Ottesen Museum To Be Dedicated

By George M. Orvick

Would you like to learn the story of our Synod? Who were those immigrants who came across the ocean 160 years ago? Where did they come from? How did they survive in the wilderness? How did our synod get started? Well, come and see! Come to the Ottesen Museum on the Bethany Campus and learn for yourselves the whole story! See historical pictures, documents and artifacts that make our history come alive! You will become familiar with the names of our forefathers: Preus, Ottesen, and Koren. You will read about the “Old Synod” and the “Reorganized Synod”. You will see how the “plucked chicken” grew feathers again!

Yes, a new venture in our Synod is the reactivation of the Synod’s Museum. It never had a suitable home before. But now it has a permanent space it can call its own. It is located in the newly remodeled building next to the Seminary building at 4 Browns Court here in Mankato, Minnesota. Yes, here you will find the Ottesen Museum. Why is the museum called by that name? One of the founding fathers of our synod was the Rev. J. A. Ottesen, way back in 1853. His daughter, Hannah, in 1931 willed her estate (a house and furnishings in Decorah, Iowa) to our synod. From the July 12, 1941 issue of the *Lutheran Sentinel* we read:

Sixteen women met at Bethany College June 16, 1941: they realized that the Hannah Ottesen Museum should be put into shape and put on display.

That was the beginning. Since it was organized around artifacts from the Ottesen family we have now officially named it *The Ottesen Museum*. It has, of course, acquired items from many sources which depict the origin and growth of the synod, the history of Bethany College and Seminary, home and foreign missions, Christian day schools, how pioneer pastors and people dressed and traveled and the like.

We would like to invite as many people as possible to come and see. Not only adults will learn from it, but children likewise will be able to visualize how our forefathers lived and what they believed. We invite Sunday School and Day School children to come for a tour. We invite groups from congregations as well as individuals to stop in for a visit. An excellent and convenient time...
to visit is on Synod Sunday, June 15, 2003. At a festival service at 2:30 p.m. in Trinity Chapel at Bethany College we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of our synod (1853-2003). After that service at 3:30 p.m. we will gather at 4 Browns Court for the dedication of the museum building, which also includes home and foreign mission offices. What an appropriate time! We hope to see you there!

It is important to remember and understand the past. It helps us chart the right course for the future. An old Norwegian poet named Ivar Aasen wrote:

Let us not forget our forefathers for they gave us a treasure to remember. It is greater than many would understand.

The Bible says: “Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” Jeremiah 6:16.

Norwegian Synod “Fathers”

A Short Speech

at the Synod Jubilee in Decorah, Iowa, Sunday, 21 June 1903.

By Pastor J. A. Ottesen
(from Evangelisk Luthers Tidende, 16 July 1919. Translated by Mark DeGarmo)

Grace and peace from God our Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Reverend fathers and brethren, dear fellow redeemed!

Those who have participated in arranging everything for this festival have been so kind to offer me the opportunity to speak some words here, because I am one of the few still alive of those who were along in establishing the Norwegian Synod. And I have gratefully accept the glorious offer, although it can only be a few words, since I am now old and weak.

But I would like to offer here my thanks as a final greeting to the dear community which God let me participate in establishing and then work for. I would like to blend my voice with that of those who here laud and praise God for all His rich grace toward us all, and I would also like to thank God for all His goodness toward me, and to thank my brethren and fellow Christians for all the honor and love which have been shown to me for these fifty years. And these thanks I connect to the words which the two disciples on the road to Emmaus spoke to the Lord:

"Abide with us! For it is toward evening and the day is far spent, and He went in to stay with them." (Luke 24:29.)

