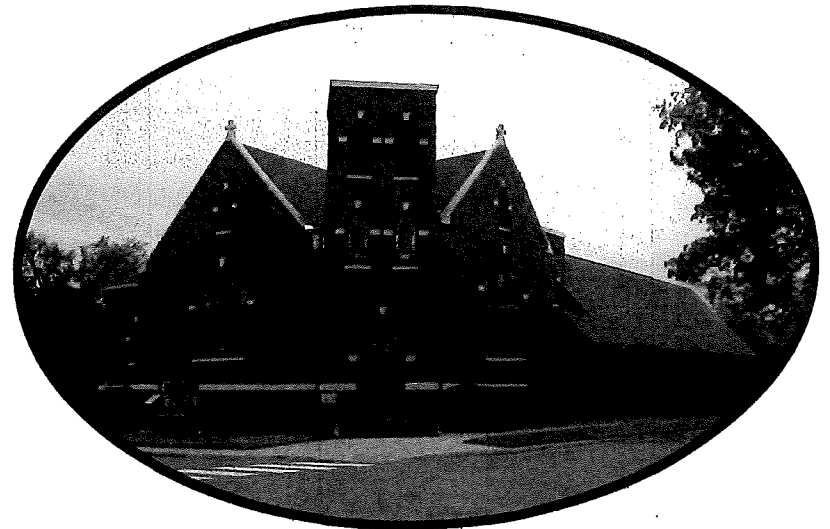




First Lutheran Church
Barron, Wisconsin
1884 - 2009
125 Years



To God be the Glory

**Being called by God through Baptism
and strengthened by the Word
and Sacrament of our Lord's Table,
God guides First Lutheran
to teach, preach, live and spread
the word of God.**

CALLED TO BE ONE

A Hymn of Celebration for First Lutheran's 125-year Anniversary
by Sally Ellison

Follow the voice of the shepherd of love,
Ever rejoice in the gift of His grace;
Walk in His way with light from above,
Live every day for His glory and praise.
Hear the words of life He has spoken to you,
That we may be one in His love.

*Chorus: We will shout the good news as we answer His call:
Jesus, our Lord, gave His life for us all!
Open your heart to his leading just now,
That we may be one in His love.*

Reach out your hand to your neighbor in need,
Be part of God's plan to bring hope from despair.
His love is made known through our actions and deeds,
So others are shown of His infinite care.
Share the words of life He has spoken to you,
That they may be won by His love. *Chorus*

That all may be one in His love!

To God Be the Glory

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF REMEMBERING, REJOICING, AND RENEWING 1884 - 1909

"Brother helped by brother is a fortress" says Proverbs 18:19, and this indeed describes well the one hundred twenty-five years of this church. Working together as children of God has made First Lutheran a fortress, which has secured its members in their faith, strengthened them in time of need, and shielded them from dangers, temptations, and evil.

It first emerges as a mission station in 1872. The preliminary work was begun in homes and later, the Methodist church invited this small, zealous group to hold services in their sanctuary. Rev. C.J. Helsem nurtured and encouraged them from 1872 to 1878; Rev. H.Z. Hvid from 1878 to 1881, Rev. N.I. Wikrie in 1882; and Rev. J. Waage stayed until 1884 and assisted greatly with the organization of the church.

These early members were staunch and loyal followers of God's word, and they were eager to form a group and to be a church. Both the early pastors and the early members were people of vision. They were willing to endure untold hardships, and they knew no security, except God alone. They withstood poverty, pestilence and heartaches. They made long journeys through snow, freezing temperatures, uncleared woods, in faith weather and foul, in weariness and privation. They braved a wilderness untamed. Services were held in the homes and often outside when the weather permitted. Then the pastor would spend the night with one of the members and move on the next day to another congregation. He traveled often on foot and carried an axe as a weapon both against the wild animals and the wilderness. And the pioneers had to fight, too, to conquer a wilderness of pine stumps so they could build their log houses, schools, churches and villages.

