



Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

Volume 2

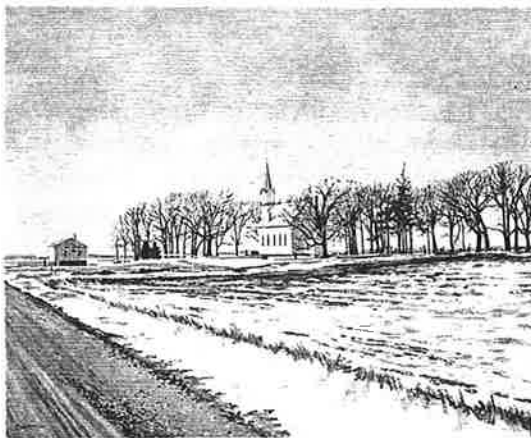
Summer 1998

Issue 2

The oak trees in historic Lime Creek church yard have been witnesses to many events during the years, both sad and joyful, in the life of the congregation. But perhaps few happening have ever been so important to all of us as that gathering which responded to an announcement printed in the church paper in April 1918, which read:

"Pastors and members of congregations who desire to continue in the old doctrine and practice of the Norwegian Synod, will, God willing, hold their annual meeting in the Lime Creek congregation, Pastor H. Ingebritson's charge, June 14 and following days."

The reorganization of the Norwegian Synod, then, took place at the Lime Creek congregation at the meeting which began on June 14, 1918. It came about as the result of the great change which synod in 1917, namely tornado of unionism and terrible damage there left who would not join in from a scattered number disorganized parishes "synod people" – at times hesitant and fearful



had taken place in our "The Merger." After this union had done its were many faithful souls this false union. And so of embattled and gathered this crowd of times determined, at of the future.

the unsettled conditions only three congregations delegates. Thirteen attendance, most of gations; and church

Indeed, because of in most congregations, were able to send pastors in all were in them without congregations with divided loyalties filled the church. But in the church, and in a large tent which had been set up across the state line in Minnesota because of the wartime restriction against foreign languages, new beginnings were planned. Nor was the meeting without those opponents of the Synod, who through scorn and ridicule, sought to confuse the minds of those who would listen, that they might crush the seeds of a reorganized church before they could take root.

The one thought of the meeting was "we want to continue as before," and much time was spent discussing this. But this was not so simple as a mere passing of motions, for with several opinions present, much time had to be spent discussing whether or not this little group had the right, or dared, to organize its own independent body. But finally a decision was reached. In a simple paragraph the plans were set forth:

"We, members present of the Synod for the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, ministers, delegates of congregations, and members of congregations, join together for this purpose of continuing the work of the Synod on the old basis and according to the old principles."

As the conditions in so many places were still so uncertain that representatives could not very well be officially elected for this meeting, the following resolutions were accepted and referred for adoption to the congregations which desired to join in the reorganization:

1. The name of this organization shall be the "Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church."
2. The only source and rule of doctrine is the Word of God as revealed in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments.
3. The Norwegian Synod adopts as its confession all the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord.
4. We elect a committee of three to propose the necessary changes in the old constitution of the Synod. The committee's report shall be published as soon as possible, in order that the congregations so wishing may consider and adopt it, the committee's report to be presented for final adoption at the next annual meeting of the Synod.

It was resolved to continue the publication of the "Luthersk Tidende" as the official organ of the Synod. The word "Evangelisk" was added to the name, which from now on became "Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende." Rev. C. N. Petersen was elected editor and business manager.

The first officers of the Synod elected at this meeting were Rev. B. Harstad, President; Rev. J. A. Moldstad, vice-president; Rev. C. N. Petersen, secretary; and Rev. A. J. Torgerson, Treasurer.

The appeal of President Bjug Harstad, as he addressed that gathering, contain things we could think about today. "The faith which our fathers fearlessly confessed in speech and writing, and which they have also embodied in our Synodical constitution and church policy, is given us by God Himself. We have a Christian right to stand on this ground, and we cannot yield to false brethren and this for the very reason that we want to retain the freedom which the Gospel gives us. The dear fathers who have left us this church order as a precious heritage have finished their course with honor, leaving their shields untarnished. We need not to be ashamed of their work."

