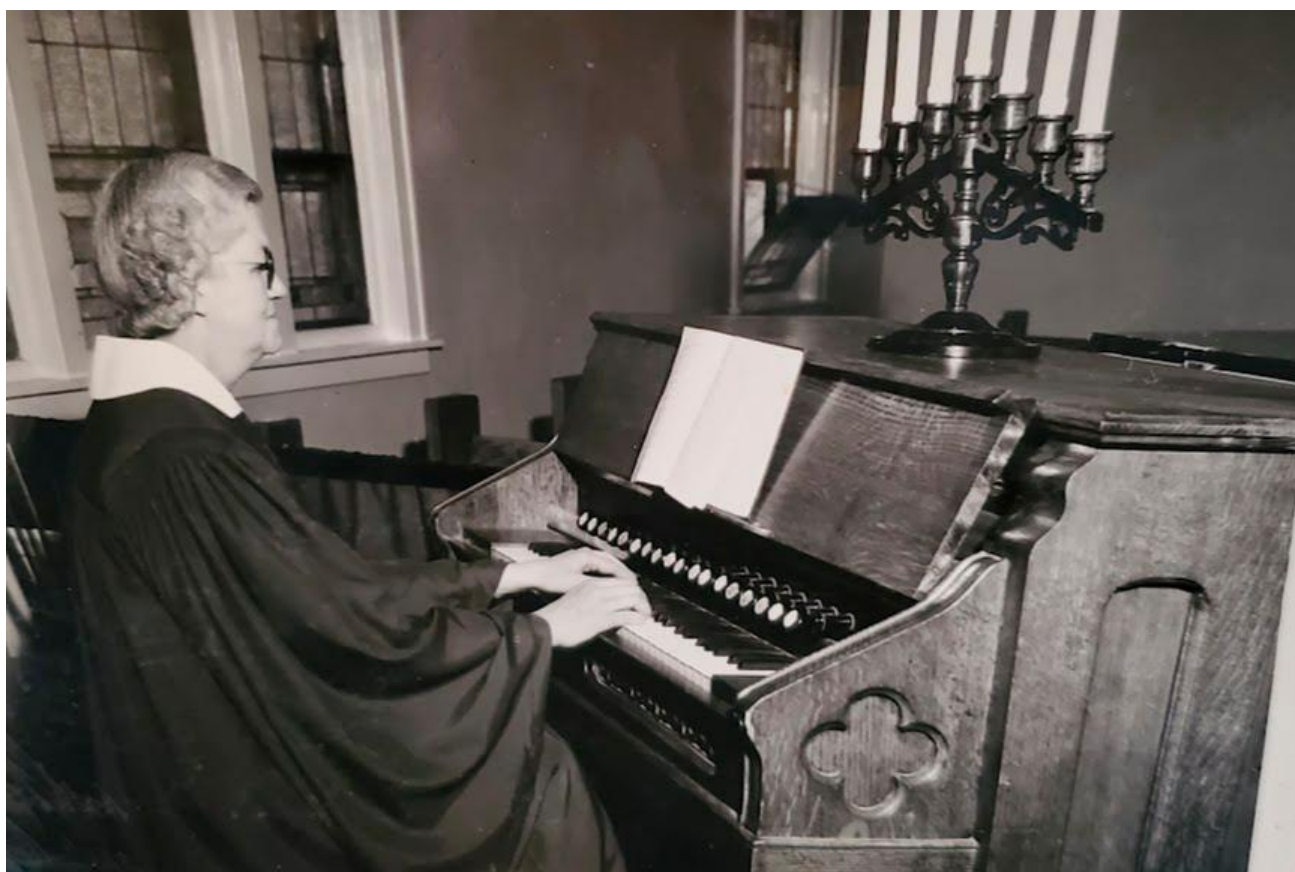
Throughout his career he exhibited extensively throughout the United States and in Sweden. His works are found in every major Kansas art museum and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, the Library of Congress, the Chicago Art Institute, the Denver Art Museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the National Museum of Stockholm.



EARLY CHURCH ORGANISTS



*Right: Hannah Sellberg
Below: Alveda Fickbohm*



Union Creek Picnic

Thursday, July 28

At the Ed. Willer grove, 3½ miles Northwest of Akron

PROGRAMS

AFTERNOON, 3:00 P. M.

Song—Union Creek Choir.
Reading—Leo Ross.
Vocal Solo—Rev. W. I. Amoth.
Selection—Union Creek Trio.
Speech—Rev. W. I. Amoth.
Vocal Duet—Lillian Sommervold and
Luella Lykken.
Cornet Solo—Kenneth Shoulberg.

EVENING, 8:00 P. M.

Selections—Immanuel Lutheran Or-
chestra.
Song—Union Creek Choir.
Accordion Solo—Mr. L. Max, of
Sioux City.
Selection—Union Creek Mixed Quar-
tette.
Saxophone Duet—Radolph Albin
and Roht. Ofstehago.
Speech—E. R. Gurney, of WNA X.
Bass Horn Trio—Rockley and Ber-
nard Beck and Merlin Wagner.
Selection—Akron Male Quartette.

SPORTS

Kitten Ball---Akron vs. Farmers
Kitten Ball---Akron Girls vs. Union Creek Girls
Horseshoe Pitching---Iowa vs. Dakota
Races and other sports

SUPPER AT 5:30 P. M.

Adults 25c

Children 15c

Music during supper hour by Akron Orchestra

EVERYBODY WELCOME

*Photo by Eliza Kjar
April 18, 2023*



DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION CREEK AND NATHANAEL PARISH

With the resignation of Pastor Edward in 1939, the Union Creek and Nathanael Lutheran Church Parish was dissolved. Nathanael had grown large enough to support a pastor themselves. When the votes were cast in both churches the majority voted to separate and Union Creek, for the first time in its long history, had no affiliation with another church.

Once more, the pastorate was vacant. Pastor Edstrom of Dalesburg Lutheran Church was appointed vice pastor and for the next six years, he traveled to Union Creek one day each year to administer communion, baptize babies, and confirm new members. Once again, without an ordained pastor to conduct Sunday services, theological students occupied the Union Creek parsonage leading services and conducting funerals. The men in this group were Edgar Anderson, Eugene Strinden, Chester Johnson, Leslie Olson, and a supply pastor, Rev. J. H. Larson.

Even without a full-time pastor, the work of the church continued in earnest. The Sunday School was especially active during this time and the children enjoyed meeting during the summer months to take part in the "Mission Band" which had been organized in 1922. The young people crafted articles from the wood of pear and peach boxes and other cheap materials. These articles were sold, and the money given to overseas missions, especially in Africa and China. Under

the supervision of volunteer teachers, the children were given bible study and memory work. Hannah Sellberg, then close to 80 years of age, spoke to the students about the work of overseas missionaries saying, "a church that is not a mission church is a dead church."

The survival of the church during these six years is credited to the congregation of Union Creek Lutheran Church. This small rural church had survived the Great Depression, a decade-long drought, and a six-year pastoral vacancy, and was now poised for new affiliation. We cannot be anything but proud of and grateful for that generation of members who kept the church going during a tough economic time.

In 1945 the Union Creek Cemetery Association purchased 40 acres north of the church using \$4,000 from their Perpetual Care Fund. The land continues to be rented to farmers from the church, and the income used to finance the care of the cemetery and the church grounds. Between 1947 and 1949 steps were taken to plant shrubbery and evergreens for further beautification. The Union Creek Cemetery Association is an incorporated entity and maintains its own board and officers. The group is strongly associated with the church and through cooperation, they have helped each other succeed. It is a credit to the early founders that the cemetery is so well-kept, planned, and surveyed with meticulous records and maps.

FORMATION OF THE UNION CREEK AND IMMANUEL PARISH

Early in 1944 discussions began with Immanuel Lutheran Church in Akron, Iowa to form a new parish. As previously related in this narrative, Pastor C. H. Nelson of Union Creek was instrumental in the organization of Akron's Immanuel Lutheran Church in 1910. Several of Immanuel's charter members were transfers from Union Creek including A.G. Johnson who had been a charter member of Union Creek.

Separated by only six miles, Union Creek had much in common with the Immanuel Lutheran Church. We were personally acquainted with most of the people, our children attended the same high school, we shared the same Akron, Iowa addresses, and many were on the same telephone "party lines." Only the state line divided us, and because of this we fell into different church conferences of the

Augustana Synod. Union Creek was affiliated with the Sioux Falls District of the Minnesota Conference and Immanuel was in the Northwest District of the Iowa Conference. To form a new parish with Immanuel, Union Creek had to be released from the Minnesota Conference and accepted into the Iowa Conference.

The parish was officially formed in 1945 following a vote at both churches. The vote at Union Creek was almost unanimous even though there was some sadness in leaving the Sioux Falls District which held such historic ties to the Swedish churches in South Dakota. A parish call was extended to the Rev. David J. Roy of Lancaster, Minnesota to be our full-time pastor. Pastor Roy had been ordained on June 6, 1943, at Calvary Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

"A church that is not a mission church is a dead church."

- Hannah Sellberg

PASTORS 1945-2000

PASTOR DAVID J. ROY, 1945-1979

Pastor Roy, his wife Fern, and their 5-month-old daughter Annelle arrived in Akron, (a second daughter, Karen was born in 1948). He conducted his first worship service at Union Creek on Sunday July 29, 1945, at 9:30 a.m. This worship time was a substantial change for Union Creek. Immanuel, as the larger dominant church had been granted the later service time. For Union Creek, 9:30 a.m. was much too early. Many farmers milked cows by hand, making morning chore routines time consuming. This earlier time made attendance at Sunday morning worship difficult for some members. Today, people prefer the early services.

Pastor Roy was instrumental in introducing many innovative programs in the parish. Youth banquets and Father and Son banquets became annual events. A Harvest Festival was celebrated in the fall as a service of thanksgiving and Easter Sunrise Services and breakfasts began in 1947 with the two churches alternating as hosts. A monthly parish newsletter titled "The U & I" was published by Pastor and Fern Roy.

Another major renovation began in 1945 with the updating of the church basement. Since this third church was built twenty years prior, the basement had remained untouched with unfinished ceilings, concrete floor, no toilet facilities (two outhouses were located north of Luther Hall), and inadequate stairs. An old hand-fired furnace with coal, wood, and corn cobs for fuel sat on the floor. Until now, all social gatherings including wedding and funeral receptions, ladies' meetings, Luther League, plays, and the Annual Meetings of the Congregation were all held in Luther Hall. The ladies had even added a cave dug in and cemented south of the building. Amazingly, Luther Hall (built in 1877) was still serving the church well in 1945.

The basement renovations were completed



in 1948 at a cost of \$11,500. Although members donated most of the labor, a carpenter from Nora, South Dakota was hired to plan and supervise the work. The ceiling was lowered, new stairways were built, and a new kitchen was incorporated into the plan. One distinctive feature was the beautifully curved serving counter. A new sewer system was put in to accommodate dual sinks in the kitchen and men and women's restrooms. Pipes were laid so water could be brought to the church from the well and a large cistern was dug to supplement the water supply. Prior to these upgrades, drinking water was provided by a pail and dipper at the entrance to the church. New folding chairs and tables were purchased by the Luther League and

the Cemetery Association. Two automatic oil furnaces were also installed at this time.

With a beautiful basement to house all the gatherings, the question now was what to do with Luther Hall. The congregation felt it was not financially feasible to maintain the building any longer and an auction was planned to sell the building. Some worried, "what if someone buys our first little church and turns it into a barn?" Hannah Sellberg, daughter of John Sellberg who had helped build the church in 1877, expressed a more progressive attitude, "Just remember this, Jesus was born in a barn so what is wrong with that?" As it turned out, the original piece of Luther Hall, that was the first church, was sold to a gentleman who moved it to Alcester where it stands today.

Additional improvements made during Pastor Roy's pastorate included a new organ, new chimes, new choir pews, paneling and carpeting the basement, and painting the exterior of the church and parsonage. There was also a barn, corn crib, granary, hog house, and chicken house on the property at this time and those were also repaired and painted.

During the January 1949 Annual Meeting of the Congregation, it was decided a celebration was in order to mark the church's 75th anniversary. The Anniversary Committee included Albert Anderson, Mrs. Alve Ericson, Mrs. Willie L. Huebner, Elmer Hultgren, Emil A. Koch, and Pastor David Roy.

Union Creek Lutheran Church reached its highest

membership count in 1953 with 173 adults and 74 baptized children for a total membership of 247 members. After serving the parish for 43 years, Pastor Roy retired from active ministry in 1979 and he and Fern moved into a new home they built in Akron. Sadly, Pastor Roy died unexpectedly while on vacation in 1985 and is the only ordained pastor buried in the Union Creek Cemetery.

Following Pastor Roy's death, Pastor Duane Olson of the Lutheran Church of Alta, Iowa was appointed vice-pastor for the Union Creek, Immanuel Parish. A call committee was elected to seek a new full-time pastor. During this pastoral vacancy an ordained pastor without a church, Rev. Dennis Hefner from Sioux Center, Iowa was hired to preach and conduct services each Sunday. He was also authorized to baptize and administer the sacrament of Holy Communion. Rev. Hefner's sermons were interesting, and attendance held up well during this period. The call committee soon recommended extending a call to Pastor Julian L. Swanson from Remsen, Iowa. Pastor Swanson had been ordained in 1976.



LUTHER HALL 1948



UNION CREEK CONGREGATION 1949

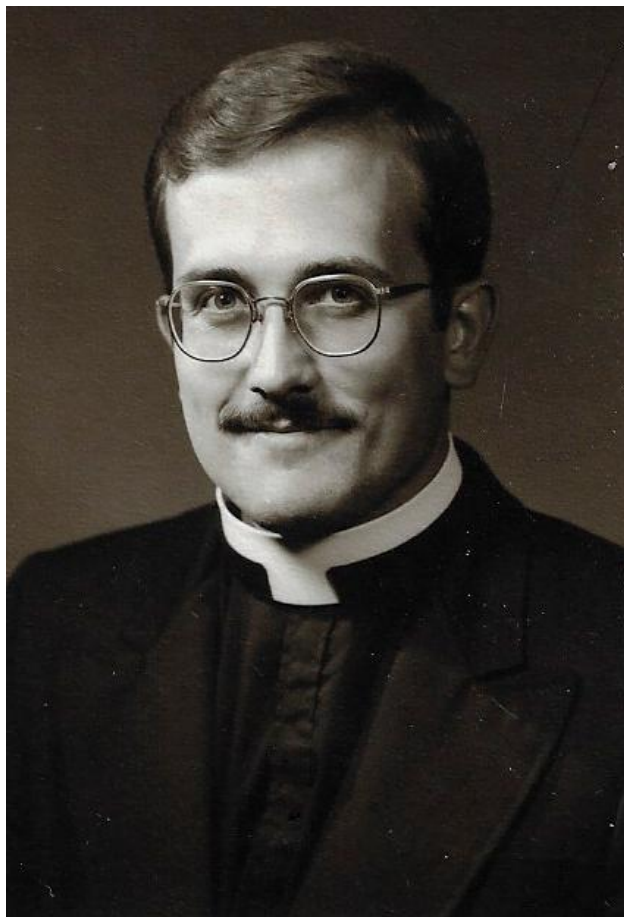
PASTOR JULIAN L. SWANSON, 1979-1982

Pastor Swanson arrived in the parish in November 1979. This new, young man was not afraid to make some interesting changes. He was an excellent speaker and is remembered most for his sermons which he delivered while walking the aisles of the church. The church underwent many improvements during Pastor Swanson's time with the parish.

At this time Union Creek had several young families and the church lacked space for Sunday School rooms. A committee investigating the possibility of insulating the attic of the church discovered unused space in the area above the altar. When the church was built in 1925, the space was intended for the installation of a pipe organ, an idea that had been abandoned years earlier. Over the years the open space had been forgotten. The Ericson family donated a new spiral staircase in memory of David Ray Ericson, which was installed for access. Two new windows were installed, a new carpeted floor was laid, the walls and ceiling were sheet-rocked, electric heat and lights were added, and Sunday School furniture completed the room. The cost was minimal. The circular staircase, windows, paneling, carpet, etc. were donated by members in

addition to labor. A carpenter was hired to install the windows and Pastor Swanson even picked up a hammer and saw to help put the project together.

Other improvements made during Pastor Swanson's pastorate included a new organ and piano and a new baseball field. Pastor Swanson shared a distinction with Pastor Sjölander (1888-1897): both were unmarried when they came to Union Creek. Pastor Sjölander married a Norwegian school teacher and Pastor Swanson married Karen Willer, a nurse and member of Immanuel Lutheran Church. The couple was married at Immanuel in January 1982. In May, Pastor Swanson resigned from the parish after accepting a call to Bethany Lutheran Church in Laurens, Iowa.



Once again Union Creek was without a pastor. The bishop appointed Pastor Myron Herzberg from Remsen as vice-pastor and he proved a strong leader. The parish reached out to Rev. Dennis Hefner to conduct services. Occasionally, Pastor Herzberg and Rev. Hefner would exchange pulpits. A call committee was formed and soon a call was extended to Rev. Dr. Bernard Nelson from Des Moines, Iowa.



**ARIAL VIEW OF UNION CREEK
LUTHERAN CHURCH, CIRCA 1979**





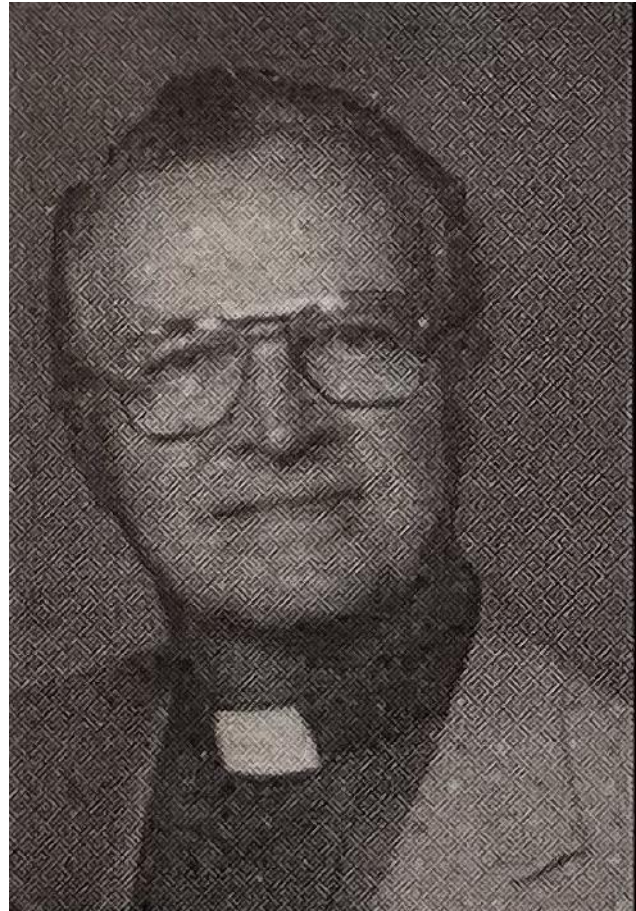
Photo by Travis Robinson

REV. DR. BERNARD NELSON, 1982-1988

Pastor Nelson was originally from Dalesburg and still had many relatives in that area. For him, it felt like “coming home.” He remembered attending special services at Union Creek with his father when he was young. Rev. Nelson was educated and experienced in many fields. He farmed for a time until his father encouraged him to enroll in South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota where he received a degree in agriculture. Later he attended the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, South Dakota where he graduated with high honors. Next, he enrolled in the Lutheran Seminary at Rock Island, Illinois and he was ordained on June 23, 1957, in Omaha, Nebraska. Rev. Nelson was awarded a Doctorate in Theology for his doctoral thesis, “A Search for a Heritage.” For this thesis, he traveled to Sweden to study Swedish Lutheran roots. During his career, Rev. Nelson served several churches which were just beginning or those in need of rejuvenation. As he was nearing retirement age, he wanted to “come home” to serve one more parish that would not prove quite as challenging.

Because of his farming background and his South Dakota State University education in agriculture, Rev. Nelson was interested in all aspects of the land. He was instrumental in planting the trees east of the church, reminding us there were no trees on the 40 acres when the land was first acquired in 1874. Only two of the original cottonwood trees planted in 1874 were still standing. Rev. Nelson would also walk out on the church land identifying weeds that needed attention and he pointed out that you can see three states from the front steps of the church: South Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska.

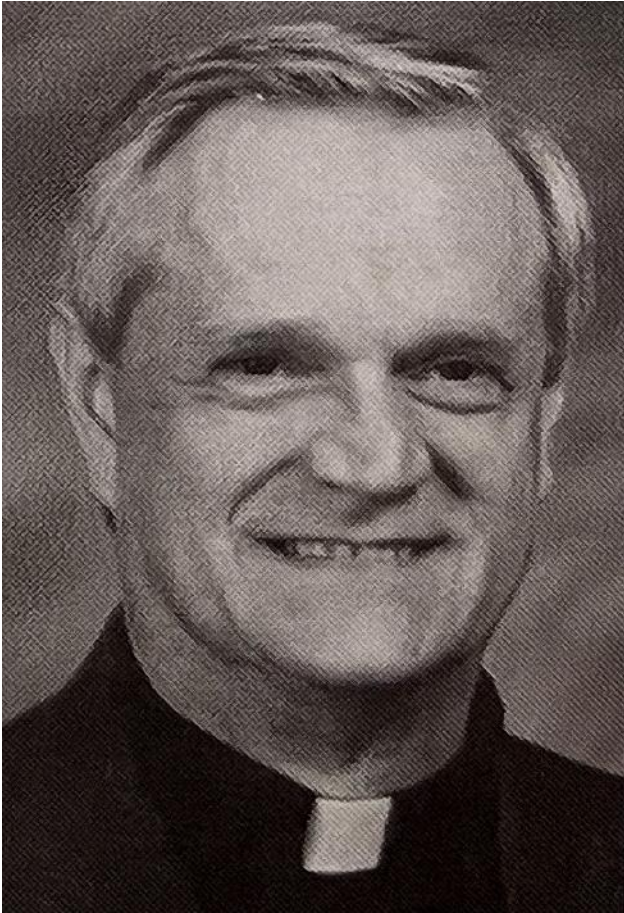
Rev. Nelson was a strong pastor who did everything in proper order and whose sermons were scripturally solid and interesting. He was not



inclined to make major changes as he said he would not be here long. True to his word, he announced his retirement effective in June 1988. Rev. and Evelyn Nelson moved to Fremont, Nebraska where they had purchased a home.