These were people of faith. They are the ones to whom the 2009 members of First Lutheran owe an immense debt of gratitude. There were enormous differences in the social, economic, and spiritual characteristics of 1884 compared with today. And it can only be with great admiration that these names are read and their zeal and enthusiasm recalled: John Erickson, Christ O. Nordby, R M. Larsen, Peder Hong, Ben thorsen, Christ Christensen, Anton Gilbertson, Olaus Borgen, T.O. Juvé, Gust Johnson, John Olson, H.O. Hong and Henry Olson. These early pioneers along with the hundreds that were to follow laid the cornerstone of this church in the wilderness.

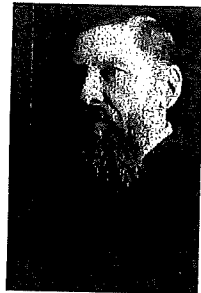
On March 28, 1884, these upper Wisconsin people of faith gathered at a little farm with Rev. T.O. Juve as their pastor. They elected him as president and Henry Olson as secretary. They called their church the First Norwegian Evangelical and chose Andrew Breda, John Thompson and Olaus Borgen as trustees.

Because these people had already buried one of their flock, a month-old baby named Hans Olson on March 12, there was an urgent need for a cemetery. An acre of land was donated by John Thompson.

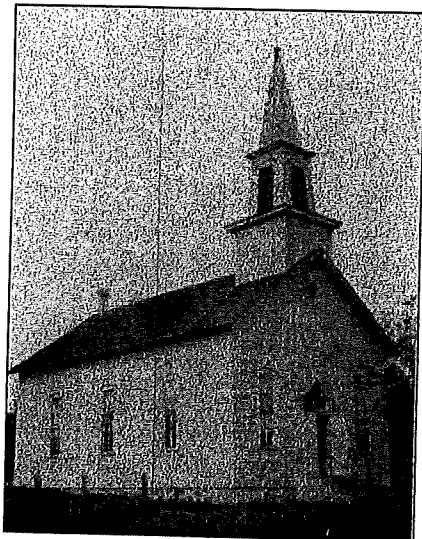
A lot was secured and building operations began in 1891, with the material and labor donated by the members. Pastor Juve served them during much of the planning and preparation, but he was followed by Rev. J.E. Nord from 1889 to 1890 and by Rev. A.J. Orke from 1890 to 1893. Rev. Orke lived at Chetek, but it was his spiritual guidance that encouraged them while the laboriously put together their first building at a cost of \$423.81! It was great joy that they moved into their very own church home.



Rev. T.O. Juve
1884 - 1888



Rev. J.E. Nord
1888 - 1890



With few worldly goods and great faith, they opened their doors to the first communicants on May 4, 1894: Mr. & Mrs. John Thompson, Mr. & Mrs. Hans Anderson, Mr. & Mrs. Elias Anderson, Martha Magneson, and Ole Horlien; to the first baptism on August 12, 1884 of Frank and Flauriette Canfield, son and daughter of Daniel and Mary Ann Canfield; on May 24, 1885 to the first confirmation class of: Hans Hanson, Nils Thompson, Albert Brenden, Ole Hanson and Emil Breda; and on May 29, 1885 the first marriage of Norris McManus & Hattie Bell Lee.

They now paid their janitor \$5.00 a year, and by 1898 the congregation's yearly income was \$71.50 with its expenditures at \$59.50. But apparently they were without debt—something this church would not know again for almost one hundred years.

