

**TENNIAL CELEBRATION
GOD'S FAITHFULNESS
1883 - 1983**

1883 *Svenska Guds Forsamling i Sauk Rapids*
1927 *Swedish Evangelical Mission Church*
1945 *Evangelical Mission Covenant Church*
1969 *Evangelical Covenant Church of St. Cloud*

**VANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH
ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA**

Dedication

This centennial booklet is dedicated to the glory of God and the memory of many of His servants. For one hundred years His Word has been faithfully proclaimed, beginning in the ministry of the *Svenska Guds Forsamling i Sauk Rapids* and continuing today in that of the *Evangelical Covenant Church of St. Cloud*.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses," --the early pioneers who began the work and those who preceded them, those who continued the work and have gone to their heavenly home, those who from our fellowship have served or continue to serve in full-time Christian service in other places, and those who continue faithful today ministering to one another and our community--"let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1,2)

"This, our life and our beginning... Now thank we all our God!"

Notes From Our History, 1883-1983

In June of 1883 a small group of recently emmigrated Swedes founded the Svenska Guds Forsamling i Sauk Rapids, the Swedish Church of God in Sauk Rapids. Located on 'Swede Hill' near the foot of the Sauk Rapids water tower, this ethnic band of born-again believers established what is today known as the Evangelical Covenant Church of St. Cloud. Preceding even the founding of the Covenant in 1885, this congregation has served the St. Cloud area continuously for 100 years, in three different locations and out of four different buildings. To God be the glory!

The Psalmist declares, "From generation to generation, thou art God." We have most certainly witnessed his 'great faithfulness' in our church family throughout the years. And so it is with joy that we celebrate this year not only remembering His past faithfulness, but because our Lord is 'the same yesterday, today, and forever,' also then praising Him for His present and future faithfulness as we walk in His leading.

"Call to remembrance the former days" (Hebrews 10:32)
"And thou shalt remember all the way Jehovah thy God hath led thee"
(Deut. 8:2)

The organization of what is now the Evangelical Covenant Church of St. Cloud took place in Sauk Rapids on the 23rd of June, 1883 with the following seven charter members: A.B. Anderson, Andrew Peterson, Louis Olson, Nels Larson, L.J. Hagquist, John Skoglund, and A. Johnson. The organization was incorporated under the name "Svenska Guds Forsamling i Sauk Rapids, Minnesota" (The Swedish church of God in Sauk Rapids, Minnesota). John Skoglund was elected chairman and Andrew Peterson secretary. A.B. Anderson, L.J. Hagquist and Andrew Peterson were elected both as deacons and trustees. Rev. F.G. Hagquist of Minneapolis acted as chairman and led the proceedings. It was a very small and unpretentious beginning, but the little group went to work with the determination to succeed, and at a meeting only three weeks later it was decided to build. A building committee, consisting of Louis Olson, A.B. Anderson and John Skoglund was appointed, and a

subscription started to get the necessary funds. A lot on the top of the so called "Swedish Hill" was donated by some friendly party, and on this lot was built a little church 26x36 feet. Louis Olson was given the job of building the church and was paid \$2.00 a day; he was permitted to hire another man to assist him with the same pay. The building was completed in a few weeks, except for the plastering, and could be used for the services. But as there was a debt of \$150.00, it was decided to use the building without plastering through the winter, and to buy the lot next to it as well. The inside of the church was finished the following year.



The congregation's first building, 5th Avenue and 2nd Street South, Sauk Rapids. Built in 1883, it is the only of our former buildings still standing. (Picture taken from the Sauk Rapids water tower on Swede Hill, also still standing)



The Sauk Rapids congregation (approx. 1905)

The activities of the little group were not confined to Sauk Rapids only. As some of the members and others interested with the work lived in St. Cloud, work was started there also. Bring's stone quarry, about two miles southeast of the city, was the site for a little chapel built in 1886, where Sunday School and preaching services were conducted for a number of years. That work ceased and the building was sold in 1911. In St. Cloud proper, preaching services were conducted in an old saloon building, but in 1888 plans were laid and work started to build a church here also on 3rd Avenue Northeast. The yellow brick building was finished the following year and dedicated June 14-16, 1889, though the congregation's main meeting place continued for some years to be the Sauk Rapids location. It was cheap to build in those days. Four members are mentioned who worked on this building and were paid 15 cents per hour, besides donating six working days each. The debt on the church when finished was \$106.95, though the total cost of labor and materials for the building was \$900.00.