Today it is sometimes easy for us to hesitate in doing certain tasks because of our small size. But consider Rev. Harstad's words to that small group, when, after talking about the struggle it had passed through, and its present condition, he added: "Let us not be dismayed and discouraged. Such great calamities have befallen the church of God in the past, and yet it has not been destroyed. Let us remember and follow these words of

continued on page 11

Eighty years ago, in 1918, the Norwegian Synod was re-organized in Lime Creek Iowa. During these past eighty years there have been both numerous officers of the synod and also a number of significant event. The chart, on the following pages of *Oak Leaves*, gives a chronology of these years.

	1918: The "Synod remnant" re-organized	
	1919: Synod joins the Syn. Conf.	
1918		
President	Bjug Harstad	
Vice-president	J.A.Moldstad	
Secretary	C.Petersen	L.J.
Treasurer	A.J.Torgerson	

FAREWELL MY JONATHAN

Note: The following article tells the story of the Rev. Thomas Johnsen, who was one of the early pastors of the Norwegian Synod.

Minnesota had been a state for only five years. Western Minnesota had been opened to white settlement only twelve years earlier when it was ceded by the Dakota Indians. The Civil War battle had just been fought at Gettysburg. Those were the events when young Pastor Thomas Johnsen took up residence in Nicollet County, Minnesota. He would remain here until his death forty-three years later.

Thomas Johnsen had been born in Norway in 1837. Upon coming to America with his brothers, in 1851, he began working for farmers for his room and board. The Rev. U.V.Koren persuaded him to enter the ministry and offered his assistance. He received private instruction from Pastor Koren at Washington Prairie, Iowa before beginning his seminary studies.

As the Norwegian Synod had no theological seminary, an agreement was made to use Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Thomas Johnsen was a member of the first class of Norwegian Synod students to attend Concordia Seminary.



Pastor Thomas Johnsen

Upon graduation, Johnsen's assignment was to take him to Nicollet County, Minnesota. He was to serve in, what had been until this time, the westernmost Norwegian Synod call in the United States. He was only the fifth Norwegian Synod pastor to reside in Minnesota.

A young Thomas Johnsen writes that around Easter-time 1863, he "passed his examinations at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. and Wednesday, the 17th of June, he was, upon aforementioned call, ordained to the holy office, by the president of the Norw. Synod, Rev. H.A. Preus."ⁱ

One week following his ordination, Thomas Johnsen was married to Maren Sahlgard. The young couple then journeyed to Minnesota.

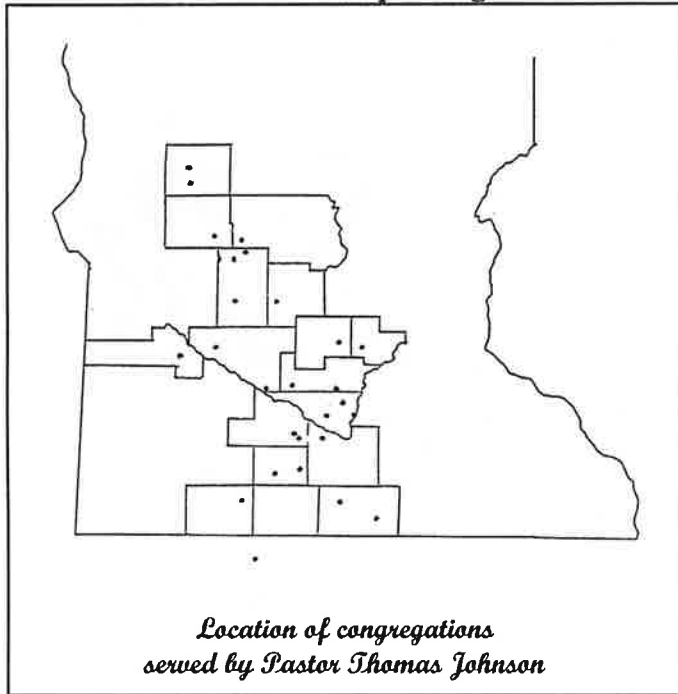
Thereafter, Pastor Johnsen's "Daybook" reveals he began his travels to meet the parish which had called him and to view the extent of his vast mission field.

