

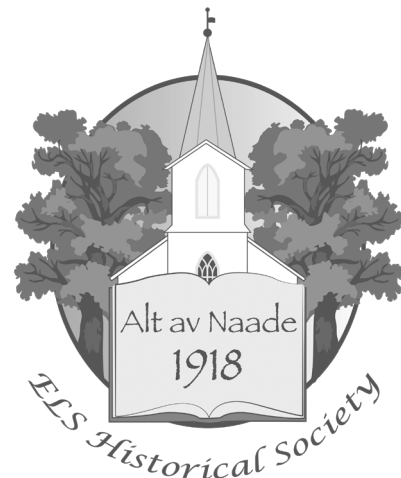
# Oak Leaves

Newsletter of the ELS Historical Society

Volume 21

Winter 2017

Issue 1



## THE ELS IN THE CITY-MINNEAPOLIS

Hugo Handberg

In the fall of 2016, King of Grace Lutheran Church in Golden Valley, Minnesota celebrated its hundredth anniversary. King of Grace itself is not one-hundred years old, but Fairview, the larger of the two churches that merged to form King of Grace in 1967 was organized in 1916. The other congregation, Emmaus, not much younger, had been founded as a daughter congregation in 1928.

One thing making the establishment of the Fairview congregation especially noteworthy is that it took place a year before the Norwegian Merger of 1917. A group of Norwegian Synod pastors had vociferously protested the basis for that merger, and did not participate in the merger. However, Christian Anderson, Fairview's pastor, had stepped out, with a large portion of his north Minneapolis Zion congregation a year earlier.

Pastor Hugo Handberg wrote a series of articles for the *Lutheran Sentinel* appearing in 1974 and 75. We reprint it here because it paints a vivid picture of the context in which this congregation was founded. Handberg was a son of the congregation, and knew its history from having spent his childhood and youth in it.

Born in 1926, Hugo Handberg was baptized in infancy at Fairview. In addition to military service in World War II, he attended the University of Minnesota and Bethany Lutheran College and seminary and was ordained in 1952. He served parishes in Mayville, North Dakota, Mankato, Minnesota, and Parkland, Washington. He entered eternal life in 1990.

In this article, Pastor Handberg writes "ELS" (Evangelical Lutheran Synod). That name was not applied to the synod

until 1955. Before that, it was usually referred to as "The Norwegian Synod," "The Reorganized Norwegian Synod," or sometimes "The 'Little Synod.'"

The material published in this issue is selected from Part I (*Lutheran Sentinel*, July 11, 1974, Vol. 57, No. 13, 197-203) and Part II (March 13, 1975, Vol 58, No. 5, 71-76). ETT

### Part I

Any sunny afternoon in Minneapolis the long shadow of a 17-story apartment building falls across Lowry Avenue on the city's north side. That tower rising above

Third Street is the residence of 225 elderly Minneapolitans.

The shadow cast by that new concrete-steel-glass building reaches across busy Lowry to a little patch of yesterday. Perhaps some of the old folks in the high-rise can remember the little white chapel that once stood kitty-corner across the street, over where the afternoon shadow lies. Now there's nothing there. Even the fire station is gone on the southeast corner of the intersection. The land where the apartment's shadow falls is part of a block-wide vacant strip

stretching north and south for miles, the right-of-way for a freeway yet to be built.

The few who remember the chapel don't remember many of its details. It was called Morrison Memorial Chapel, and belonged to a Baptist group. An old picture shows it as a bare, frame building no more than 25 feet wide. It faced south on the northeast corner of the intersection. A worshiper reached the double wood doors on the east end of the building's front by going up five steps from the street, aided by a wood handrail, then walking a few feet to the two steps just beneath the doors.



Fairview

# FROM THE EDITOR

Just over one-hundred years ago, December, 1916, a meeting between four men, all Norwegian-American pastors took place in Austin, Minnesota. In that meeting, two representatives of a minority group of the Norwegian Synod were persuaded to enter the merger of three Norwegian bodies. In June 1917 the merger was accepted by the three bodies. However, a smaller part of the minority, unable to accept the terms of the agreement made at Austin, met in the Aberdeen Hotel in St. Paul, and that was the beginning of the formation of the ELS.

This year's annual meeting of the ELS Historical Society will focus on those two events. The program is entitled *From Austin to Aberdeen*, and will be a re-enactment of the two meetings. Based on minutes recorded by Pastor C. N. Peterson, the re-enactment will be presented in the form of a readers' theater. There may even be one or two members of the cast in the roll of their grandfathers.

The Historical Society program and meeting will be held on Synod Sunday, June 18 at the Ylvisaker Fine Arts Center.

3:00 p.m. Synod Sunday Service, Trinity Chapel

4:15 p.m. Synod Sunday Dinner

5:00 p.m. Registration

6:00 p.m. Program Sig Lee Theater

7:30 p.m. Society Business Meeting

Refreshments and social time

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We want to expand our *Oak Leaves* readership and membership in our historical society. If you know someone who is interested in our heritage, or should be, why not make a copy of the back page of this issue and give it to them – or, better yet, after you've read this issue, pass it on. You could even give a subscription as a late (or early) Christmas gift. During the next two years, the events connected to the formation of the ELS as well as the Reformation anniversary, will be commemorated in various presentations.