The second building, 3rd Avenue NE, St. Cloud (built 1889)



The St. Cloud congregation (approx. 1905)

For a number of years the congregation had no resident pastor but depended on visiting pastors for the preaching of the Word. Rev. Matias Peterson visited the little group and conducted services once a month for about a year. The traveling ministers of the Northwest Mission Association also gave occasional visits. At a business meeting July 2, 1887, a call was extended to Rev. A.G. Nelson of Anoka. He had for about a year previous to this visited the little group once a month and conducted services. He accepted the call and took up the work the same summer. During his ministry many were saved and joined the church. At the close of 1889 the membership was 47. It seems that the years 1888 and 89 must have been very busy for the little congregation; from January to June during 1888 besides regular worship and six monthly business meetings, no less than eight extra meetings were held. Several extra meetings were held during 1889 also. In 1888 the congregation joined the American Congregational denomination, receiving from them financial help for a number of years for the minister's salary and a loan of \$500 from their Church Building Society.

Rev. A.G. Nelson resigned and left in the spring of 1889. His successor, Rev. B. Finstrom, from Varmland, Sweden, was called. He arrived in June 1889 and served the congregation for about two years or until the spring of 1891. During his time the parsonage was built. Addition to that was made later, and a hot water heating plant was installed in the fall of 1920. At an extra business meeting held May 4th, 1891, it is stated that the congregation was without a pastor. Rev. Finstrom had then left. In the fall of that year a minister, P.J. Lofven, had arrived from Sweden, and he was called to serve the congregation from October 1891 to May 1st, 1892. At a business meeting February 27, 1892, the call to Lofven was extended to a year from the following 1st of May, but he declined and after some time went back to Sweden.

Rev. John Rood from Lake City was now called. He accepted and served the congregation for about seven years, from July 1892 to March 1899. The economic conditions were good in the early 1890's. Work was plentiful, and many Swedes moved into St. Cloud until working conditions became poorer in the late 1890's and many moved away. Yet the work of the Lord prospered.

Rood's successor was Rev. K.E. Peterson. He had been a member of the church since 1889, and served the congregation from the spring of

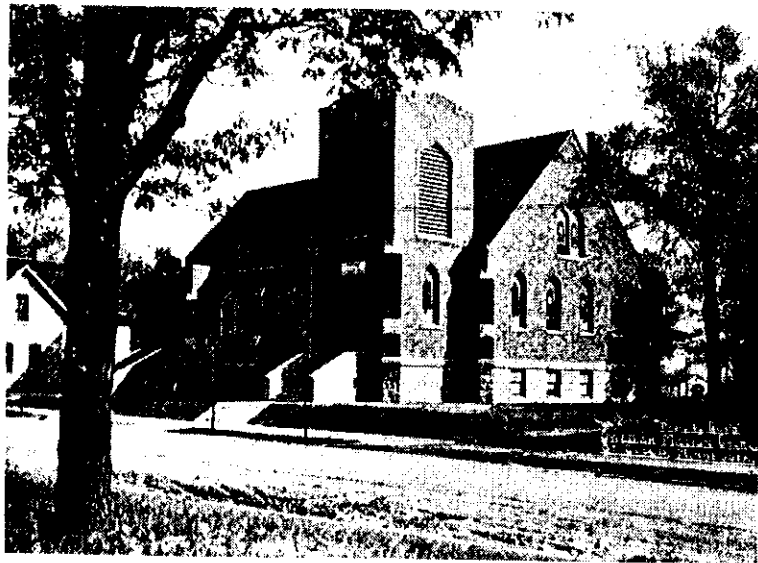
1899 to the spring of 1903. Besides serving the church, he studied at the Teachers College and received his Teachers' Certificate, then taught school for two years while serving the church at the same time.

Peterson's successor, Rev. E.V. Bjorklund from Phelps Centers, Nebraska was called. He took up the work during the summer of 1903 and served the congregation for twelve years until 1915. Bjorklund was gifted as a singer and musician and was very active in these lines. During his ministry, on November 25-26, 1905, the congregation celebrated its 22nd anniversary. Five of the charter members, A.B. Anderson, Andrew Peterson, Louis Olson, L.J. Hagquist and Nels Larson, were then present and took part. During Bjorklund's ministry a better system of administration seems to have been introduced. The minutes of the business meetings were more complete, and after being adopted were signed by both the chairman and the secretary. The treasurer's report to the annual meeting was copied in the minutes, etc. At the annual meeting on January 1, 1904 it was decided to get a regular Church record. Then too, the pastor reported the membership to at least some of the annual meetings. We find that December, 1910 the congregation numbered 84 members, January, 1912, 94 members, and January, 1914, 91 members. At a business meeting August 31, 1907 it was decided not to ask for financial help any more from the 'Americans.'