1920: First graduate of the re-organized synod from Concordia Seminary	1926: Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Norwegian Synod celebrated 1927: The Synod votes to assume ownership and control of Bethany Lutheran College		
1920 i i i i 1925 i i i i			
Bjug Harstad	George A. Gullixson	Christian Anderson	
J.A. Moldstad	Christian Anderson	H. Ingebritson	H. M. Tjernagel
L. P. Jensen			C.Q.
A. J. Torgerson			

His first visits to the calling congregations were:

- 6 August 1863 -----Nicollet congregation [Norseland]
Nicollet County, Minnesota
- 23 August 1863 -----Linden congregation
Brown County, Minnesota
- 23 August 1863 -----Watonwan congregation [Rosendale]
Watonwan County, Minnesota
- 18 September 1863 ---Carver congregation
Carver County, Minnesota
- 13 January 1864 -----Crow River congregation [Bergen]
McLeod County, Minnesota

There must have been some apprehension about establishing a parsonage on the edge of the prairie. The parsonage, at Norseland, was located at the eastern extreme of the Indian Uprising of 1862. The Swedish Lutheran pastor in the area



Location of congregations served by Pastor Thomas Johnson

had fled and did not return. His successor had not yet arrived when Pastor Johnsen was installed. The 1864 Norwegian Synod convention received the report that there were no delegates from the congregation Pastor Johnsen served at Linden because "...they fear new Indian turbulence and therefore do not dare leave their homes." Likewise, there were no delegates from the Carver or Crow River congregations because "...they are small and poor and are yet frightened from last year's Indian turbulence. In addition they have partially constructed church buildings which must occupy all of their strength and energy." ⁱⁱ

The field of labor was large and continued to grow. Over the years Pastor Johnsen served people in sixteen counties in Minnesota and one county in Iowa. Pastor Johnsen's own words tell the story:

The field of labor was large and

1930				1935			
C.A	H. M. Tjernagel	N.A.Madson	C. A. Moldstad	H. Ingebritson			
H.T	O. M. Gullerud	C.A.Moldstad	H. Ingebritson	C.Anderson			
	C. J. Quill	George O. Lillegard					
A.J.Torgerson	H. A. Preus	Paul Ylvisaker					

"...it was a rather large and wide spread field of labour for one so young and inexperienced as I was at that time. And still my field of labour became still greater, later on it was not confined to these 5 congregations in 7 different counties. -I was the only Norwegian Lutheran Pastor west of Goodhue County; for this reason it was self evident that I had to take charge of the Norwegian Settlers who from time to time gathered round about, and continually became more numerous. By 1868 the number of congregations and preaching places served by me had risen to 18. And most of these were rather far apart. But in 1868 the number of congregation served by me went down to 11, when two more pastors were placed in the field. In 1870 the number had increased to 14. From that time on my journeys decreased, as other pastors were installed here and there round about. From 1873 I have had only my present call, that part which originally constituted the Nicollet [Norseland] congregation."ⁱⁱⁱ



Mrs. Thomas Johnson

It is interesting to note that the pastor baptized fifty-five children in three days during one of his early journeys.^{iv}

Pastor and Mrs. Johnsen became the parents of eight children. Four of their children died as youths and one son died at the age of twenty-four years while attending Luther Seminary. Mrs. Johnsen also was gathered with the heavenly host in 1898.

Pastor Johnsen's concern was for the souls which he could serve with the Gospel of Christ. It was the invisible Church which was the center of his activity. External church buildings obviously were secondary to him. He often did not have the time to report statistics or detailed information to the synod. His energies were in organizing and serving, at one time or another, twenty-seven congregations (which through expansion and division eventually were served by fifty pastors).^v

The venerable pastor's energies were directed to a ministry of Word and Sacrament. He introduced the practice of Private Confession prior to receiving the Sacrament of the Altar by referring to this as "the oldest custom in the Lutheran Church" and to the Lutheran Confessions. He admonished the congregation "...to be obedient to their shepherd in all that he performs which is in agreement with God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions."^{vi}

1943: Twenty-fifth anniversary of the synod observed
 1943: Debt on Bethany Lutheran College is liquidated
 1945: First missionary sent to the Synodical Conference
 1946: Bethany Lutheran Seminary begins operation

1940	H. Ingebritson	Norman A. Madson	Adolph M. Harstad
	Christian Anderson	Adolph M. Harstad	C. M. Gullerud
	George O. Lillegard		
	P. Ylvisaker	Martin Galstad	Harry Olson
			S.L.