Please don't let anyone who *should* be interested in our history to go uninformed!

Erling T. Teigen

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**Editor:** Erling T. Teigen, [eteigen@charter.net](mailto:eteigen@charter.net)

**Design and layout:** Kate Sehloff

**Board of Directors:** Bergetta Abrahamson, Peter Faugstad (Chairman), Craig Ferkenstad, Ted Gullixson, Lois Jaeger (Secretary), Marge Lillo (Treasurer), John Moldstad, Andrew Soule, Erling Teigen

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

Check out the Historical Society website <http://www.els-history.org/>

Coming soon:  
Old synod convention panoramic photos



Make and take ornament project



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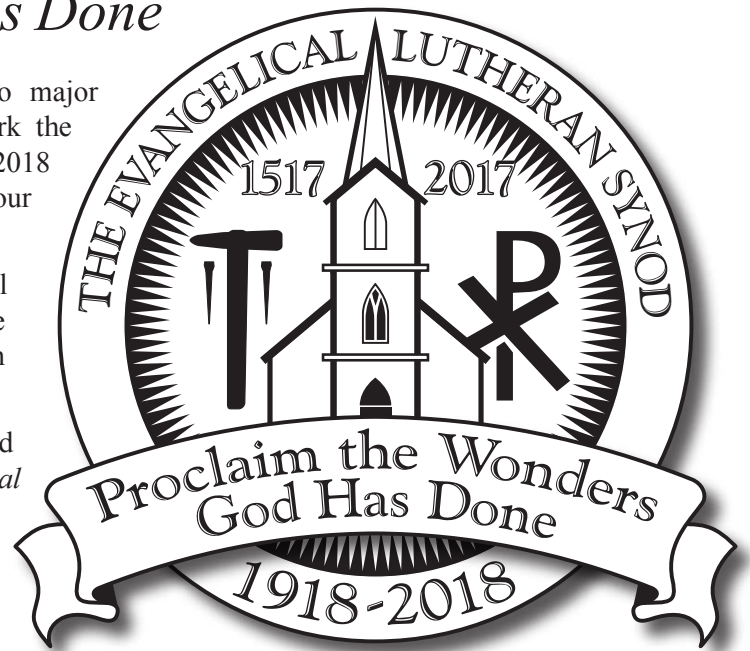
## *Proclaim the Wonders God Has Done*

The Evangelical Lutheran Synod will be observing two major anniversaries in the next years. The year 2017 will mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. The year 2018 will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reorganization of our Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

In honor of the two major anniversaries, the ELS Historical Society will produce a commemorative medallion. The 2” medallion will bear the synod’s anniversary logo which symbolizes the dual anniversaries.

The synod also will publish a centennial history entitled *Proclaim His Wonders: A Pictorial History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod*.

Both items will be available in June 2017. 🍁



## **CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE**

A record 86 guests toured the ELS Ottesen Museum during its 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Open House which was held December 6, 2016. The theme was “A Norwegian American Pioneer Christmas”.

Upon entering the Museum, visitors were greeted by a Christmas tree decorated with Norwegian flags, red and white hearts, and candles. Trees of this style were common among Norwegians both in Norway and the United States before electricity and modern glass ornaments became popular.

One of this year’s highlights was a make and take project. Many people took the time to learn to make a Scandinavian woven heart ornament. These ornaments traditionally held nuts and small candies for children to pick off of the Christmas tree.

Another highlight was the chance to sing traditional Christmas carols in both Norwegian and English. One of the songs, *Å Jul Med Din Glede*, included dancing in a circle around a Christmas tree along with clapping and singing. The hymns *Silent Night*, *From Heaven Above*, and *Thy Little Ones Dear Lord Are We* were also sung in both languages.

Of course, no Christmas party is complete without food. Guests were able to sample the traditional Norwegian treats kringla, krumkake, pepperkaker, and lefse. To wash it down, there was plenty of hot mulled apple cider.

It’s fairly safe to say, “A good time was had by all”. 🍁



Krumkake and other Norwegian treats

Inside the chapel, very likely on a back wall, was a remarkable mirror. One who remembers says, “There was an old looking-glass in the chapel. When you looked in the glass, you were lopsided – one side of your face was thin and long, the other short and fat.”

It was here in 1916, in the rented Baptist chapel with the twisty mirror, that what was to become the first ELS church in Minneapolis began its work. Today there are three ELS congregations in the metropolitan area. Two others with proud histories no longer exist. And therein lies quite a story.

The story begins at Zion Lutheran Church, nine blocks away from the little Morrison Chapel. Today, with its more than 2000 souls, Zion is a congregation of the American Lutheran Church. But Zion was founded in 1884 as a congregation of the old Norwegian Synod, mother synod of the ELS.

However, we must go back still farther.

Zion’s first families began meeting in 1875 in a house on 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, three blocks west of the Mississippi River, about a mile south and forty years ahead of the still-to-come Morrison Chapel. Zion’s people were Norwegian people, immigrants, with their Norwegian language, Bibles, and hymnbooks.