When Bjorklund resigned in the spring of 1915, Rev. Carl Olson of Winnipeg, Canada was called. While waiting for him to come, Rev. E. Dahlhjelm, editor of Minneapolis' "Veckobladet," a regular Christian newspaper in Swedish, supplied the pulpit on Sundays. During Carl Olson's term the connection with the Congregational denomination was severed. At a business meeting in February, 1917 it was reported that the debt of \$500 owed them was paid, and in March, 1918 it was decided to sever all connections with that body. The 36th anniversary of the congregation was celebrated June 23rd, 1919.

Carl Olson resigned and left in the fall of 1919, and the congregation was again without a pastor. Calls were extended to several men but without result. Finally Prof. Wedell of the Covenant's Minnehaha Academy was called temporarily, until a permanent pastor could be secured. At an extra business meeting May 10, 1920, Rev. A.E. Olson was called. He accepted and served the church until the spring of 1925. During his term the 3rd Avenue, brown brick building was built. That was quite an undertaking, and the question was discussed at several meetings for a number of years. Some of the families had moved from Sauk Rapids to St. Cloud, and the work had become more and

more centralized here. Consequently the old church had become inadequate and impractical, besides being in need of repair. Already in May 1916, it was decided to build a new church "as soon as we can venture the undertaking." Nothing more is said about it until the annual meeting on January 1st, 1920. A committee was appointed to prepare plans and also get an estimation of what a new church would cost. Again nothing is said until the next annual meeting in January 1921. It was then decided to get "a better church this year." At a meeting three months later (March 29) it was decided to "repair the old church"; but at a special business meeting only two weeks later (April 14, 1921) it was decided to "tear down the old church and build a new one." Sounds like it was a difficult decision! May to September that year there is no record of any business meetings. Evidently all were busy with the building and had no time for meetings. Elmer Youngberg, as carpenter with the help of other men, built the brick church at the location of 18 3rd Avenue NE, St. Cloud, on the site of the first St. Cloud church building. At a meeting September 14 it was decided to "dedicate the new church November 17 if possible." And so it was. The church in Sauk Rapids was sold and services there discontinued except for occasional prayer meetings in the homes.



The third building, built in 1921 on former site

Rev. A.E. Olson resigned and left in the spring of 1925. He was to return again and serve as pastor from January 1, 1936 - September 1, 1943. It was during this term that he married. When Olson resigned in 1925, Rev. Dahlhjelm was again called to serve until a permanent pastor could be secured. Rev. I. Hoyem of Cadillac, Michigan was now called and took up the work November 19, 1925. What has taken place since then is more well known. The following might be mentioned: At the annual meeting January 1, 1927, a new constitution was adopted, and the name of the church changed to the Swedish Evangelical Mission Church of St. Cloud. February 28, 1927 it was decided to join "The Northwest Mission Association." This later became known as the Northwest Conference of the Covenant Church. The last of the church debt was paid in March, 1930, and the occasion was celebrated with a festival April 15, when the paid notes were burnt with great rejoicing. January 1933, the membership was 91. Hoyem left in 1935.



The congregation at its 50th Anniversary, June 1933

* Original picture is one long continuous photograph.

After A.E. Olson resigned from his second term (during which time services were finally begun in English on March 27, 1940) on September 1, 1943 a call was extended to L. Jackson Derbe. He responded and served the church from June 3, 1944 through March 1, 1947. Rev. Derbe came from the east, was married and had two daughters. He might have been called the traveling pastor as he served churches from the East to the West coasts. During his service, a name change again took place. On January 5, 1945 the name was changed to Evan-gelical Mission Church, dropping the word, "Swedish." In the fall of 1945 an oil burning furnace was installed in the church and an oil burner installed in the furnace of the parsonage. In 1946 six hearing aids were installed in the church, as continued modernization took place.

Upon the resignation of Rev. Derbe, a short time was to elapse before the arrival of Rev. Daniel Bloomdahl. During that time Rev. Payne was the interim pastor. Rev. Bloomdahl's ministry extended over five years from September 5, 1947 - October 1, 1952. Membership during his ministry was 116-1948, 107-1949, 118-1951, and 116-1952. Daniel Bloomdahl had been in the armed forces and taught at Minnehaha Academy. His wife, Valberg, had been a nurse while living in the Twin Cities area. They came to this church from Stambough, Michigan, having two children. Because he was fluent in Swedish, Swedish services were held on Sunday afternoons even though services had been in English since 1940. His wife was such a whirlwind - busy all the time with few hours of sleep. Besides working part-time at the hospital she gave her nursing skills to many in their homes. Daniel, was just the opposite of her. He lived a slow, calm, gentle life meeting people where they were. Rev. Bloomdahl resigned October 1, 1952.