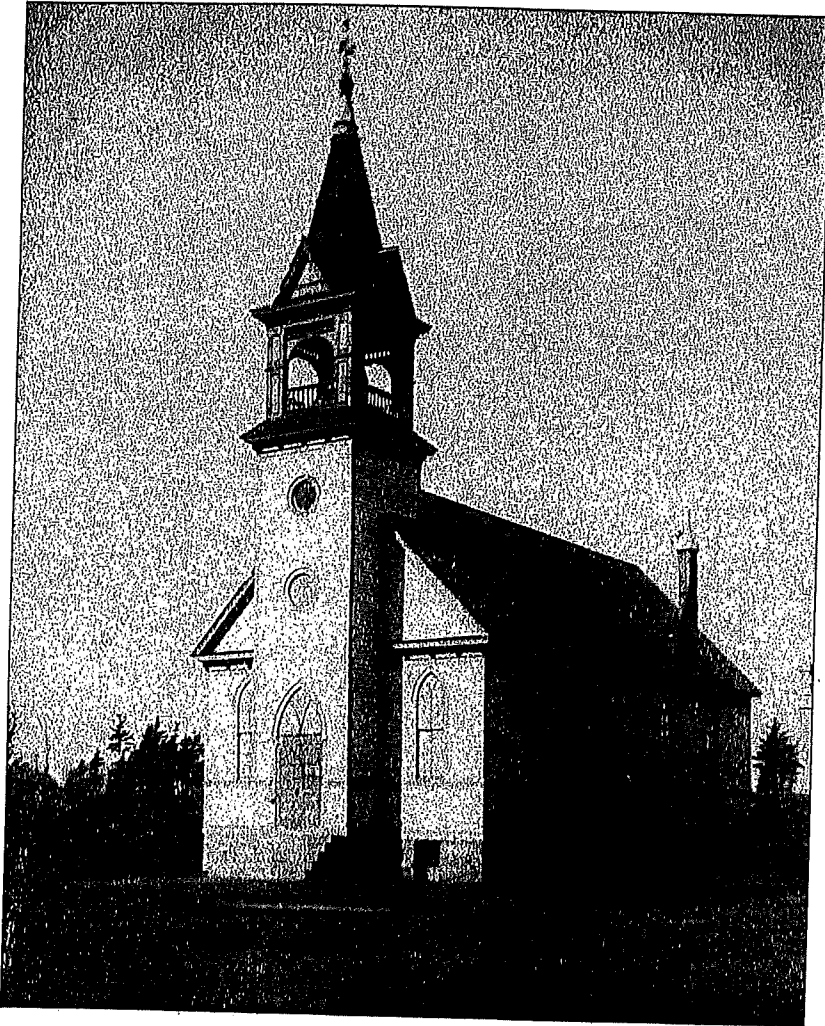
After deciding in 1891 to build a church, brother worked with brother, like the Israelites of long ago and when the edifice was almost completed two years later, the proud charter members moved into it. Rev. J.A. Urnes was called to serve this new but enthusiastic church.



Rev. J.A. Urnes
1890 - 1899

Throughout church history, it is well known that the ladies have always given a helping hand whenever possible. And this group did not fail to do their part in helping to pay off the indebtedness. They organized a ladies Aid in 1886. Nine ladies were present: Mrs. O.C. Boren, Mrs. Julia Larson, Mrs. Anna Aune, Mrs. Lars Wold, Mrs. Hans Dahl, Mrs. Andrew Breda, Mrs. Charles Swan, Mrs. Henry Olson and Mrs. John Thompson. Norwegian was spoken exclusively until 1910, and the only officer was a president.

On March 15, 1905, a number of ladies decided to organize a second Ladies Aid, to supplement the first and to ease transportation problems. This was later called the Bethel Ladies Aid. Pastor Lund acted as chairman, and Mrs. Thor Osterhaus was elected president. A banner year for the Bethel Aid was 1923. On July 4, a picnic and bazaar held in the C.O. Tvedt grove, enriched the ladies by \$321.78. During that year a total of \$725.62 was paid out of the treasury with \$600.00 of that going to the pipe organ fund. By January 1925 the Bethel Ladies Aid paid



Another \$149.99 completed the payments on the organ. These diligent ladies continued helping the church in every possible way. From 1930 to 1955 they raised \$6,603.24! And surely their labors of love were continued for these one hundred twenty-five years through the hands and hearts of the women that were to follow.

Rev. J.A. Urness served the congregation until 1900 for a salary of \$50.00 a year. It was while he was pastor that this small flock received its first real setback. A cyclone on June 12, 1899 lifted the newly completed edifice from its foundation and dashed it to the street. Only one timber remained. Once again services had to be elsewhere. This time the German Lutheran Church opened its doors.