During this pastoral vacancy, Pastor “Jack” Hebard of Brunsville, Iowa’s Christ Lutheran Church was appointed vice-pastor. He coordinated several retired pastors (most from the LeMars area) to lead Sunday worship services. After interviews and visits, the call committee recommended that a call be extended to Pastor William J. Flemr, pastor of St. Ansgar Lutheran Church in Waterloo, Iowa.

PASTOR WILLIAM J. FLEMR, 1988-2000



Pastor Flemr was ordained June 10, 1975, at St. John's Lutheran Church in Des Moines, Iowa where his father-in-law Louis Valbracht was the pastor. Pastor and Mrs. Susan Flemr arrived in Akron in September 1988.

Many changes and improvements were made at Union Creek during Pastor Flemr's time:

- » The entire worship area was redecorated.
- » The large "Ascension of Christ" Sandzén painting was taken down and transported to the University of South Dakota's Art Department in Vermillion, South Dakota for restoration. The painting had been vandalized and paint was flaking off. After repairs were completed, the painting was hung on the north wall of the sanctuary.
- » A large brass cross was donated to the church and was mounted in the chancel.
- » The altar was moved forward so the pastor

could stand behind it facing the congregation. The re-altar or "step" section of the altar was hung at a proper height on the wall below the brass cross. The two 75-year-old brass candelabras were taken from storage and placed on the re-altar.

- » A new communion rail was installed. The old, curved rail from 1910 was removed and stored in the old parsonage. To create the room needed for the new rail, minor changes were made to the pulpit.
- » The hymn board was moved.
- » A new piano was placed in the basement.
- » The "With One Voice" hymnal supplements were added in the pews.

Continued on page 72



*Brass cross adorning the chancel.
Photo July 2024*



"ASCENSION OF CHRIST" BY BIRGER SANDZÉN

Photo July 2024

Continued from page 70

- » The inside of the 1910 altar was fitted with doors and drawers to store paraments, candles, and other worship needs. This fine carpentry work was done by Pastor Flemr.
- » With funds from the WELCA group, the kitchen was extensively remodeled with new countertops, sinks, and floor. The women also paid for new carpet for the basement and steps. In conjunction with this project, volunteers removed the old carpeting and gave the basement and hallways a coat of new paint.
- » The handicap ramp leading into the basement from the east door was added. With the enlargement of one of the restroom doors, both floors of Union Creek became handicap accessible.
- » Two new fuel-efficient furnaces were installed in the basement, one for each floor of the church.
- » New doors were installed on the front of the church.
- » A handicap ramp was built on the south side of the church. Again, the ramp project was completed in true “Union Creek style” with volunteer labor donated to keep the cost minimal.

- » A new roof was put on the church, and at the 1999 Annual Meeting of the Congregation, the congregation voted to install permanent siding.
- » A new lighted church sign was installed in front near the road along with a lighted flagpole.
- » A large metal arch with the words, “Here is heaven’s gate, here it is good for us to be” was installed over the south gate of the cemetery. We remember the first church was located on what is now cemetery land and these words were taken from the scripture lessons read at the dedicated of the second church in 1877.



*Lighted sign
and flag pole.*

Photo July 2024



Above and left: New communion rail installed during Pastor Flemr's tenure.

Below: The cabinets and drawers added to the altar by Pastor Flemr.

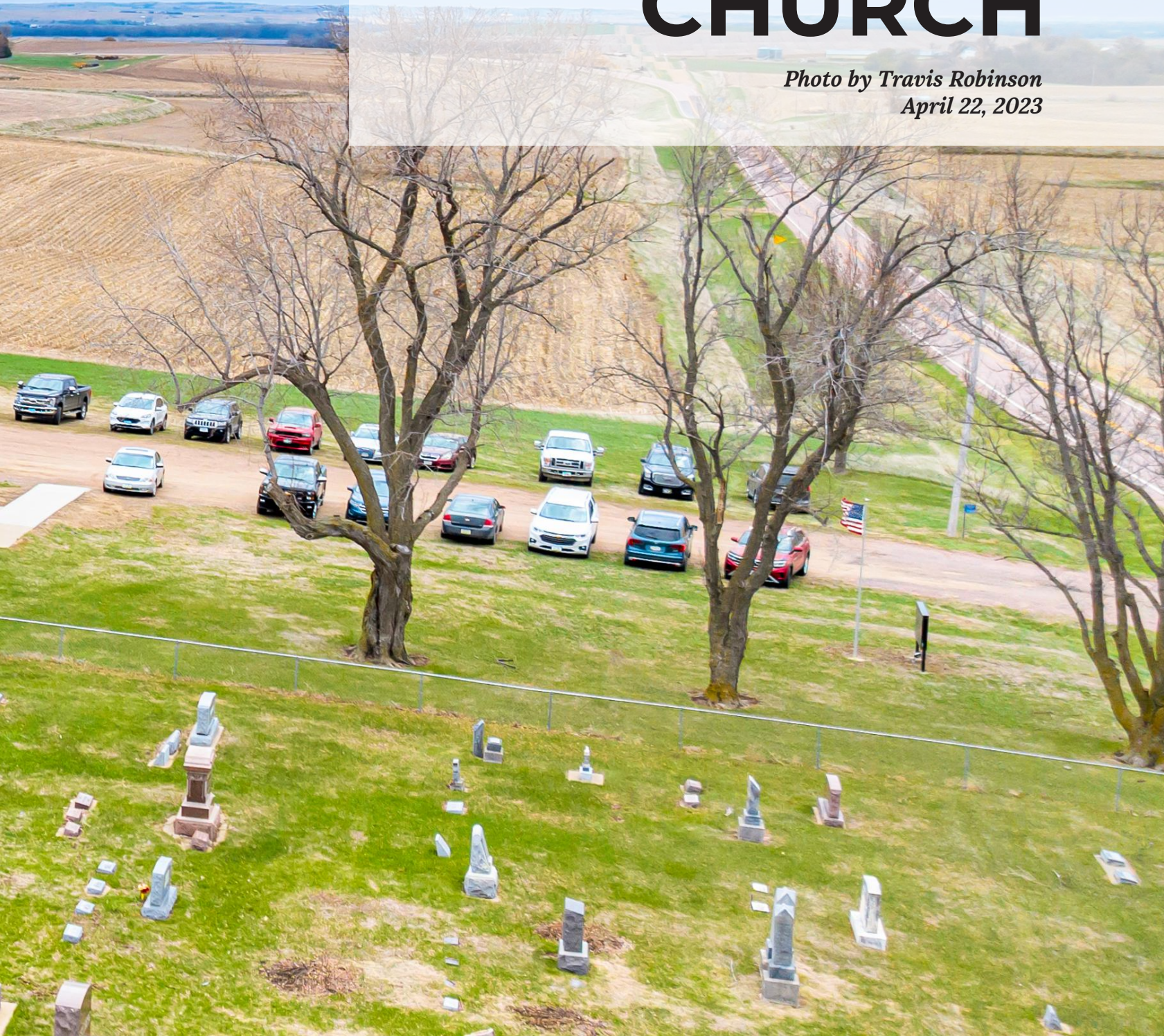
Photos 2024





TODAY'S UNION CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Photo by Travis Robinson
April 22, 2023*



UNION CREEK LUTHERAN CHURCH RECENT HISTORY

Dennis Hultgren penned the early history of Union Creek Lutheran Church 1874-1999. During those 125 years, the history focused on acquiring land, organizing the church, establishing leadership, building three churches between 1874 and 1926, plotting a cemetery, and recording a revolving door of pastors, while reminding us of the hardships of the early settlers.

The recent history reflects a quieter and more stable time in the life of Union Creek Lutheran Church. The past twenty-five years have not been without trials, tribulations, and some controversy thrown in for good measure; however, our building is solid, our congregation is strong, and our church grounds are spectacular.

For the recent history, 2000-2024, this writer chose to document by year which seems the most sensible for the sake of organization and storytelling. While we encountered some years of revolving pastoral supply, there were also many years our pulpit was filled continuously: Steven D. Larson, (Synodically Approved Minister) was with us for three and a half years and Pastor Carla Nelson served us for over 17 of these years. There will be more written on these two people later in this history.

While Dennis relied on actual historical documents and church and cemetery records, this writer relied on narrative and financial reports taken directly from The Annual Report to the Congregation for each year. At times, a report documented a particular year or event so eloquently, there was no need to reinvent the wheel. A few of

those reports are included in their entirety in addition to snippets from other reports. Thank you to those contributors.

I wish to extend my gratitude to all who submit detailed and comprehensive reports for our annual book each year. Looking forward, you are encouraged to continue documenting the life of Union Creek Lutheran Church with the same attention to detail. Union Creek, like many churches, does not elect a designated historian. In twenty-five years, when we celebrate 175 years, the reports you submit will be invaluable to whomever updates the history for the next chapter in the life of Union Creek Lutheran Church.

In his book, *Church History in Plain Language*, Bruce L. Shelley writes, "History is not just about the past; it tells us about who we are and where we came from." Your efforts to preserve the history of Union Creek Lutheran Church will show future generations who we were and where we came from, and that is a priceless gift.

This church had a long history before us and will have a long future after us. It is a part of our lives, but, really, it's the reverse. For a short time we have been allowed to be part of its life.

I wish to note that any mistakes made in the telling of this wonderful story are my own.

I humbly and respectfully submit the following: *The History of Union Creek Lutheran Church 2000-2024*.

Joni Noble
June 10, 2024



Photo by Joni Noble - January 22, 2021

2000

The year 2000 was an interesting, controversial, and historic year for Union Creek Lutheran Church. Pastor and Sue Flemr accepted a call to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sibley, Iowa and began their duties on March 1, 2000.

Pastor Daniel Stegen was offered and accepted the position to serve as interim pastor for Union Creek and Immanuel Lutheran, Akron.

In March, Immanuel Lutheran Church, our parish partner, voted to dissolve the 55-year partnership with Union Creek. Following this decision, Union Creek voted to change affiliation from the Western Iowa Synod back to the South Dakota Synod of the ELCA. In June, at the Synod Assembly in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Union Creek was formally accepted into the South Dakota Synod of the ELCA.

With the dissolution of the Union Creek/Immanuel Parish, Union Creek was left without a secretary. Prior to this, the work was done by a secretary in the Immanuel office in Akron. Joni (Kjar) Noble approached the council and applied to fill the position. At this time she was also secretary at the United Methodist Church in Akron. Joni, husband Keith, and four daughters, Erica, Annie, Allison, and Eliza joined Union Creek in January. Joni was given the job and began her duties working from her home north of the

church. She continues serving as our secretary in 2024.

In September, a special congregational vote was called in regard to extending the contract with interim Pastor Stegen. The congregation voted not to extend the contract. Pastor Sonja Brucklacher, Pastor Daniel Avery, and Pastor Robert R. Fedde provided pulpit supply while Union Creek looked at pastoral options for the future.

In 2000, Joni (Kjar) Noble and Audrey Ericson donated the first two sets of handbells for the youth. For several years, Joni and Donna Swanson directed the bell choir. Currently, Patti Ericson is the director, and the children play Happy Birthday at the beginning of the service on the second Sunday of each month and at other special times throughout the year.

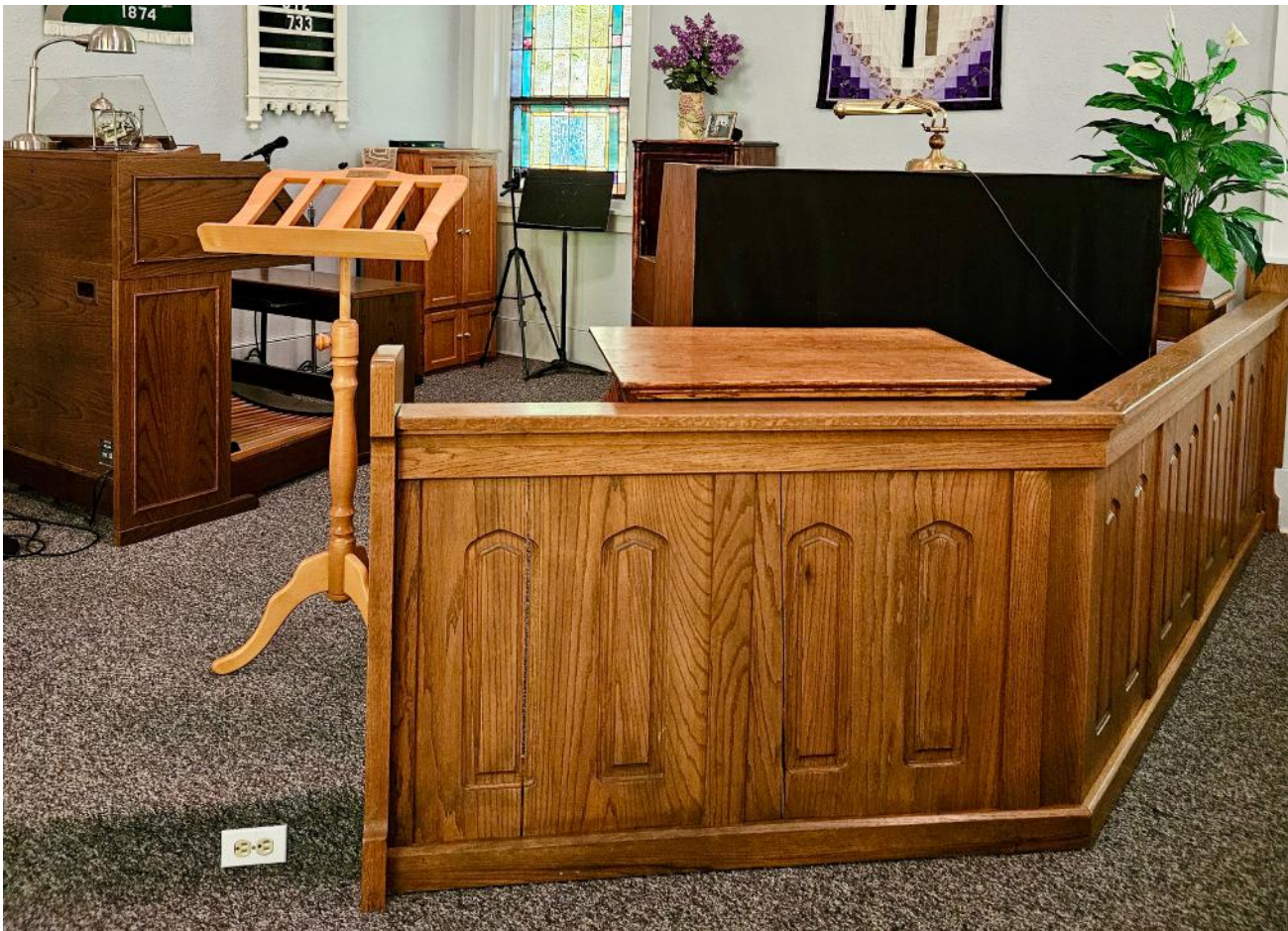
With 13 students (pre-school through 8th grade) in Sunday School, there were many activities planned to keep them busy. Some activities were mission-based while others were fun gatherings with movies and popcorn.

In October, our youth were treated to a hayride organized by Ray and June Heeren. Mike Harvey pulled the wagon and made a great trip around the back roads by the river on a beautiful fall evening.



Above: Youth bell choir practicing with co-director Donna Swanson.

Below: The church music area. Photo 2024



2001

At the Annual Congregational Meeting held on January 21, 2001, it was announced that due to safety issues, the parsonage needed to be burned down. The parsonage was built in 1889 for \$753.74. Pastor Sjölander and his mother were the first to live in the new parsonage. In 1910, a home was purchased in Alcester for use as a parsonage and no pastor ever used the Union Creek parsonage again.

There was only one item deemed worth selling—the claw-foot bathtub. Sealed bids were opened, and Darold and Paulette Vanderham secured the bathtub with a winning bid of \$111.11. Following the burning, the area was leveled and seeded by Robin Heeren.

The year 2001 was the first full year since 1945 that Union Creek was not yoked with another congregation. During January and February the church relied on retired pastors and other pulpit supply persons to conduct services on Sunday mornings. We were fortunate to have Pastor Robert Fedde, a retired pastor from Centerville, South Dakota, serve our congregation on a semi-regular basis. This worked well for Sunday worship services; however, our congregation needed someone to oversee the pastoral care ministry for our members.

Being a small rural, single-parish congregation without a parsonage, securing even a part-time pastor would require ingenuity. Dennis Hultgren, Union Creek Council President, traveled to the Southeast South Dakota ELCA Synod Office in Sioux Falls to request help in this matter. The Synod gave Dennis the name and phone number of Steven D. Larson, a seminary student. They told Union Creek three other churches were also trying to hire him, and said, “if you get him, you will get a good one!”

The church interviewed Steven D. Larson and offered him a one-year half-time contract. Thankfully, he accepted our offer. A home in Alcester was rented for him and he moved into the house on March 1, 2001.

Pastor Steve graduated from Dell Rapids High

School, attended Augustana College and South Dakota State University before entering the North American Baptist Seminary in Sioux Falls.

In his January 9, 2022 obituary, his children wrote the following: “Mixed with his extensive travels to Finland, Germany, and pretty much every place west of the Mississippi, his broad education helped him uncover beautiful patterns in people and places, and he made friends and served communities wherever he went. We will always remember him hiking, painting, writing, drawing, gardening, traveling, and sharing his music.” This was definitely the Steve Larson we knew.

Although he was still a seminary student, the congregation called him “pastor.” It seemed right since the word “pastor” means “shepherd,” and he filled that description perfectly.



**STEVEN D. LARSON,
SYNODICALLY APPROVED MINISTER**

Although the church is always well kept, improvements and additions are periodically necessary. New railings on the basement stairway were added and new trim boards were installed in the restrooms and around the spiral staircase. Marie Heeren generously paid for these improvements.

Alma Seely contributed funds for the new sound system and Keith Kjar facilitated the planning and installation of the new system. As part of this upgrade, a new wireless microphone was purchased with funds donated by Leonard and Violet Swanson. This was especially welcomed as Pastor Steve, like Pastor Julian Swanson, did not preach from the pulpit, but rather walked around the sanctuary as he delivered his sermons without notes.

Pastor Steve was a dynamic speaker and talented musician. To incorporate the additional special music and extended sermons of Pastor Larson into our one-hour service times, services began 10 minutes early. This allowed us to address any announcements, prayer concerns, and joys from the congregation before the actual service began. Even with this adjustment, Pastor Steve's worship services would last an hour and fifteen minutes!

This year also brought changes in our music ministry. Long-time organist Ruth Stoutenburg stepped down from her position as full-time organist. Donna Swanson, who was serving as the assistant, moved into the full-time position. Joni (Kjar) Noble moved into the assistant position.

Later this year, the congregation rented a farmhouse south of Alcester for use as a parsonage. The home was much larger than the one in Alcester, and closer to Union Creek making it more convenient for Pastor Steve.

In 2001, Union Creek received 11 new members through baptisms (both adult and children) and transfers. Our average attendance at Sunday worship services grew from 59 in 2000 to 75 in 2001. Our special mid-week services' average attendance was 46. This was an exceptional year of growth for Union Creek. Council President Dennis Hultgren wrote in his annual letter, "you can just feel the change. But these things don't just happen. They come about because of the efforts of the pastor and also the efforts and dedication of our congregation."



ORGANIST RUTH STOUTENBURG



ORGANIST DONNA SWANSON

2002

With the hiring of Pastor Steve, our pastoral needs were met and the focus shifted to improvements to our building and property. There were prior discussions about purchasing pew cushions for the sanctuary and at the annual meeting Dwight Fickbohm gave a presentation about various options for the 21 pews in our sanctuary. Alma Seely stated she would give money for 5 pews. In true Union Creek fashion, many other members and friends of Union Creek contributed toward the project. Cushions were eventually purchased for all the pews at a cost of \$2,500.

Another new addition to the sanctuary was the special cabinet crafted by Dave Morin of Akron. The cabinet was used to hold our new sound system. Updates were also made to the basement speakers and additional microphones were purchased.

Since the beginning, cleaning of the church was handled by the women on a volunteer basis. Myra Vreugdenhil suggested it was time to go another route. The decision was made to hire someone to clean once each month to help take the load off our church members.

The exterior of the church was not neglected in 2002. A new concrete sidewalk was poured at the rear (east) door of the church.

The Sunday School was very active during the year with 15 children in classes. The bell choir, under the direction of Joni (Kjar) Noble, performed a difficult piece at the Annual Akron Community Christmas Program at Trinity Lutheran. This was well-received as the children did not use colored cards, but rather read the sheet music.

With encouragement from MaLinda (Harvey) Nohava, Audrey Ericson, Sherri McKee, Pastor Steve Larson, and several others, the youth were involved in many mission projects in the area. The youth also began the Noisy Offering collection on the last Sunday of each month. This money is donated to local, national, and global causes and the tradition is still observed on the last Sunday of each month.

For many years, the children in our area attended Vacation Bible School in Akron, hosted by Trinity Lutheran, Immanuel Lutheran, and Wesley United Methodist Churches. The event was put on by a team from the Okoboji Lutheran camps and, by 2001, the cost was prohibitive for those with multiple children attending.

Joni (Kjar) Noble proposed hosting our own program as Union Creek did many years before. By scheduling events in the evenings, volunteers could provide classes, music, meals, snacks, crafts, and games. With donations from the Union Creek Council, WELCA, the Union Creek Cemetery Association, and several individuals, the event "Mystery Mansion—Unlocking God's Truth," was offered free of charge to any child attending. Each evening began with a light supper. After a week of classes, a potluck picnic was held in the backyard before the closing program. There were 28 children in attendance that first year.