Christian education was an area of work which must have been of special concern to Pastor Johnsen. A parochial school with a full-time teacher was operated by the Norseland congregation beginning in 1868. After it ceased its instruction in 1893 his chastisement became increasingly sharp. His remarks repeatedly urge diligence, and ever increasing, instruction. He urged the expansion of Christian education, telling the congregation:

“...there are no direct commandments regarding the matter of a School given us by God, yet the words ‘You Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.’ (Ephesians 6:4) show that it is the duty of the parents to instruct their children in religion and the truths of Christianity , and for that purpose the Congregation has established a School in our midst in order to support the parents in their duty. He looked upon it as a powerfully urgent work in as much as there is evidently a great neglect in this matter. He also pointed out that the School as it is now conducted cannot possibly fulfill the duty we Christians owe our children.”^{vii}

In 1903 he chastised the Norseland congregation, telling them:

“Ought not the Congregation, after so long a period of existence and undisturbed ministering, be a model Congregation, well-established in Christian Confession and with well-organized and well-conducted School for the children? Certainly! But is that the case? No! Alas, No! God help us to improve. In my estimation, the lack of School for the children is the greatest deficiency, which does not promise well for the future if there is not a change for the better, and that very soon. Yes, unless there is not improvement in the School, there is danger that the Congregation will die out little by little, and who will then bear the blame? Who else but we who have neglected a Christian School for our children. Can we defend this? Will we continue to let it go on as it is now? If there is to be improvement, we shall have to be willing to bear the expenses which are necessary for good Christian Schools for our children.

“God give to all of us the right knowledge as to our high and important calling and the willingness to do everything to God’s glory and for our own benefit as well as for that of our children. God grant this for His own name’s sake. Amen.”^{viii}

The synodical commitment was viewed as being an important part of the work of the congregation under the Lord’s Great Commission, In 1871 the main building had been constructed at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. Even though

				1953: Centennial of the Norwegian Synod celebrated										
				1955: Fellowship relations suspended with the LC-MS				1958: Name changed to Evangelical Lutheran Synod						
1950								1955						
A.H.	C. Monrad Gullerud						Milton H. Otto			Milton E. Tweit				
C.G	Milton E. Tweit						J. A. O. Preus			M.E.Tweit		Julian Anderson		
G. O. Lillegard				Walther C. Gullixson										
												Sophus E. Lee		

the Norseland congregation had a debt at that time, he urged:

“...it was their duty as well as the duty of other Member Congregations of the Synod to do all they can in order to pay the debt on Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. He sought to impress on the gathering how important a matter it is for our Church Body and therefore also for each Congregation in the Synod to contribute their share so that our College will continue to serve in the proclamation of God’s Word pure and clear and the Sacraments be rightly administered to those now living and for the preservation of the Means of Grace for our descendants.”^{ix}

Some of the most difficult days in his ministry must have come during the dark days of the “Election Controversy” which raged through the Norwegian Synod in the 1880s. Pastor Johnsen did not stand aside in the debate, but publicly confessed Biblical truth. To his own congregation at Norseland he



Thomas Johnsen family

“pointed to the necessity and purpose of establishing the Synod - the Norwegian people here in this land joined together in order to establish Schools where people could be trained. The same reasons exist now as it did before to hold them together.”^x Yet, to his disappointment, the Norseland congregation resigned its membership in the Norwegian Synod in an effort to prevent a division within the congregation. Five years later, the pastor was to chastise this action by stating:

“The reason that the Congregation resigned from the Synod was that it believed that its growth and prospering would be advanced by doing so, but it is evident that the situation of the Congregation has not been made better.”^{xi}

Two years later he was to say, even more strongly: “Just as the Congregation did wrong when it stepped out of (resigned) from the Synod so it continues to be