Rev. H. Lund
1903 - 1912

Church members began rebuilding at once. Rev. H. Lund and Rev. J.B. Raynardson served them temporarily from 1901 to 1902. In 1903 Rev. Lund was pastor for three churches: Barron, Dallas and New Scandinavia. These First Lutheran churches had a common bond of love and zeal for the Lord, inspired by the early pastors. The Barron First Norwegian Evangelical even had a pump organ with Millie Hanson as the first organist.

In 1905 the Barron Congregation applied for membership in the United Norwegian Lutheran Church body and was accepted. This gave them an opportunity to take part in missions. By 1906 the church steeple, bell, altar painting, and a furnace had been installed. It was a Lennox Wood Furnace, complete for \$200.00. Work was donated by the members. Four years later they added a full basement. Up until 1912 apparently all wood had been donated, but that year they did spend \$3.00 for wood, which had increased to \$47.50 by 1920. Their beautiful church was a source of pride to them. The cost was dear, but it was worth it to them—\$2,253.10. And their hearts sang Ephesians 5:20 - "Giving thanks always for all things unto God".



Rev. N.B. Ursin
1913 - 1919

In 1913 the congregation withdrew from Dallas and formed a parish with Poskin, and two years later in 1915 Cameron was added to the parish. During these years and until 1919, Rev N.B. Ursin served as pastor for a salary of \$450.00 a year. During his ministry the Luther League was started. It was known as "Den Lutherske Skandinaviska Ungdom's Forening of Barron."

It was first organized at Christ O. Nordby's grove on July 27, 1914. There were forty-eight members present, but when the first meeting was called on September 6, 1914, this number had grown to sixty. Both youth and adults looked forward to these meetings usually held mid-week with spiritual nourishment embellished by basket socials, ice cream socials and candy sales. The dues were 25¢ a year and 10¢ for refreshments at each monthly meeting. At that time the Luther League Conventions were held at Long Lake and everyone looked forward to attending them.. These Luther Leaguers were an arm of the church too.

In 1914, the small, thankful group celebrated its 30th anniversary. From the nine families who had started as charter members, the congregation had now grown to seventy-two families with four hundred souls.

Between 1912 and the 1930s, Norwegian school was held in the summer at the various school districts. The church helped in finding the teachers, but they were paid by the parents of the children attending. These teachers roomed and boarded in the various homes, and the children came to know and respect them. Most children enjoyed going to Norwegian school. They liked the comradeship of their friends, and it meant a whole day away from the work on the farms or in their homes. Their teachers were fairly strict and they did learn God's Word, willingly or unwillingly. Norwegian school lasted about six weeks, probably because it was easier to get to school in the summer than through the high snow drifts in the winter. However, Sunday School had also been well established because the Lutherans have always strongly believed in education. In 1918, John Mortenson was the first Sunday School Superintendent.