Thus prayed the two. And the Lord went in to them to stay with them. And He comforted them and blessed them. He is still alive and is the same in heeding our cry. And it is not just the old at death’s door who can say: “It is toward evening and the day is far spent.” No, for any of us this can indeed be the last day; and then each day has its evening when the night’s darkness and danger issues forth, where it applies to have the Lord along. Yes, at every hour of the day we can say that dusk and darkness with their confusion can press in, if the Lord is not with us with His light and does not let it shine in our heart. And as He came to the two, so He will come to us. Don’t say in your heart: Who will ascend into heaven or descend into the abyss to bring Him as from afar, but the Word is near you in your mouth and in your heart, the word of faith in which He lives and works.

We are indeed encouraged these days to thank God who gave us His Word and kept it pure for us. Seek Him there early and late with prayer and supplication, then He will come to you and speak to your heart and make it burn within you, just as He did with the two, when He spoke with them on the way.

Yes, He wants to go in to you and “give you His Holy Spirit, who by His grace makes it that you both believe God’s Word and live a holy and godly life here in time and hereafter in eternity.” By His word He wants to bring light into the darkness of your soul, to work the divine enlightenment there, where, as our children’s textbook says, begins by taking away the will’s opposition. For by nature we always oppose the Holy Spirit. But Christ ascended on high and gave gifts to men, and He captured the obstinate.

It is not just for the one who wants, or the one who runs, but for God who grants mercy; and it is Him who works and accomplishes in us both to will and to do according to the will of His good pleasure. And this not by force, but with loving persuasion and with His divine creative power in the Word. He does as it says in the Formula of Concord: “makes willing persons out of the unwilling”, so that you may say: You drew me, and I let myself be drawn, You persuaded me and were too strong for me. He takes away our heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh.

In other words: He works regeneration in us, which, as we have learned in the Catechism, is “the same as the communion of living faith or wakening of those spiritually dead,
conversion and translation from darkness to light, from Satan’s power to God.”

Or if, by the work of God’s grace on your heart through Word and Sacraments you are already converted and reborn to a new life in Him, then He must continue to stay with you; for without Him we can do nothing, and all our ability is from Him. He must always continue to stay with us, daily teach us to believe the forgiveness of sins and thereby to love God and receive the desire for Him instead of fleeing from Him with fear of punishment as before. “You do not now what things will go, but surely what God wills will happen, and the way of the spirit you do not understand, which happens in secret, but by God’s Word his attention draws near.” So He will also come to you when you diligently and with devotion follow Him in the Word and cry out from the heart: Abide with us!

And He wants to stay with you, comfort you, talk with you as friend with friend, as brother with brother. He wants to teach us everything and remind you of everything. He wants to come to the table with you and break bread for you, when you seek Him at His Holy Supper, and He wants to give you the covenant of His love in His body and blood under the bread and the wine. And He, who has begun the good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ. For He is faith as He has promised, that He will never lose you nor leave you.

So, seek Him in His Word and Sacraments, and He shall come to you and teach you, surely with sorrow when you see your sin, but also with joy when you believe the forgiveness of sins; for where sin abounded, sin did much more abound. And then you too will learn from Him to watch and pray and strive against sin and by His power daily abstain from any sin; for whoever is forgiven much loves much, and whoever loves has fulfilled the Law. You will then love Him who loved you first, and rightly seek to serve Him in obedience and out of love you will be afraid of betraying Him by sin.

O, then let us all daily seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is near. Stay with His word, oh, don’t neglect it, as so many do, and He shall stay with you, lead you into all truth, and strengthen you for all good works. He shall give you victory in the struggle of faith and patience in the hour of trial. Keep calling to Him: “Abide with us, Lord!” And when the evening hours of your life drawn near, and your last day looms before you, then you shall have open access and the clear way to His saving embrace, so that you can go in there and find comfort, so that death, all the horror of the flesh, shall not harm you; for “death which before was the wages of sin, shall now be for your good. It was punishment before, now it is a door, a way to the kingdom of heaven; now your death is a sleep so sweet, with it all worry fades away.”