In 1949, a group of men and boys under the leadership of Elmer Youngberg (who built the scaffolding) washed the church from ceiling to basement. A group tore down the front porch, and in its place a smaller entry and closet were built. Inside, the colonnades were removed and the doorway widened between the front and dining rooms, and the side door toward the church sealed up. The entire building was also insulated. This made the building easier to heat and much more comfortable. 1950 brought changes to the parsonage. Parsonage remodeling and improvements included stuccoing and painting, a new bath tub, closet and hallway partitions upstairs, and some necessary redecorating. The cost of this work was covered by a Thanksgiving offering and other gifts. Still more improvements on the church building came in 1951: an electric clock for the auditorium, new

entrance lights for the front doors, and a retaining wall built along the alley and a part of the front. The first two were donated, and the labor on the wall was also without cost to the church by Archie Johnson and Fred Freeburg. The church rest rooms were finally modernized and the garage painted to match the color of the parsonage. A thermostat control in the church study made that more usable. Improvements in 1952 included painting on the outside woodwork and installation in the parsonage of an automatic gas tank to replace the worn-out range boiler. The Ladies Aid and the Brotherhood each purchased a dozen steel folding chairs for use in the church. The Aid also paid for the installation of a hot water tank donated by one of the members. January 27, 1952 the church was rocked by an explosion of the furnace. Needless to say, the church was due for some improvements following this event: a new ceiling and redecoration of the whole interior, as well as repairs to the furnace. Summer of 1952 storm windows were added to the church at the cost of \$811.00.

Of importance was the event of June 8, 1953. It was that day that the church voted to join the Covenant and its application was accepted at the annual conference of the Covenant in Minneapolis, June 18, 1953.

There was a period of time without a pastor until Rev. Donald Thomas' arrival in 1955. However, the needs were supplied by many men sent by God. Donald Thomas stayed until March 1958. During that time a name change once again took place. January 9, 1956 a new constitution was adopted and the name was changed to Mission Covenant Church. In August of 1955 the Mission Covenant Campaign (over Radio WJON) began. These broadcasts continued until after Rev. Thomas left, totaling 19 broadcasts. During the year 1957, the brick work of the church building was repainted, granite stone fixtures were reset, a tile floor replaced the wooden floor in the basement, and a new sidewalk was laid in front of the entire church property. The old coal bin, which had been standing empty since the oil furnace was installed, was made into a comfortable Sunday School room. Aluminum storm windows and screens were donated and installed on the second-story windows of the parsonage.

The June 1958 membership stood at 95. It didn't take long for a pastor to respond to our need. Albin E. Nelson became pastor on July 1, 1958. Albin had a heart for people, and people's involvement showed it. Building improvements included the furnace being changed

over to natural gas. The pastor's study was repaired, an outside bulletin board installed, and with joy a new mimeograph machine was purchased. Albin Nelson resigned from this church March 1, 1961. He and his 'once missionary' wife, Faye, now live in Faribault, MN after his retirement in 1977.

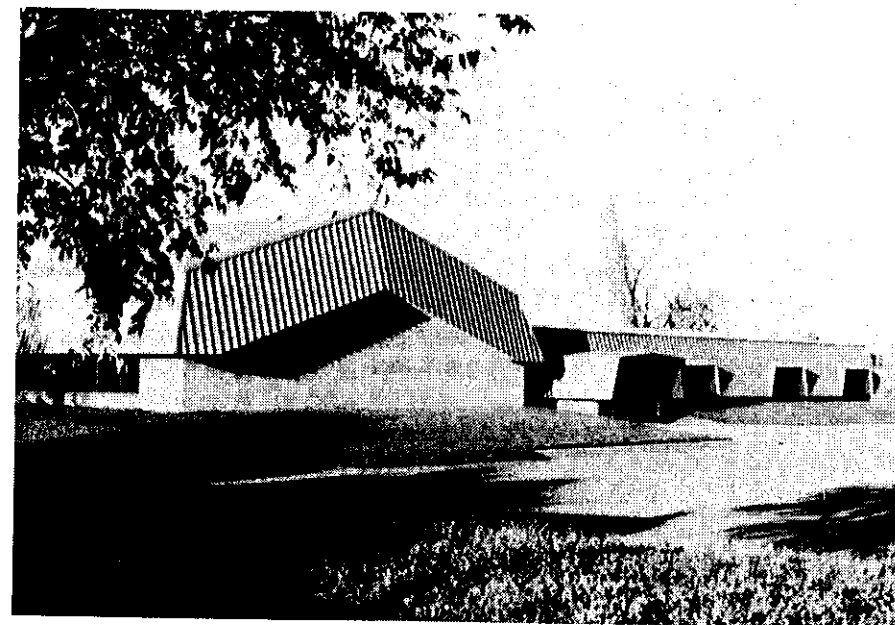
Rev. Chester Johnson, Rev. Franklin, Rev. Soderholm, and Rev. Grundy all served the church between Albin Nelson and Rev. Raymond Anderson. July 16, 1962 brought Rev. Anderson to us from Clear Lake, Wisconsin. He served this church for three years. During that time he was actively involved in Christian work at the Veteran's Administration Hospital, the Reformatory, St. Cloud State University, and with Boy Scouts. Rev. Anderson resigned August 31, 1965.