Pastor Steve's pastoral, musical, and creative talents manifested into wonderful services. On Easter morning, 125 people attended the sunrise service featuring Pastor Steve playing the synthesizer for the prelude and his trumpet during the opening hymn. The service included a homily by Pastor Steve and Joni (Kjar) Noble. The Union Creek Gospel Choir joined in a final number led by Pastor Steve and Joni titled "One Less Stone."

Pastor Steve continued to serve our congregation while attending seminary classes in Sioux Falls. The high cost of seminary training necessary for ordination in the Lutheran Church creates financial burdens, and the congregation voted to contribute \$2,160 toward Pastor Steve's seminary costs. This contribution made possible the availability of matching funds from the Seminary.

This year, we began offering memorial lilies and poinsettias for purchase by the congregation. At Easter, 31 lilies filled our sanctuary. An iron cross, built by Sheveland Welding of Akron held 12 of the plants. The iron "flower cross" still graces our



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, AUGUST 2023

IRON CROSS

sanctuary at Easter and Christmas.

Late in the year, Pastor Steve indicated he would complete his seminary training in the summer of 2003. Once again, Union Creek Lutheran Church was faced with tough decisions. In his President's Report at the 2002 Annual Meeting of the Congregation, Dennis Hultgren wrote the following:

"At that time, he [Pastor Steve] will either move to full-time service in another parish or decide to remain here at Union Creek if we offer him a call to be our full-time pastor. At a legally called meeting of the congregation on December 15, the voters approved a resolution authorizing the church council to pursue the hiring of a full-time pastor for our church. These are very important decisions that we face this year [2003]—decisions that will decide how our church advances or regresses in the work of the Lord here at Union Creek. Any official call to any pastor to serve us will be voted on at a special meeting of the congregation. That call will include full financial responsibilities of the congregation. We ask all members for deep thoughts on these future plans, and also ask for the prayers of everyone, that all we do will be for the progress of God's work at Union Creek."



2003

Steven D. Larson finished his seminary studies and agreed to stay on at Union Creek. Since he was not officially ordained, the Southeast South Dakota Synod Office bestowed on him the title of Synodically Authorized Minister (SAM). In this capacity, he could perform communion, baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and he served our congregation well. In 2003, our average worship attendance was still holding high at 66 people.

Pastor Steve was not only an engaging speaker but also an extremely talented musician and vocalist. During his time at Union Creek, both vocal and instrumental music were a key ingredient in our worship services.

The youth were also active in projects this year. A fundraiser featuring Immanuel Music Ministry generated \$550 which was used to add a new basketball court in the backyard of the church. This project was completed by a group of volunteers: Dennis

Hultgren, Rob Heeren, Dwight Fickbohm, Keith Kjar, Sherri McKee, PeeWee Kincaid, and Mike Harvey. An anonymous donor purchased a portable basketball hoop.

New picnic tables were also on the youths' wish list this year. However, after paying for the basketball court, the group did not have the funds to make this happen. Six picnic tables were donated by PeeWee Kincaid and Sherri McKee, Lloyd and Bernice Miller, Mike Harvey and MaLinda

Basketball court installed in 2003.

Photo taken at the 2023 Sunday School Rally Day.

Left to Right: T. J. Podzimek, Marleigh Robinson and Ryland McKee



(Harvey) Nohava, Mic Ruhland, Dennis and Nelda Hultgren, and Dorothy Borgman.

The youth also took on a cemetery project this year by restoring and resetting the monument honoring Mabel Christine Nelson. Mabel died in 1909 and was the infant daughter of Union Creek Pastor C. H. Nelson.

Union Creek maintains high standards for our church building and property. This year, the front steps were repaired and painted. New rock was spread in the parking lot and old shrubbery was cleaned up south of the driveway.

Interior improvements included the restoration of the tolling bell which was called back into service after many years during our All-Saints' Sunday worship service in November.

The Union Creek Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church continued to be active in local and area events. Their tradition of meeting for a Christmas Luncheon in December remains a favorite event of the group. Members of the group attended area and state conferences and meetings and maintained an active mission plan that included quilting and assembling sewing and hygiene kits for Lutheran World Relief. In October, several women visited the Sioux City Gospel Mission where they helped serve the noon meal and toured the facility. They brought with them 14 quilts, treats, and groceries for the mission's pantry. Attending this event were June Heeren, Betty Hair, Joann Hedeby, Myra Vreugdenhil, Dorothy Borgman, and Nelda Hultgren.

MONUMENT HONORING MABEL CHRISTINE NELSON

Photos July 2024



2004

In his letter to the congregation at the January 23, 2005, annual meeting, Council President Keith Kjar referred to 2004 as, "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." This quote from *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens summed up the year 2004 quite well.

The hiring of Pastor Steve Larson created some budgetary concerns for the church. We remained a single parish since splitting from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Akron. During the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on January 18, 2004, the council recommended offering Pastor Steve a two-thirds (2/3) contract for the upcoming year. Full time was 54 hours and half-time (1/2) was 27 hours. The cost for a two-thirds Pastoral Contract Proposal would be \$31,636.00. After a discussion, it was brought to our attention that we were already \$6,000 short of our budget this year. Never running from a challenge, the Union Creek congregation voted to dig deeper to meet the budget and offer Pastor Steve the contract.

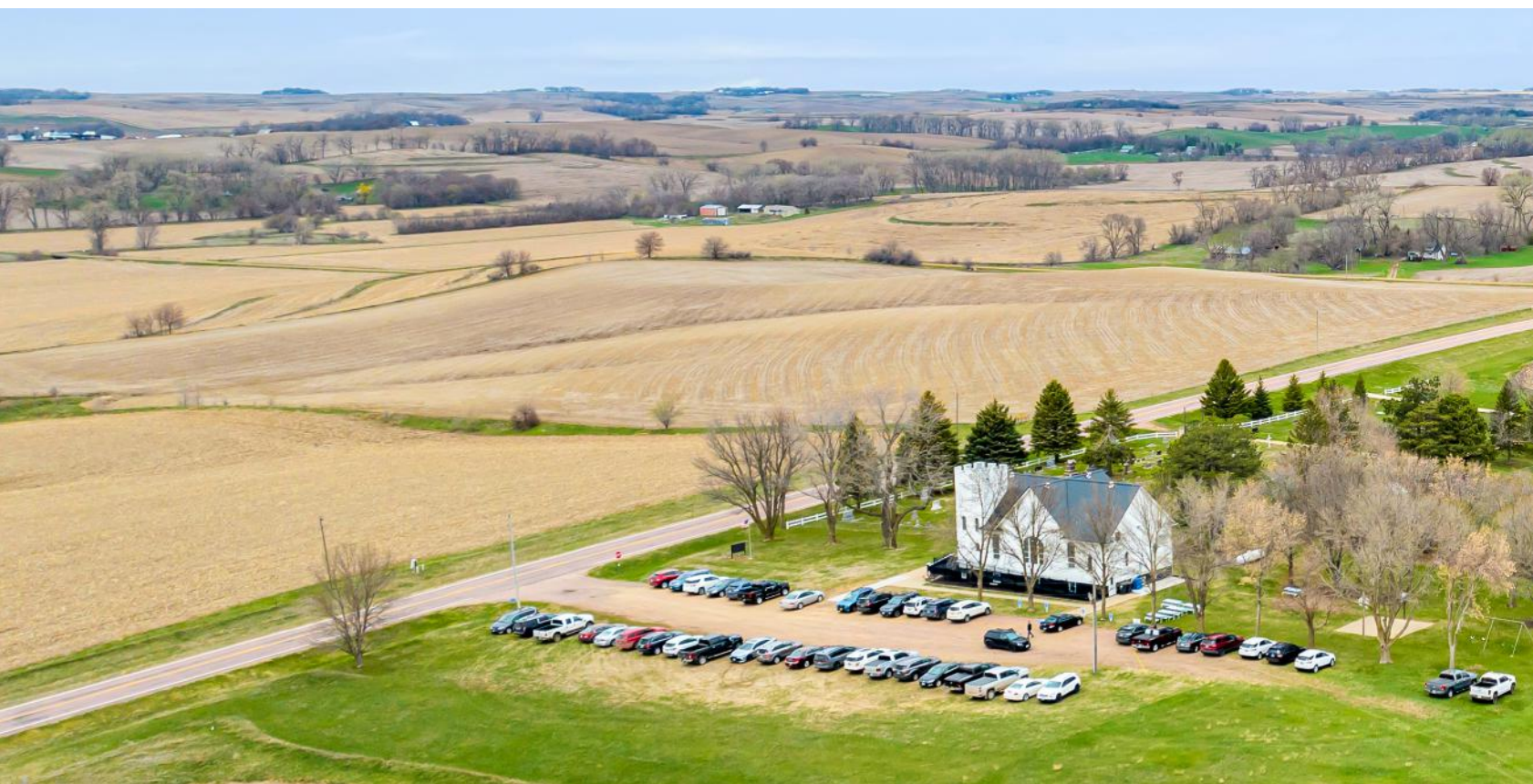
Reflecting on "the best of times," Union Creek was the recipient of a \$25,000 gift from the estate of Florence Peterson, a long time Union County

resident. This money was put into a CD for future use.

We celebrated 100th birthdays with two members: Henry Fickbohm and Wayne Waterman. We were blessed to have these two gentlemen as part of our church family. Henry Fickbohm passed away on June 7, 2006, at the age of 102 years and 13 days. Wayne Waterman passed away on February 25, 2007, at the age of 102 years, 10 months, and 10 days.

We welcomed 19 new people into our church family this year, bringing our membership total to 172 members. Our average attendance for worship services remained steady at 67 people.

The youth remained active in our church and community. The creation of an outdoor worship area was a fine contribution to our church. With the help of PeeWee Kincaid and Sherri McKee, a fire pit, wooden cross, and amphitheater-style benches were built in the pasture east of the church. In the 2004 Youth Report, youth co-coordinators MaLinda (Harvey) Nohava and Sherri McKee showed every month filled with activities, fundraisers, and mission-based service projects.



The year 2004 marked the first year we held elections for council and other appointed positions on the first Sunday of December. By doing this, outgoing council members could be acknowledged for their service and new members could be installed at the end of each Annual Congregational Meeting. This change proved an effective way to get new council members and officers in place earlier in the year. Committees were also formed earlier and could be updated in the annual WELCA book.

In the fall of 2004, Dennis Hultgren took on three monumental projects for Union Creek: 1) the writing of new by-laws, 2) revision of constitution, and 3) the research of the deeds and land holdings on the church.

The Union Creek WELCA group continued mission work for Global Health Ministries and Lutheran World Relief. The WELCA Fall Auction, held the Friday evening after Thanksgiving, raised \$1,493.00 despite low attendance.

On the last Sunday of November, the Worship & Music Committee organized our first Hanging of the Greens Service, a tradition that continues today. Union Creek was represented at the Annual Akron Community Christmas Program this year by Anthony Miller, Annie Jo Kjar, Allison Kjar, Eliza Kjar, and Joni (Noble) Kjar. This group, along with soloists Kayla McCrill, Annie Kjar, and Lakin Kjose also offered special music on Christmas Eve.

Then came “the worst of times.” On October 10, 2004, Pastor Larson announced his resignation, and once again Union Creek was without a pastor. Dennis Hultgren and Joni (Kjar) Noble were diligent and quite successful in their search for pulpit supply to bring us a weekly message. The following is a partial list of those who led Sunday services for us during this time.

- Carolyn Salberg
- “Born Anew” (youth group from Augustana College)
- Rev. Jim Olson (Rostered Ministry Coordinator of the SD Synod, ELCA)
- Karen Kraus (Lutherans Outdoors)
- Pat Eidness (Faith Family Style)
- Joni Noble
- Brad Vreugdenhil
- Becky Senner
- Rev. Mary Wilkens
- Pastor Michael Girlinghouse
- Lori Marty
- Neil Peck, UMC Lay Speaker
- Rev. Laurice Streyffeler, retired UMC
- Pastor Jerry Crow, retired ELCA
- Various volunteers from Union Creek

While this filled the need for a weekly service and message, we were still left with a void in our pastoral care needs.

Photo by Travis Robinson - April 22, 2023



2005

“We have come through a full year without the leadership of a pastor, and this was accomplished by the faithfulness and willingness of each of you.” Keith Kjar, Council President, January 2006 Annual Report to the Congregation.

As to be expected in any church without a pastor for over 14 months, our attendance was down slightly from previous years. However, we were blessed with great pulpit supply and a faithful congregation.

Even without pastoral leadership, the work of maintaining and improving our building continued. The WELCA ladies, Sherri McKee, PeeWee Kincaid, Val Hohenstein and others took on the task of updating both restrooms.

Sherri McKee and PeeWee Kincaid donated Quiet Bags for use by the young children during worship services. PeeWee built a white wooden cross to hang and store the bags which are still used today. Another change this year was the switch from wax candles to oil candles.

The highlight of the year for the Union Creek WELCA ladies was the hosting of the SE SD Conference of The Women of the ELCA on April 30, 2005. Approximately 100 ladies attended from different churches. Union Creek Lutheran Church was the newest church in the conference, so this was a special day.

The annual Vacation Bible School program was successfully held in August with 30 young people in attendance.

The Union Creek Youth continued to be active during the year as noted in the Annual Report. The report now took two full pages to detail their mission projects and activities for the year. In March, the youth attended a Maundy Thursday Seder Supper at the Luther Center on the USD camps in Vermillion.

Union Creek was once again represented

in the Annual Akron Community Christmas Program. Joni (Kjar) Noble was in charge of program design and printing, Nelda Hultgren served on the Organizing Committee and was chairperson of refreshment. Tessa and Lakin Kjose represented Union Creek with a Christmas duet of “The First Noel.”

Following is a partial list of those who led our Sunday worship services during 2005:

- Pastor Jean Morse
- Pastor Laurice Streyffeler, Retired, UMC
- Neil Peck, Lay Speaker, UMC
- Rev. Bob Hanson
- Rev. Michael Girlinghouse
- The Kjar Family on Christmas Day with Annie Kjar performing a monologue as Mary

We were also blessed with several guest organists:

- Marilyn Abraham
- Marie Lykken
- Christina Ackerman
- Mike Pedersen

Since October 2004, Union Creek had functioned without a permanent pastor. While the work of the church continued, it was time to fill our pastoral void. From a financial perspective, this could only be accomplished by forming a parish with another area church. Since we had rejoined the South Dakota Synod of the ELCA, the option would be another South Dakota ELCA Lutheran congregation. At this time, Roseni Lutheran Church, 12 miles northwest of Union Creek, was also without a pastor and a two-point parish was formed between the churches. Under the guidance of Keith Kjar (Union Creek Council President) and Doug Weevik (Roseni Council President) a Joint Call Committee was formed as the search for a new pastor began in earnest.

2006

On January 17, 2006, the Joint Call Committee interviewed Rev. Carla Nelson. On February 5, 2006, both congregations voted to extend a call to Pastor Carla to serve as full-time pastor of Union Creek and Roseni Lutheran Churches. Pastor and her family arrived in May, and installation services were held at both churches on Memorial Day weekend.

Pastor Carla Nelson was born on the west side of Chicago, Illinois and graduated from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa in 1982 with a degree in mathematics. She joined the Peace Corps and spent three years teaching mathematics and organizing women's farm cooperatives in Ghana, West Africa. After returning to the U. S. she studied at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and graduated in 1990. Pastor Carla served Gracious Savior Lutheran Church in Detroit, Michigan for almost 16 years before moving to South Dakota with her husband Rev. Kevin Jensen, son Samuel, and daughter Kendra.

Pastor Carla's husband Rev. Kevin Jensen was born and raised near Irene, South Dakota and accepted a call in 2006 as pastor for the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. Following his time there, he served Nathanael Lutheran Church in Alcester, S.D. and Hudson Lutheran Church in Hudson, S. D.

Although Union Creek was without a pastor for the first five months of 2006, several projects still came to fruition during the year. A sitting room for Pastor Carla was created north of the altar; a new organ was purchased; and the congregation voted to install central air conditioning in the sanctuary.

Following Pastor Carla's arrival, a Joint Worship and Music Committee was formed between the two churches. Musicians from both congregations met often to consider worship strategies, hymns, and liturgies. This joint committee continues to meet with the pastor four or five times each year and is comprised of talented and gifted musicians from both churches.



PASTOR CARLA NELSON

*Left to right:
Saul Ortiz,
Kendra Jensen,
Pastor Kevin Jensen,
Pastor Carla Nelson,
Samuel Jensen and
Nicole Mueller*

2007

Central air conditioning was installed in the sanctuary and the basement in 2007, making summer worship, summer weddings, and August Vacation Bible School much more comfortable. Controlling the humidity also proved beneficial in preserving church furnishings, including the piano and organ.

New round tables were purchased for the basement this year, giving our fellowship area an updated look.

This was a busy year for the Property Committee at Union Creek. Missing shingles were replaced on the church roof and the roof on the bell tower was repaired at the same time. The handicap ramp was reconditioned. For safety purposes the old cave was finally filled in, trees were trimmed, and the grove was cleaned up. We are blessed to have selfless volunteers to help with maintenance work.

After attending a Seder Meal at the Luther Center in Vermillion in 2005, Union Creek youth, under the guidance of Sherri McKee, hosted the first Union Creek Christian Seder Meal. A Christian Seder is a service that commemorates the deliverance of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. The focal point of this Passover event is a communal meal called the Seder. Wine, bitter herbs, eggs, charoset, matzah (unleavened bread), lamb, chicken, vegetables, and rice are served at the meal. No butter or dairy products are used in the preparation of the meal. The Haggadah is read during the meal, telling the story of the exodus from Egypt.

The WELCA group continued to be very active this year. The group met twice each month, once for a work meeting and once for bible study. Bandages were crocheted and rolled and sent to Global Health Mission. For Lutheran World Relief, the group assembled AIDS kits and quilts. Locally, treats were baked, and tray favors were created and delivered to Alcester and Akron care centers. Nelda Hultgren was chosen as a delegate to the 20th Annual S.D. Synodical Convention in Madison,

S.D. The women also hosted wedding and baby showers and served meals at funerals.

With generous donations from the church, individuals, matching Thrivent funds, and free-will offerings, our Vacation Bible School program continued for the seventh year. Without the help of wonderful volunteers, this program would not be possible.

2007 VBS volunteers: Patti Ericson, Annie Kjar, Aaron Harvey, Allison Kjar, Pastor Carla Nelson, MaLinda (Harvey) Nohava, Elaine Swift, Mary Jean Frerichs, Sherri McKee, Joni (Kjar) Noble, Felicia Miller, Becky Kjose, Audrey Ericson, Joann Hedeby, April Sommervold, Nancy Forsythe, Robin Doty, Selene Van Wyk, Nelda Hultgren, and Carol Forslund.





Above: Table setting for Seder meal at Union Creek.

Left: Fruit and vegetable trays for the Seder meal.

Right: Introduction to the Seder meal, printed in the service books.

A Christian Seder

Welcome

Welcome to our Passover Seder:

Tonight, we recount a story told every year for over 3,000 years. We gather tonight as a family of families to remember the bondage of our ancestors, so that we, as sons and daughters, may be inspired to cherish the freedom we now have, to recognize the bondage of those who are not yet free, and to encourage our sons and daughters to help in the struggle to free all people.

**Without knowledge of our past,
we cannot see the future.
Without memory,
we have no present.
Without knowing what is flawed,
how can we know what is whole?**



THE CHURCH BASEMENT, CIRCA 1948



THE CHURCH BASEMENT WITH NEW ROUND TABLES, PHOTO 2023

2008

No major projects were undertaken for the church this year, but there are always small tasks needing attention.

Throughout this historical narrative, there have been countless stories of members volunteering to keep Union Creek running smoothly. From leading worship services to trimming trees, this attitude has been present in our church since our humble beginning in 1874. In January, at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, long-time member Alma Seely read a thank you she had written to all the “silent workers.” She talked about those who are recognized for all their deeds and hard work and reminded us that there are many volunteers behind the scenes who also should be remembered and recognized.

This year, new hymnals were introduced: The Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW). Copies were purchased by individuals and families with memorial dedication stickers placed in the front of each book. The hymnal contains many old standard hymns, but also many new pieces we have come to enjoy. Head organist, Donna Swanson and Joni (Kjar) Noble, assistant musician, enjoyed learning the new music. The Joint Worship and Music Committee still refers to the Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW) and With One Voice (WOV) for hymns and liturgical texts.

On July 4, 2008, Union Creek and Roseni Lutheran Churches came together for our first



Cookies donated to the cookie walk fundraiser.

joint service. Union Creek hosted the event, and a potluck meal followed the service.

The Union Creek Youth held their first Annual Cookie Walk on the first Sunday in December. This is another wonderful fundraising tradition that continues today.

In January, at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, long-time member Alma Seely read a thank you she had written to all the “silent workers.” She talked about those who are recognized for all their deeds and hard work and reminded us that there are many volunteers behind the scenes who also should be remembered and recognized.

2009

Union Creek celebrated its 135th anniversary in 2009. A special service was held in conjunction with the Annual Harvest Festival on November 15th. Dennis Hultgren, writer and church historian, prepared the service. The WELCA group assisted with decorations, and Nelda Hultgren provided vintage hats for the congregation to wear that day.

In her Annual Report to the Congregation for the year 2009, Pastor Carla noted this was a “year of storms.” We had two snowstorms in April resulting in cancelled church services. Summer storms were prevalent and Autumn rains hampered the harvesting of bumper crops of corn and soybeans. Mother Nature finished the year with a history-making Christmas Eve/Christmas Day blizzard which shut down everything in most of South Dakota and Western Iowa for several days.

The passing of the ELCA social statement on human sexuality initiated another type of storm this year. The following is taken from Pastor Carla Nelson’s 2009 Report to the Congregation. “The statement, which passed by a 2/3 majority vote at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) church-wide assembly in Minneapolis in August, allows individual congregations to call a rostered leader in a publicly accountable lifelong monogamous same gender relationship without being disciplined. Strong feelings on both sides were expressed across the nation. The conference of bishops continues to wrestle with implementation of the possible changes, so nothing is truly settled yet. Bishop Zellmer wants to remind churches in the South Dakota Synod that the decision to call a pastor, has, does, and will continue to belong to the congregation.”