1963: Withdrawal from the Synodical Conference					
				1966: Evangelical Lutheran Confession Forum organized	
				1968: Golden Anniversary celebrated	
				1968: First missionaries sent to Peru	
1960			1965		
Milton E. Tweit	Theodore Aaberg	Joseph Petersen	Juul B. Madson		
Julian Anderson	Joseph Petersen	E. G. Unseth	Joseph Petersen	E. Unseth	*
Walther C. Gullixson					
Sophus E. Lee					

* George Orvick

wrong by continuing to remain apart from it since it thereby deprives the Synod from the moral support which the Congregation ought to give the Synod." He also said: "...because a Congregation joins a Synod, none of the members can then with legitimate reason resign from the Congregation as long as it cannot be shown or proven that the Synod is guilty of false doctrine."^{xii} Synodical membership, Pastor Johnsen said, was important because:

"The Christian Congregations are to support and spread the Kingdom of God here on earth, which can best be done when they join together. Since it is necessary that institutions of learning be established so that teachers can be sent to heathen lands, Congregations have to join together so that they can support such institutions of learning. If every Congregation had done what this Congregation did we would not have a single institution of learning."^{xiii}



*Funeral Service of Mrs. Thomas Johnsen
April 3, 1898*

The Norseland congregation again requested membership in the Norwegian Synod, and was received into membership in 1894.

One could hardly have become a member of the Norwegian Synod clergy roster eleven years after its organization without having special contacts with the individuals who shaped the synod.

His early relationship was with the Rev. U.K. Koren in whose home he lived and studied. Koren would, no doubt, have been the pastor of his youth. In the midst of controversy in the Norwegian Synod, the mature Pastor Johnsen signed the Biblical confession of truth called "An Accounting" in 1884 along with Koren, its author, and numerous other Norwegian Synod pastors.

Rev. Laur. Larson (who was to become the first president of the Norwegian Synod's Luther College in Decorah, Iowa) was his instructor at Concordia

1970: Faith Mission Society organized

1973: Missionaries sent to Nicaragua

1976: full-time seminary president

1970									
J.M.	George M. Orvick				Wilhelm W. Petersen				
G.O.	Luther Vangen		Wilhelm W. Petersen			Hugo Handberg		Norman Madson	
Walther C. Gullixson		Alf Merseth							
Sophus E. Lee		Leroy Meyer							

Seminary. where he also would have sat at the feet of Dr. C.F.W. Walther. Synod president, the Rev. H.A. Preus performed the Rite of Ordination and visited the Johnsen home in 1870 to conduct a synodical "visitation."

His predecessor in central Minnesota was the Rev. B.J. Muus.(Rev. Muus, in withdrawing from the Norwegian Synod, was instrumental in establishing St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota).

Another close associate must have been Rev. O. J. Hjort who was a fellow seminarian in St. Louis and served his entire ministry at Waterville, Iowa. Mrs. Johnsen had "made her home in the household of Rev. Hjort."^{xiv} One of Rev. & Mrs. Hjorts daughters, Louisa. married the Rev. C.K. Preus (who succeeded Laur. Larson as the president of Luther College). Another of his daughters married the Rev. J.C.K. Preus. A third daughter married the Rev. H.A. Preus (who served the ELS congregation in Calmar, Iowa).

There were, undoubtedly, a number of students who assisted and learned from him; yet reference is made to only A. Torgerson (1867) who was to become instrumental in reorganizing the Norwegian Synod as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1918 and H. Krog (1872-73).

Of his three children who survived to adulthood, Anna served at the Norwegian Synod mission in Salt Lake City, Utah beginning in 1897. Inga married Norwegian Synod pastor Axel Berg in 1906. Thora married Norwegian Synod pastor John Dahle in 1908.

The Rev. Amund Mikkelson had been one of his classmates while at St. Louis. He was to become the first president of the Norwegian Synod Normal School (teacher training) in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Rev. Mikkelson was among those who spoke at Thomas Johnsen's Funeral in 1906.

