



CHANCEL LINES ARE SIMPLE BUT EFFECTIVE

*In Three Short Years . . .*

## They Organized And Built

By Birt Harris

*Pastor at New Prague, Minn.*

IN the May 1949 issue of the joint publication of the Board of American Missions and the Board of Foreign Missions—*Augustana Missions*—there appeared an article by the Rev. T. W. Wersell entitled "Times Have Changed." The article tells of all-American home mission approach in an effort to win all peoples for Christ regardless of national background. In this article the writer told of the establishment of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in New Prague, Minn., "a community where our American conception of home missions will be well tested." Here is the New Prague story.

In 1947 a few women felt the need of a strong Protestant church. They were concerned about the Christian education of their children as well as their own Christian faith. Their desire and enthusiasm led them to talk to the Rev. Conrad J. Buehler of Montgomery, Minn., just south of New Prague. Pastor Buehler conducted services and canvassed the field. The results of the canvass were promising and on June 15, 1947, the first service was held in a lodge hall. One hundred people attended the first service. The average attendance at the following services was 60. Thirty-three children attend the

new church school. The mission was organized and received into the American Lutheran Church on May 25, 1948.

### *Appealed to Our Church*

Leadership and support of the field was discontinued late in 1948. This left the little congregation without guidance or aid. Acting quickly, the Board of Administration appealed to the Augustana Lutheran Church through Dr. Edgar Carlson, president of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn. To keep the work going until the field could be investigated by the Board of American Missions of our Church, the Rev. Arnold Carlson, professor of Christianity at the college, gave leadership to the little flock. Thus begins the history of the congregation in our Church.

On April 3 the organization service was conducted and on April 6, 1949, the congregation was formally organized. At the time of reorganization, the membership of the congregation numbered 63 adults and 52 children. The members of the Board of Administration at the time of reorganization were: Deacons—Charles Koktavy, Frank Proshok, Wallace Miller, Marlin Fahrenkamp; trustees—Fred Brandt, Emil

Dvorak, Elmer Winterfeldt and Robert Kodadek.

A call was extended the Rev. Birt Harris, who arrived on the field on September 30, 1949, from the Mayville-Brocton parish in New York. State When Pastor Harris reached New Prague the parsonage was nearing completion.

### *Had a Mind to Work*

The history of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church to date is similar to the history of all new missions. The New Prague story is a story of building. Ground was broken for the parsonage on July 4, 1949. The parsonage was dedicated on November 27, the same year. The following summer the garage was built. Ground was broken for the church building on May 6, 1951, and the cornerstone was laid on August 26 that same year. On Easter Sunday, April 13, 1952 the first service was held in the new church, with 230 in attendance. The church was dedicated September 14, 1952.

As buildings appeared on the congregation's property, interest in the new mission increased and more and more members were added to the roll. The membership to date is 106 adults and

THE LUTHERAN COMPANION, continuing *Augustana* (1856) and *The Lutheran Companion* (1892). Official organ of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church. Published weekly by Augustana Book Concern, 639 Thirty-eighth Street, Rock Island, Ill. E. E. Ryden, Editor. A. T. Lundholm, Associate Editor. Charlotte Odman, Staff Assistant. Edwin Holmer, Art Director. Daniel Nystrom, Book Reviews. Birger Swenson, Business Manager. Subscription price: United States and Canada, \$3.00 per year in advance. Foreign countries, \$4.00. Manuscripts, news items, books for review, and communications regarding editorial matters should be sent to the Editor. Business communications should be addressed to Augustana Book Concern. Remittances may be made by check, money order, draft, or cash in registered letter. When giving notice of Change of Address, indicate old address as well as new. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Rock Island, Ill. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 11, 1918.

73 children. The church school ministers to 91 children in all.

In two respects the Holy Trinity congregation is unique: the membership is predominantly of Central European extraction. Secondly, the buildings of the congregation have been obtained at a cost unheard of in these times of high prices. The total cost of the parsonage was \$12,000. The total cost of the garage was \$500, and the total cost of the church was \$12,000. Four building lots on the edge of town were purchased for \$1,700. The building program has been financed locally without the aid of the Church Extension Fund. The local bank and members in the congregation gave loans to further the project.

#### *Give 5,000 Hours of Labor*

There is an explanation for this unusual accomplishment. Wise planning, intelligent choice of materials, together with the donation of well over 5,000 hours of labor by men, women and children in the congregation is responsible for the erection of a church valued at more than \$35,000.