This decision definitely created turmoil, and there were congregations across the country who chose to end their affiliation with the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Union Creek remained with the ELCA.

The youth continued in their mission work and fundraisers. The 2009 monthly Noisy Offerings were donated to ELCA World Hunger, A-W Prom Project, Heifer International, the Ronald McDonald House, UC VBS, Bless-a-Pack/Share-a-Pack, the USD Luther Center, Sioux City Gospel Mission, World Mission Prayer League, and Mid Sioux Adopt-a-Family. The group continued their tradition of providing meals prior to our mid-week Lent and Advent services, hosting the Seder Meal, and preparing Easter breakfast.

This year marked the first year the youth hosted their Annual Tea Party. Tables were “sold” to individuals who decorated them, prepared their own menu, and invited guests to fill their table. At this inaugural event, Annie Kjar sang while we enjoyed our food. Following the light meal, a special program was held in the sanctuary. “Toys, Games, and Pastimes of Children in the 1880s,” was presented by Lois Beckner of Aberdeen. After the program, everyone returned to the basement for desert. This wonderful tradition continues today.





TEA PARTY TABLES



2010

Although the year 2010 was quiet in terms of church projects, our WELCA group remained active. The women met for eleven bible studies and ten work meetings. June Heeren made a beautiful king-sized quilt that was sold at the fall auction, and their mission work for Lutheran World Relief and Global Missions continued.

In addition to global ministries, local care centers in Akron and Alcester were supplied with lunches and treats and the women organized three Family League events at Union Creek. A benefit for Keith Kjar was held in Akron and the Union Creek WELCA women paid for the meat and buns for the event.



Photo by Sherri McKee, March 2024



Photo by Jerry Klumper

2011

This year Union Creek took on another substantial building upgrade when a new black metal roof was added. A committee was formed to obtain bids and chose a color. Committee members were: Dwight Fickbohm, Lance Johnson, PeeWee Kincaid, and Dene Doty.

This project was made possible by donations from various groups and individuals. At the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Congregation it was noted there was \$4,000.00 in the Building Fund that would be a great start to the fundraising project.

Other donations were: \$1,000.00 from the Youth, \$3,000.00 from the Cemetery Association, and \$2,500.00 from WELCA. The roof was installed at a cost of \$21,264.00, and the black color compliments the building nicely.

In addition to the roof, new front doors were installed with a generous donation from the Harvey family in memory of Don and Eleanor Harvey. As always, we are grateful to the generosity of members and friends of Union Creek Lutheran Church who make these improvements possible.

2012

Writing the “new history” of Union Creek has proved a challenge. To tell the story of Union Creek since 2000, this writer has read through each letter submitted to every annual report for the past 25 years in an attempt to find those “historical nuggets” that merit documentation. When I opened the 2012 Annual Reports to the Congregation, the first letter I read was Pastor Carla Nelson’s report. In her letter, she summed up 2012 in the best way possible and I made the decision to include her report in its entirety.

“You crown the year with your bounty and your carts overflow with abundance.”

Psalm 65:11

On his late-night show, David Letterman often had a top ten list and I thought it would be fun to pattern my report to the congregation this year in the same fashion. As we look back on this year of ministry together at Union Creek, here some of the highlights...

#10 – New Signs

The County asked that our faded signs at the Big Springs corner and The Ericson Cemetery corner either be repaired or removed. Thanks to legwork from the council we have a nice two-sided metal sign already up and, in the spring, the other one will go up as well. Great evangelism pointing the community to Union Creek.

#9 – Confirmation

Union Creek and Roseni had a wonderful week at NeSoDak Confirmation Camp in Waubay, SD. Pastor and Damien Ericson attended from Union Creek and hope to attend again this summer. Confirmation continues to meet on Wednesday evenings through the school year. We have two students this year, Damien Ericson and Holly Jo Van Wyk.

#8 – Food (serving at Akron’s Farmers Market, The Banquet in Sioux Falls and Union Creek’s Annual Tea.)

It was a hot! hot! hot! day for cool! cool! cool!

sub sandwiches. Not as many of the community braved the weather the night Union Creek Youth served the Akron’s Farmers Market, so the youth donated the extra subs to the next Family League dinner which was on Rally Day Sunday.

July 13, 2012, members from Roseni and Union Creek served nearly 400 delicious meals of homemade lasagna at The Banquet soup kitchen in Sioux Falls. Thanks to all who volunteered.

The 4th annual Union Creek Tea was again a smashing success. This year’s speaker was Jane Green with the South Dakota Humanities Council, who spoke on shoes. Good food, good fellowship.

#7 – Church Gatherings

We celebrated one infant baptism: Elise AnnMarie Coyle. On a sad note we gathered for the funeral services of beloved members June Heeren and Ruth Stoutenburg.

#6 – WELCA

Our faithful ladies met monthly for Bible Study and meetings in the church fellowship hall. The Fall Auction was a tremendous success and as a result the women were able to make generous donations to the church, including a new refrigerator (the old one went out the week before Vacation Bible School) as well as support several missions and ministries outside of Union Creek.

#5 – Hanging of the Greens and Christmas Eve Candlelight

Always beautiful services in celebration of our Lord’s birth, our church secretary, Joni Noble did a wonderful job of writing the Hanging of the Greens service and putting together the Christmas Eve service including the special candles on the altar. Joni has a real gift for worship planning, and it was especially moving this year. Many, many thanks.

#4 – Our Sunday School (Christmas pageant)

The children practice on the Wednesday evenings of Advent and the one before the program seemed especially trying. Yet, come Sunday,

everything came together so beautifully. Special thanks to all the teachers and substitutes who so faithfully share Jesus with our children. They are Patti Ericson, MaLinda Harvey, Letitia Robinson, Angela Ericson, Jessica Minor, April Sommervold, and Sherri McKee. Our organist, Donna Swanson, has been leading the children's bell choir and the bells add a special sound to our service.

#3 – YAP (Youth and Parents)

Once a month usually on the first Wednesday, our pre-school and elementary age children gather for an evening of learning and fun. It is nice to have some special activities for that age group and it's the parents (with help from grandparents) who sign up to lead these events.

#2 – Vacation Bible School

VBS continues to be one of our strongest outreach ministries of the year. We were filled to the "gills" with children, teachers and helpers. Special thanks to Sherri McKee & Pee Wee Kincaid for all they do to make VBS and the youth programming possible at Union Creek.

...and the #1 highlight for Union Creek this past year – drum roll please..... Communion.

How blessed we are to worship God in this place, share communion for the forgiveness of our sins, lift the name of Jesus in praise and share the name of Jesus with others. How blessed we are to be church. Thanks be to God.

With you on The Way,
Pastor Carla Nelson



THE CHURCH, DECORATED FOR CHRISTMAS

November 26, 2017

2013

Seven elementary children at Union Creek received acolyte training this year. As we all know, the mantra spoken at Union Creek is “once an acolyte, always an acolyte.” Even today, on Sundays when no youth are present, adults step up and handle the job beautifully. As Pastor Carla wrote, “I believe God wants each one of us who are called

children of God to feel that sense of belonging.” Union Creek has always encouraged our youth to participate in worship, beginning as acolytes, moving on to become Confirmation-aged readers for our mid-week services, eventually serving on committees, and generously volunteering their time as adults. We are indeed a “family.”

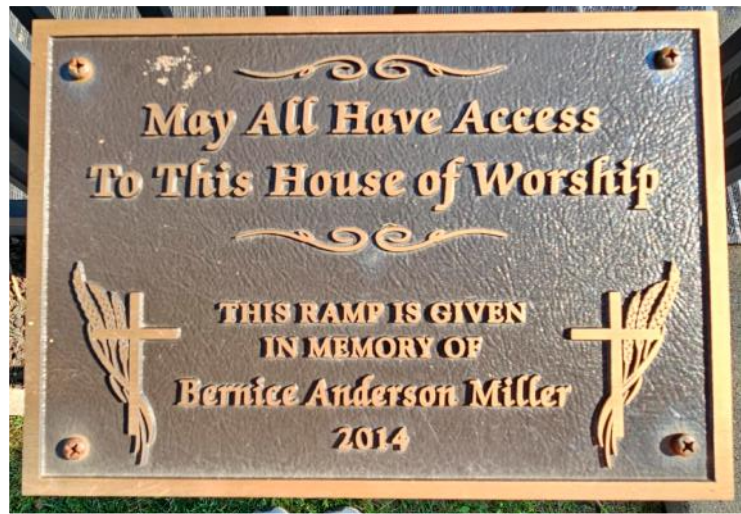
*Below: The handicap ramp donated by the family of Bernice (Lloyd) Miller in 2014.
Right Page Inset: The ramp dedication plaque.
Photos July 2024*



2014

One of the most notable improvements to our church building in recent years was the memorial gift of a new handicap ramp by the family of Bernice (Lloyd) Miller in 2014. The old wooden ramp was removed, and the new metal ramp was installed in its place along the south side of the church. Total cost of the project was \$15,935.67. The ramp is beautiful and will serve our congregation for years. The Miller family included a metal plaque at the bottom

of the ramp near the back door of the church. The plaque reads: "May all have access to this house of worship. This ramp is given in memory of Bernice Anderson Miller, 2014." Union Creek is blessed with this functional and beautiful addition to our building and thanks the Miller family for their thoughtfulness and generosity.



2015

In July 2015, Pastor Carla Nelson, Damien Ericson, and Patti Ericson attended the National Youth Gathering in Detroit, Michigan. In August, nearly 40 youth invaded Union Creek for a week of VBS. Over 100 people attended the closing program and picnic at the end of the week.

The WELCA group served at The Banquet in

Sioux Falls. Verdell and Donna Swanson, Karen McCrill and Paulette Groom arrived early to start roasting the 30 turkeys. Paulette Vanderham, Audrey Ericson, Jean and Dene Doty, Warren Wilkens, and Pastor Carla arrived later to help serve. Union Creek and Roseni supplied the 38 gallons of milk needed for the event, and by the end of the day 386 people enjoyed a hot meal.



Union Creek's Pulpit



Christmas Day, 2016

2016

In his annual report to the congregation, Council President Brad Vreugdenhil wrote, “In a world that seems to move faster and faster, we are so blessed to have this place of worship. A place where, for a few hours each week, we can block out all the noise of the world and remember that God is still in charge of our lives.”

In 2016, Mike Pederson was hired to paint the interior of the church. It was quite a job that required large scaffolding which allowed Mike to reach the highest part of the ceiling. The new light blue paint freshened the look of our sanctuary, and the color coordinated with the “blues” in our pew cushions. During the painting process, Mike found

an area where he could see several layers of paint from years gone by. A few layers in, he found a blue color almost identical to the color he was painting in 2016. In addition to walls, the altar and pulpit were also refreshed with a coat of white paint. Afterwards, Sherry Fickbohm donated hours of her time and talent to repaint all of the gold trim and restore the original look of the altar and pulpit.

The total cost of the project was \$7,700.00. Donations from the Cemetery Association (\$2,500.00), WELCA (\$3,000.00), and many individuals helped cover the cost. As Brad wrote, it is indeed wonderful to have such a beautiful building for meditation, worship and fellowship.

2017

In 2017, Lutherans world-wide celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation and one of the formidable figures associated with the reformation, Martin Luther. Both Union Creek and Roseni had doors prominently displayed in the front of the sanctuary to commemorate Martin Luther's defiant act of displaying 95 theses (or critiques) of the Roman Church. Special thanks were given to Verdell and Donna Swanson for making the symbolic door a reality in our worship space.

"Flat Luthers," (pictures of Martin Luther) were distributed at the end of the 2016 Annual Meeting. The challenge was to carry these "Flat Luthers" with us during our travels in 2017. Many members shared photos of their adventures with "Flat Luther."

Pastor Carla and her husband Pastor Kevin Jensen celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary this year. After leaving the Luther Center in Vermillion, Pastor Kevin was called to Nathanael Lutheran in Alcester, South Dakota and Hudson Lutheran in Hudson, South Dakota. Between the two, the couple served four Lutheran congregations in our area.

Union Creek Lutheran Church addressed another major renovation for the church this year with the faithful support

of our members. New carpeting in the basement, the stairs, and the interior ramp was installed this year. The full cost of the project was \$6,918.16. Completion of this project was accomplished with donations of \$5,000.00 from UC WELCA, \$1,000.00 from the Cemetery Association, and \$1,000 from Joni Noble in memory of her mother, Jan Lundberg. Sherry Fickbohm sewed new curtains for the basement windows to finalize the renovation.

This year the congregation also voted to purchase new carpet for the sanctuary.



Flat Luther with Lay Speaker Niel Peck and Sherri McKee.



THE ADVENTURES OF FLAT LUTHER

*Above left: Flat Luther on a cruise to
Alaska with PeeWee Kincaid.*

*Above right: Flat Luther with
Pastor Carla Nelson.*

*Right: Flat Luther with buns from a
Souper Bowl sandwich prep day.*



2018

“There have been improvements in our church this year. The biggest improvement has been the new carpet in the sanctuary. In the world of “bigger and faster” in today’s economy, our small church is still here and surviving because of our members who are willing to do what it takes to get things done—whether with money or giving of their time and talents when needed.” Robin Heeren, Council President.

The installation of new carpet in the sanctuary began February 5, 2018. As with every major building improvement, there were individual contributions, the WELCA ladies contributed \$2,500.00, and the Cemetery Association added \$1,000.00 toward the project. The total cost of the project was \$3,961.95.

2019

Building improvements continued in 2019 with the installation of new laminate flooring in the kitchen and both bathrooms in August.

The Youth-sponsored Tea Party was held in March with 47 people in attendance. The entertainment was a presentation of "The Stavig Letters." The program was an interesting rendition of the true story of two brothers who corresponded through letters to each other between Norway and the United States.

The mission project for VBS this year was titled "Read for the Stars." The goal was to collect new and gently used elementary reading books and donate them to a school of our choice. Amazingly, 999 books were collected and donated to the Rosebud Elementary School in South Dakota.



New flower bed installed 2024

2020

In his President's Message, delivered at the January 2020 Annual Meeting, Robin Heeren touched on the year to come. We could not know then how correct his insights were.

"As I get older and the outside world continues to change at light speed, my personal life and my church life chugs along at a speed I can comprehend. 2020 is the beginning of a new decade and change is inevitable."

Change was indeed inevitable, although we could not have imagined how our personal and spiritual lives would change when the COVID outbreak swept across the globe.

In February we began hearing about COVID-19 and by mid-March, most church activities were canceled. We quickly made decisions on alternative ways to bring worship to our members. Virtual services began at Union Creek on March 29, 2020 with Joni Noble live streaming weekly services to our Facebook page. Many Sunday mornings, Pastor Carla, organist Donna Swanson, and Joni were the only ones in the building.

Pastor Carla proposed the idea of creating monthly "worship booklets" people could use to follow along with the live streams. Secretary Joni Noble put together a monthly mailing packet that included liturgies, scripture readings, and prayers for each week. The mailing also included the monthly Creation newsletter with announcements and prayer concerns. Members could stop at the church and pick up pre-filled individual

communion cups and wafers which allowed them to participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion during the live streamed services.

Pastor Carla made it her goal to be in continued contact with our members through many, many phone calls. To stay in touch with the youth and their families, she also distributed palm branches on Palm Sunday, Easter egg coloring kits during Holy Week, and Mother's Day cards to color which were later collected and mailed to members and care facilities.

During the warm summer months, worship continued outside, on the front lawn or in the back yard. The relentless wind we are all familiar with at Union Creek presented problems, however, no service was rained out the entire summer. Outdoor services continued until the cool October weather forced us inside again. Face masks and social distancing were implemented to assure the safety of our members.

At Christmas, Union Creek and Roseni joined in creating an Advent Daily Devotional Book. Members from both congregations wrote daily devotionals based on Christmas hymns. These were printed and delivered with an Advent candle for families use to keep connected to each other and to God in the Advent/Christmas season.

Building upgrades in 2020 included the Sunday School room floors at a cost of \$200.00.

Below: The sanctuary, decorated for Christmas.



CHRISTMAS AT UNION CREEK



Above: The sanctuary decorated for Christmas.

Below: Nativity scene donated in memory of Leonard and Violet Swanson.





Above: Christmas pageant, 2021.

Below: Christmas pageant, 2018.





Above: Christmas pageant, 2019.

Below: Advent service December 2023.

Left to right: Brad Vreugdenhil, Lance Johnson, Deb Vreugdenhil, Waylon McKee and Joni Noble.



2021

As research carried me forward into more recent history, this writer is grateful to Pastor Carla and Council President David Ericson for capturing the year-in-review so thoroughly and elegantly in their annual reports. There is no reason for me to reinvent the wheel. The following is an excerpt from Pastor Carla's 2021 report.

"The Storm is Passing Over." I do believe, church, 'the storm is passing over,' and while we will never go back to what was, we have learned much along the way. I am most grateful for the freedom to try new ways of 'doing' church. We added services, worshipped outdoors, offered VBS in different formats. We fed people, learned new technology on the fly, made hundreds of phone calls, and wrote letters to keep the community as joined together as possible. We baptized outdoors and in smaller services, gathered for funerals at gravesides, and held weddings around hay bale altars. Some of our attempts failed and some sailed.

January: Pastor tested positive for COVID, and, out of an abundance of caution, we cancelled the January 31st worship services at both churches.

February: We shared "Ashes-To-Go" at Roseni and met in-person for an Ash Wednesday service at Union Creek.

March: Mid-week Lent services were virtual. The conference clergy, under the leadership of Vicar Scott Munger, worked together to produce a midweek service. Both churches also purchased licenses to be able to legally record our weekly services with music.

April: We gathered for in-person worship at both churches on Easter Sunday.

May: We celebrated 15 years together as pastor and church.

July: Members of Union Creek and Roseni helped Nathanael Lutheran serve a meal at The Banquet in Sioux Falls.

August: Union Creek offered a wonderful VBS nightly for a week.

September: A Bible was given to Waylon

McKee.

November: The Union Creek WELCA Fall sale was a smashing success.

December: Advent services at Union Creek focused on the book of Revelation. Both churches enjoyed beautiful Christmas Eve services. We had a wonderful retirement service at Union Creek thanking Donna Swanson for her many years of faithful service as organist. Pastor tested positive for Covid (again). Special...they called me special.

Join me in thanking our church secretaries, Stef Bonaiuto (Roseni) and Joni Noble (Union Creek). They are so faithful and do a fabulous job with bulletins and newsletters.

Joni is also our tech guru at Union Creek, weekly ensuring Union Creek services reach much farther than ever imagined.

Thank you for all your work. We are so thankful for our music leaders, and as mentioned above, we gave thanks for Donna Swanson's faithful years of service as Union Creek's organist. Union Creek welcomes Kathy Knight who has agreed to play the organ the first Sunday of each month. We are truly grateful to Joni Noble who plays piano 2-4 Sundays a month now.

Thank you to Doug Wevik (Roseni) and David Ericson (Union Creek), our church council presidents. I have weekly sought their wise leadership, counsel, and advice. Thank you to the leadership of both churches, you are treasured and prayed over and for often. And finally, thank you church...we are so blessed to "journey on".

With you On The Way,
Pastor Carla

And from Council President, David Ericson:

This year was not without its challenges. One of the largest challenges of the year was the retirement of our steadfast organist, Donna Swanson. Although it will not be easy to replace Donna or

move forward, we will. As one council member said at a recent meeting "we have the best church."

Perhaps the best example of that is the changing of the guard on cradle role duties. I am not sure if April was able to see into the future and Felicia closed her eyes for a minute, but this has been one of the busiest years our church has had for new members in quite some time, and it just so happens it is Felicia's first year managing the cradle role.

As a council president there are two things that are most enjoyable. First is new membership and second is baptisms. This year at Union Creek we were fortunate enough to enjoy a several of both, which tells me our future is bright here. While other rural churches seem to be floundering, I think we will march forward stronger than ever.

Regards,
David Ericson

During 2021, Union Creek welcomed 19 members to our roster, bringing our membership to 146 full members and 52 baptized only for a total of 198. Eleven were received by baptism (Liam Callender, Amery Doty, Sienna Doty, Zoe Heeren, Ethan Judd, Tuff Voegeli, Wylde Voegeli, Everlee Kenefick, Riggs Ericson, Esther Kjose, and Olivia Kjose.) Eight were received by Affirmation of Faith (Nick, Kristal, Ryland and Waylon McKee and Tom, Heather, Bella, and TJ Podzimek).

As David mentioned above, Felicia Miller had her hands full as the new Cradle Roll Superintendent. To return our Cradle Roll display to its original look, Felicia created small "wooden cradles" to hold the information of each baptized child. She also mails monthly informational packets to parents. Children remain on our Cradle Roll until age three when they begin Sunday School.



2022

In late summer Pastor Carla announced she would be leaving Union Creek and Roseni. She and her husband, Rev. Kevin Jensen, accepted a call to Grace Lutheran Church in Sturgis, South Dakota. Our church was finally getting back into its normal routine following the COVID years when this news hit us. Pastor Carla's last Sunday with us was November 13, 2022.

The timing of Pastor's departure fell at the beginning of the Advent Season. Once again, Union Creek stepped up to the plate. With the help of volunteers and pulpit supply our Sunday worship services and mid-week Advent suppers and services continued uninterrupted.

Pastor April Peterson

Marie Lykken from Roseni introduced us to retired ELCA Pastor April Peterson who had recently moved to Yankton. She graciously agreed to serve as interim pastor for Union Creek and Roseni, preaching 2-3 times per month, usually the first and third Sundays to accommodate our Holy Communion schedule. Pastor April soon became a beloved member of our church family, and her musical talents were extraordinary. She continues to serve our congregations when Pastor Nancy Eckels is away.