On that final day, the Rev. A. Mikkelson gave a summary to the life, work, and faith of his dear friend:

"It was in the year 1860 that we met ... He had gone to study to serve the church and to prepare to be called in the holy ministry. Johnsen already had one year of training in St. Louis. For three years we would be schoolmates, and there was a warm friendship among us. He was in my soul and my heart. We graduated and were ordained at the same time; the year was 1863. But we were forced to separate; the one called to labor in northern Wisconsin, and the other in south-west Minnesota. We often saw each other at synod meetings or pastors' conferences... He was an Israelite in whom there was

1986: Full-time synodical presidency established
 1987: Thoughts-of-Faith recognized as a church-related organization

1980		1985	
Norman A. Madson		George M. Orvick	
Alf Merseth		John A. Moldstad	P.P.
Leroy Meyer			

no deceit. His disposition was quiet, even, steady. He was not what anyone would call impulsive... he was the same Thomas Johnsen morning and evening and evening and morning. Johnsen was from the old school. God's Word, God's will was everything to him. It directed him. He aligned himself with it... He often complained about his lack of f knowledge. He had an emotional nature and much learned experience. Yet he found his redemption in the life of Christ who lived, and died the death for sins. Faithfulness filled Pastor Johnsen's Christian character-faithful unto death! There were four of us who graduated the same year: Krohn, Hagstad, Johnsen, and me, Now three are called, and I remain alone!... My heart grieves about him, my Jonathan; because you are my very dearest friend! This, David's lament over his friend Jonathan, is my comfort today. You are my very dearest! Farewell, my Jonathan! God has granted you a righteous death and my death will also be His!"^{xv}

Rev. Craig A. Ferkenstad



- i Thomas Johsen, History of Congregations served by Rev. Th. Johnsen, 1893, manuscript, translator unknown.
- ii Synodal Beretning, Norwegian Synod, 1864, page 22.
- iii Thomas Johsen, History of Congregations served by Rev. Th. Johnsen, 1893 manuscript, translator unknown.
- iv H.R.Holand, Den Norske Settlementers Historie, (Ephraim, Wis: Forfatterens Forlag, 1909), page 560
- v H.R.Holand, Den Norske Settlementers Historie, (Ephraim, Wis: Forfatterens Forlag, 1909), page 560
- vi Congregation Minutes, 4 April 1866, Norseland Lutheran Church, translated by M.E.Tweit
- vii Congregation Minutes, 26 January 1897, Norseland Lutheran Church, translated by M.E.Tweit
- viii Thomas Johnsen, Report to the Nicollet Congregation for the year 1902; found in Congregation Minutes, 13 January 1903, Norseland Lutheran Church
- ix Congregation Minutes, 16 January 1871, Norseland Lutheran Church, translated by M.E.Tweit
- x Congregation Minutes 26 September 1887, Norseland Lutheran Church, translated by M.E.Tweit
- xi Congregation Minutes 26 January 1892, Norseland Lutheran Church, translated by M.E.Tweit
- xii Congregation Minutes 28 February 1894, Norseland Lutheran Church, translated by M.E.Tweit
- xiii Congregation Minutes 26 January 1892, Norseland Lutheran Church, translated by M.E.Tweit
- xiv 100th Anniversary: Norseland Lutheran Church, St. Peter, Minnesota, 1958, page 14.
- xv Evangelisk Lutersk Kirketidende, 1906, translated by C.Ferkenstad

	1991: Ordination of first national pastors in Peru		1992: Missionaries sent to Chile		1993: Seventy-fifth anniversary celebrated		1993: Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference organized		1996: <i>Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary</i> published
1990						1995			
George M. Orvick									
Paul Petersen					Glenn Obenberger				
Alf Merseth					Craig A. Ferkenstad				
Leroy Meyer									