Rev. E.B. Swenson
1920 - 1926

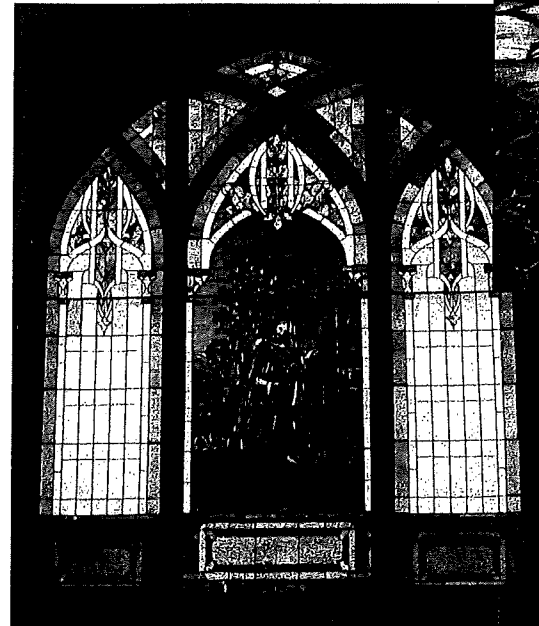
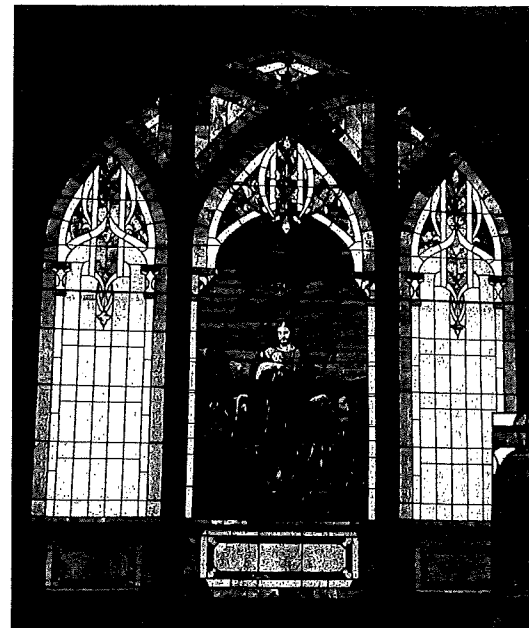
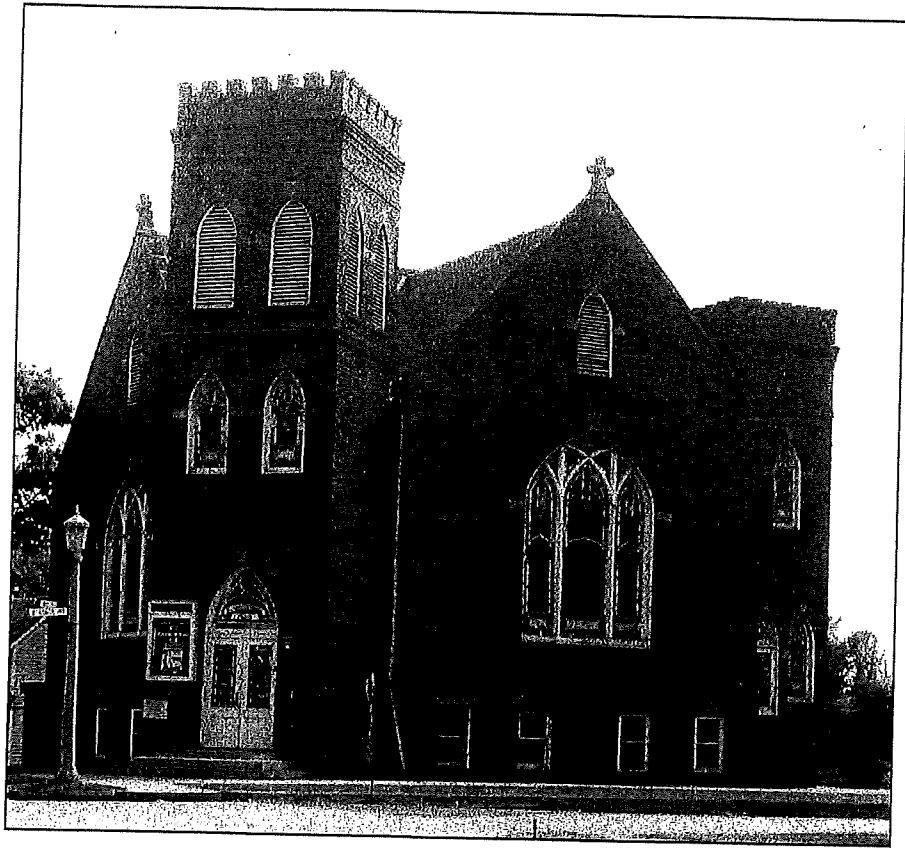
When Rev. Ursin resigned, the congregation was without a pastor for about a year. Services were held at least once a month by visiting pastors, but in 1920 Rev. E.B. Swenson was called to be pastor. He served for six years for a salary of \$800.00 a year, and it was at this time that many changes occurred. The men and women who had sat on separate sides began to sit together, and services now were conducted in about half Norwegian and half English. Soon it was Norwegian only once a month, and finally because all the youth were speaking English, that became the language that prevailed. The yearly income of the First Norwegian Evangelical in 1920 was \$2,728.59, and the expenses were \$2,627.16.