Three members of our Joint Worship and Music Committee— Joni Noble from Union Creek and Marie Lykken and Ilene Lerseth from Roseni—worked together to coordinate pulpit supply for the weeks Pastor April was not with us. Additional pulpit supply during 2022-2023 were:

- 11.20.22—Pastor Paul Johnston, retired ELCA
- 01.08.23 Wayne Tjeerdsma, Gideons International
- 02.19.23 (Transfiguration Sunday) Paulette Groon, Sherri McKee, April Sommervold, Letitia Robinson, Brad and Deb Vreugdenhil, Tom Podzimek, Lance Johnson, Joni Noble, and David Ericson

- 03.05.23 Pastor Jeff Backer, St. Dymas of South Dakota
- 03.19.23 Pastor Chris Matson, Church on the Street, Sioux Falls, SD
- 04.02.23 (Palm Sunday) Brad & Deb Vreugdenhil and Joni Noble
- 04.16.23 Pastor Alan Blankenfeld, S.D. Synod Rural Ministries Liaison
- 05.07.23 Pastor Kwen Sanderson, Mike Durfee State Prison Ministry
- 05.21.23 Pastor Aaron Matson, Companion Synod Coordinator in Nicaragua and Cameroon
- 06.04.23 (Holy Trinity) Various Union Creek Volunteers
- 06.18.23 David Ericson (Father's Day)
- 07.02.23 Pastor Chris Mavity with special music by Jahn Hultgren.



PASTOR APRIL PETERSON



Photo by Travis Robinson

2023

In January, as required by our Constitution, a six-member Call Committee was formed to lead the congregation through the Pastoral Call Process. Roseni also formed a Call Committee. Members of the Union Creek Call Committee were David Ericson, Paulette Vanderham, Kyle Kenefick, Tom Podzimek, Kristal McKee, and Payton Ericson.

With help from Rev. Renee Splichal Larson, Associate to the Bishop, South Dakota ELCA, the joint committee discussed the qualities we wanted in a new pastor. With Rev. Renee's help, a Ministry Site Profile (MSP) was created. The MSP reflected who we are as a church/parish and indicated our priorities, goals, and expectations of a new pastor.

On February 15, 2023, Union Creek hosted a joint meeting of the congregations with Rev. Larson. Fifty people attended the meeting. She explained the call process, answered questions,

and reviewed the Ministry Site Profile with the congregations. Following this meeting, the MSP information was finalized and distributed by the Synod to potential candidates.

Thankfully, the Synod had a few potential candidates in mind from the start. Three interviews were conducted by the joint Call Committee and one candidate was recommended to move forward to Council interviews.

After meeting with the respective councils, a motion was made to accept the candidate. Union Creek hosted a successful meet-and-greet event on April 19, 2023, with Pastor Nancy Eckels.

Union Creek and Roseni held Special Congregational Meetings on Sunday, April 23, 2023, with the sole purpose of issuing a Letter of Call. Both churches unanimously voted "yes" to call Pastor Nancy Eckels as our new pastor. Her first Sunday preaching with us was July 23, 2023.



Lent service, 2024. Left to right: Brad Vreugdenhil, Deb Vreugdenhil, Felicia Miller and Joni Noble.

Pastor Nancy Eckels

Pastor Nancy Eckels spent a long career in Kansas public education as an elementary instructor, math specialist, track and cross-country coach, and instructional coach to elementary math instructors. When she, her husband, Les, and their beloved cat, Luther moved to South Dakota in 2010, God repurposed her life from educator to ordained minister in the ELCA. The couple has one daughter, Majken (Jonathan) Fullner and granddaughter, Hannah, who live in Lincoln, Nebraska. Pastor Nancy transferred here from Storla Lutheran Church near Letcher, South Dakota.

After Pastor Carla and Pastor Kevin purchased a home in Alcester, Roseni rented out the parsonage for several years. Now, with a need for a parsonage again, the home was given a thorough facelift prior to Pastor Nancy's arrival. We thank Roseni for the copious amount of work they put into this project. Pastor Nancy and Les hosted a Christmas Open House, and all agreed the parsonage is restored to its original beauty and will serve our pastor well for years to come.

At this time, it is important to note that the Union Creek/Roseni Parish worked through the call process in record time. Even those involved from the Synod office in Sioux Falls were impressed with the two churches' ability to work together and make this happen so quickly. Pastor Carla's last Sunday was November 13, 2022, and Pastor Nancy's first Sunday was July 23, 2023—only 252 days or 8 months and 10 days. No grass grew under the feet of our leaders during this time, and we thank them for their dedication to our congregation.

Although the two churches are different in so many ways, the joint Call Committee, church councils, and congregations came together in a big way to fill our pastoral vacancy. The Holy Spirit was indeed working in our lives.

Although 2023 seemed chaotic at times, with the Call Process in full swing and the relentless scheduling of supply pastors and organists, our church remained strong in both attendance and offerings.

A Mid-week Lent series was well-received. The



PASTOR NANCY ECKELS

series, “Sing With All the Saints in Glory” was taken from Sundays and Seasons, focusing on the Lutheran tradition of commemorating the saints who have gone before us. Each service provided an opportunity to light individual candles remembering our own faithfully departed, and attendees received a bookmark each week with quotes from the featured “saint.”

The Advent season series was “Flames for the Faithful” from Creative Communications. A good crowd attended each week to hear the stories of the candles—Prophecy, Bethlehem, Shepherds, and Angels. Sermons were provided in a dramatic format involving several volunteers. Thirteen people, including Waylon McKee and Confirmation students Ryland McKee, and Elijah Graves made this series possible.

In 2023, a committee was organized to begin plans for our 150th anniversary scheduled for 2024. The group began meeting monthly to plan this event and they have been diligent in their efforts.

2024

There is much to be thankful for as we moved into our 150th year as Union Creek Lutheran Church. With Pastor Nancy and her husband Les joining our church family, we were once again settling into a comfortable routine; however, at Union Creek, comfortable does not mean complacent. Our congregation, council, committees, and youth continued to be active while serving the Lord in wonderful ways.

In January, two wireless microphones and 2 stand microphones were purchased and installed. Two microphone stands were also purchased: a gooseneck stand for the lectern and an additional straight stand.

In June, Ryland McKee, Elijah Graves, and Pastor Nancy Eckels attended the LOSD Confirmation Camp at NeSoDak in Waubay, South Dakota.

On June 22, 2024, the Big Sioux River at Akron crested at an all-time high of 27.4 feet. At this writing, Highway 48 and Union County Road #3 were both damaged and impassable. For our many members living in Akron, this caused problems in getting to Union Creek. In addition, Union Creek members who farm land in the river valley lost their crops for this season. This was not the first time this has happened, and probably will not be the last!

In July, Marleigh Robinson, accompanied by Patti Ericson, represented Union Creek Lutheran Church at the ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Youth Gathering brings together over 30,000 high school students from across the country for five days of high energy worship, Bible study and fun. The 2024 the theme was "Created to Be."

In August, Amelia Robinson, Aria Kruger and chaperon Letitia Robinson attended NeSoDak 1-2-3 camp. In addition, over 30 young people attended our "Camp Firelight" VBS Week.

The highlight of the year was the 150th Anniversary celebration held September 7-8, 2024.

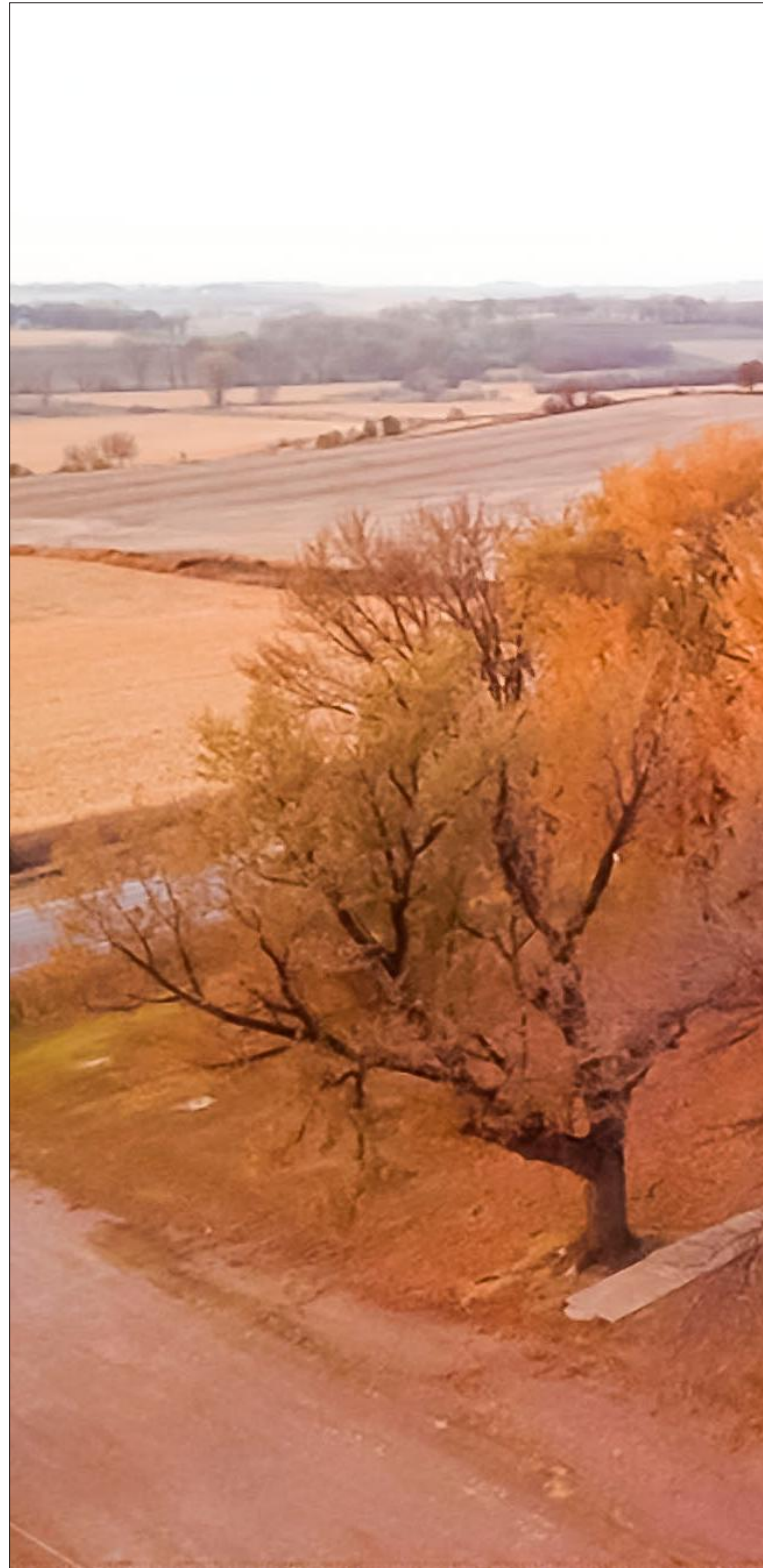


Photo by Travis Robinson



WELCA

The group meets once each month for Bible Study with Pastor Nancy. Their Fall Auction is an annual fundraiser which draws a big crowd each year. The auction is held the Friday after Thanksgiving when many out-of-town family members are visiting, and “fun and fellowship” describes the event perfectly. In recent years, David Ericson has taken over the roll as auctioneer and he always adds to the evening’s entertainment. In 2022, the auction brought in \$5,525.00 and \$4,928.00 in 2023. The women are faithful in their support of several global, national, and local ministries as well as our church and youth. Whenever there is a large church improvement project, the WELCA group always steps up, offering a generous donation. Active members in 2024 are: Pastor Nancy Eckels, Mary Jean Frerichs, Joann Hedeby, April Sommervold, Elaine Swift, and Connie Tentinger.



PARAMENTS & BANNERS

Throughout the church year, the colors of the altar/lectern paraments change with the seasons of the church year, providing a visual experience to our worship services. April Sommervold, in addition to maintaining the altar candles, keeps the paraments changed as necessary. Over the past nine years, all of our paraments have been replaced with beautiful new versions.

- White—2015
- Blue—2015
- Purple—2024
- Red—2024
- Green—2024

Many thanks to the WELCA group for providing funds for the most recent upgrades to our paraments.

The banners in our sanctuary are also changed periodically. Thank you to Deb Heeren for her work in this area.



Banners displayed in the church sanctuary.

PROPERTY UPGRADES

Union Creek receives so many compliments for our beautiful church and setting. Our Property Committee and countless individuals continue to work diligently to repair and upgrade and maintenance the building and grounds as needed.

In anticipation of our anniversary celebration, the front steps were given a face-lift. Sherry Fickbohm repaired the concrete and April Sommervold and Felicia Miller added a fresh coat of paint.

Nestled beneath our exquisite Gethsemane window and overlooking our beautifully maintained cemetery, the newly established Memory Garden offers families and visitors a place to sit and reflect on cherished memories of loved ones while taking in the same views that early Swedish settlers once admired. This historical connection enhances the garden's significance, linking the past with the present and providing a sense of continuity. For evening visitors, the Memory Garden is perfectly positioned to capture South Dakota's spectacular sunsets, with hues of orange and pink providing a breathtaking backdrop for contemplation.

It is a space designed not only for reflection but also for feeling a

part of nature's enduring beauty. Surrounded by beautiful trees, vibrant shrubs, and a variety of flowers, the garden exudes an atmosphere of tranquility, inviting everyone to pause, finding solace and a profound sense of peace. Please let the Church Council know if you are interested in adding something in memory of your loved one.

Also included in the beautification of the church grounds for the 150th-anniversary celebration was the small area on the south side of the stairway. This area received a face lift in anticipation of the placement of the Sesquicentennial plaque honoring our first 150 years.



*The Memory Garden.
Photo taken the day
the garden was finished,
July 6, 2024*

YOUTH

The youth of Union Creek have been active in church events and the community from the beginning. The young people in 2024 are no different. Many of the fundraisers and activities enjoyed today began during the past 25 years. Some of these are:

- Vacation Bible School
- Noisy Offering
- LOSD Camps
- Souper Bowl Sub Fundraiser
- Serving at the Akron Farmers' Market

- Butterbraid Fundraiser
- Cookie Walk Fundraiser
- Tea Party
- Advent/Lent Suppers
- Seder Meal
- Easter Breakfast

The Noisy Offering monies are matched by the youth and used for camp fees and also distributed to various causes, both globally and locally. The "mission ministry" of the Union Creek Youth group is exceptional.



Noisy offering presentation to Akron-Westfield After Prom Breakfast, March 2024.
Left to right: Riggs Ericson, Henry Ericson, T.J. Podzimek, Patti Ericson, Amelia Robison, Bella Podzimek, Waylon McKee and Ryland McKee.



Youth book drive benefiting Union County Jail, March 2022.
Left to right: PeeWee Kincaid, Marleigh, Emma, Amelia and Letitia Robinson.



Youth group on Heifer International Sunday.
Left to right: Grace Davis, Emma Robinson, Waylon and Ryland Mckee with the goat, Amelia and Marleigh Robinson and Adalai Davies.



Right: 2023 Confirmand Marshall McCrill and Pastor Nancy Eckels.

Below: Ryland McKee and Bella Podzimek listen to a children's sermon from Pastor Nancy Eckels.
Photo 2023





HALLOWEEN 2023

Top right: Corn Maze, 2023. Left to right: Patti Ericson, Ethan Judd, Amelia Robinson and Adalai Davies.

Below: Halloween at the Tom & Connie Tentinger Barn, 2023. Left to right: Amelia Robinson, Bella and Heather Podzimek.

Below, left to right: Ryland McKee and T. J. Podzimek.





Top left page: Youth group playing gaga ball at Joy Ranch.

Bottom left page: 2014 Youth swimming party at the Sioux Center Siouxnami Waterpark.

This page: 2023 Sunday School Rally Day.





**FUN AT JOY RANCH
CHURCH CAMP**







FUN AT NESODAK CHURCH CAMP

Above, left to right: Ashton Eden, Cooper Jacobson and Daynen McKee. Photo 2014.

Below back row, left to right: Cooper Jacobson, Raiden Ericson, Ashton Eden and Daynen McKee.
 Front row, left to right: Emma and Marleigh Robinson. Photo 2014.



WORSHIP & PRAISE

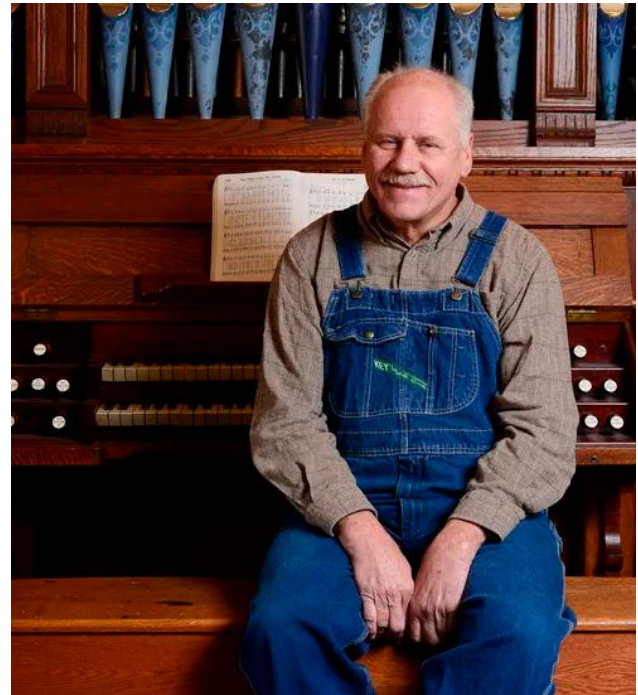
Although our Worship Committee is comprised of only three people—Pastor Nancy Eckels, Paulette Groom, and Joni Noble—this group makes important decisions in our worship services. In addition to choosing hymns and liturgies for weekly services, the group also organizes special services when needed.

We continue the tradition of the Hanging of the Greens Service when we decorate the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas Season. We also recognize those who passed during our All-Saints Sunday service on the first Sunday in November. Families are encouraged to light candles in memory of the saints who have gone before us that year. After this, anyone is welcome to light a candle in memory of a loved one.

The mid-week Lent and Advent services continue, a tradition that began during Pastor Steve's time at Union Creek. These services are made possible by volunteers and confirmation students.

Joni Noble manages our organists' schedule. We are blessed to have Naomi Graves, Mike Pedersen, and Joni Noble providing both piano and organ

music during our services. Kathy Knight also served us for several months during 2023-2024.



MIKE PEDERSEN, MUSICIAN



NAOMI GRAVES, MUSICIAN



JONI NOBLE, MUSICIAN

HISTORY OF THE UNION CREEK CEMETERY

*Photo by Travis Robinson
April 22, 2023*





EARLY HISTORY OF THE UNION CREEK CEMETERY

Written by John Sellberg; Translated by Eric Hedeby

The following description of the Union Creek Cemetery was translated just as it was originally written, including capitalization and punctuation. Mr. Sellberg wrote this in "old Swedish," therefore, it created unusual sentences in the English language. Remember this was written at the end of the 19th century so we must give Mr. Sellberg credit for doing a fine job.

—*Eric Hedeby, June 2, 1968 (signed)*

Description of the map of the cemetery of the Swedish Evang. Luth. Union Creek Congregation in Union Creek, S.D. The churchyard located in the N.W. corner of the S.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 12, Township 93, Range 49, W. of the 5th Principal Meridian. The map with description drawn up in May 1901 by John Sellberg.

After building the Congregations Church on above described location in 1877, the Churchyard was being used for a burial place. There were not any lots divided of the same. Instead the corpse were buried in the order they came, in lines after each other, such as graves 1-2-3-4 and etc. are showing. However, sometimes exceptions were made from this order, so that either a space was left in between 2 graves, or a grave was placed on the side of the line. This was done because one wished to make it possible to have members of the same family buried next to each other, however, this was first done at the Congregations yearly meeting the 9 of January 1888. It was suggested, and passed to lay out the burial yard in lots and to do this work a committee was elected, consisting of John Sellberg, and Peter Shoulberg, whose committee reported later at the Congregations meeting the 23 of August 1888, about the execution of their task as follows. To the Sv. Ev. Luther. Union Creek Congregation, we the undersigned members of a committee elected by you at the yearly meeting the 9 January 1888, to lay out the burial place at the

above mentioned Church in blocks and lots, can herewith respectively report that we met at the Church the 9th of May 1888, and after careful consideration we decided that the burial place should be laid out in six blocks, which was done, but after the new Church was built on the South side of the Graveyard, it was considered necessary to establish a new map over the burial yard, which was also decided at the yearly count and meeting the 10th of Jan., 1901, when John Sellberg was again elected to do this work, which was also done which the following report shows of the 14 Jan. 1902. Honorable Congregation, your committee which was given the assignment to anew lay out of the burial yard in blocks and lots has done this work by the undersigned as follows: 10 rods from the N.W. corner of the Churchyard East, and 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ rods from the same corner to the South, forms the Union Creek burial place. This N.W. corner is N. W. corner of the Churches ground, and forms this square 26 blocks, and 88 lots. Block 1 begins in the Northwest corner and is one half block or 2 lots North and South. Block 2, 3, 4, 5, Westward from there, with one 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ foot alley in between each block, 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet in square of each lot. Blocks no. 5 and 6 and 15-16 and 25 on the West side are half blocks and makes up 2 lots North and South. On the South side are also half blocks, namely blocks 27-28-29—these blocks have only 2 lots each, in east and west, block 26, is the Southwest corner of the churchyard, and is only one lot, as well as the Southeast corner block 30, is only one lot. This extensive and unpleasant survey had to be done because of the disorder that came about at the beginning of the first burials, not only was it impossible to get all the graves in lots but three were in an alley between block 19 and 22 namely No. 2 Frans Osar Erikson, No. 3 his grandfather Erik Jansen and No. 25 Alfred Victor Erikson.

—With all respect your congregations servant
John Sellberg (signed)

HISTORY OF THE UNION CREEK CEMETERY

The early burials in the Union Creek Cemetery beginning in 1878, were taken from the original record book translated from the original Swedish. Beginning in the 1990s, fueled by advancements in digital technology and wide-spread internet usage, genealogical research became the new hobby for millions of people around the world. Because of the renewed interest in researching family histories, the Union Creek Cemetery Board realizes the importance of including the burials at Union Creek in this book.