The circle at the private house grew quickly, and the congregation moved to a German Lutheran church building at 16<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, four blocks away. Ten families completed the formal organization in 1884. In 1887 a large frame building was built on the hill at 24<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> St., just across the street from the new Hawthorne School, and only three blocks from where Zion’s imposing building, a later structure, stands today.

When Pastor Johannes Halverson, Zion’s minister through twelve years of this growth, accepted a call to the Koshkonong area near Madison, Wisconsin, in 1902 plans to enlarge the church building on 24<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> St. had to be set aside.

Now Zion called Christian Anderson, four years out of Luther Seminary, from Genesee Valley, Idaho, to succeed Pastor Halverson. Anderson was installed at a service in Zion’s fine frame church in 1903, and the interrupted building plans again moved ahead. A new bell tower, balcony, and sacristy were added to the church, and the expanded building was rededicated in July 1904. Noteworthy, however, is the fact that the far-sighted congregation one year earlier had purchased three lots on 26<sup>th</sup> and Lyndale, three blocks away and just across from beautiful Fairview Park.

But what was Minneapolis like when the Twentieth Century began, when Zion got its new pastor, when, in 1904, the bell rang out of that new steeple and out across the city’s north side for the first time?

It was a time of transition. The people most affected by it didn’t fully grasp it, but a combination of great forces, social and economic, was shaping the character of this City of Lakes and its north side.

In 1882 there wasn’t a single paved street in Minneapolis. By 1895 only two streets in Zion’s vicinity were paved, one 4 blocks away, the other 3. Where there were sidewalks, they were usually of wood.

One street, Twenty-sixth Avenue, running right alongside the north wall of today’s Zion Church, is a five-block-long sloping hill from Aldrich on the west to Washington Avenue close to the river. The street borders the south edge of Fairview Park, site of Sunday school picnics in long-ago summers and sledding in winters. (The city’s highest point of land is the hill in the park. In recent years the park has been renamed Farview Park). Traffic was so light on city streets in earlier days that even after the turn of the century neighborhood children could “ice” the 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue hill with buckets of water for its entire fiveblock length. One father helped his sons build a marvelous bob-sled complete with its own warning gong. A lookout was posted at Lyndale to watch for traffic, and down the hill on sleds flew the children and grandchildren of the immigrants on winter days sixty or seventy years ago!

As the new century began, the streets may have been of dirt and the sidewalks of wood, but there were many people moving about on these streets and walks. In the 1880s, the city’s population quadrupled. Of the 203,000 people in the city in 1900, thirty-six thousand were Norwegians. A third were born in Norway, the rest in this country. The Norwegian language was used exclusively in many immigrant homes. Children learned no English until forced to do so when they started school. In some Minneapolis neighborhoods, young boys delivered daily Norwegian newspapers house-to-house.

Thirty-three million immigrants were admitted to the United States in the century between 1820 and 1920. Almost half of them (43%) came between 1901 and 1920! The heaviest influx of Norwegians into Minneapolis came in the first decade of the present century. Zion church’s members lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward and the adjoining 10<sup>th</sup> Ward to the north. In 1905 five percent of the total citizenry of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward and eight percent of the 10<sup>th</sup> had been born in Norway.

Immigrants were often unskilled laborers. Many Norwegians lived in an area called by one politician “the river flats,” the section east of Zion to the river six blocks away. Between 1900 and 1910 a surge of Polish people came to that same area and settled chiefly in a three-block band running between Washington Avenue and the river. On Sunday mornings the Poles walked through Fairview Park on their way from their self-imposed ghetto near the railroad tracks and the river to St. Philip’s Catholic Church several blocks beyond the park. Germans, too, both Catholic and Lutheran, moved into the same neighborhoods. And Swedes outnumbered them all, especially in the 10<sup>th</sup> Ward north of 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

In 1900 both the east and west banks of the river were lined with sawmills and sash-and-door factories. The city’s two chief industries were sawmills and flour mills. Logs were floated downriver from northern forests. One man remembers that “the river was often almost paved with logs.” Many of Zion’s members worked in these sawmills and, just as most Zion people could walk conveniently to church, they could also walk to work.

But Minnesota lumbering peaked in 1899. By 1919, it had vanished into history.

In 1885 Minneapolis led the world in flour production. Flour milling employed some of Zion’s men. But when bulk wheat could be shipped to new eastern mills cheaper by boat on the Great Lakes, or through the Panama Canal (opened 1915), than Minneapolis-packaged wheat products could be shipped east by either boat or rail, another major industry quickly declined.

When the sawmills were quiet on a Sunday morning in 1904, and when the church bell rang from Zion’s new steeple, most members of the church walked to services from within a radius of no more than a mile in any direction. Then it was up that long flight of wooden steps (fourteen of them!) into the church. Pastor Anderson preached in Norwegian from the pulpit on the right while the choir had its own section opposite on the left. All eyes were reminded of our Lord’s ascension by the handpainted altarpiece in the chancel to the west.