In 1921 Rev. Swenson changed the format of the Luther League meetings considerably. They met at the church instead of in the homes, devotional meetings were changed to Bible studies and less adults and more youth began to attend. Rev. Swenson spoke to the youth at each of their meetings because the aim of the Luther League has always been "to awaken and nourish the spiritual life of youth."

That year the Norwegian Lutheran Mission Society was formed. They met the first Sunday of each month, and the ladies sold coffee and sandwiches to adults for 10¢ and to youth for 5¢. The distinguishing factor was confirmation. After that, each youth was considered an adult! This group supported foreign missions, another strong interest of the Lutheran Church.

On January 26, 1922, this small but brave congregation had to watch their church, valued at \$62,000.00, go up in flames. An overheated furnace was the cause. For the second time, the faith of these early Christians was put to a test, but like the pioneers before them they made plans for rebuilding almost before the coals were cold.

By June 22, they were ready to lay the cornerstone for their third church. The construction progressed rapidly and was completed that year for a sum of \$33,000.00. It was a beautiful red brick building with a seating capacity of 325. The stained glass windows installed at the same time were inspirational and beautiful.



One of the major requests of the ladies for their new church was a pipe organ. This the Ladies Aids and the youth contributed to and it was purchased and installed. Throughout all the years to follow it was a vibrant part of this church's worship services. There were now 98 families and 475 souls in this congregation.



Rev. B.B. Ostrom
1927 - 1946

Rev. Ostrom, who was installed on New Year's Day, 1927, and stayed until 1946, continued part-time English and part-time Norwegian services until 1941 when it was discontinued.

When the church celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1934, the membership was 340, representing 97 families. Former ministers participated, and the Rev. L.W. Boe, President of St. Olaf College, was the special speaker.

Rev. Ostrom served for nineteen years and although he was very strict, as those who tried to rearrange the chancel for programs learned, he was loved by his congregation for his spiritual leadership. On the 60th anniversary in 1944, he was lauded by the parishioners: "We feel a hearty thank-you should be extended to our pastor, Rev. B.B. Ostrom. He has struggled along with us all these years, instructed our children, shared our joys, comforted us in time of sorrow, and visited our sick. Surely we owe him a very sincere thank-you." No doubt this was true for all the pastors who served First Norwegian Evangelical Church, but perhaps his many years with them brought for this this tribute.

The Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation was also active these years. They were a Bible Study group of young girls. They, as well as the young men, were interested in worshipping with song as well as words, and choirs were formed early. Clara Falk (Viitanen) who had been pumping the organ since she was about fourteen, now played the new pipe organ and continued to do this for about twenty years. She also sang in the choir that met at the Bjugstad's. Olaus Bjugstad drove a bob sled in the winter and came to town to pick up the eager musicians, eight or ten of them. Many landed in the snow drifts on the way to the farm, but once there they practiced diligently until Mrs. Bjugstad announced lunch. They hungrily devoured sandwiches, cake, hot cocoa or coffee.

After the church burned in 1922, before the new one was ready, the Ladies Aid met in some of the homes: Rockman's, Anderson's, and Falk's in particular. The ladies served suppers for 25¢, which usually included a hot dish, rolls, pickles, cake and coffee. When the Ladies Aid met at the homes, it meant the young girls had to help their mothers to clean. The house had to be spotless. Mrs. Emil Tharaldson said, "My mother insisted every inch of the house be scrubbed, upstairs and down, even if no one ever went upstairs."

During these years when the pastor was paid so little, he and his family had a difficult time. The congregation helped them out with produce from their farms and also with special offerings at Easter and at Christmas. Occasionally the organist would be remembered with a special offering too.

Although there were trustees from the beginning, the earliest mention of a deacon was in 1922. Two men were elected as deacons: Christ Hansing and N.S. Gyland, and interestingly, three women as deaconesses: Mrs. N.O. Strand, Mrs. E. Nelson and Mrs. Anton Englelien. The Lutherans were recognizing their finest resource, the minds of their women!