Rev. Helge Hamilton served in an interim capacity until the coming of Rev. Satterblom. Rev. Clarence Satterblom came with the phrase "Come expecting and you will receive" on September 1, 1966 from Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada. He was a native of Chicago, and a graduate of Moody Bible Institute, North Park College, and North Park Seminary, Chicago. Satterblom's children are Mrs. Wilber Anderson and son Paul. In 1968, the church purchased a Baldwin organ. An offering was received to defray the expenses on the evening it was dedicated, and with use of Memorial Funds and the sale of the old organ, most of the cost had been realized. December, 1969 brought another name change -- The Evangelical Covenant Church of St. Cloud. Membership was 58-1966, 62-1967, 62-1968. Clarence Satterblom was with us until November, 1970.

While waiting for the arrival of Rev. David Erickson from North Park Seminary in December, 1971, there were three interim pastorates: Rev. Richard Haferman (December, 1970 through June, 1971), Rev. Erickson (July-August) who preceded his pastorate with an interim position, and Rev. Stuart Dale (September-November). Rev. Erickson brought a great concern for people, a stress for body ministry, and a gift of administration. One of the major events to occur during his ministry was the decision to sell the 3rd Avenue NE building and relocate. Ground-breaking ceremonies for the new ministry facility were held on the Maine Prairie Road site on November 9, 1975. Also during this time a different parsonage was purchased at 836 N. 24th Avenue, with the old one next to the 3rd Avenue building used for missionary housing. Pastor Erickson resigned in December of 1975, and he and his family moved to a work in Eugene, Oregon; today they serve a Covenant Church in Duluth.

Rev. John Klopsch and Rev. Roger Schantz filled the vacancy in the interim period before the coming of Rev. Paul Mann from Des Moines, Washington, in September of 1976. Pastor Mann led worship twice in the 3rd Avenue NE church building before it was sold; after this, before the completion of the Maine Prairie Road building in the Fall of 1977, the congregation met temporarily in several locations, for the longest period at the St. Cloud Children's Home of the Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Cloud. The 24th Avenue North parsonage was sold during Pastor Mann's term, with a home on Sweetaire St. in the Cloud Park Addition being purchased. Rev. Mann is remembered by many as a sensitive pastor and friend, with a sound preaching gift. After having also served the community as Police Department Chaplain, Pastor Mann resigned in June of 1979. He and his family are now active in a Covenant church in Seattle.

Prior to Pastor Richard Mylander's coming from North Park Seminary in June of 1980, the congregation was ably served on an interim basis by one of its people, Rev. Wayne Hall, this after a six-month period of various area pastors filling the pulpit. Pastor Mylander's emphases have been the development of intimate Christian fellowship and support within the church family, and the active involvement and cultivation of lay leadership and spiritual giftedness.



Our current facility, built in 1977

LANGUAGE...

From the time the church was organized in 1883, the Swedish language was used in all services and other activities as well as in recording the minutes of the business meetings. The Sunday School not only conducted its religious instruction in Swedish, but taught the children to read and write the language.

As time progressed, more and more of the young people were unfamiliar with the Swedish language. This presented a problem. The Sunday School and the Young People's Society discontinued the use of the Swedish language in their activities in the earlier years of the church. The church services continued in the Swedish language. Attempts were made to combine the two languages at special meetings and to set aside certain Sundays for service in English. This presented difficulties because the older people failed to get full benefit from the services in English and the young people could not understand the services in Swedish. Church-goers became confused as to which Sunday service would be in English and which in Swedish.

At a meeting held January 14, 1936, the secretary was authorized to write the minutes of the business meetings in English. Gradually, English became the language most used, and at a business meeting held March 27, 1940, the decision was made to have all Sunday services in the English language.