But now I must close. So help us all, faithful Lord God, always to seek You and find You when we cry: Abide with us with Your grace! Again laud and praise to You for all Your mercy which up to now You have granted us anew each morning. Bless and keep continually the dear Norwegian Synod, preserve its teachers and hearers in Your Word of truth. Keep us all therein, until You come to take us home. Help us, so that when we meet You we then can boldly sing:

Lord, let at last Thine angels come,
To Abram’s bosom bear me home,
That I may die unfearing;
And in its narrow chamber keep
My body safe in peaceful sleep
Until Thy reappearing.
And then from death awaken me
That these mine eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, Thy glorious face,
My Savior and my Fount of grace,
Lord Jesus Christ,
My prayer attend, my prayer attend,
And I will praise Thee without end.

Amen, in Jesus’ name! Amen.

Jakob Aall Ottesen was one of the founders of the Norwegian Synod. (Picture on page 2)
Norwegian Synod Anniversary: How Shall We Celebrate?

By Mark DeGarmeaux

The 150th anniversary of the Norwegian Synod! How do we celebrate such an anniversary? We could eat lutefisk and lefse. We could raise the Norwegian flag and sing the national anthem. But what would our synodical forebears want us to do? That’s not how they would have celebrated a church festival.

First of all, let us have services and prayers of thanks to God for the blessings of the gospel as proclaimed in the Lutheran Church. The preaching of the gospel—the work of the Holy Spirit bringing Christ to troubled souls—is what the Holy Christian Church is all about.

Let us rededicate ourselves to the truth of God’s Word, with the motto, engraved on the seal of the Norwegian Synod and the gravemarker of President Ulrik Vilhelm Koren: “ΓΕΓΡΑΠΤΑΙ. Det staar skrevet. It is written.”

Let us continue reclaiming and proclaiming the Scriptural heritage entrusted to us from the church of all time. Yes, our heritage is Norwegian, but it is more than that. With the lead of our Lutheran Reformers, we honor and claim the common heritage of the church of Preus, Ottesen, and Koren, the church of Luther, Bernard of Clairvaux, Augustine, Saint Paul, Isaiah, David, Moses, and Adam.

If we strive to be what our name now says—an evangelical Lutheran synod—then we will want to walk in the old paths of the gospel of God’s mercy, trusting that the One Thing Needful gives salvation and eternal life to those who hear and believe.

We should rededicate ourselves to continue preaching true Law and Gospel sermons, producing books that promote the Christian faith to children and adults, supporting the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in every place possible.

Let us teach the hymns, liturgy, and catechism of the church that rightly divide law and gospel and preach justification by grace through faith for the sake of our crucified and risen Savior Jesus Christ.

Yes, we can eat lutefisk and lefse and do all those Norwegian things. But first and foremost, let us continue in the heavenly, spiritual things of Word and Sacraments that make us and keep us an evangelical church of the Augsburg Confession.

Ten Ways to Celebrate the Anniversary of the Norwegian Synod:

1. Visit some historic sites
   - Koshkonong churches near Stoughton, WI, and other older Synod churches
   - Vesterheim Museum, Decorah, IA
   - Luther College, Decorah, IA
   - Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, MN
   - Ottesen Museum, Mankato, MN
   - Koren’s grave at Washington Prairie Lutheran Church near Decorah, IA

2. Visit a mission church
3. Hold a special church service
4. Attend the Reformation Lectures at Bethany that will celebrate the legacy of H. A. Preus, J. A. Ottesen, and U. V. Koren
5. Learn Norwegian, or at least some Scandinavian hymns
6. Have a Scandinavian hymn festival (Don’t just sing everybody’s favorites. Learn a few “new” ones.)
7. Learn about our sister churches in Peru, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Latvia, etc.
8. Read a book
   - Books available from Bethany Lutheran College bookstore:
     - *Diary of Elisabeth Koren*
     - *Built on the Rock*
     - *Jacob Aal Ottesen* (biography by Laur. Larsen, translated by George A. R. Gullixson)
     - *Vivacious Daughter*, writings of H. A. Preus
     - *Book of Family Prayer*, N. J. Laache
   - Out of print resources. (Look in used book stores.)
     - *Grace for Grace 1853-1943 1918-1943*, S. C. Ylvisaker
     - *Faith of our Fathers 1853-1953*, George O. Lilegaard
     - *Truth Unchanged, Unchanging*, selected works of U. V. Koren
9. Sign up for the Koshkonong trip! (Page 11.)
10. Get your commemorative medallion!