The cemetery records also include detailed maps of the cemetery which are updated regularly. All graves are recorded on the maps by name and number. These maps are kept in four separate locations: on the wall in the room behind the

altar, in the church's safe, in the Cemetery Board President's home, and in the home of the Cemetery Board Treasurer. These precautions are taken to preserve these records in case of fire or other mishap. The Cemetery Board is meticulous in their record keeping.

In 1945, the Union Creek Cemetery Association had accumulated \$4,000 in perpetual care funds. The 40 acres adjoining the church on the north side came up for sale and the board members decided to use the money to purchase this land. Today, the land is rented out to the same person who holds the lease on the church's cropland. This income gives our cemetery unusual resources, assuring us of financial security. Owning this land also gives us unlimited room for expansion as needed.

CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

We must be grateful to those who have planned our cemetery so well. The Union Creek Cemetery Association is an incorporated organization recognized by the State of South Dakota (separate from the church). Our Articles of Incorporation state no real estate belonging to the Union Creek Cemetery Association can never be sold or mortgaged, including the 40 acres. Money in the Perpetual Fund cannot be spent. The Union Creek Cemetery Association helps the church by covering

all mowing expenses for the cemetery and church grounds.

2024 CEMETERY BOARD:

Bruce Ericson, President
Alan Sommervold, Vice-President
Kirk Miller, Secretary
Brad Vreugdenhil, Treasurer
PeeWee Kincaid, Dwight Fickbohm,
Tom Tentinger, Kyle Kenefick

CEMETERY UPGRADES 2000-2024

2000

Brick pillars were added to the south gate, nearest the church. The gate itself was installed in 1997.

2001

Three cement benches were added to the cemetery.

2002

Beautiful improvements were made to the Union Creek Cemetery this year. New brick pillars and a metal arch were installed at the southern-most entrance to the cemetery on the west side. The arch has the words, "Union Creek Cemetery, established 1874." Many thanks to the Moir family the donation of funds to make this possible.

One half of the planned driveway through the cemetery was completed.

2003

Gates were installed at the north end of the new road and a plaque recognizing the contributions given for the construction of the new road was placed on the cross in the cemetery.

In their annual report the cemetery noted there were several graves that still remained unmarked. The Cemetery Board purchased inexpensive steel markers that include birth year, death year, and the name. Dennis Hultgren commented, "we believe these pioneers and their children, who are not related to anyone here now, deserve at least some kind of marker for their grave."

2004

The Union Creek Cemetery was busy as usual with improvement projects, including the completion of the unmarked grave project. There were 26 unmarked graves dating from 1878 to the 1930s. Fifteen of these unmarked graves were for children of pioneers under the age of one year. Two of them did not reach the age of five. One was nineteen and one was twelve. The other seven were sixty to ninety years of age. Thanks to the Hall Monument Company of Sioux City (steel markers) and the Porter Funeral Home in Hawarden (steel letters and numbers) for making this possible. The cost to the cemetery to complete the project was \$40.00.

2008

The cemetery expanded to the north this year. A chain link fence was installed on the north and east sides of the newly expanded area. A new white vinyl fence was installed along the west side near the road.

New cemetery maps were made to show the expansion and new lots available. These maps are on display in the church.

2009

The second half of the driveway through the cemetery was completed this year.

2023

Paved from the road to connect the cemetery driveways of both west gates.

2024

New gates were installed at the north entrance on the west side along the road. Photo on page 146.

UNION CREEK CEMETERY BURIALS

No.	Name	Born	Died	Block Location
1	Elvina Hanson	12-07-1878	12-08-1878	22-S
2	Frans Oscar Erikson	06-30-1877	1879	22-S
3	*Erik Johansson	1801	1879	19-S
4	Delina Hanson	02-25-1880	06-16-1880	22-S
5	*Johanes Anderson	01-15-1823	04-18-1881	23-S
6	Child of John Johnson	1881	Stillborn	22-S
7	Carl Gustaf Carlson	1880	1881	19-S
8	John Ludvig Erikson	10-18-1869	07-20-1881	19-S
9	Carl Johan Erikson	08-xx-1881	08-xx-1881	19-S
10	George Waldemor Hanson	08-16-1881	12-08-1881	22-S
11	Emelia Corolina Anderson	03-15-1882	09-04-1882	22-S
12	Daughter of C. Hanson	11-15-1884	11-15-1884	22-S
13	Vicktor Homin	In Sweden	04-09-1886	22-S
14	James A. Lund	1884	08-12-1886	22-S
15	Gust Mauritz Hanson	06-06-1887	06-08-1887	22-S
16	*John M. Peterson	08-20-1851	05-08-1888	23-S
17	Clara Johnson	12-26-1887	09-30-1888	23-S
18	*Marta Anderson	01-16-1844	02-08-1889	22-S
19	Hannah Maria Hultgren	11-28-1888	08-13-1889	14-S
20	August Warner Anderson	08-29-1889	10-02-1889	21-S
21	Daughter of C. Hanson	09-02-1889	09-02-1889	22-S
22	Almer A. Blomdin	11-03-1888	05-29-1890	21-S
23	Child of P. G. Wiberg	09-03-1890	Stillborn	23-S
24	Carl Richard Ek	02-19-1889	02-25-1891	24-S
25	Alfred Vicktor Erickson	05-02-1872	07-22-1891	22-S
26	*Maria Sophia Wiberg	11-14-1843	03-07-1892	22-S
27	Gustaf Adolph Blomdin	07-02-1870	06-18-1892	21-S

No.	Name	Born	Died	Block Location
28	Charles Hanson	09-13-1838	10-07-1892	22-S
29	Thekla Albertina Johnson	03-09-1892	11-08-1892	22-S
30	*Emma Christina Johnson	02-01-1853	06-17-1893	22-S
31	Anders Janson	06-07-1807	01-13-1894	21-S
32	Wilhelm Wiberg	04-12-1877	04-02-1894	23-S
33	Beatrice Josphina Swanson	06-05-1894	09-04-1894	21-S
34	Amalia Anderson	04-05-1879	09-18-1894	24-S
35	*Olaf Erickson	07-26-1836	02-27-1895	28-S
36	Maria Olson	10-21-1887	05-05-1896	27-S
37	Herman Jacobson	08-27-1862	12-26-1896	28-S
38	Hannah Johnson	09-29-1852	02-02-1897	19-S
39	Agnes Wilhelmina Johnson	xx-xx-1897	xx-xx-1897	19-S
40	Augusta Chalatta Peterson	Unknown	08-04-1897	19-S
41	David Anderson	10-12-1866	10-01-0897	24-S
42	Child of C. P. Lundgren	Unknown	xx-xx-1899	30-S
43	Kajsa Erickson	12-26-1837	03-02-1900	27-S
44	Hugo Herrstromer	xx-xx-1900	xx-xx-1900	24-S
45	Margrita Johnson	xx-xx-1900	xx-xx-1900	21-S
46	*Stina Lisa Peterson	04-09-1827	10-30-1900	24-S
47	Brita Peterson	07-21-1820	11-25-1901	23-S
48	Oscar Johnson	01-04-1879	11-30-1901	22-S
49	*Maja Stina Anderson	09-11-1819	02-02-1902	23-S
50	*Nils Cedar	12-12-1822	07-23-1902	19-S
51	Martin Theodor Erikson	12-09-1901	07-30-1902	24-S
52	Hilma Eleonora Ek	09-23-1901	08-xx-1902	24-S
53	Mrs. Carl Lundgren	Unknown	11-08-1902	30-S
54	Jens Johnson	01-02-1856	06-01-1903	29-S
55	*Lars J. Erikson	08-30-1833	01-26-1904	19-S
56	A. G. Blomdin	Unknown	03-01-1904	20-S
57	Child of L. E. Ek	Unknown	Unknown	24-S
58	Carl Carlson	xx-xx-1819	03-06-1905	21-S
59	Edith Josephina Johnson	06-24-1904	07-12-1905	18-S
60	Son of Elmer Johnson	10-08-1905	10-10-1905	23-S
61	Nellie Elvida Johnson	04-29-1886	10-15-1905	22-S

No.	Name	Born	Died	Block Location
62	*Olaus Nelson	03-11-1833	04-28-1907	17-S
63	Mary Monne Kapfer	07-13-1907	08-04-1907	18-S
64	Anna Christina Carlson	09-25-1821	01-09-1908	20-S
65	*John Sellberg	01-01-1831	08-01-1908	18-S
66	*John Henrik Peterson	08-04-1833	08-01-1908	24-S
67	Mabel Chrstine Nelson	01-18-1909	01-19-1909	27-S
68	Nikolaus Sellberg	09-10-1871	02-11-1909	18-S
69	Raymond Herbert Johnson	06-01-1908	06-18-1909	23-S
70	Anna Lund	08-14-1841	08-23-1909	22-S
71	Eddie J. Blomdin	04-09-1894	11-20-1909	20-S
72	Karin Hedvik Halverson	07-06-1848	03-03-1910	18-S
73	Netha Lovella Odean	05-31-1910	07-21-1910	18-S
74	August Anderson	09-12-1856	05-04-1911	24-S
75	*Charles Anderson	09-13-1837	08-01-1911	27-S
76	Albert E. Johnson	03-03-1888	11-20-1911	17-S
77	Twins of Godfrey Davidson	01-01-1912	01-01-1912	29-S
78	Ernest Gassman	09-10-1864	04-03-1912	17-S
79	Child of August Johnsons	xx-xx-1912	xx-xx-1912	17-S
80	Lillian Christine Erickson	10-08-1912	10-09-1912	19-S
81	Elmer Oaks	08-30-1895	11-02-1912	24-S
82	John F. Fredell	11-06-1849	01-06-1913	17-S
83	*Per Gustaf Wiberg	03-21-1843	05-27-1913	23-S
84	John Hultgren	12-11-1840	01-02-1914	14-S
85	Signe Maria Erickson	04-29-1894	02-15-1914	14-S
86	Arthur Emmanuel Ericson	09-18-1890	11-02-1914	14-S
87	Esther Otilia Hultgren	09-02-1888	03-10-1915	7-S
88	Esley John Hultgren	02-21-1915	03-20-1915	7-S
89	John August Erickson	04-29-1867	06-25-1916	14-S
90	Elmer Glenard Johnson	12-18-1911	07-19-1916	19-S
91	John Melvin Frisk	01-07-1917	01-07-1917	29-S
92	Lillian Marie Anderson	03-08-1902	06-20-1917	13-S
93	Charlotta Carlson	xx-xx-1824	03-13-1918	21-S
94	Maria Katrina Gassman	01-21-1841	03-30-1918	17-S
95	Beda Pearl Johnson	03-29-1918	03-29-1918	19-S



Photo by Joni Noble



No.	Name	Born	Died	Block Location
96	Pedar Halverson	xx-xx-1839	xx-xx-1918	19-S
97	Charles P. Lundgren	xx-xx-1849	xx-xx-1918	25-S
98	Mrs. Peter J. Anderson	Unknown	xx-xx-1919	13-S
99	Cpl. Arthur Alexander Herrstromer, WW I veteran, died at Camp Sherman, Ohio	09-01-1891	05-21-1919	24-S
100	Henning Gassman	02-27-1866	06-05-1919	16-S
101	Betta Crick	xx-xx-1840	12-14-1919	21-D
102	*A. G. Johnson	02-08-1846	10-19-1920	23-S
103	*Charles J. Arvidson	xx-xx-1842	xx-xx-1921	20-S
104	Peter J. Shoulberg	07-27-1846	07-12-1921	16-S
105	Mrs. L. E. Oaks	Unknown	10-02-1921	24-S
106	Opal Elaine Hamilton	August 1921	11-11-1921	7-S
107	*Brita Sellberg	08-27-1833	06-23-1922	18-S
108	*Anna Nilson	08-28-1833	06-09-1923	17-S
109	John Olson	xx-xx-1846	02-11-1923	20-S
110	E. O. Carlson	05-18-1847	02-19-1923	18-S
111	Anna L. Hanson	xx-xx-1849	01-06-1924	22-S
112	August Johnson	xx-xx-1882	02-13-1924	17-S
113	Anna Hultgren	12-23-1851	01-01-1924	14-S
114	Vernon Pierson	10-10-1917	04-30-1924	13-S
115	Alma Pierson	07-17-1886	06-12-1927	13-S
116	Johannes Ericson	09-08-1838	02-03-1928	27-S
117	Mrs. John E. Ericson	06-20-1865	07-21-1928	14-S
118	Peter J. Anderson	02-25-1850	10-19-1928	13-S
119	*John B. Johnson	xx-xx-1851	08-12-1929	22-S
120	Sven Johan Gassman	01-09-1838	12-19-1929	17-S
121	Jens Peter Lund	11-23-1846	01-21-1930	22-S
122	*Christina Erikson	xx-xx-1839	01-25-1930	22-S
123	Orville Seely	02-10-1920	01-27-1930	12-S
124	John A. Johnson	01-16-1861	09-16-1930	8-S
125	L. E. Erickson	11-03-1868	07-11-1932	14-S
126	Anna Johnson	09-03-1869	07-26-1932	8-S
127	John A. Hultgren	01-26-1881	09-27-1933	7-S

No.	Name	Born	Died	Block Location
128	L. E. Oaks	Unknown	xx-xx-1935	24-S
129	*Mrs. A. G. Johnson	08-15-1853	05-16-1935	23-S
130	John Pierson	Unknown	03-27-1937	13-S
131	Duane Groon	09-29-1936	09-29-1936	29-S
132	Mary C. Larson	12-19-1856	11-12-1937	23-S
133	Nellie Cross	xx-xx-1872	xx-xx-1937	20-S
134	John A. Johnson	xx-xx-1878	11-13-1938	20-S
135	Walter Swanson	09-08-1906	02-03-1939	13-S
136	Raymond Walter Swanson	07-20-1939	07-21-1939	13-S
137	Hannah E. Oaks	01-08-1886	05-08-1939	13-S
138	Teckla Johnson	04-12-1882	11-27-1939	22-S
139	Mrs. L. E. Erickson	07-14-1869	02-07-1940	14-S
140	Michael A. Hultgren	12-23-1879	09-18-1940	7-S
141	Sophia Carlson	01-xx-1861	11-01-1940	18-S
142	R. Clifford Anderson	07-03-1908	11-05-1940	13-S
143	Adolph O. Wiberg	02-04-1880	12-02-1940	23-S
144	*Catherina Ericson	12-26-1842	01-24-1941	28-S
145	Jason Hollis Sykes	09-25-1940	02-06-1941	14-S
146	Oscar Johnson	11-23-1891	04-23-1941	8-S
147	Elsa Shoulberg	11-20-1851	07-02-1941	16-S
148	Tekla Anderson	07-13-1880	03-23-1942	12-S
149	Mrs. John Fredell	03-03-1853	08-29-1942	17-S
150	Christian Lucht	03-31-1878	10-19-1942	13-S
151	John E. Ericson	11-03-1865	03-03-1943	14-S
152	Mary Victoria Ericson	07-29-1864	06-21-1943	14-S
153	Nina Groon	07-06-1912	12-21-1943	8-S
154	Elmer G. Johnson	03-28-188	01-16-1943	23-S
155	Peter O. Nelson	06-16-1872	10-10-1945	4-S
156	Gordon Dewey	01-25-1945	02-26-1945	25-S
157	Amanda L. Swanson	10-11-1879	05-04-1946	13-S
158	J. Ephrem Westin	06-08-1884	05-04-1946	23-S
159	Donald W. Hultgren	08-22-1645	11-16-1947	7-S
160	Emma Hultgren Ericson	01-27-1883	01-21-1949	6-S
161	Esther O. Larson	03-21-1883	08-29-1949	23-S

No.	Name	Born	Died	Block Location
162	C. August Lundgren	11-13-1879	01-31-1951	25-S
163	Hannah Sellberg	10-31-1862	04-28-1951	18-S
164	Dean Alfred Jacobs	08-21-1951	08-27-1951	4-S
165	Raymond Hamilton	05-06-1899	12-18-1952	7-S
166	Michael S. Homandberg	07-31-1953	07-31-1953	7-S
167	Sister Albertina Gassman	04-24-1866	01-13-1954	17-S
168	Marvin Sorlie	09-18-1912	01-14-1954	4-S
169	Sigfried W. Fredell	02-15-1879	05-19-1954	15-S
170	Hannah Gassman	07-28-1868	10-13-1954	16-S
171	Elmer A. Hultgren	11-14-1884	03-10-1955	26-S
172	Gerdy Groon	01-16-1874	04-22-1955	3-S
173	Mae Ericson	03-10-1904	11-15-1955	28-S
174	John C. Johnson	11-24-1880	12-20-1956	17-S
175	Sharon Kay Heeren	07-05-1957	07-05-1957	8-S
176	Wilma Fredell	09-17-1880	09-02-1957	15-S
177	Frank Willms	03-29-1908	12-27-1857	8-S
178	Lee Stoutenburg	06-28-1891	09-04-1958	9-S
179	O. Martin Ericson	03-04-1875	11-09-1958	28-S
180	John T. Willms	01-30-1883	12-01-1958	8-S
181	Schwantje Lucht	10-27-1881	12-09-1958	13-S
182	Esther Marie Hultgren	10-10-1898	05-08-1960	7-S
183	E. Clayton Hultgren	08-19-1907	08-31-1960	7-S
184	Arthur Abraham	06-19-1899	04-25-1961	3-S
185	Christine Hultgren	08-23-1885	06-06-1961	7-S
186	Hannah Groon	07-04-1882	06-25-1962	3-S
187	Denise Robertson	07-29-1957	11-29-1962	9-S
188	Lester M. Seely	06-26-1891	02-01-1963	12-S
189	Earnest P. Meske	07-31-1909	02-11-1963	12-S
190	William Ericson	10-15-1873	04-29-1964	6-S
191	Beda Johnson	06-07-1892	07-22-1967	19-S
192	Lawrence E. Ericson	03-10-1902	01-23-1965	28-S
193	Arthur E. Lund	11-01-1881	05-29-1965	22-S
194	Adina Hultgren	11-13-1889	08-25-1965	26-S
195	Signe Westin	03-21-1885	10-10-1966	27-S

No.	Name	Born	Died	Block Location
196	Martin Weme	07-17-1894	11-25-1966	14-S
197	Joseph Lambert	01-29-1896	09-01-1967	22-S
198	Herman Lucht	01-29-1921	01-25-1968	13-S
199	Carl R. Moir	05-19-1897	01-23-1970	2-S
200	Albert R. Anderson	11-09-1900	02-01-1970	12-S
201	Alfred Sommervold	03-20-1892	10-07-1970	2-S
202	Bertil Shoulberg	07-17-1883	01-21-1971	16-E
203	Annie C. Lund	03-09-1879	06-12-1971	22-S
204	Alfred W. Jacobs	09-11-1911	06-26-1971	2-S
205	Oktje Willms	03-02-1884	05-02-1972	8-S
206	Alfred J. Swanson	05-14-1872	10-05-1972	13-S
207	Hannah W. Abraham	09-26-1900	10-06-1972	3-S
208	Edward J. Willms	11-18-1910	11-2-1972	9-S
209	Richard E. Ball	12-28-1895	11-03-1972	3-S
210	Morris L. Powell	08-02-1952	04-06-1973	29-S
211	Lillian Swanson	10-19-1883	01-01-1974	25-S
212	Milton Ericson	12-23-1904	08-10-1974	19-S
213	Clifford Johnson	03-01-1901	04-23-1976	7-S
214	Alveda Fickbohm	06-21-1905	08-18-1976	1-S
215	John August Frisk	07-14-1887	02-18-1977	4-S
216	Martin E. Johnson	10-29-1888	06-03-1977	19-S
217	Emil A. Koch	12-27-1884	03-22-1978	15-S
218	George D. Adamson	12-18-1903	06-22-1979	10-S
219	C. Albin Carlson	06-03-1891	07-25-1979	11-N
220	David Ray Ericson	09-24-1953	10-25-1979	10-N
221	Anna M. Ericson	11-04-1893	05-02-1980	12-S
222	John Alvin Frisk	07-10-1921	07-12-1980	4-N
223	Anna V. Frisk	04-26-1896	11-11-1980	4-S
224	Robert Ericson	02-27-1924	01-20-1981	12-S
225	Elna M. Lambert	04-03-1891	04-02-1981	22-S
226	Henry C. Wilkens	01-04-1917	06-12-1981	3-S
227	Hannah W. Seely	01-04-1894	01-16-1982	12-S
228	Pearl Eloris Wilkens	07-10-1921	09-22-1982	3-S
229	Oscar Lund	09-10-1886	10-17-1982	22-S





Photo by Joni Noble

No.	Name	Born	Died	Block Location
230	Henry C. Borgman	01-05-1910	11-18-1982	6-S
231	Alve David Ericson	05-03-1899	11-20-1982	12-S
232	Elsie Mae Jacobs	05-21-1923	05-24-1983	4-S
233	Daisy Willms Lucht	06-07-1917	10-30-1983	8-S
234	Philip J. Larson	11-13-1907	11-24-1983	23-S
235	Jay D. Robertson	07-16-1919	06-27-1984	9-S
236	Antoinetta M. Buum	07-20-1912	08-17-1984	13-S
237	Elnora E. Hamilton	08-04-1901	10-09-1984	7-S
238	Pastor David J. Roy	06-22-1912	01-02-1985	10-S
239	Bertha K. Fickbohm	08-22-1918	01-11-1985	4-N
240	Clark E. Heyl	01-17-1913	09-21-1985	9-S
241	Wesley E. Heeren	07-01-1910	11-21-1985	2-S
242	Elsie Adina Carlson	08-02-1901	02-10-1986	11-N
243	James Hiram Ball	03-17-1934	02-19-1986	3-S
244	Maybelle Rose Moir	03-17-1894	03-10-1986	2-S
245	Marvin R. Powell	07-24-1935	04-19-1986	7-N
246	Ophilia Gustave Koch	04-15-1894	11-10-1986	15-S
247	Grayce Johnson	03-09-1904	07-24-1987	7-S
248	Ronald Moir	03-16-1926	10-24-1987	2-S
249	Margaret Stoutenburg	07-07-1898	03-29-1988	9-S
250	Russell Hamilton	11-13-1923	06-03-1988	7-S
251	Elsie A. Anderson	09-10-1901	09-25-1988	12-S
252	Clifford Groon	09-26-1908	10-26-1988	8-S
253	Cameron J. Carolus	06-01-1989	Stillborn	3-N
254	Max W. Vreugdenhil	11-19-1925	05-30-1990	12-N
255	Richard E. Tentinger	05-09-1926	11-22-1990	6-N
256	Wilfred Hebert	10-21-1912	12-18-1990	7-N
257	Shirley J. Miller	12-03-1927	02-21-1991	9-N
258	Cora M. Adamson	05-30-1907	05-11-1992	10-S
259	Olivia Sommervold	02-11-1894	05-19-1992	2-S
260	Walfrid A. Forslund	02-01-1902	08-08-1993	9-S
261	Clara D. Sorlie	01-06-1908	02-03-1994	7-S
262	Lorene H. Hinrichs	08-07-1918	02-04-1994	6-N
263	Lucille D. Larson	04-16-1913	02-26-1994	23-S