SUNDAY SCHOOL...

The first mention of a Sunday School is found in the minutes of a meeting, held December 8, 1883. There we read, "agreed that the Sunday School in Sauk Rapids should take part in the Sunday School festival in St. Cloud, the expenses to be paid by the congregation." Consequently, Sunday Schools must have been conducted in both places by then. In the years 1888-93 there were five Sunday schools: Sauk Rapids, St. Cloud, Bring's Quarry, Waite Park, and one in the country north of Sauk Rapids, where pupils and teachers met in homes. It has been related that some teachers taught in more than one school, besides attending services each Sunday. Transportation was by foot or by horse and buggy. This meant sacrificial time and effort. The Sunday Schools in the outlying districts were discontinued and centralized in one school. The chapel at Bring's Quarry was sold in 1911. The last school to be discontinued was in Sauk Rapids in 1921, when the new church was built in St. Cloud. Since then, it has been one church and one school. It is our hope, that the good seed sown in the minds and hearts of children, young people, and adults during these one hundred years has been a means of salvation and growth to many.

Descendants of Early Members Active in the Church in its Centennial Year (underlined)

Ancestors: Nels and Maria (Friberg) Larson (charter member)
Born: Nels, September 21, 1860 Maria, March 3, 1865
Arrived in America: Nels, from Dalsland, Sweden, March 1882
Maria, from Varmland, Sweden, May 10, 1886
Married: December 25, 1887, Sauk Rapids
Died: Nels, May 21, 1954 Maria, December 19, 1940
Their Children:

-Joseph Emmanuel Larson (one of only two current
descendants of charter members)
Born: March 19, 1889, Sauk Rapids
Baptized: April 26, 1889, Sauk Rapids
Received into the Church: January 19, 1948 (though he
had attended since birth)
Married: Estelle (Schumann) Larson, August 19, 1948,
St. Cloud
Born: September 21, 1904
Baptized: 1904
Received into the Church: January 8, 1950
Lives: Sauk Rapids

-Esther Eleanor Larson (the second of only two current
descendants of charter members)
Born: February 2, 1901, Sauk Rapids
Baptized: September 28, 1901, Sauk Rapids
Received into the Church: September 30, 1918
Lives: Sartell

Other Children Include:

-Ruth Maria; born August 27, 1890; died October 1, 1980
-Naome Elizabeth; born October 25, 1893; died August 21, 1976
-Adolf Ephraim; born December 13, 1895; died July 31, 1975
-Ernest Daniel; born November 23, 1898; died 1936

Ancestors: Axel and Amelia Larson
(birth, death, etc. dates not available)
Arrived in America: both from Sweden
Their Children:
-May Larson
-Gunnard Axel Larson
-Ellen Larson (died 1962)
-Hilda Larson (died 1953)
-Mabel Larson (died 1955)
-Walter Larson (born February 28, 1896; died October, 1974)
-Albert Larson (died 1954)
-Florence Larson (died 1968)
-George Larson (the 5th of the 9 children)
Born: December 10, 1894, Sauk Rapids
Died: 1963
Married: Ruth Evan (Lafstrom) Larson, September 30, 1929,
St. Cloud
Born: May 20, 1903, Sandstone
Baptized: June, 1907, Sandstone
Received into the Church: April 15, 1927
Lives: Duluth

Ancestors: Johan Gustaf and Selma Josefina (Fridlund) Youngberg
Born: Johan, October 9, 1859 Selma, October 6, 1866
Arrived in America: Johan, from Stockholm, 1882
Selma, from Elfsbonslan, Sweden, 1882
Married: December 1, 1885, Sauk Rapids
Received into the Church: both on January 1, 1886
Died: Johan, February 1, 1938 Selma, March 5, 1927
Their Children:
-Esther Josefina (born October, 1887; died, 1919)
-Alice Emelia (Johnson) (born September, 1891; died 1970's)
-Arthur Emmanuel (born August, 1894; died 1960's)
-Ruth Caroline (Fagerman) (born April, 1901; lives in
Sauk Rapids)
-Hazel Loretta Sophia (Mead) (born May, 1904; died 1960's)
-Holger Otto Leonard (born December, 1906; died January, 1927)
-Elmer Vitalius Youngberg (the 2nd of the 7 children)
Born: July 27, 1889, Sauk Rapids
Baptized: December 28, 1889, Sauk Rapids
Received into the Church: June 27, 1908
Married: Ida Mathilda (Swenson) Youngberg, June 30, 1920
(continued on next page)