Mark DeGarmeaux is chaplain at Bethany Lutheran College, and co-editor of Oak Leaves
Timeline: Norwegian Synod and Evangelical Lutheran Synod

900s and earlier Christianity comes to Norway

1000 Leiv Eiriksson travels to America and calls it Vinland

1380-1814 Norway and Denmark are united as one kingdom.

1537 Lutheranism comes to Denmark and Norway through Johannes Bugenhagen and King Christian III.

1685 King Christian V orders a slight revision of the Church Ritual

1699 Thomas Kingo’s hymnbook is published. He is well-known for hymns such as: He that believes and is baptized, On my heart imprint Thine image, and Like the golden sun ascending.

1814 University of Christiania (Oslo) established, Norway’s first university where many Norwegian Synod pastors were trained under the confessional Lutheran professors Gisle Johnson and Carl Paul Caspari

1825 Beginning of the Norwegian Migration to America. The sloop Restauration sailed from Stavanger, bringing 52 Norwegian Quakers to America.

1840 Koshkonong Settlement, Dane County, Wisconsin

1843 Claus Lauritz Clausen organized the first Norwegian congregation that came out of the state-church tradition in Muskego, December 14.

1844 J. W. C. Dietrichson arrived in Muskego and preached under the oaks of Koshkonong, September 1-2 and organizes the congregation October 13.

1845 The first Norwegian church building was inaugurated March 12 in Muskego.

1851 Kirkelig Maanedstidende (Church Monthly) was launched two years before the official founding of the Synod.

Kirkelig Maanedstidende

Norwegian Synod was organized, but dissolved in 1852 because of a doctrinal error (Grundtvigianism) in the constitution.

Norwegian pioneers came to Spring Grove, Minnesota, and Paint Creek, Iowa.

1853 The Synod for the Norwegian-Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (the Norwegian Synod) was organized at Koshkonong near Madison, Wisconsin. The Synod adopted the ritual of the Church of
Norway. Three leaders of the Synod were Herman Amberg Preus, Jakob Aall Ottesen, and Ulrik Vilhelm Koren.

1857 The Synod sends students to Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Missouri, and establishes a professorship there

1861 Luther College founded, first near La Crosse, Wisconsin; relocated to Decorah, Iowa, the next year.

1869 Landstad’s Salmebog (hymnbook) published

1872 The Norwegian Synod participates in the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America along with the Missouri, Wisconsin, and Ohio Synods.

1876 Luther Seminary, the Synod’s own theological seminary, is founded in Madison, Wisconsin, later moved to St. Paul.

1877 Ludvig Lindeman’s Koralbog (book of hymn-tunes) published

1878 25th Anniversary of the Synod is celebrated at West Koshkonong, Wisconsin

1880s Controversy concerning conversion and election begins. Eventually 1/3 of the congregations left the Synod over this question, forming the “Anti-Missourian Brotherhood”, and then the United Church (Den forenede kirke) in 1890.

1894 Pacific Lutheran Academy and Business College founded in Tacoma, Washington [later becomes Pacific Lutheran University]

1903 50th Anniversary of the Synod is celebrated at Decorah, Iowa, publishing a Norwegian hymnbook (Synodens Salmebog – Synod’s Hymnbook), and a Festskrift (Festival Book).

1905 Norway gains full independence from Sweden. Norwegian nationalism sweeps Norway and the Norwegians immigrants in America, one of the factors in the church merger in 1917, and the minority that became the ELS.