No.	Name	Born	Died	Block Location
264	James C. Johnson	10-03-1933	10-26-1994	8-S
265	Margaret A. Powell	06-06-1913	03-31-1996	29-S
266	Collin Hamilton	11-15-1959	07-03-1996	7-S
267	Evelyn O. Waterman	08-12-1910	08-14-1996	5-S
268	Rodney D. Groon	03-08-1950	08-24-1996	29-S
269	Margaret Ericson	11-11-1905	10-25-1996	19-S
270	Harriet E. Ball Swanson	02-16-1905	12-26-1996	3-S
271	Mabel L. Pierson	05-31-1907	01-24-1997	13-S
272	Elsie Lucht	12-31-1914	05-31-1997	13-S
273	Gilbert O. Hinrichs	09-24-1924	11-15-1998	6-N
274	Arnold M. Powell	02-13-1914	07-04-1999	29-S
275	Alvin O. Sommervold	03-29-1916	05-29-2000	N-5
276	Harvey A. Dewey	08-22-1917	07-11-2000	S-25
277	Eldon M. Seely	07-27-1926	03-26-2001	N-11
278	Jay H. Sykes	01-31-1913	03-26-2001	S-!5
279	Clifford Wayne Miller	08-13-1925	08-24-2001	S-9
280	Ira Irene Hultgren	02-16-1917	05-14-2002	S-5
281	Donald R. Harvey	10-25-1914	10-17-2002	N-10
282	Raymond David Ericson	08-13-1925	11-06-2002	S-11
283	Anna Maria Pefferman	09-22-1912	02-04-2003	S-27
284	Betty Groon	04-12-1926	02-13-2003	S-8
285	Brian Keith Klemme	05-16-1973	05-01-2003	S-9
286	George Ronald Adamson	06-25-1932	11-02-2003	S-10
287	Fern Beatrice Roy	02-22-1912	02-25-2004	S-10
288	Robert Lyle Enockson	04-21-1919	01-25-2004	S-5
289	Marion Elvina Sykes	02-12-1912	05-12-2004	S-15
290	Kenneth Elmer Hultgren	04-13-1914	08-26-2004	S-5
291	Mildren Meske Laudenschlager	11-06-1912	11-26-2004	S-12
292	Marie Evelyn Heeren	02-12-1912	01-20-2005	S-2
293	Helen A. Tentinger	02-02-1928	06-10-2005	N-6
294	Opal E. Robertson	05-01-1918	12-04-2005	S-9
295	Merl L. Fickbohm	09-21-1912	01-23-2006	N4
296	Henry W. Fickbohm	02-23-1904	06-07-2006	S1
297	Baby Klemme	11-05-2006	11-05-2006	N1

No.	Name	Born	Died	Block Location
298	R. Wayne Waterman	04-16-1904	02-25-2007	S5
299	Richard E. Ball	02-19-1930	05-21-2007	N12
300	Enid M. Hamilton	03-26-1933	12-01-2007	S7
301	Wayne E Buum	11-07-1931	02-26-2008	N4
302	Marie Dewey	06-11-1917	12-22-2008	S25
303	Otilda J. Heyl	05-18-1921	06-10-2009	S9
304	Irene M. Forslund	08-04-1911	10-01-2009	S9
305	Roger E. Groon	06-14-1933	07-18-2005	S8
306	Steven R. Heeren	10-09-1950	05-16-2010	S2
307	Gary Hamilton	xx-xx-1956	09-17-2009	S7
308	Eleanor S. Harvey	04-05-1919	06-10-2010	N10
309	Jana Hebert	12-30-1915	12-07-2010	N7
310	Dorothy Borgman	03-02-1913	08-07-2011	S6
311	June M. Heeren	05-12-1930	05-05-2012	S2
312	Kathryn A. Frisk	12-29-1952	08-18-2012	N4
313	Ruth Stoutenburg	12-21-1925	08-31-2012	S9
314	Violet V. Swanson	01-14-1919	06-12-2013	N11
315	Bernice E. Miller	01-09-1928	11-24-2013	N5
316	Mary Ellen Powell	06-08-1941	01-22-2014	N7
317	Duane A. Ericson	08-19-1952	08-19-1952	S19
318	Gertrude F. Sommervold	12-20-1918	12-30-2014	N5
319	Leonard A. Swanson	11-20-1918	01-16-2015	N11
320	Lloyd J. H. Meyer	08-04-1926	07-08-2015	N6
321	Alma I. Seely	08-22-1928	10-15-2015	N11
322	Myra A. Vreugdenhil	01-13-1928	06-23-2016	N12
323	Heeren, Baby Boy	03-27-1956	03-27-1956	S8
324	Raymond Heeren	09-07-1930	12-07-2016	S2
325	Eric U. Hedeby	10-22-1923	03-14-2017	N3
326	Dennis E. Hultgren	03-19-1929	03-13-2018	S4
327	Lloyd K. Miller	05-25-1927	01-15-2018	N5
328	Verne A. Heeren	02-26-1933	05-26-2018	S8
329	Phyllis E. Frisk	07-03-1924	03-09-2019	N4
330	Irene Fickbohm	02-10-1922	05-06-2019	N4
331	Chris A. Lucht	03-18-1923	03-31-2019	S4

No.	Name	Born	Died	Block Location
332	Audrey J. Ericson	11-25-1928	04-10-2020	S11
333	Ericson, Baby Boy	xx-xx-2020	xx-xx-2020	S11
334	Greta A. Carolus	04-24-1957	12-13-2020	N3
335	Richard L. Reed	10-28-1941	05-30-2021	N4
336	Audery Ball	11-22-1929	03-25-2019	N12
337	Miriam L. Enockson	10-30-1919	11-23-2022	S5
338	Edward F. Beeck	03-08-1942	06-20-2023	S9
339	Betty A. Meyer	08-17-1932	01-06-2023	N6
340	Donna J. Swanson	08-30-1945	12-12-2023	N13

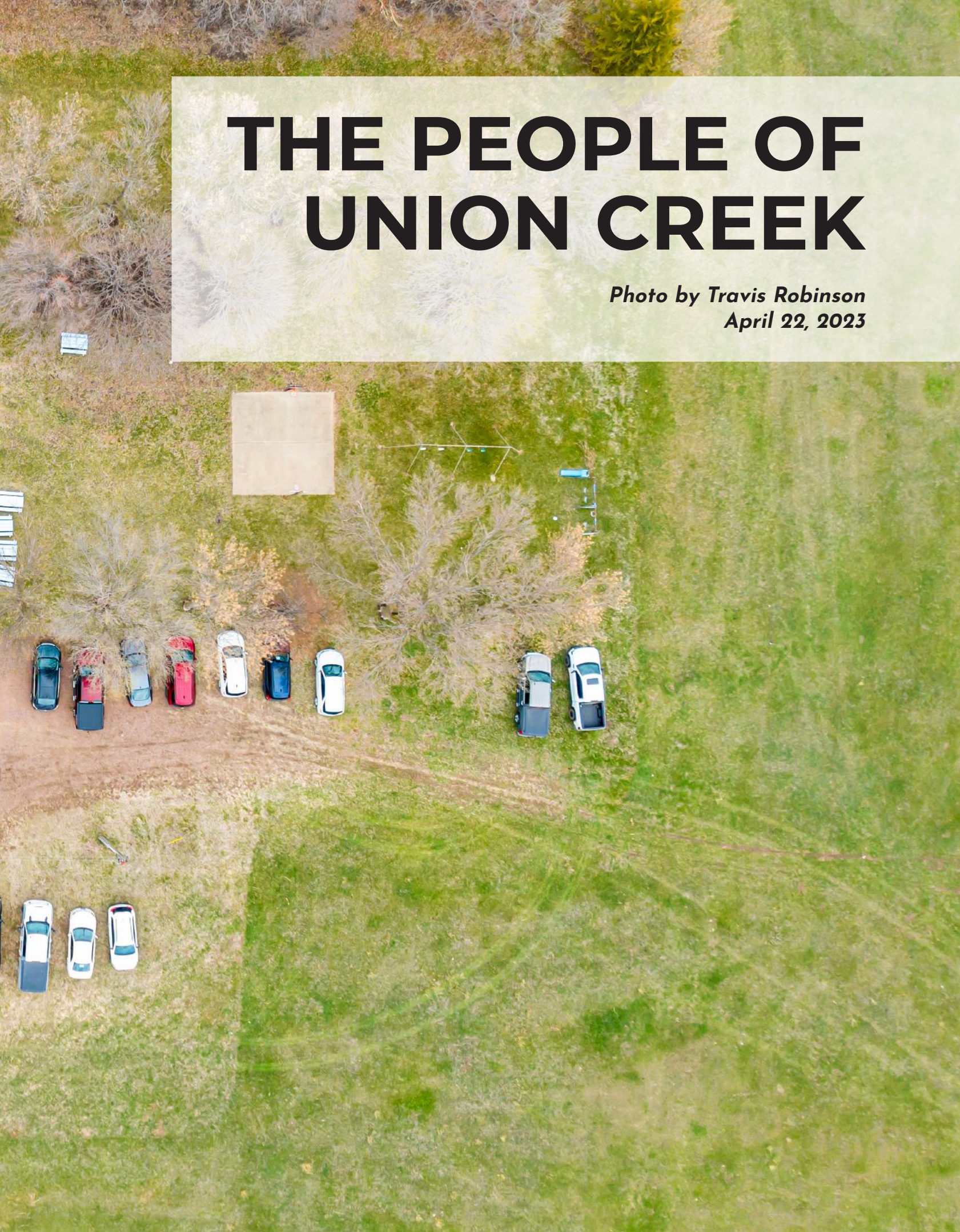
Photo by Joni Noble





THE PEOPLE OF UNION CREEK

*Photo by Travis Robinson
April 22, 2023*



UNION CREEK CONFIRMANDS

- 1876** Sellberg, Maria Christina
- 1879** Anderson, Helena
Anderson, Josephina
Hanson, Oloffina
Peterson, Marie
Sellberg, Brita Johanna
Skallinder, John
Skallinder, Peter
- 1882** Anderson, Anna Fredrika
Ericson, Johan Erik
- 1884** Nilson, Ingeborg
Peterson, Anna Sofia
Peterson, Cora Louisa
(names missing)
Pastor C. J. Carlson
- 1889** Anderson, Mary
Erickson, Martin
Ericson, Alfred
Ericson, William
Johnson, Anna
Nelson, Dagmar
Sellberg, Nicholas
Shoberg, Huldah
Pastor L. E. Sjölander
- 1898** Anderson, August
Anderson, Ellen
Anderson, Jessie
Anderson, Selma
Erickson, Louise
Fredell, Malcom
Fredell, Sigfrid
Hanson, Teckla
Peterson, Esther
Shoulberg, Hilma
Tunell, Joseph
Tunell, Selma
Wiberg, Adolph
Pastor Eric G. Anderson
- 1901** Anderson, Arthur
Erickson, Selma
Fredell Gunnar
Johnson, Gunhild Fredell
Shoulberg, Bertil
(Pastor unknown)
- 1903** Ericson, Adina
Ericson, Esther
Fredell, August
Fredell, Elmer
Gustafson, Rudolph
Halverson, William
Johnson, Albert
Johnson, Nellie
Johnson, Tillie
(Pastor Olaf Wallin)
- 1905** Anderson, Walfrid
Erickson, Arthur
Fredell, Ogda
Ring, Ernest
Ring, Gustaf
(Pastor Olaf Wallin)
- 1906** Isgren, Carl
(Pastor unknown)
- 1908** Anderson, Esther
Erickson, Signe
Fredell, Othilia
Hong slo, Almer
Hong slo, Joseph
(Pastor C. H. Nelson)
- 1911** Erickson, Erick Sigfrid
(Pastor unknown)
- 1913** Anderson, Fred
Anderson, Henry
Anderson, Rueben
Erickson, Anna
Erickson, Carl
Hagen, Luella
Johnson, Martin
(Pastor unknown)
- 1915** Erickson, Alve
Erickson, Elsie
Fredell, Emil
Kapfer, Clara
Kapfer, Minnie
Gassman, Agnes Margaret
Gassman, Grant
Gron, Hannah
Malm, Alma
Malm, Betty
Malm, Clarence
(Pastor Emil Johnson)
- 1918** Anderson, Albert
Anderson, Elenora
Anderson, Mabel
Ericson, Lawrence
Ericson, Willie
Pearson, Erick
Renberg, Iva Cecelia[^]
Renberg, Julia Carolina[^]
(Pastor Emil Johnson)
- 1919** Anderson, Myrtle
Dewey, Ralph[^]
(Pastor Emil Johnson)

[^] Indicates the confirmand was an adult.

- 1923** Anderson, Hildur
Ericson, Milton
Gassman, Marvin
Groom, Clifford
Harker, Alvina
Hultgren, Milford
Hultgren, Clayton
Peterson, Carl
Peterson, Nannie
Pierson, Mabel
(*Pastor Emil Johnson*)
- 1924** Anderson, Herman
Rudolph^
Carlson, Carl Albin^
Carlson, Elsie^
Hamilton, Elnora^
Hamilton, Raymond^
Hultgren, Julius^
Johnson, Cora Margaret^
Johnson, Esther Marie^
Johnson, Mae Fern^
(*Pastor Emil Johnson*)
- 1925** Buum, Marie
Ericson, Evelyn
Green, Buelah
Huebner, August
Huebner, Wilhelm
Hultgren, Violet
Jamtgaard, Margaret
Pierson, Carl
(*Pastor Emil Johnson*)
- 1927** Anderson, Amy
Anderson, Violet
Ericson, Margaret
Ericson, Margaret
Hamilton^
Huebner, Willie
Hultgren, Dorothy
Hultgren, Kenneth
Hultgren, Marie
Hultgren, Marion
Johnson, Lloyd
Pierson, Viola
Swanson, Herbert
Swanson, Antionetta
Westin, Bertil
(*Pastor David J. Edward*)
- 1929** Davidson, Ruth^
Huebner, Marion
Huebner, Ralph
Johnson, Dorothy
Swanson, Stanley
Willms, Jennie
(*Pastor David J. Edward,
Theological Student
Hansen*)
- 1931** Ericson, Wilma
Hultgren, Russell
Seely, Vera
Stinehart, Rhoda Mae
Stinehart, Ralph
(*Pastor David J. Edward*)
- 1932** Huebner, Walter
Swanson, Walter
Sommervold, Alvin
Sommervold, Opal
Willms, Henry
(*Pastor David J. Edward*)
- 1935** Ericson, Miriam
Harker, William
Huebner, Rueben
Hultgren, Earl
Renken, Lowell
Renken, Lydia
Renken, Marvin
Seely, Lorene
Sommervold, Pearl
Swanson, Leonard
Willms, Otilda
(*Pastor David J. Edward*)
- 1938** Anderson, Lois
Anderson, Lowell
Anderson, Oscar
Ericson, Raymond
Ericson, Robert
Hamilton, Lucille
Hamilton, Russell
Hultgren, Eldon
Lucht, Chris
Lucht, Herman
Stoutenburg, Ruth
Stoutenburg, Wayne
(*Pastor David J. Edward*)
- 1942** Anderson, Bernice
Dewey, Arlene
Dewey, Phylis
Ericson, Arlo
Ericson, Audrey
Fickbohm, LaVon
Fickbohm, Marian
Granstrom, Wendell
Hultgren, Dennis
Seely, Eldon
Stinehart, Shirley
(*Pastor Arthur C. Edstrom,
Theological Student Eugene
Strinden*)
- 1944** Ball, Richard Jr.
Ericson, Roger
Fickbohm, Daryl
Fickbohm, Donald
Granstrom, Milo
Heeren, Kervyn
Heeren, Raymond
Heeren, Verne
Sommervold, Arlo
(*Pastor Arthur C. Edstrom,
Theological Student Leslie
Olson*)
- 1946** Adamson, Ronald
Bradley, Colleen^
Bradley, Kervyn^
Buum, Wayne
Stinehart, Loren
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1947** Clark, Lois Moir^
Clark, Victor^
Ericson, Joann
Groom, Betty Wilson^
Groom, Roger
Hartman, Donald
Hultgren, Ione
Moir, June^
Willms, Lois Hilliker^
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)

- 1948** Ball, Harriet^
Ball, James
Ball, Richard^
Kock, Stanley
Maynard, Lawrence^
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1949** Hartman, Richard
Hendricks, Laura Webb^
Powell, Marvin
Seiver, Francis Neal^
Wakeman, Dorothy
Heneman^
Wakeman, George
Millard^
Wakeman, Willis
Eugene^
Willms, John
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1950** Iverson, Garnett
Prinsen, Charlotte
Prinsen, Grace^
Prinsen, Irwin
Prinsen, John^
Prinsen, Milton
Moir, Carl^
Moir, Maybelle^
Moir, Ronald^
Rundell, Keith
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1951** Buum, Alvern
Forslund, Gerald
Groon, Edwin
Hebert, Wilfred^
Huff, Eldon^
TePoel, Arline^
- 1952** Fickbohm, Marilyn
Harris, Craig
Harvey, Sharon
Hultgren, Lorraine
Miller, Lloyd^
Robertson, Jay^
Wakeman, Janet Allan^
Wakeman, Shirley
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1953** Bradley, Herbert^
Bradley, Myrtle^
Harvey, Duane
Vreugdenhil, Max^
Waterman, Warren
Willms, Bryant
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1954** Bradley, Dennis
Groon, Janice
Powell, Marilyn
Wakeman, George
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1955** Adamson, Mary Lou^
Huff, Betty
Heeren, Marilyn^
Pefferman, Dixie
Wakeman, Darlene
Willms, Rodney
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1956** Ball, Sharon
Bradley, Karen
Clark, R. G. (Skip)
Fickbohm, Elaine
Forslund, Duane
Forslund, Elaine
Hultgren, Sharon
Mangelsen, Darlene
Osterbuhr, Martha Mae^
Waterman, Carole
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1957** Clark, Cassandra
Fickbohm, Duane
Groon, Sandra
Harvey, James
Hendricks, Gary
Johnston, Duane
Meske, Yvonne
Swanson, David
Swanson, Verdell
Willms, Ronda
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1958** Harvey, Linda
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1959** Beeler, Arlene
Beeler, Judith
Clark, Debbie
Groon, Gloria
Huff, Robert
Hultgren, Paul
McPherson, Frederick^
Pefferman, Gary
Swanson, Vivian
Waterman, Linda
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1960** Beeler, Ardis
Forslund, Nancy
Groon, Gerald
Harvey, Nancy
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1961** Powell, Duane^
Smith, James Lee^
Willms, Doris^
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1962** Beeler, Catherine
Huebner, Winston
Jacobs, Lillian
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1963** Beeler, JoElla
Ericson, Paulette
Hedges, Thelma^
Milner, Robert Charles^
Wilkens, Warren
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1964** Fickbohm, Dwight
Groon, Rodney
Heeren, Steve
Robertson, Jo Ellen
Sommervold, Alan
Swanson, Eugene
(Pastor David J. Roy)
- 1966** Groon, Randy Kevin
Hultgren, Nancy
(Pastor David J. Roy)

UNION CREEK CONFIRMANDS

- 1967** Heeren, Robin
Miller, Cathy
Powell, Morris
Swanson, Linette
Toben, Jean
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1968** Ericson, David
Hitzemann, Gerald
Hultgren, Jean
Cynthia Miller
Seely, Marlene
Seely, Marsha
Wilkins, Darla
Willms, Renita
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1969** Groom, Constance
Heeren, Janet
Pefferman, Barbara^
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1970** Heeren, Mark
Swanson, Venita
Toben, Michael
Vreugdenhil, Monica
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1971** Hedeby, Erica
Larson, Blake
Larson, Rhonda
Willms, Randall
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1972** Ericson, Bruce
Hedeby, Greta
Groom, Steve
Hitzemann, Renee
Toben, Jack
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1973** Harvey, Douglas
Hultgren, Jahn
Vreugdenhil, Brad
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1974** Hedeby, Rickard
Larson, Leasa
Larson, Marlene
Miller, Jay^
Miller, Kirk
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1975** Hultgren, Ruth
Willms, Ronelle
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1978** Swanson, Lisa
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1979** Caskey, MaLinda
Hedeby, Ingrid
Siemers, Ronald, Jr.
Swanson, Karen
(*Pastor David J. Roy*)
- 1980** Siemers, Becki
(*Pastor Julian L. Swanson*)
- 1982** Seely, Myron
Vanderham, Tina
Vanderham, Tracy
(*Pastor Julian L. Swanson*)
- 1983** Caskey, Tammy
(*Rev. Dr. Bernard A. Nelson*)
- 1985** Swanson, Greg
(*Rev. Dr. Bernard A. Nelson*)
- 1986** Fischer, Shannon
Klemme, Shaun
(*Rev. Dr. Bernard A. Nelson*)
- 1987** Klemme, Kristen
Rice, Amy
(*Rev. Dr. Bernard A. Nelson*)
- 1989** Ericson, Chad
Klemme, Jodi
(*Pastor William J. Flemer*)
- 1990** Tentinger, Joseph
(*Pastor William J. Flemer*)
- 1991** Heeren, Deborah^
Tentinger, Rachel
(*Pastor William J. Flemer*)
- 1992** Klemme, Deacon
Tentinger, Jeremy
(*Pastor William J. Flemer*)
- 1993** Ericson, Gene
Heeren, Wynette
Klemme, Vanessa
Robinson, Travis
Sommervold, Tara
(*Pastor William J. Flemer*)
- 1994** Klemme, Kendell
Vanderham, Tim
(*Pastor William J. Flemer*)
- 1995** Fickbohm, Nicholas
Groom, Nathaniel
Rice, Travic
Robinson, Jason
Sommervold, Amber
Tentinger, Krystal
(*Pastor William J. Flemer*)