* John A. Moldstad

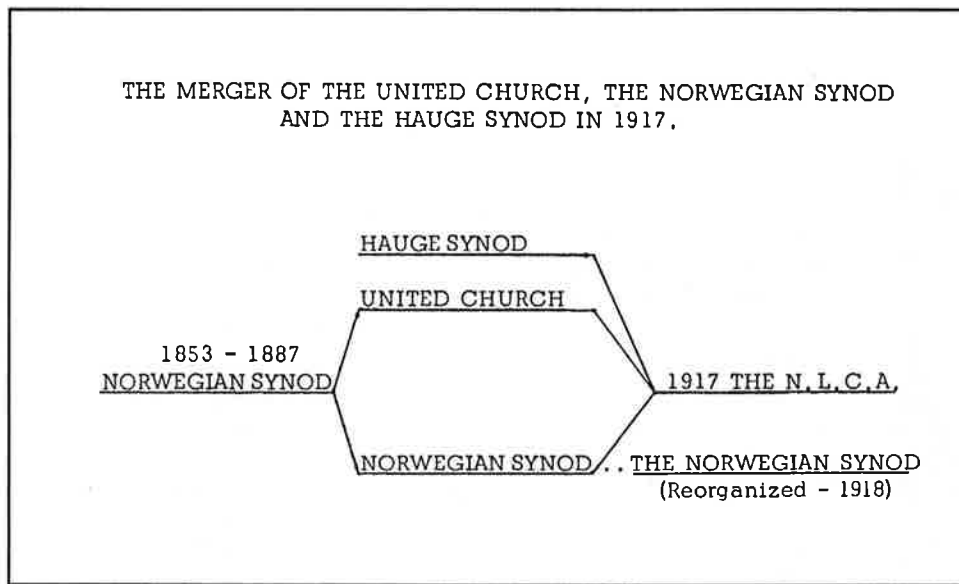
1918 continued ...

Jeremiah the prophet: 'Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.'

The proverb says, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." This small group of pastors and lay people had now taken this first, single step. It may have looked like a feeble step to the world at large and doomed to failure. But the next ... years would show that the step was not taken in vain.

The oak trees still stand at Lime Creek. They are taller and sturdier. The Synod lives today also, but it too has changed. It has become larger, stronger, adding proof to the Lord's promise concerning His Word: "It shall not return unto me void.... It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Is. 55,16. The forces of nature may one day humble our oaks. But if it be our determination to ever remain faithful to God's Word, our Synod shall have a perennial youth and vigor, for are we not reinforced by Christ's promise to the Church? "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." May God bless those who have labored, whose labors have not been in vain, and may this blessing rest upon all those who shall in the future build Christ's kingdom.

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Grace for Grace
Rev. George M. Orvick



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Oak Leaves
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TO

PRES & MRS GEORGE ORVICK
1117 LORI LANE
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Pastor Justin Petersen joined the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1924. He received his theological education at Hamline Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, which was the seminary of the "old" Norwegian Synod. Prior to entering Hamline Seminary he graduated from Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. He was ordained into the ministry in 1916 near Decorah, Iowa, where he served Big Canoe Lutheran Church for a short time. From there he went to Rembrandt, Iowa, where he was pastor of Little Sioux Valley congregation.

After seven years at Rembrandt he left "the merger church," for doctrinal reasons. This church was known as the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (NLCA) which came about as a result of a merger of three Norwegian Lutheran church bodies in 1917. He then received and accepted a call to the Scarville-Center parish, Scarville, Iowa, where he served 24 years. He was an ardent advocate of Christian education on all levels and established a Christian Day School at Scarville, a school which is still in existence today. His six children

attended Bethany Lutheran High School and Bethany Lutheran College. Three of his sons became pastors in the ELS and one of his daughters was a Christian Day School teacher.

He resigned from his pastorate after 24 years because of ill health, but later when his health improved he accepted the position as manager of the Lutheran Synod Book Company at Bethany College. He held that position until the day of his death. He died suddenly of a stroke on February 18, 1954, at the age of 63 years. He is buried in the Scarville Lutheran cemetery.

Justin Petersen truly loved the Synod and worked hard to promote its work. He was "a team man" in the good sense of the word. He favored the purchase of Bethany Lutheran College in 1927 and demonstrated this by personally soliciting funds for its purchase. He was also a recruiter of students in his parish, setting the example by sending all of his children to Bethany. He would be pleased to know how the Lord has blessed Bethany over the years and would join in praising God, along with the many other pastors and lay men and women who worked so hard and sacrificed much for the cause of the Synod and its work. Inscribed on his tombstone in the Scarville Cemetery are the words A CHRISTIAN LUTHERAN PASTOR-BY THE GRACE OF GOD, an epitaph that aptly describes the life of Justin A. Petersen



Rev. Wilhelm W. Petersen