But the people kept coming, Zion kept growing, and soon the congregation would have to worship on its three lots across from the park! C. J. Hoigaard, the tent-and-awning man, would buy the outgrown frame church and rebuild it completely into a residential duplex, and Tom Heller, street-car-man and grocer, would make his home in the old parsonage around the corner behind the church.

The congregation made its big decision to leave the frame church and build a larger one in 1909. Construction took

place in 1910. The cornerstone of the large, twin-towered brick building was laid in November that year, and the splendid new church was dedicated in June 1911. Almost fifty years later a writer in a Lutheran periodical said of that building, still much in use in 1974, “How fortunate the present generation is that the church was a sound building, built on good traditional lines that have lasted.”

Earlier, in 1907, Zion Congregation was the fourteenth largest in the Minnesota District of the Norwegian Synod (over 600 preaching stations in Minnesota, the Dakotas, Montana and Central Canada) with 505 souls and 333 communicants. But in 1912, a year after the dedication of the new church, there were 707 souls and 511 communicants. Zion’s diamond anniversary booklet said in 1959, “The early years after the new church was built were some of the most active ones that Zion Church has ever known.... The youth made good use of the gymnasium of the new building. There was even a girl’s basketball team!”

A woman now in her nineties remembers that gymnasium. “I had only one thing against it. The walls were so rough that we had skinned hands and arms most of the time.”

But a far more devastating type of wound was about to be inflicted upon Zion Congregation itself. A nationwide merger of three Norwegian Lutheran synods took place in 1917. For doctrinal reasons not all Lutherans involved were pleased with that union. Prior to the merger the pros and cons were debated fervently in many congregations, and it is no understatement to say that that debate broke Zion apart. Months before the merger Pastor Anderson knew that a majority of Zion’s members was in favor of the proposed union. Another sizable portion of the membership, opposed to the merger, resigned from the congregation. Zion’s anniversary booklet describes the



Fairview Choir



rupture: “This move, of course, left Zion in very unhappy circumstances. Good friends and even families had been separated into two camps. The congregation left at Zion found themselves without pastoral leadership – a small group with a large church and debt.”

Years later *Lutheran Herald*, church paper of the former ELC (the new synod created by the 1917 merger) reported: “As an example of what happened, Zion’s confirmation class that began in the fall of 1916 with thirty-five pupils ended up as a class of nine! The rest had gone with the pastor to the new congregation.”

It is at this point that little Morrison Chapel entered the picture.

A group of anti-merger members left after one of Zion’s heated meetings. They walked two blocks south down the hill on Lyndale and reconvened at Tom Heller’s house, the old parsonage on 24<sup>th</sup>. It is likely that this was the significant meeting of October 3, 1916, which is known to have been held at the Heller home. The entire week was crucial for these ex-members of Zion. A committee of six was elected to find a meeting place by the following Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup>. Another panel of three was to draw up a constitution.

Two nights later, Thursday, a meeting was held at the Moe residence, about nine blocks north on Lyndale from the Heller house. This time twenty-one men were present. A new name was chosen, “Fairview Evangelical Lutheran Church,” and the first nine paragraphs of a constitution were adopted. Officers were elected. A call was drawn up and sent to Pastor Anderson, at this point still Zion’s pastor.

The next Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, Fairview’s first service was held in the spot where the apartment-house shadow falls today. Rev. C. N. Peterson conducted that first service in the little white chapel. Forty-three boys and girls came to Sunday School that morning, and 9 teachers were there to instruct them.

Meanwhile Pastor Anderson had accepted Fairview’s call and, on the third Sunday in the little white chapel, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, preached his installation sermon. As winter drew on, a building site with an excellent house on it was purchased on the corner of 31<sup>st</sup> and Colfax, two blocks west of Lyndale and seven blocks from the still-new Zion Church. By year’s end, a building committee had been elected. But the little white chapel would have to be Fairview’s home for several more months.

Mention was made earlier of social and economic forces which played a great part in making Minneapolis what it is today. Events within Norwegian Lutheranism also sprinkled flavorings into the kettle known as the city’s north side. So did World War I.

When the doughboys came home from France, an era had passed. The city’s postwar growth was rapid and strong. Immigration had ceased, but the automobile had come to stay. Streets were paved, and younger marrieds took advantage of a mobility their parents hadn’t known. Suburbs grew and old neighborhoods changed. So did familiar old patterns of church membership and church attendance.

In 1916, where once there had been thirty or forty sawmills strung along the east and west banks of the Mississippi, there were two left, the Itasca and the Northland Pine mills,

on either side of the Lowry Bridge at the river’s west edge. Eventually, the Itasca was replaced by a processed foods plant (locally called “the pickle factory”), and Northland Pine years later burned to the ground in a spectacular fire. Just three blocks west of these industrial sites, along Lowry, was the Morrison Chapel. On Sundays through all that winter of 1916, 17, Pastor Anderson continued to look into the chapel’s “lopsided lookingglass” when he struggled to put on his *Prestekrave*, the millstone-shaped ruffed collar worn by Norwegian Lutheran preachers.