In 1923, in addition to paying the minister \$800.00, the congregation spent \$200.00 on Religious School, \$29.45 on Sunday School, \$129.76 for wood and coal and \$283.68 for missions. Their priorities were evident. Even though they were heavily burdened with the debt for their new building, they knew that the great commitment must go on.

Up to the time of Rev. Ostrom, the common chalice was used for communion, but during the years he served, the individual glasses were introduced and used from that time on. Kneeling at the altar was the accepted procedure until very recent years when communion has been served to participants standing before the chancel.

Throughout the years the Ladies Aid has been instrumental in helping to pay local church debts, in purchasing needed supplies for the altar, the chancel, the kitchen, the young people's groups, and the robes for the choir. They helped to build three churches, and with the cooperation of Bethany and Bethel Aids, the three bought the carpeting for the chancel and the auditorium.

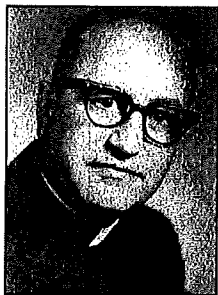
In 1928, the members of First Norwegian Evangelical Church were proud to see one of the sons, Edward Nordby, go into the ministry. He was a parish pastor from 1928 to 1965 and served congregations at Walseth, Bang, New England, and Portland—all in North Dakota.

By 1930, two choirs were active: the one conducted by Olaus Bjugstad and a young girls' choir conducted by Clara Falk (Viitanen). Music has always been an extra blessing at this church.

These were hard years for the church, especially, with its indebtedness. When Rev. Ostrom in 1934 pointed out to his congregation that the rent due on the parsonage had not been paid for two years, individual contributors rescued the situation for the time. Often throughout the one hundred years, the parishioners have had to make special contributions for various causes, but with God's help, they have met the challenges as difficult as they often seemed at the time.

Now the Ladies Aid was very active too, and in 1940 four circles were formed: Golden, Faith, Sunshine, and Afrida. They decorated both the upstairs and the downstairs and started to make extra contributions to such groups as Pacific Lutheran College, Homme Home Appeal, Red Cross, March of Dimes, Bethany Indian Mission, and the Cancer Drive.

On March 31, 1946, Rev. P.E. VanTassel was installed by Dr. T.F. Gullickson of Luther Seminary. He served for ten years and was paid a salary of \$2,400. Because Cameron had separated from Barron on October 23, 1945, he now had only two congregations: Poskin and Barron. Before his arrival however, the congregation had voted to sell the old parsonage for \$3,000 and to build a new one, for which they budgeted \$5,500. It was not ready when he and his family arrived, but it was completed in 1947; and on Palm Sunday, March 21, 1948, the new parsonage was dedicated.



Rev. P.E. VanTassel
1946 - 1955

Over the years the pastor of First Lutheran had many parsonages, including one on Division Avenue, but most of them in the proximity of the present church. Interesting financial figures show that one parsonage was sold for \$2,500. Later it burned down and the new owners collected \$4,500. Still later First Lutheran bought the lot again for \$5,000. Vision can not always be clear.



On November 18, 1946, the name of the church was changed to its present name, the First Lutheran Church of Barron. Numbers were increasing, and it was evident that the present building was not adequate for Sunday School rooms. This was the main thrust during Rev. VanTassel's ministry - the church needed to grow, and First Lutheran needed to raise money to do this. The Ladies Aids responded quickly with something they were experts on - creating good Norwegian food! In 1947 they started the Smorgasbords which became famous for hundreds of miles and were written up in the St. Paul and Minneapolis papers.

The women put on their Norwegian costumes and laid out their Smorgasbord for as many as a thousand people sometimes in the years from 1947 to 1963. They were bright, happy affairs with everyone exclaiming over the bountiful foods and some truly Norwegian ones: primost, flat brod, ris grot, sot suppe, rulla pulsa, lefse, rommegrot, and kottbullar!

Esther Berger (Mrs. Otis) brought her recipe for lefse and taught the ladies to make them by the thousands: Boil 10 pounds of potatoes with 3 heaping teaspoons of salt. