

*FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY*

of the

*Swedish Evangelical Mission  
Church*

of

St. Cloud, Minnesota

1883  
1933

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*June 16, 17, 18- 1933*



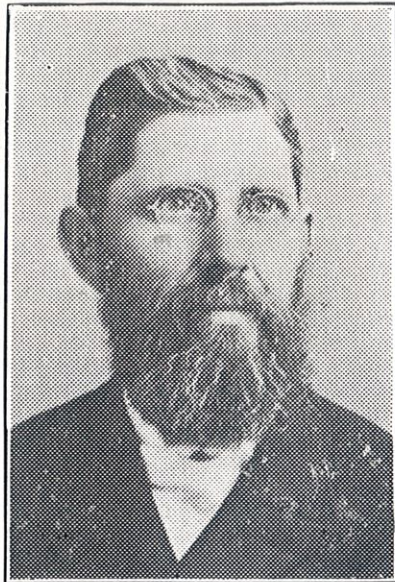
**Swedish Evangelical Mission Church**  
St. Cloud, Minnesota

## Church History

“Call to remembrance the former days” (Hebr. 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 Swedish Mission 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 “Guds Församling i Sauk Rapids, Minnesota.” (The 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 church. 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, and 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 on the property, it was decided to use the building without plastering through the winter, and to buy the lot next to it instead. The inside of the church was finished the following year.

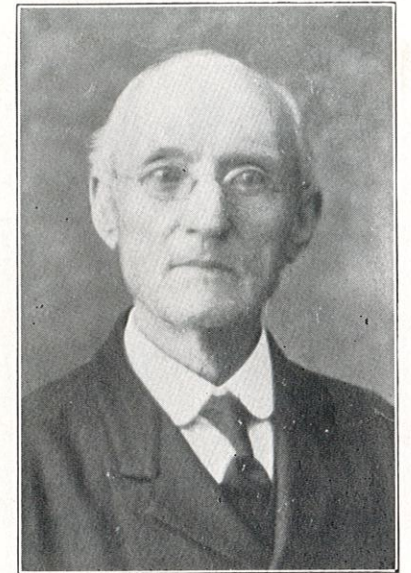


REV. F. G. HAGQUIST

The activities of the little group were not confined to Sauk Rapids only. As some of the members and others interested and in sympathy with the work lived in St. Cloud, work was started there also. At Bring's stone quarry about two miles S.E. of the city a little chapel was built in 18-86, were 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. The building was finished the following year and dedicated June 14-16, 1889. It was cheap to build in those days. Four members are mentioned who worked on this building and were paid 15 cents per hour, and besides they donated six working days each. The debt

on the church when finished was \$106.65.

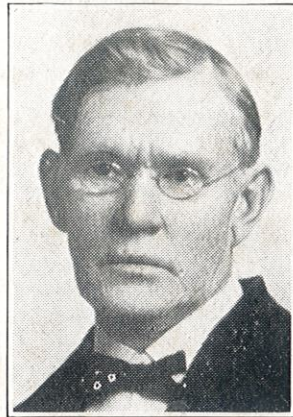
For a number of years the congregation had no resident pastor but depended on visiting pastors for the preaching of the word. Rev. Matias Peterson visited the little group and conducted services once a month for about a year. The traveling ministers of the Northwest Mission Association also gave occasional visits. At a business meeting July 2, 1887 a call was extended to Rev. A. G. Nelson of



REV. A. G. NELSON

Anoka. He had for about a month 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 years for the little congregation, because from January to June inclusive during 1888 besides the 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 and received from them financial help for a number of years for the minister's salary and also 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 Vermland, Sweden, was called. He arrived in June 1889 and served



REV. JOHN ROOD

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 during these years. Work was plentiful, and many Swedes moved into

St. Cloud, and the work of the Lord prospered also, until working conditions became poor and many moved away from



REV. K. E. PETERSON

the city.

Rood's successor was Rev. K. E. Peterson. He had been a member of the church since 1889. He 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 he taught school for two years and served the church at the same time.



REV. E. V. BJORKLUND

As 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 or until 1915. Bjorklund was gifted as a singer and musician and was very active in these lines. During his ministry or to be exact Nov. 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 little better system seems to have been introduced. The minutes of the business meetings are more complete and after being adopted are signed by both the chairman and the secretary. The treasurer's report to the annual meeting is copied in the minutes, etc. At

the annual meeting Jan. 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. So we find that the 31 of December, 1910 the congregation numbered 84 members, Jan. 1, 1912, 94, and Jan. 1, 1914, 91 members. At a business meeting Aug. 31, 1907 it was decided not to ask for financial help any more from the Americans.



REV. CARL OLSON

When Bjorklund resigned in the spring of 1915, Rev. Carl Olson of Winnipeg, Canada was called. While waiting for him to come, Rev. E. Dahljelm, editor of "Veckobladet," Minneapolis 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 Minnehaha Academy was called temporarily, until

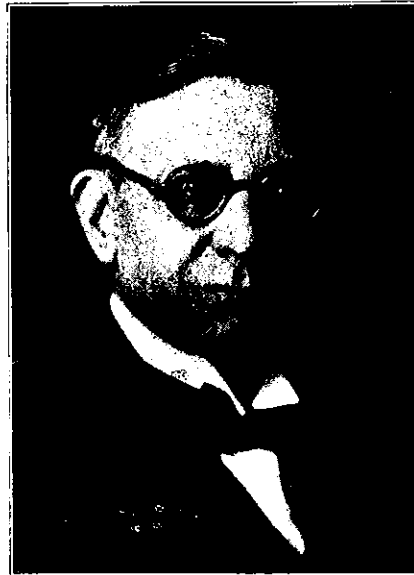


The Church Building and Congregation at Sauk Rapids



The Old Church Building and Congregation at St. Cloud

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 new Church was built. That was quite an



REV. A. E. OLSON

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 there. Consequently the old church had become inadequate and impracticable, besides being in need of repairs. 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 at the annual meeting Jan. 1st, 1920. Then 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 Jan. 1921. Then it was 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." From 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. But at a meeting Sept. 14 it was decided to "dedicate the new church Nov. 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.

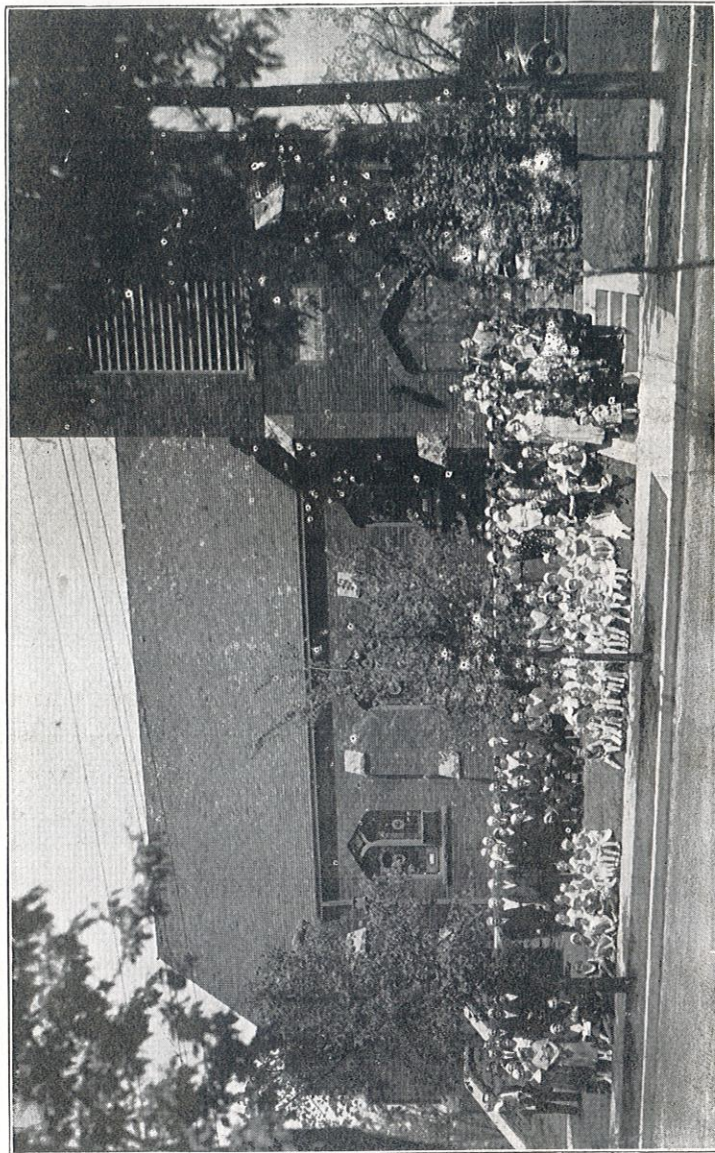
Rev. A. E. Olson resigned and left in the spring of 1925.

Again Rev. Dahlhjelm was called to serve until a permanent pastor could be secured. Rev. I. Hoyem of Cadillac, Michigan was now called and took up the work Nov. 19, 1925. What has taken place since then is well known. The following might be mentioned: At the annual meeting Jan. 1, 1927 a new constitution was adopted, and the name of the church changed to *The Swedish Evangelical Mission Church of St. Cloud.* Feb. 28, 1927 it was decided to join "The Northwest Mis-

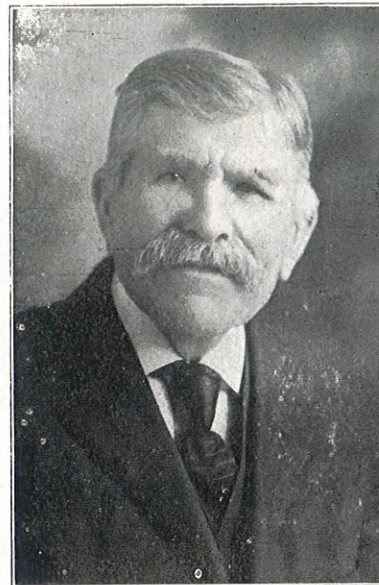


REV. I. HOYEM

sion Association." 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. The present members of the church board are: John Freeberg, chairman; Ernest Bostrom, vice chairman; Ernest Sodergren, secretary; Carl Johnson, vice secretary. Deacons: Gust Youngberg, Nels Henning and Chas. Carlson. Trustees: A. E. Hagquist, John Erikson and Carl Johnson.



Present Church and Congregation (Three Charter Members seated in center foreground)



A. B. ANDERSON



L. J. HAGQUIST

*The three men whose pictures are shown and also John Skoglund are charter members who have gone to their reward.*



*The following are charter members who are still in active service:*

- Andrew Peterson*
- Louis Olson*
- Nels Larson*



AUGUST JOHNSON

## The Sunday School

“These words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children” (Deut. 6: 6, 7).

The first mention of a Sunday School is found in the minutes of a meeting, held Dec. 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 congregaton.” Consequently Sunday Schools must have been conducted in both places already then. But the school in St. Cloud must have discontinued, because there is no more mention of any school there until May 3, 1890. Then we read in the minutes, “The meeting considered it necessary to start Sunday School in E. St. Cloud, wherefore it was decided to do so. N. F. Larson was elected to lead the same.” At this time there were three Schools, Sauk Rapids, St. Cloud and at Bring’s Quarry. At Bring’s Quarry Sunday School was conducted from 1886 to 1909. In the country north of Sauk Rapids Sunday School was conducted several years.

At a meeting June 29, 1895 it was decided to build a “shanty” for the school out in the country. That “shanty” was never built however, but the work was carried on in the homes, how long can not be ascertained. In the minutes of the annual meeting Dec. 31, 1898 we read, “The Sunday School in Waite Pk. was recognized as a branch of the church’s

work.” For a number of years then four or five schools were conducted.

Each school had its superintendent and over all was placed a general superintendent somewhat like the order of the public school system. It was a busy time for the members. Some would have to teach in two different schools each Sunday besides attending the regular preaching services. There were no automobiles in those early days and not even street cars, so they had to walk several miles back and forth. Not much time for Sunday pleasures. But they were not a pleasure-seeking people. How many in our day would be willing to spend their Sundays that way? As the young people grew up, the schools in the outlying districts were discontinued one after another. At the annual meeting Jan. 1, 1912 only two schools are reported – Sauk Rapids and St. Cloud. The enrollment was then 125 pupils. The school in Sauk Rapids was discontinued in 1921, when the new church was built in St. Cloud, so now there is only one school. It is our hope, that the good seed sown in the minds and hearts of children and young people during these fifty years has been a means of salvation to many.

The present officers of the Sunday School are; Miss Irene Freeberg, superintendent; Rev. I. Hoyem, vice superintendent and Norman Henning, secretary-treasurer.

## The Young People's Society

"Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Eccl. 12: 1).

In the minutes of a meeting, held July 6, 1889 we read: "The meeting decided that a Young People's Society should be organized within the church, and that all who lived in fellowship with the Lord, both members of the church and others were heartily invited. The old people could also take part. The churches of the congregation should be open for these meetings whenever desired without conflicting with the services of the congregation. The Young People's Society should hold a meeting every Thursday evening. Rev. B. Finstrom was elected president of the Society." Nothing more is said of the organization until at a meeting Sept. 2, 1893, when we read in the minutes: "Decided that John Rood shall announce a meeting for the Young People's Society."

How long that organization existed can not be ascertained, but the present society was organized Jan. 7, 1906 with the following ten members: Ruth Larson, Agnes Bostrom, Sam Ostlund, Laura Peterson, Arthur Ahlgren, Esther Johnson, Peter Bostrom, Agnes Erickson, Agnes Hollander, and Mary Larson.

The society has always worked in harmony with the church and contributed to the local work. For a number of

years it has also contributed to the Covenant China Mission as well as the Northwest Young People's Covenant and Minnehaha Academy.

About a year ago the constitution was changed and the organization made an open society as an attempt to take better care of the younger set.

The present membership is not very large, as so many have moved away on account of working conditions, but the little group that is left is keeping up the work, hoping for better times to come. Devotional meetings are held Sunday evenings except for two or three months during the summer, and social meetings are held once a month, when a program is given and refreshments served.

The present officers of the society are: Wesley Freeberg, president; Esther Larson, vice president; Anna Palm, secretary; Mabel Larson, vice secretary and Ellen Olson, treasurer.

## The Ladies Aid Society

"Martha served" (John 12:2). "These women" -- "labored" -- "in the gospel" (Phil. 4:3).

The ladies took an active part in the work of the congregation long before a formal organization existed. The congregation would elect one or two to have charge, give them money to buy material which they would cut and give out among the ladies to sew. Then an auction sale would be held to dispose of the ready made articles. But the congregation always decided about the details of the sale, when and how things were to be done, and the proceeds went into the church treasury.

The first mention of any work of that kind is found in the minutes of a meeting Febr. 7, 1885. Then it was decided "to take up a collection at a prayer meeting in Sauk Rapids and also in St. Cloud to get a sewing society started". The first auction sale was held at the home of Andrew Peterson the following 9th of July; the proceeds to go to home missions. Mrs. Andrew Peterson and Mrs. August Johnson had charge of the work. To begin with it seems that several sales were held annually, but Febr. 2, 1889 it was decided to have "only two sales during the year, because it was hard to collect for more than two.

Mrs. Gust Youngberg was elected Febr. 6, 1886 to have charge of this work. Others who later had charge were:

Mrs. A. B. Anderson and Mrs. Louis Olson, Alma Hagquist (Mrs. Charles Carlson) and Mrs. John Walstedt (1889-90), Mrs. B. Finstrom (1891), Mrs. Freedlund (1892), Mrs. John Rood (1893-99). At the annual meeting Jan. 1, 1900 Mrs. E. Walstedt was elected to have charge of the work, and she was the last one thus elected by the congregation. At a meeting the following December the ladies elected their own officers, but not until Jan. 13, 1921 was the society formally organized with 23 members and a monthly membership fee of 25 cents decided on. A flower committee was elected in 1916 to bring flowers to the sick and also visit the sick. A special collection is taken at the meetings for that purpose.

As stated above, Mrs. E. Walstedt was elected president in 1900 and served one year. Then Mrs. Gust Larson was elected and served three years (1901-03). Mrs. E. Walstedt served again for 18 years (1904-22), Mrs. Oscar Johnson one year [1923]. Again Mrs. E. Walstedt was elected in 1924 and has served faithfully since then to this date.

Most of the money raised by the society has gone to the local work, but occasional contributions have also been made to other missionary and philanthropic enterprises such as the Covenant Alaska Mission, the China Mission, Home of Mercy, Chicago, Northwestern Mission Association, Old People's Home, Buffalo, Minnesota, Seamen's and Immigrant's Home, Boston, Massachusetts and Children's Home, Cromwell, Connecticut. Since 1905 when Rev. T. J. Bach opened mission work in Venezuela, S. America, regular support has been given to that mission. The society has the distinction of being the first organization to promise Rev. Bach support and is at present contributing \$100 a year toward the support of

Miss Linda Sveiven on that field.

The present officers of the society are: Mrs. E. Walstedt, president; Mrs. Oscar Bostrom, secretary, and Mrs. Carl Johnson, treasurer.

## The Choir

"Oh sing unto Jehova a new song: Sing unto Jehova, all the earth. Sing unto Jehova, bless His name; show forth His salvation from day to day." (Ps. 96: 1, 2)

The first choir was organized 1888 with C. A. Soderman as leader. To save on expenses he would copy the songs - words and music - for the choir members instead of buying a sufficient number of books. He would work that way until late at night and sometimes until the early hours of the morning.

Soderman's successor as choir leader was Oscar Bostrom who was elected in 1894 and served both as choir leader and organist until 1903. Adolph Rood, O. Storberg and Ernest Bostrom were at times assistant organists.

When Bjorklund took up the work as pastor in 1903 he also took charge of the choir and led the same until he resinged in 1915. Then Bostrom again had to take charge and served faithfully until 1928, when he resinged and Miss Ellen Olson was elected. She served faithfully until the close of 1931, when she resinged on account of ill health. Ernest Bostrom was then elected and is at present leader of the choir.

The choir has rendered good service and has been a great help in the work during the past two years of its existence, and both leaders and choir members deserve appreciation and thanks for their faithful service.

## Thanksgiving

“Bless the Lord, Oh my soul, And forget not all His benefits.” (Ps. 103:2)

Thanks to God for my Redeemer,  
Thanks for all Thou dost provide!  
Thanks for times now but a mem'ry,  
Thanks for Jesus by my side!  
Thanks for pleasant, balmy springtime,  
Thanks for dark and dreary fall!  
Thanks for tears by now forgotten,  
Thanks for peace within my soul!

Thanks for prayers that Thou hast answered,  
Thanks for what Thou dost deny,  
Thanks for storms that I have weathered,  
Thanks for all Thou dost supply!  
Thanks for pain, and thanks for pleasure,  
Thanks for comfort in despair!  
Thanks for grace that none can measure,  
Thanks for love beyond compare!

Thanks for roses by the wayside,  
Thanks for thorns their stems contain!  
Thanks for home and thanks for fireside,  
Thanks for hope, that sweet refrain!  
Thanks for joy and thanks for sorrow,  
Thanks for heav'nly peace with Thee!  
Thanks for hope in the tomorrow,  
Thanks thro' all eternity!

# FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

of the

## Swedish Evangelical Mission Church

### PROGRAMME

Friday, June 16, 6:30 p. m.

Banquet (församlingsfäst). Greetings by former pastors  
Special music

Saturday, June 17, 7:45 p. m.

Sermon by Rev. K. E. Peterson of Minneapolis.

Sunday, June 18,

- 9:30 a. m. Sunday School Talk by Rev. H. Sodergren of Loomis, Neb.  
10:15 a. m. Sermon by Rev. Carl Olson of Minneapolis.  
Music by the choir.  
11:30 a. m. Communion Service in charge of Rev. F. G. Haggquist of  
Minneapolis.  
3:00 p. m. Jubilee Service Testimonies by Charter Members.  
Sermon by Rev. F. G. Haggquist of Minneapolis.  
Music by the Jubilee Chorus.  
7:30 p. m. Evening Service (English). Sermon by Rev. A. E. Olson of  
St. Cloud.  
Music by the Choir and Ladies Quartet.