Christian Anderson

About 135 blacksmiths and horseshoers plied their trades in Minneapolis between 1895 and 1905, peak years for those services. But when Fairview’s first funeral was held at Morrison Chapel

that fall of 1916, the passing of an era became all too apparent. The deceased, a Mr. Holt, one of Fairview’s charter members, had been a blacksmith. In keeping with his former trade, all vehicles supplied by the undertaker (a member of Zion) were to be pulled by horses. But the undertaker had considerable difficulty locating a horse drawn hearse and hacks. Consequently that funeral was his last utilizing horses.

Less than 50,000 cars were registered in the entire State of Minnesota in 1916. In contrast, by 1934 Minneapolis alone had 80,000. But in 1916 one of the cars on the city’s streets was the new Model T Ford presented by the congregation to Pastor Anderson as a surprise gift at the Morrison Chapel. Many of the members themselves were still walking to church, or walking up from the streetcars on Washington Avenue a block away. In those days it was

a little too much for laboring people to pay \$450 to \$500 for a shiny black Model T just for the family.

The building of the church foundation and basement at 31<sup>st</sup> and Colfax went ahead in the summer of 1917. Ole Bredeson, a coal-dealer, furnished the horses and scoop for the excavation. Men of the congregation reported to the construction site many evenings after their day's work was done and helped excavate with hand shovels. Often on summer nights they worked by the light of kerosene lamps. When the excavators came upon a boulder too big to lift out of the pit, a special hole was dug in the bottom of the excavation and the boulder was pushed into it and buried!

Sunday, October 14, 1917, just one year after the organizing of the congregation, residents along the way saw a joyous procession of people walking the six blocks from Morrison Chapel to 31<sup>st</sup> and Colfax. That day the first service was held in Fairview's new basement.

First Sunday school classes were held in the basement that day, too, and thirty teachers taught the catechism and Bible stories to 214 children.

Building of the superstructure of the church continued, and a year later, on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1918, the finished church was dedicated. Fairview joined the reorganized Norwegian Synod at the synod's second convention eight months later in Albert Lea, Minnesota, and the ELS had its first congregation in Minneapolis.

## Part II

World War I was raging when Fairview was formed by a segment of the members of Zion Lutheran Church. America was not yet in the war, but would be within months. People across the nation were fearful of being drawn into the conflict. Prices rose, and materials for building the new church that summer of 1917 were not always easy to get.

Ferment and change were everywhere. Six weeks before the war was over, Fairview's completed building on 31<sup>st</sup> and Colfax was dedicated. Young lads had gone off to France, then had come home again at war's end — mature men with experiences they didn't care to talk about. Henry Ford began turning out his Model Ts, and postwar times were prosperous. Men's and women's dress styles changed. Music changed. Industry changed. In many ways, Minneapolis itself changed. The city had become a shipping, milling and manufacturing center for the entire Northwest. Eastern wholesalers rushed to set up branches in Minneapolis and, by 1919, the city was calling itself "the billion-dollar market."

The old languages of a score of foreign homelands gave way now to English. Foolish wartime laws concerning

those languages made it embarrassing to be a "hyphenated-American," and the things of the "old country" began a slow but discernible decline. Immigration ended in 1920. In the future, churches would have to do mission work among all fellow-Americans, a factor which hastened the switch to English in many ethnic churches.

But the Norwegian language did not die overnight in Fairview congregation.

A daily paper, the *Daglig Tidende*, published in Norwegian, reported that in 1924 services were still being held in the Norwegian language in twenty-five churches in Minneapolis. All but two of those churches had both a Norwegian and an English service every Sunday.

The public high school serving Fairview's area, North High, had introduced the study of the Norwegian language in 1912, with twenty-three students in the first class. As late as the thirties, high point of Norwegian studies in Minneapolis high schools, close to a thousand students were enrolled in Scandinavian classes at such schools as North, South and Roosevelt. Mr. Oscar Pedersen, member of Fairview, was for several years South High's teacher of Norwegian. (Pedersen had mastered the Greek language and would at times use a Greek New Testament for his personal devotions.)

In Fairview's early years, the choir routinely sang in Norwegian. Two services, one English, one Norwegian, were held every Sunday into the thirties. Each year a class of children would be confirmed in both languages, that is, until the class of 1922. That year, the last to follow the bilingual practice, all the children were confirmed in English except Pastor Anderson's son and a girl born in Norway. The fact that, with the passing of time, newer Fairview choir singers could not handle the language helped to speed Norwegian's demise. Only an occasional funeral hymn in Norwegian, sung by a soloist, could be heard at Fairview as late as the fifties, a last echo of the founding immigrants' mother tongue.

Pastor Anderson was anxious that the new facilities should be a worship home for ELS students who were attending schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Young ELS men preparing to enter the seminary of the Missouri Synod at St. Louis would do preliminary work at Concordia College, St. Paul. With their homes sometimes hundreds of miles away, they lived in a portion of a Concordia dormitory the students called "the Norwegian settlement." One of those students [Neelak Tjernagel, editor of the *Sentinel* when these articles were published] says of Anderson, "He not only invited us to come to Fairview to church, but promised us that when we came we would receive an invitation to dinner in a real home, with real cooking,

just like in our own homes. I can still see Pastor Anderson buttonholing people as they were leaving church and pleading with them to take a couple of college boys home with them for dinner.” Concordia’s St. Paul campus was many miles from the north side of Minneapolis and from Fairview Church. Was the trip worth a lonesome student’s time? Could he endure that tedious ride? “It was a long ride and several transfers on the streetcars to get from Syndicate Avenue in St. Paul to Fairview. But it was worth it. I will never forget the gracious hospitality of so many of those families.”