1910 H. M. Tjernagel, missionary to Alaska

1912 George O. Lillegard, missionary to China; C. U. Faye, missionary to South Africa

1912 The Madison Settlement [Opgjør], agreed upon by representatives of Hauge’s Synod, the United Church, and the Norwegian Synod, endorses doctrinal compromise over the objections of a minority who want to remain faithful to the theology of the Old Synod.

1913 Lutheran Hymnary published, the first large hymnbook in English, reflecting the heritage of the Norwegian Synod

1916 The Austin Agreement finalizes compromise as the solution of the majority and basis for Norwegian Lutheran merger. Both
synergistic and monergistic teaching are to be tolerated side by side in the new merger body.

1917 On June 9, the United Church, the Hauge Synod, and the Norwegian Synod merged to become the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, based on a doctrinal compromise. This group eventually became the Evangelical Lutheran Church, then by merger the American Lutheran Church (1960), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1988).

The “minority”, who chose not to go along with the merger, organizes at the Aberdeen Hotel in St. Paul, Minnesota. Pastor Bjug Harstad is elected president until formal organization can take place.

1918 The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church (later called the ELS) “re”-organizes at Lime Creek, Iowa “to continue in the old doctrine and practice of the Norwegian Synod.”

1922 Norwegian Synod professorship at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota

1927 Bethany Lutheran College is purchased by the little Norwegian Synod and opens as a co-ed junior college and high school.

1928 75th Anniversary of the Norwegian Synod celebrated at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota

1930 Dr. Sigurd Christian Ylvisaker becomes president of Bethany Lutheran College.

1943 25th Anniversary of the reorganized Norwegian Synod, publishing Grace for Grace

1945 Paul Anderson, missionary to Nigeria

1946 Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary is established on the campus of Bethany Lutheran College, with Norman A. Madson as its first dean. The first graduate is Robert D. Preus.
1951 Synod sends a missionary to Cornwall, England. Old People’s Home opened at Ka-
sota, Minnesota

1953 Norwegian Synod celebrates its Centen-
nial at Mankato, Minnesota, publishing *Faith of our Fathers*

1955 The Synod suspends fellowship with the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

1957 The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church adopts the name *Evangelical Lutheran Synod.*

1961 The ELS leaves the Synodical Confer-
ene.

1968 50th Anniversary of the Evangelical Lu-
theran Synod

Latin American mission work begins in Peru, branching out to other nations. Today there are churches in Peru and Chile.

1977-78 50th Anniversary of Bethany Luth-
eran College

1980s Thoughts of Faith begins work in Czech Republic, Ukraine, and Latvia

1982 Marvin Meyer becomes president of Bethany Lutheran College, leading the institution to become a four-year college

1993 75th Anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, commemorated in Amanda Madson’s play “It’s Somewhere in the Third Article”

1996 *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* published

2001 Bethany Lutheran College has its first class of B. A. graduates

2002 75th Anniversary of Bethany Lutheran College

2003 150th Anniversary of the Norwegian Synod

Sources:

T. N. Teigen’s Chronology from *Faith of our Fa-
thers,* 1943.

Mark Harstad’s “A Brief Chronology of Events in Norwegian Lutheranism in America Leading up to 1918”
“Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?” That verse from Psalm 78 was the theme of Pastor Dietrichson’s sermon for the service depicted on the commemorative medallion, commissioned by the ELS Historical Society to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Norwegian Synod. God did prepare a table for our immigrant forebears so that they could gather around the means of grace to have their faith strengthened and be assured of salvation by grace through faith for the sake of Christ. Our synodical ancestors passed on that Christian heritage to us.

The limited-edition commemorative medallion which was authorized at the 2001 annual meeting of the Historical Society is in production.

The obverse of the pewter-finish medallion features a reproduction of Bethany Lutheran College art professor Bill Bukowski’s painting of the 1844 Communion Service which was held beneath the oak trees at Koshkonong. This was the first Norwegian Lutheran Communion Service in America. The reverse side of the 2 1/2” medallion acknowledges that the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society has commissioned its production.

Only 500 medallions are being produced! They will be available for sale beginning at the Historical Society’s Annual Meeting on June 14. The cost will be $11.95. After that date they will be available for sale through the Bethany Lutheran College Bookstore.

As a privilege of membership, Historical Society members can receive a medallion in advance of sale to the public. To reserve your medallion, send a check for $14.00 (which includes postage) for each medallion to:

ELS Historical Society
6 Browns Court
Mankato, MN 56001.

Craig Ferkenstad is pastor of Norseland and Norwegian Grove Lutheran Churches near Saint Peter, Minnesota. He is also secretary of the ELS.

Send us your ideas, articles, and suggestions for Oak Leaves. We welcome information and articles on church anniversaries, and articles of Synodical and local significance.

In the next issue: Report on the Synod Anniversary and Trip to Koshkonong
Announcing the
Seventh Annual Meeting
of the
ELS Historical Society
Saturday, June 14, 2003
Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church
2642 Church St.
Cottage Grove, Wisconsin

Friday, June 13
10:00 am - Chartered Bus leaves from Mankato, traveling to Madison on scenic highway 14 from LaCrosse to Madison – *(Bus trip includes a commemorative medallion.)* **Bus trip cost: $40 per person.**
6:00 pm - Approximate arrival in Madison/Koshkonong area.

**Overnight Motel reservations are available at Chose Family Inn, 1124 West Main St., Stoughton, WI, 53589.**
**Reservations must be made by May 15. Each room is double, capable of sleeping 4 people.**
**The room rate, to date, tax included is $69.58. phone: 1-800-521-1581, local: (608) 873-0330, Fax: (608) 873-8904, Website: www.chosein.com**

Saturday, June 14
9:00 am - Registration & Coffee
9:30 am - Opening Service
10:00 am - Welcome and
Historical sketch of the Old Norwegian Synod and the Reorganized Norwegian Synod. – Erling Teigen
10:45 am - Historical Society Business Meeting
11:00 am - The Beginnings of the Synod at Koshkonong – George Orvick
with reminiscences by some Koshkonong residents.
12:00 noon - Luncheon at Koshkonong Church
  **Cost: The noon luncheon will be served at a cost of $7/person at the church.**
1:30 pm - Bus tour of the historic sites – sites of the first two services, Koshkonong Churches, Seminary site in Madison, old Our Savior’s Church in Madison, Holy Cross, first ELS mission congregation
3:30 pm - Bus Trip back to Mankato

For further information, contact Erling T. Teigen, eteigen@blc.edu, or 507-344-7325 (office) or 507-388-8327 (home), or at the address below

**Please reserve for noon lunch and bus transportation.**
**Visitors: are welcome and invited to attend!**

☐ I plan to attend the Annual Meeting of the ELS Historical Society. Please reserve __ luncheon tickets.

☐ I wish bus transportation from Mankato to Madison
(6 hour trip, with cost depending on number of reservations)

Name(s)__________________________________________________________

Address________________________________________________________

Please return by May 15 to **ELS Historical Society, c/o Erling Teigen, Bethany Lutheran College, 700 Luther Drive, Mankato, MN 56001**
Renew your membership!
ELS Historical Society

Name: ___________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________
_________________________________________________

Send completed form and check (see box below right for type of membership and correct amount) to:
ELS Historical Society
6 Browns Court — Mankato, MN 56001

**Oak Leaves** is published periodically by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod Historical Society, 6 Browns Court — Mankato, MN 56001

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**Oak Leaves** welcomes articles of both Synodical and local significance for publication. Articles maybe edited for style, clarity, or length to allow for publication. Submitted manuscripts will be deposited in the archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

**MEMBERSHIP**
All membership renewals are due **June 1**

**Voting Membership**: $10/year: individual
$15/year: husband & wife

**Associate Membership**: $15/year: individual
$25/year: institutional
$5/year: student

**Lifetime Membership**: $200