Youngberg continued--

Born: April 29, 1893, Sweden
Baptized: May 2, 1893, Sweden
Arrived in America: October, 1893
Arrived in St. Cloud: 1920
Received into the Church: April 19, 1935
Lives: St. Cloud

Ancestors: Oscar and Anna Christina (Erickson) Bostrom
Born: Oscar, June 22, 1867 Anna: September 28, 1866
Arrived in America: Oscar, April, 1887
Anna, June, 1885; both from Sweden
Married: March 10, 1888, Sauk Rapids
Died: Oscar, June, 1933 Anna, May, 1953
Their Children:
-Agnes Maria (Bloomdahl) (born January 1889; died 1955)
-George Nathanael (born July, 1891; died June, 1920)
-Olga Rebecka (Johnson) (born March 25, 1901;
lives in Kerkhoven)
-Dagmar Hilder Annette Bostrom
Born: May 16, 1908, Sauk Rapids
Baptized: 1908
Received into the Church: 1927
Lives: Sauk Rapids

Ancestors: Peter John and Hannah (Peterson) Holmgren
Born: John, July 19, 1876 Hannah, September 2, 1874
Married: June 27, 1901, Smaland, Sweden
Arrived in America: May 17, 1904, From Sodermanlan, Sweden
Died: John, May 23, 1940 Hannah, November 21, 1963
Their Children:
-Olga (Cross) (born May, 1902; lives in Foley)
-Alma (Swanson) (born October, 1903; died June, 1976)
-Karl (born December, 1907; lives in Zimmerman)
-Ruth (Streitz) (born January, 1909; lives in Dennison)
-Oskar (born September, 1911; lives in St. Cloud)
-Gunnard (born February, 1915; died February, 1979)
-Hilda Holmgren (the 3rd of the 7 children)
Born: January 5, 1905, Swift Falls
Baptized: January 15, 1905, Swift Falls
Received into the Church: 1927, and after living near
Chicago for nearly 30 years, again in September, 1970
Lives: St. Cloud

Testimonies from Our History

Testimony of an Unknown Member, Given at the 22nd Anniversary, 1905:

My thoughts go back to eight years before the church was built, and I think about how this hill which the Americans call Swedish Hill looked at that time. There was not a single house, only trees and bushes so thick it was difficult to walk through.

If there had been some prophetic spirit that had said in eight years, a Swedish church would be built here, where each Sunday God's Word would be preached, prayer services held and Sunday School children gathered with teachers, I wonder would any have believed it.

When a person is 21 he is considered of age. We cannot say this about a congregation. If anyone thinks this he is wrong. God has lead and helped this little congregation from its beginning to this day. May He lead and help us in the future. We are dependent upon Him, and we are also dependent on each other. As the Apostle so beautifully says in 1 Corinthians 12:21, the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you, I can see just as well without you." Perhaps before evening comes he must depend on the hand to wipe away a tear, or bind up some wound, were one member suffering. May this be the practice of this congregation forever. This is my prayer to God.

Testimony of Building Chairman, 1976:

A year ago, we approached the East Bank of the Jordan River and gazed into the promised land with feelings of excitement and eager anticipation. The Land of Milk and Honey was just close enough to be within our grasp. Perhaps a glimpse of the activities comprising this past year will help us to reflect on where we've come from, where we are, and where we're going.

In early December, 1975, the initial excavation for our new facility was completed and the footings were poured for the worship fellowship and Christian education areas. Steel beams and paneling arrived on the first and were erected in February and March. Most of the concrete block work was completed by early April. Final building plans and the building permit were available in July. The block work, rough plumbing, concrete floors, windows, most exterior doors, mansard

and gypsum board "exterior" walls are ready for the interior ceilings and insulation. The final excavation was finished in November.

The city has already installed the water main along Quarry Road, and the sanitary sewer is due to be completed early this winter. Underground electricity, gas and telephone service is available to the exterior of the building.

In January, the Northwest Conference Board approved our application for aid and has been providing as with monthly assistance since then. The board, at a special August meeting, approved our request that they co-sign for a loan if a lending institution required. In return the board has required that ownership of the property be transferred to them during the period of the loan.

In October, the First American National Bank gave their written commitment to provide financing (not to exceed \$170,000) - short term by them and long term by a private investor. A required appraisal was completed, and our new facility (including all land) will have a current market value of \$363,000 when completed as compared with an investment of \$273,000. The final papers are being completed and will soon be ready for trustee action.

As we sit on the East Bank of the Jordan River, it is obvious that a fair amount of work needs to be completed before we enter the Promised Land. Perhaps, the Promised Land is more than a completed new facility. Perhaps the Lord will expect commitment from us - commitment to strengthen our Christian ministry to each other, commitment to extend our Christian ministry to others through our benevolences, and commitment to be open to new opportunities for ministry via our new facility.