The twenties brought growth and development. The population of Minneapolis in 1920 was almost 381,000. In ten years it would be 464,000. There were 90,000 foreign-born whites in Minneapolis in 1920, and about 17,000 of them had been born in Norway, among them most of Fairview’s adult members. But there were six or more Norwegian Lutheran churches on the north side of Minneapolis. In addition there were three Swedish Lutheran and two German Lutheran churches. At least four Catholic churches in Fairview’s neighborhood served Polish, German and Irish Catholics. The work in post-immigration America would be something new indeed!

But the Twenties were “a fantastically opulent decade,” as one writer put it. The city that once counted lumber, flour, wood products and woolen goods its chief industries now added, by 1929, printing and publishing, foundry products, bread and bakery goods, railroad car construction and repair, prepared animal feeds, electrical equipment, furniture, butter, coffee and spices to its list of industrial output.

Even the skyline changed. In 1927, most prosperous of the postwar years, the Foshay Tower and the Municipal Auditorium were among the new buildings. Fairview’s people slowly began to change from mostly blue-collar workers to a growing number of white-collar professional people. The congregation prospered with the city. Five to six hundred people gathered to observe the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pastor Anderson’s ordination in October 1924. But no joy equaled that of Fairview’s people at the banquet at the church on Lincoln’s birthday 1926, when the church’s mortgage was burned.

A spirit of well-being prevailed within the congregation. No one knew that the great depression was just around the corner. Fairview had its new house of worship, the mortgage was paid, and its people began to look outward.

With its base established, the congregation now more adequately could tend to the Christ-ordained work of making disciples “of all the nations.”

It would be incorrect to conclude, however, that Fairview had neglected its mission obligations or had been provincial in its outlook, or only introspective, since its break with Zion Congregation. Quite the opposite was true.

Fairview had joined the Evangelical Lutheran Synod at the synod’s convention in Albert Lea, Minnesota, in May 1919. It hosted the third convention of the reorganized synod the next year, and would do so again in 1940. The Ladies Aid participated in the Twin City Mission Auxiliary with women of the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods. It supported the Lutheran Children’s Friend Society, a child placement agency of the Missouri Synod. The Young People’s Society joined Missouri and Wisconsin youth groups in the Twin City Lutheran YPA, and soon became

a dominant factor in that organization. At one time, all the major offices of the two-city, many-congregation-group were held by young people of Fairview!

In April 1926, the Bethany Lutheran College Association was organized at Fairview and instituted incorporation proceedings, important steps leading to the purchase of property that would become today’s ELS junior college at Mankato, Minnesota.

Editor’s note: Fairview also played a role in the first steps of the formation of the Reorganized Norwegian Synod. In 1917, on the weekend that the three bodies, the Norwegian Synod, the United Norwegian Lutheran Church, and the Hauge Synod, held their separate final conventions, and

then marched to the St. Paul Auditorium for their uniting convention, the little group of pastors, which included Pastor Christian Anderson, had met as a minority in the Aberdeen Hotel in St. Paul. They gathered again on Sunday morning at little Fairview’s meeting place, the Morrison Chapel and worshiped with the group that had left the Norwegian Synod a year before. On that occasion, Pastor Anderson conducted the service and Pastor John A. Moldstad of St. Mark’s Lutheran Church in Chicago preached the sermon. At that meeting, they agreed to begin a church paper, *Luthersk Tidende*, which later added the Sentinel as a companion publication in English. They named Bjug Harstad as their temporary leader, and agreed to meet the next June, a meeting later set to be at Lime Creek Lutheran Church in Northern Iowa.



Hugo Handberg

To be continued 





# Acorns from the ELS Archives



Ted Gullixson  
For September 2016

*(The following is printed from the 1926, "The Assistant Pastor" a monthly newsletter by the Rev. H. M. Tjernagel, pastor of Jerico and Saude Lutheran Churches.)*

## An Iowa Delegate Meeting

Andrew Foss, Ole Fossen, Ned Borlaug, Nels Ellingson and the pastor attended the regular fall meeting of our circuit in Scarville, Iowa, September 29–30.

The congregation at Scarville consists of 15 families who have since 1918 built a very respectable church and have furnished the church as well as basement with all necessary furnishings. They have also acquired the finest residence in the village as a parsonage. And now they entertained the circuit royally.

Two papers were read at the meeting. One on 1 Peter 2:1–10, the other on Matthew 18:1–6. The former by your pastor [H.M Tjernagel]; the latter by the Rev. Norman Madson. Both provoked lively and edifying discussion .