UNION CREEK CONFIRMANDS

- 1996** Fickbohm, Leslie
Groon, Bethany
Heeren, Paige
Johnson, Nolan
Tentinger, Janet
(Pastor William J. Flemr)
- 1997** Ahart, Keegan
Doty, Christopher
Doty, Kyle
Vreugdenhil, Carissa
(Pastor William J. Flemr)
- 1998** Doty, Keith
Fickbohm, Stacey
Groon, Katherine
Harvey, Jessica
Johnson, Darin
(Pastor William J. Flemr)
- 1999** Doty, Craig
Fickbohm, Angela
Knowles, Chandra
Tentinger, Jason
(Pastor William J. Flemr)
- 2000** Hohenstein, Brittany
(Pastor Dan Stegen)
- 2001** Ruhland, Trent
*(Steven D. Larsen,
Synodically Authorized
Minister)*
- 2002** Endelman, Rachel
Harvey, Amanda
*(Steven D. Larsen,
Synodically Authorized
Minister)*
- 2003** Endelman, Candice
Endelman, Travis
Ericson, David
Hohenstein, Jordan
Kjar, Erica
Miller, Brittney
*(Steven D. Larsen,
Synodically Authorized
Minister)*
- 2005** Harvey, Aaron
Kjar, Annie
Kjose, Kade
Lanning, Allie
*(Steven D. Larsen,
Synodically Authorized
Minister)*
- 2006** Kjar, Allison
Miller, Anthony
Vreugdenhil, Tyler
(Pastor Carla Nelson)
- 2009** Kjar, Eliza
Kjose, Ian
Miller, Emily
(Pastor Carla Nelson)
- 2013** Van Wyk, Holly Jo
(Pastor Carla Nelson)
- 2014** Ericson, Damien
(Pastor Carla Nelson)
- 2016** Ericson, Kendra
(Pastor Carla Nelson)
- 2017** Van Wyk, Tristan
(Pastor Carla Nelson)
- 2018** Ericson, Riley
(Pastor Carla Nelson)
- 2019** Robinson, Emma
(Pastor Carla Nelson)
- 2020** Ericson, Raiden
Robinson, Marleigh
(Pastor Carla Nelson)
- 2021** Heeren, Zoe
Jacobson, Cooper
(Pastor Carla Nelson)
- 2022** Ericson, Payton
(Pastor Carla Nelson)
- 2023** McCrill, Marshall
(Pastor Nancy Eckels)



Photo by Joni Noble

UNION CREEK PASTORS

Rev. C. L. Beckstrom	1874-1876
Rev. S. A. Lindholm	1878-1879
Rev. C. J. Carlson	1880-1885
Rev. S. A. Sundberg	1885-1886
Rev. Lawrence. E. Sjölander	1888-1897
Rev. Eric G. Anderson	1897-1899
Rev. Olaf Wallin	1902-1905
Rev. Carl H. Nelson	1907-1913
Rev. Emil Johnson	1914-1925
Rev. David J. Edward	1926-1939
Rev. David J. Roy	1945-1979
Rev. Julian L. Swanson	1979-1981
Rev. Dr. Bernard Nelson	1982-1988
Rev. William J. Flemr	1988-2000
Steven D. Larson, <i>Synodically Approved Minister</i>	2001-2004
Rev. Carla Nelson	2006-2022
Rev. Nancy Eckels	2023-

2024 CHURCH LEADERSHIP

CHURCH COUNCIL

David Ericson, President • Paulette Vanderham, Vice-President
Connie Tentinger, Secretary • April Sommervold
Patti Ericson, Rob Heeren, Dan Haeder, Nicholas McKee, Tom Podzimek

APPOINTED POSITIONS

April Sommervold,
Financial Secretary
Sherri McKee, Treasurer
Felicia Miller, Cradle Roll
Superintendent

AUDITORS

Paulette Groon
Tom Podzimek
Sherry Fickbohm

SYNOD ASSEMBLY DELEGATE

Sherri McKee

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

David Ericson
Paulette Vanderham
April Sommervold
Karen McCrill

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Jim Bundy
Nicholas McKee
Sherri McKee
April Sommervold
Connie Tentinger
Brad Vreugdenhil

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Angela Ericson
Patti Ericson
Kristal McKee
Sherri McKee
MaLinda Nohava
Letitia Robinson

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

Chad Ericson
Carol Forslund
Paulette Vanderham
Warren Wilkens

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

Jean Doty
Karen McCrill
Kirk Miller
Travis Robinson
April Sommervold
Tom Tentinger

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Dene Doty
Bruce Ericson
Dwight Fickbohm
Nick Fickbohm
Kevin Groon
Rob Heeren
Alan Sommervold
Brad Vreugdenhil

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

David Ericson
Becky Kjose
Lance Johnson
Connie Tentinger

WORSHIP & PRAISE COMMITTEE

Pastor Nancy Eckels
Paulette Groon
Joni Noble

YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Patti Ericson
MaLinda Nohava
Sherri McKee
Letitia Robinson

CHRISTMAS DECORATING COMMITTEE

Paulette & Kevin Groon
Gary & Karen McCrill
Ryland McKee
Sherri McKee
Waylon McKee
Emily Miller
Jim & Shar Schuldt
Alan & April Sommervold
Selene Van Wyk
Tristan Van Wyk

2024 UNION CREEK MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

BAPTIZED & CONFIRMED MEMBERS

Barker, Roy
Bundy, Corbin
Bundy, Jim
Bundy, Missy
Bundy, Tanner
Bye, Amanda

Calentine, Carissa
Campbell, Wynette
Cauthen, Katie
Coyle, Laci
Coyle, Ryan

Delperdang, Allison
Dennison, Kelley
DeWit, Tessa
Doty, Christopher
Doty, Craig
Doty, Dene
Doty, Jean
Doty, Keith
Doty, Kyle

Endelman, Candice
Endelman, Rachel
Endelman, Travis
Ericson, Bruce
Ericson, Chad
Ericson, Damien
Ericson, David
Ericson, Gene
Ericson, Kendra
Ericson, Patti
Ericson, Payton
Ericson, Raiden
Ericson, Riley
Ericson, Roni

Fickbohm, Dwight
Fickbohm, Nick
Fickbohm, Sherry

Forslund, Carol
Forslund, Duane
Frerichs, Mary Jean

Groon, Bethany
Groon, Kevin
Groon, Nathan
Groon, Paulette

Haeder, Dan
Hair, Betty
Harvey, Aaron
Hedeby, Joann
Heeren, Deb
Heeren, Marilyn
Heeren, Robin
Heeren, Zoe
Hitzemann, Eleanor
Hohenstein, Jordan
Hohenstein, Mike
Hohenstein, Val
Hughes, Brittany

Jacobson, Cheryl
Jacobson, Cooper
Jacobson, Darren
Jacobson, Garry
Jacobson, Jessica
Johnson, Betsy Ann
Johnson, Darin
Johnson, Lance
Johnson, Nolan

Kenefick, Jessica
Kenefick, Kyle
Kincaid, Harry (PeeWee)
Kjar, Annie Jo
Kjar, Eliza
Kjar, Keith
Kjose, Becky
Kjose, Ian
Kjose, Kade
Kjose, Randy
Klemme, Bruce
McCrill, Gary

McCrill, Justin
McCrill, Karen
McCrill, Kayla
McCrill, Marshall
McKee, Kristal
McKee, Nicholas
McKee, Sherri
Macedo, Allie
Miller, Emily
Miller, Felicia
Miller, Kirk
Minor, Jessica
Morehead, Jade

Noble, Joni
Nohava, MaLinda

Parrott, Kristen
Podzimek, Heather
Podzimek, Tom

Rice, Diane
Rice, Travic
Robinson, Emma
Robinson, Jason
Robinson, Letitia
Robinson, Marleigh
Robinson, Travis
Ruhland, Mic
Ruhland, Nancy
Ruhland, Nancy E,
Ruhland, Trent
Runcie, Lakin

Siemers, Candi
Siemers, Gloria
Siemers, Ron, Jr.
Siemers, Ron, Sr.
Saloum, Amber
Sommervold, Alan
Sommervold, April
Swanson, Eugene
Swanson, Julia
Swanson, Verdell
Swift, Elaine

Tentinger, Connie
Tentinger, Janet
Tentinger, Jason
Tentinger, Jeremy
Tentinger, Joseph
Tentinger, Crystal
Tentinger, Robert
Tentinger, Roely
Tentinger, Tom

Van De Wiele, Vanessa
Vanderham, Paulette
Vanderham, Tim
Vanderham, Tracy
Vam Roekel, Leslie
Van Wyk, Johnny
Van Wyk, Selene
Van Wyk, Tristan
Vreugdenhil, Brad
Vreugdenhil, Deb

Wielenga, Holly Jo
Wilkins, Warren

TOTAL = 140

BAPTIZED ONLY MEMBERS

Barker, Robin
Barker, Royhon
Barker, Torina
Barker, Treysawn

Coyle, Carter
Coyle, Elise

Davies, Adalia
DeWit, Eloise
DeWit, Roman
Doty, Amery
Doty, Calvin
Doty, Sienna

Doty, Braylon
Doty, Jaxon
Doty, Moxon
Doty, Owen

Eden, Alyssa
Eden, Ashton
Endelman, Gage
Ericson, Henry
Ericson, Riggs

Jacobson, Berklie
Jacobson, Karston
Judd, Ethan

Kenefick, Everlee
Kenefick, Karson
Kjose, Esther
Kjose, Mathias
Kjose, Olivia
Klemme, Alexis

McCrill, Briar
McKee, Ryland
McKee, Waylen
Minor, Ayden

Parrott, Brandon
Parrott, Alex
Podzimek, Bella
Podzimek, TJ

Robertson, Beth
Robinson, Amelia
Ruhland, Jayce
Ruhland, Lilly

Saloum, Elena
Saloum, Calvin
Siemers, Sam
Swanson, Samuel

Voegeli, Tuff
Voegeli, Wylde

TOTAL = 48

*Photo by
Sherri McKee*





Jim Bundy



Missy Bundy



Left to right: Collin, Alan,
Liam and Brittney Callender



Katherine, Drew and Louis Cauthen



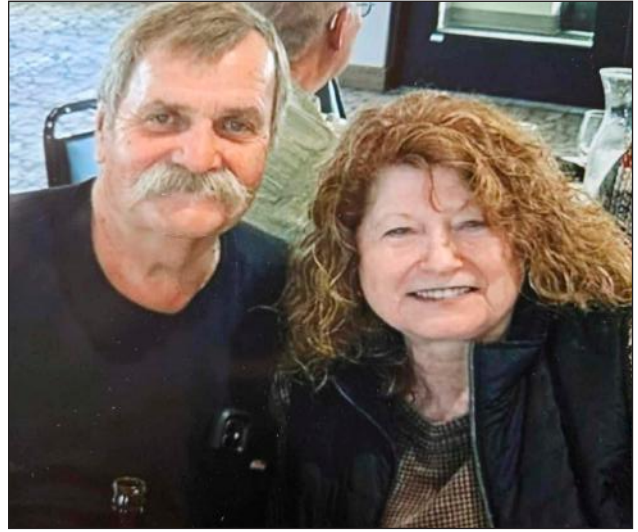
Back: Chris Doty
Front, left to right: Moxon, Jaxon and Owen Doty



Left to right: Sienna, Alexys, Calvin,
Amery (front), Craig and Braylon Doty



Left to right: Christopher, Keith,
Craig and Kyle Doty



Dene and Jean Doty



Left to right: Kyle, Mandy and Eloise Doty



Patti and Bruce Ericson



Left to right: Raiden, Angela,
Chad and Payton Ericson



Left to right: Roni, Henry, Riggs and David Ericson



Back: Dawn and Nick Fickbohm
Front: Allison and Adam Fickbohm



Sherry and Dwight Fickbohm



Carol and Duane Forslund



Mary Jean Frerichs



Paulette and Kevin Groom



Nathan and Stephanie Groom



Becky and Dan Haeder



Dylan Haverhals



Joann Hedeby



Deb and Rob Heeren



Eleanor Hitzemann



Garry and Cheryl Jacobson



Left to right: Everlee, Kyle, Jessica and Karson Kenefick



Keith and Mindy Kjar



Left to right: Esther, Kade, Mathias and Anna Kjose



Gary and Karen McCrill



Marshall and Kayla McCrill



Left to right: Michaela, Briar, Brynlee and Justin McCrill



Harry (PeeWee) Kincaid and Sherri McKee



Back: Kristal and Nicholas McKee
Front, left to right: Waylon and Ryland McKee



Kirk and Felicia Miller



Emily Miller



Joni Noble



MaLinda and Jeff Nohava



Bethany and Josh Nyreen with their dog Lucy



Back:: Heather and Tom Podzimek
Front: Bella and TJ Podzimek



Left to right: Letitia, Amelia, Emma,
Marleigh and Jason Robinson



Left to right: Brooklyn Weber,
Kristen and Travis Robinson, Caden Weber



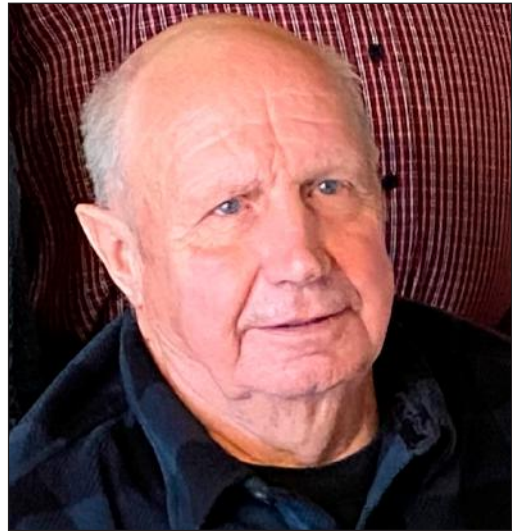
Nancy Ruhland



Jim and Shar Schuldt



Al and April Sommervold



Verdell Swanson



Elaine Swift



Tom and Connie Tentinger



Paulette Vanderham



Tim Vanderham and Marci Nessing



Tracy Vanderham



Left to right: Kristen Klemme, Shaun Klemme and Vanessa Klemme VanDeWiele



Vanessa Klemme VanDeWiele and Joe VanDeWiele



Left to right: Johnny and Selene Van Wyk, Holly Jo and Brady Wielenga, Tristan Van Wyk



Brad and Deb Vreugdenhil



Warren and Rev. Mary Wilkens

WE ARE 'THE CHURCH'

An edited excerpt from Dennis Hultgren's "In Conclusion" from the 1999 Union Creek History Book.

The Swedish immigrants who arrived at the Union Creek Settlement in 1868-1869 laid down a foundation of Christian life that we, today, must maintain. Most of these immigrants stayed in this community until death and are buried in the Union Creek Cemetery. Some of their descendants are still members at Union Creek while others are completely lost to us. They were here for the organization, and during the early years of the church, but, because of circumstances unknown to us, they left the area. Perhaps their adventurous nature motivated them to move further west, seeking who knows what. Perhaps some just gave up and went back east where there were established towns and cities where life was easier. We will never know. Their names remain on our excellent church records, in the Union County Courthouse, and on original homestead records.

"The Church" is the people who belong to it. After organizing the congregation in 1874, there was a Church, but they had no church building. They worshiped the Lord in sod houses, log cabins, and claim shanties. "The Church" was wherever services were held. These people built three churches starting from nothing each time, acquired 40 acres of land, and an adjacent 40 acres for a cemetery. Nothing was left to chance. They kept good records. Everything was done in proper order. These past generations deserve our deep gratitude for the legacy they have given us.

Most of the early history of our church focuses on the Swedish people but, over the past 150 years, people from many different nationalities have joined our congregation. Just as the United States became known as the "Melting Pot," Union Creek has developed the same way. The abandonment of old farmsteads and the subsequent enlarging of farms has had a great effect on our membership numbers. Today, we depend on the loyalty of our current members and extend the hand of friendship to any and all newcomers to our community to join in the work of the Lord at Union Creek Lutheran Church.

150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION WEEKEND

SEPTEMBER 7-8, 2024

"They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit." – Jeremiah 17:8

The 150-year legacy of Union Creek Lutheran Church began modestly, with early Swedish settlers who put down roots along the banks of Union Creek. They weathered drought and cyclone, hail and flood to build a community sustained by God's unyielding mercy and favor. Our church stands today as a testament to generations of enduring faith and resilience.

As we celebrate our sesquicentennial anniversary, we remember those humble beginnings. The faith shown by our founding members was a seed planted that has grown into a community of believers, known as Union Creek Lutheran Church. For 150 years we have remained united under the banner of Christ's love, dedicated to serving humanity and spreading the Gospel. Today, as we look at the diversity and strength of our congregation, we see the abundant harvest of that faith.

Each of us has played a role in nurturing the growth and vitality of our church. The diverse talents, gifts, and strengths within our congregation have shined over the past year as we planned this milestone celebration. Thank you to the dedicated members of the 150th Anniversary Celebration Committee: Carol Forslund, Sherri McKee, Joni Noble, MaLinda Nohava, Shar Schuldt, April Sommervold, Brad Vreugdenhil, Warren Wilkens, and Pastor Nancy Eckels. Through their vision, creativity, and hard work, we now come together as a community of believers to celebrate the rich history and bright future of Union Creek.

As we mark another year of our church's history, let us look backward to the many blessings we've received and forward in anticipation of what God still has in store for us. May we continue to grow, not only in numbers but also in spirituality, faith, and love for one another and be a beacon of Christ's love and light to all those around us.

We thank God for His love poured out among us, for His mercy that has never failed, and for His provision that has sustained us.

SCHEDULE

FUNDRAISERS BENEFITING UNION CREEK YOUTH GROUP

Weekend fundraisers will benefit the Union Creek Youth for the purchase of a Gaga Ball Pit.



BASEBALL, PREACHERS AND FUNERALS

HUMANITIES SPEAKER:
PHYLLIS SCHRAG

Phyllis's storytelling transports audiences back in time to the influences of small town and rural life that are fast disappearing.



Free to the public. Reservations are not required. Made possible by the South Dakota Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

SATURDAY EVENTS

- 10:00 AM BRIDAL SHOW
CAR & TRACTOR SHOW
- 11:30 AM LUNCH
- 1:00 PM HUMANITIES SPEAKER
- 2:00 PM CEMETERY TOUR
- 2:30 PM ROOT BEER FLOAT
FUNDRAISER
- 3:30 PM TRIVIA CONTEST
- 4:00 PM HISTORICAL PROGRAM
- 5:00 PM PORK SUPPER
- 6:00 PM CEMETERY TOUR
- 6:30 PM BONFIRE & HYMN SINGING

SUNDAY EVENTS

- 10:00 AM SERVICE WITH
BISHOP COSTANZA
- 11:30 AM LUNCH BY
CENTRAL CATERING
TICKETS \$10/PERSON
AGES 10 & UNDER FREE
- 1:00 PM CEMETERY TOUR

ALL DAY ACTIVITIES

HISTORICAL DISPLAYS

KIDS GAMES & BOUNCY HOUSES

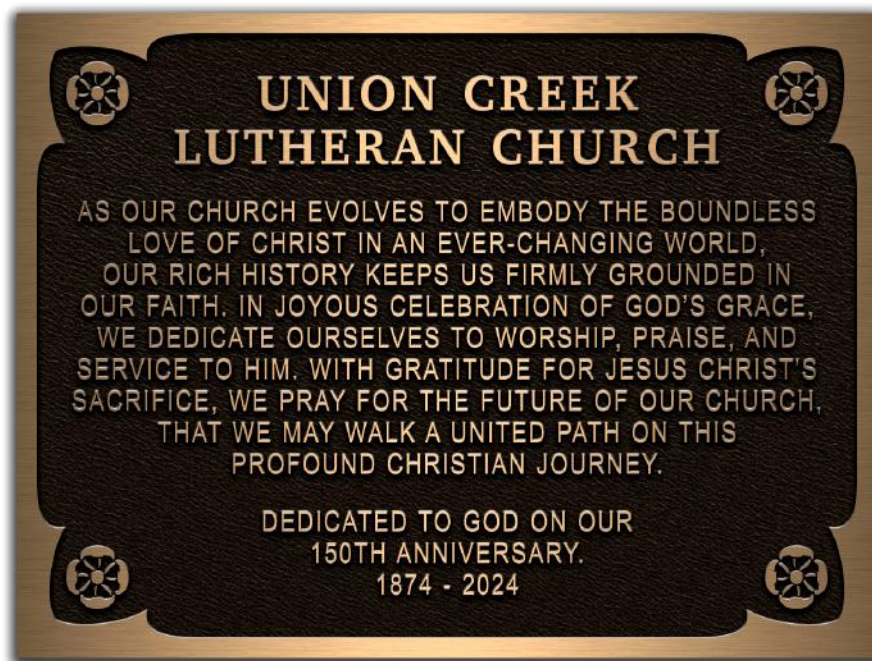
COOKBOOKS, HISTORICAL BOOKS,
CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS
& T-SHIRTS FOR SALE

BRING YOUR LAWN CHAIRS!

COMMEMORATIVE ORNAMENTS



ANNIVERSARY PLAQUE



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Hultgren, Dennis "Personal Information on Those in Attendance at the Organization of Union Creek Lutheran Church, January 10, 1874." Sioux Valley Township, South Dakota: Personal Papers.

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Union Creek Cemetery Association Records, 1878-2024.

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