The Lord said to Joshua (and to us?) - "This is my command; be strong, be resolute, do not be fearful or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

KLJ

Centennial Observances, 1983

- January 16th Northwest Conference Superintendent, Rev. Stan Henderson, made centennial presentation and shared from the Word of God; at regular morning worship, 10:30 am.
- March 4th-6th Centennial Weekend I; Former Dean of North Park Theological Seminary and current Professor of History there, Rev. Glenn Anderson, resourced lay weekend of devotional Covenant history, "Covenant Roots"
- April 17th Former Pastor Donald Thomas (1955-58) preached at morning worship, 10:30 am.; informal potluck followed in his honor.
- May 15th Former Pastor Clarence Satterblom (1966-70) preached at morning worship, 10:30 am.; informal potluck followed in his honor.
- June 23rd Shared in Founder's Day Service of prayer and praise on anniversary of our chartering in 1883.
- July 15th-17th Centennial Weekend II; Centennial Missions Conference, featuring three of our four supported missionary families/singles: Covenant missionaries Bob and Erna Bergstrom and family of Zaire, Covenant short-term missionary and member of our church Tim Johnson of Japan, and Covenant missionaries Jerry and Vicky Love, of Mexico.
- July 24th Former Pastor Albin Nelson (1958-61) preached at summer morning worship, 9:30 am; informal brunch followed in his honor.
- August 28th Former Pastor Dave Erickson (1971-75) preached at summer morning worship, 9:30 am; informal brunch followed in his honor.
- September 25th Former Interim Pastor Chester Johnson (1961-62) preached at morning worship, 10:30 am.; informal potluck followed in his honor.

October 29th-30th Centennial Weekend III, Culminating Centennial Celebration with President of the Covenant, Rev. Milton Engebretson, here; events include a Saturday evening reunion banquet with Rev. Engebretson speaking, the Sunday Centennial worship service, and a traveling prayer service on Sunday afternoon on the sites of the former and present church buildings.

November 20th Annual Harvest Festival, on the theme "A Harvest of Years of the Faithfulness of God," honoring the senior adults of our congregation.

A Closing Centennial Comment...

In reading over the history of our congregation, it seems obvious that historical progress has been focused on pastors and buildings. Though this is inevitable and somewhat understandable due to our pre-occupation with tangible and measurable things, it is an incomplete look at our history at best. It is easiest to focus on the ministries of the church by focusing on the pastors who have served us and the buildings out of which ministry has taken place. However, the true focus of the church is not its pastor but its Lord; and the true focus is equally not bricks and mortar, but the Lord's people. Perhaps our history, then, is more rightly defined by a look at the way the Lord has touched people, His living temple, over the years.

Our history is the history of faithfulness of men and women of God, of the Joes and Elmers, the Esthers and Idas. Our history is the history of the Gospel being received, salvation appropriated, and the Good News shared over the many coffee cups with friends, family and neighbors. Our history is the history of the tens of thousands of hours given to the service of the Almighty. Our history is the history of the joyful singing and learning by adults and children alike. It is the history of the gentle nurture of the young Adams and Annies, Jennies and Johns. It is the history, not only of those who have gone forth already to serve the Lord in full-time ministry, as pastors and missionaries--the people with names such as Sodergren, Larson, Ferree, Anderson, Johnson, Olson, Mohrenweiser; but also of those whom the Lord is calling for future service full-time--the couples in our midst seriously considering missionary service, the young man and wife awaiting

the college sophomore struggling with the meaning of the high school freshman who's indicated a leaning, and who-knows-how-many others. Our history is the history of those throughout our one hundred years who have the concept of Christian vocation whether they've gone to service or not. In short, our history is the history of the often overlooked ways in which our faithful God Himself to be our Immanuel, God with us.

They aren't measurable or tangible, but they're the reality that binds us together in the Name above all names. Each of us has a part to play in the writing of a written history all its own. And all this in a hundred years! Can you imagine what the Lord yet has in store for us? Can you comprehend that 'He who has begun a work has yet to bring it to completion? Therefore, 'let us run with endurance the race that is still set before us,' '...reaching that goal lies ahead, pressing on toward the prize of the life that is in Christ Jesus.'

Pastor Rick Mylander
October, 1983

... whose work has contributed to our joy this year, but especially to these of the Centennial Committee: Bob Dopkins, Nancy Haarstad, Hilda Holmgren, Estelle Mahrenweiser, Peter Thorpe.