The pastors present at the meeting were: J. A. Petersen, H. Ingebritzen, C.J. Quill, A.J. Torgerson, H.A. Preus, J. B.

Unseth, A. Harstad, S. Sande, N. A. Madson, Chr. Anderson and H. M. Tjernagel.

Your pastor and delegates were exposed to serious danger on the return trip from the meeting. At about eight in the evening we were rolling along pleasantly at about 25 miles per hour on a straight, graveled highway—No. 9—when, without warning, we found ourselves on slippery clay road. The next instant we were flung into the ditch. Calmly and quietly the car stood there and all passengers in place in their seats. When we got out of the car to survey our location we could only wonder how it could have happened without serious injury to car and passengers.

It was God’s almighty hand that held that ton and more of dead weight upright in spite of the every-ready power of gravity. After about an hour’s delay we proceeded on our way and reached our respective homes about midnight. 🍁

### *U. V. Koren’s Works — Now in English!*

Ulrik Vilhelm Koren (1826-1910) was a beloved pastor and church leader for the Norwegian Synod, the first Norwegian pastor to live west of the Mississippi. He guided the Synod through difficult controversies, and helped establish relationships with the Wisconsin Synod and Missouri Synod, as well as helping to found colleges and academies throughout the Midwest. His writings are a clear application of Law and Gospel in a timeless way.

Four volumes of Koren’s works were published in Norwegian shortly after his death in 1910. They are being made available in English translation. Three volumes have been published so far. Volume four is scheduled for June 2017. Prof. Mark DeGarmeaux has compiled previous translations and completed the translation work for this set.

- Volume 1 — sermons for the church year
- Volume 2 — addresses to synod meetings, etc.
- Volume 3 — journal articles
- Volume 4 — memoirs, poems, letters, short articles

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# Why can the Minority not go along with the new church body?

Bjug Harstad

*Luthersk Tidende*, Minneapolis, Minn July 16, 1917, Vol. 1, No. 1, p 1 ff.

*In the last issue of Oak Leaves, we promised that the next issues would contain translations of selected writings appearing in the first volumes of Luthersk Tidende in 1917, as those who did not go along with the 1917 Norwegian merger moved toward their founding convention in 1918 at Lime Creek congregation near Lake Mills, Iowa. ETT*

As the avalanche towards *Opgjør* [Settlement, The Madison Agreement] was put in motion, more sad things both in doctrine and practice previously unknown in the Norwegian Synod came to light. Not all of it can be listed here. It is too long. But from time to time, *Luthersk Tidende* will point to important things that prevent us from joining. Only a few things need to be mentioned now.

We could not go along, among other things:

1) Because *Opgjør* forms the basis for the merger. It contains several ambiguous, irreconcilable and false things. The more one considers it, the more we must think about or see the Lord's words fulfilled: "and they [the people] build a wall, and they [the prophets] plaster it with untempered mortar [whitewash]" Ezek. 13:10. Therefore, it came to look good enough outwardly, but what the interior is, no one knows, until something comes that washes off the whitewash. Such whitewash is in the church, just as in other buildings, falsehood and a dangerous deception that everyone must guard against. When any of the parties in controversy says that they teach exactly the same now as before, is not this proof enough that we stand in front of a whitewash or a compromise?

2) Among other odd things in *Opgjør*, which confuse people and prevent us from going along with it, is that paragraphs one and three, without reservation, attempt to present two different doctrines and concepts as being about the same thing. The clear, full, comforting doctrine of Scripture and the Confessions concerning the doctrine of election we accept unconditionally. Dear reader! Carefully search Article 11 of the Formula of Concord prayerfully and with child-like willingness to learn and be obedient to the word. Then you will, to your great joy and strengthening, find that the election of grace is God's eternal decision about all the Holy Spirit's gracious working toward you, to call, enlighten, sanctify, and preserve you, as well as that the Savior, finally on the day of judgment, will glorify his bride, the church.

But the second form of the doctrine limits election only to the final stage, namely the final sanctification. This concept the Norwegian Synod has never recognized as a right understanding of Scripture and the Confessions' doctrine of election, and even less can we do so now after so many years of experience in the controversy and harmful use of it to flatter and support the old Adam. Therefore, we must now certainly disclaim and reject this concept as contrary to Scripture and the Confessions, and harmful to a clear confession of our sin and grace in Christ's blood.

3) During the dispute they grasped Pontoppidan's short answer to Question 548 and made it sound like he taught an election based on human faith and good behavior. Pontoppidan taught no such thing, but says that faith cannot cause election and that all who have not been reborn are under Satan's reign "until they are converted." But still they pressed the assertion that Pontoppidan, Scripture and the Confessions taught that man's repentance and election were dependent on different conditions. Thereby they had a way of explaining many common sense questions which are quite easily answered, but without the light of God's Word. The old-Lutherans obviously could not assume, because it is contrary to the Word of God, which says that that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that the natural conditions of the human heart is only evil from childhood and is child of perdition until God, for Christ's sake, by the work of the Spirit through the means of grace, takes away the heart of stone and gives a heart of flesh. Genesis 6:5, 8:21 Ezekiel 36: 25-27. Romans 3:12.