The structure is one story, and measures 32x72 feet. The nave can seat 150 people normally, but has, on occasion, seated 270. The chancel, which is 12x14 feet, holds a stone altar and baptismal font. To the south is the sacristy and to the north is the furnace room, housing the radiant heat furnace. Water from the furnace is circulated by pumps through coils in the floor to give clean, even heat throughout the building.

To the right of the entrance is the kitchen, measuring 10x15 feet. The kitchen is so situated that it can be used as a mother's room during the services. A glass serving window and public address system make it possible for mothers to see and hear the service while they care for their infants. To the left of the entrance are two restrooms and

cloakroom. The balcony is located over the kitchen and other rooms. The balcony seats about 40 people. It can be used as a choir loft.

#### *A Triple Purpose Building*

For social purposes, the chancel can be screened off. The nave will hold 150 people seated at banquet tables. The one-story building is used for three purposes: worship, education and social.

The congregation is grateful to the building committee for its untiring effort in seeing this project through. The committee members are: Wallace Miller, chairman; Eugene Bundul, co-chairman; Edward E. Navak, Erwin Walth, Charles Koktavy, Emil Dvorak and Frank Proshek.

In the last three years, the Ladies Aid, numbering between 30 and 40, has turned over about \$5,000 to the building fund.

This is God's house which the congregation has labored to build. It hopes that it has built well. The congregation's purpose is to bring God and man together, so that new life, a new spirit, and new vision and meaning may be found in man's vocation.

#### *They Look Back with Wonder*

The completed structure is the realization of the prayers and dreams of many. The congregation looks back with wonder at the progress that has been made during three short years. And, it looks forward to the work to which He has called us. We pray that we may be found faithful to the honor of being called by God in Christ. We visualize the generation that is to follow in the work that has begun here. May they retain the spirit of adventure under the guiding hand of God.

"The Americanized conception of home missions" is well tested and found to be a productive one.

## WORLDWIDE BIBLE READING THANKSGIVING TO CHRISTMAS

THE theme this year is "The Word of Life." The following Scripture selections will bring out helpful truths. These 29 readings were listed by 1,096 ministers as their favorite selections on this theme.

#### NOVEMBER

27 Thanksgiving .....	Psalms 103
28 .....	Psalms 91
29 .....	Psalms 121
30 Sunday .....	Psalms 1

#### DECEMBER

1 .....	Psalms 27
2 .....	Psalms 46
3 .....	Psalms 90
4 .....	Isaiah 40
5 .....	Isaiah 55
6 .....	Matthew 5, 1-26
7 Sunday .....	Matthew 5, 27-48
8 .....	Matthew 6, 1-18
9 .....	Matthew 6, 19-34
10 .....	Matthew 7
11 .....	John 14
12 .....	John 15
13 .....	John 17
14 Universal Bible Sunday .....	Psalms 23
15 .....	Luke 15
16 .....	Romans 8
17 .....	Romans 12
18 .....	Ephesians 6
19 .....	Philippians 4
20 .....	Revelation 21
21 Sunday .....	John 1, 1-18
22 .....	Isaiah 53
23 .....	Hebrews 11
24 .....	I Corinthians 13
25 Christmas .....	Luke 2, 1-20

For those who want to continue reading the Bible during the last week of the year, these passages are recommended: Dec. 26, Luke 2, 21-52; Dec. 27, John 1, 19-51; Dec. 28, Matthew 2; Dec. 29, John 16; Dec. 30, Revelation 3; Dec. 31, Psalms 19.

#### HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

##### I

Hold faithfully a stated daily period for Bible reading in which you have time to think seriously. Regular feeding develops spiritual strength.

##### II

Read carefully—not mechanically nor just from a sense of duty, but with mind alert, and if possible without interruption.

##### III

Read with expectation and delight, finding the personal message each day's passage has for you.

##### IV

Read prayerfully and slowly. Let God through the Bible speak directly to you. Your inner response to God's message is vital. When He condemns, accept penitently. When He offers help, place your hope on it. When He commands, obey. When He guides, follow.

##### V

Reread a statement which grips you. Work it into your life and pass it on. By your living out the truth you have received someone else will gain the benefit, too.

##### VI

Memorize a key verse and repeat it during the day, or copy out a verse to carry and refer to throughout the day.



A LIGHTED CROSS ADORNS THE FRONT