But they declared us to be false teachers who ought to be deposed or removed. Some were deposed, congregations split, opposition altars established, and many congregations and pastors left the Norwegian Synod as a false-teaching body. This was 1887.

4) But section 3 of *Opgjør*, says about this controversy: "This should not be cause for schism within the church and disturb the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

that God wills should prevail among us.” This declaration came in 1912. Before then it was certainly church divisive. Here, there is no regret that at the time, many actions showed that it was regarded as church divisive. It says only that “it should not be church divisive.”

But what is this declaration worth in light of what *Opgjør*'s fathers or promoters had done since that product of their imagination saw the light of day? Have they wanted to hear us, hold district meetings, conferences and doctrinal discussions as before? Why did they not once want to discuss doctrine with the peace committee elected by the Synod meeting of 1914? Since *Opgjør* came, what else than adherence to Synod principles has caused individual missionaries and pastors to be kept from office or driven from their calls? Those who have done such things certainly seem to consider the matter to be church divisive. In many ways, they sought to silence us, until at one of the last meetings, by careful procedural maneuvers and support, have substituted for our synodical constitution a new one and arranged it so that they could destroy the corporation also for those who would hold on to their share of it. They were not at all ashamed, even at the last meeting, to elect officials, not according to the provisions of the Constitution to maintain or serve its purpose, but to destroy it as soon as possible. If any one would with similar intentions let himself be elected president under a country's constitution, he would be sentenced as a traitor of his country. But here they are not ashamed to do it, because it is the practice and accepted that when a corporation is swallowed by another and thereby dismissed as a competitor or minor stockholder. Does anyone believe that such a thing can be done decently or in order in the church?

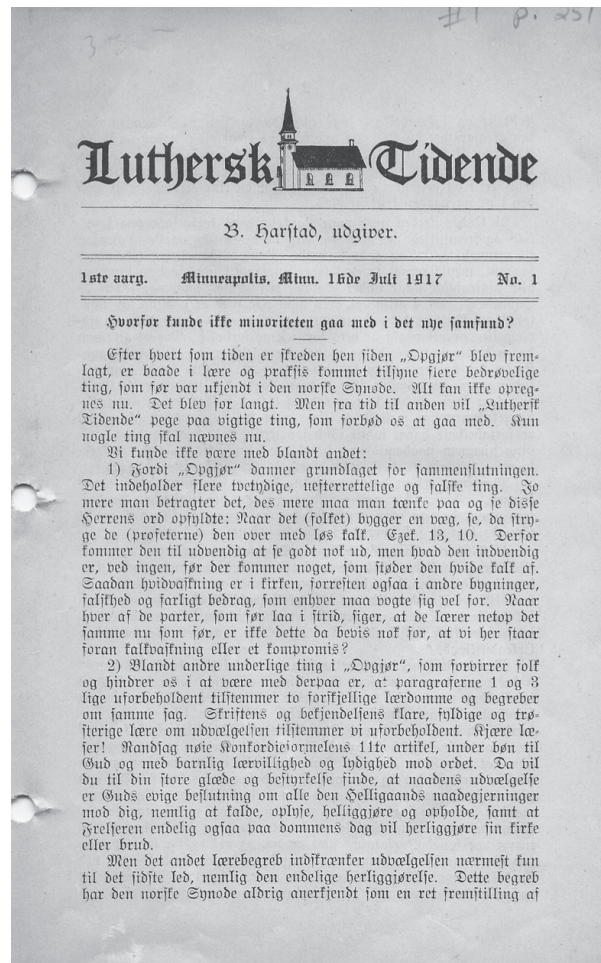
That the synod long ago was declared to be a dangerous organization did trouble us deeply, but that many men and descendants of the synod's self-sacrificing pioneers could go along with and participate in treating their Alma Mater as worthy of the death sentence, was an incomprehensible, bitter disappointment and humiliating shame that can never be obliterated.

5) *Opgjør* includes a public confession of sin which the three contracting synods have made, but it is likewise as unclear and confusing as *Opgjør* itself. It reads: “We have all sinned against God and against each other. This causes our hearts grief, and for all that we ask God and each other for forgiveness, just as we heartily forgive each brother his failings.” This sounds nice enough, but especially because almost all proper people, even Catholics or unbelievers, can agree to such a general confession. It presumes no great sorrow for any particular

man's deeds. It must be remembered that this is made by people who have led major battles or discussions about important Catechism truths. The result was that many churches were divided, some lost more than half of their members, or some lost their church property and had their pastors thrown out the door. Now when both those who did this and those who suffered this say: “We have all sinned” where does the matter stand then, and what is the truth here? Should people now believe that all their public doings, both doctrine and life were sin and error? Was there no one defending any divine truth in any part? I wonder if such a confession is evidence of Christian penance and improvement of the heart?

A true Christian cannot go along in giving such an indistinct sound of the trumpet without confusing the flock, and thereby bringing about sin and harm. The deceitful moves about in ambiguities, says the old proverb. That brings to mind this kind of repentance. The prophet Ezekiel says: “O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts!” Ezek. 13:4.

B. H. 





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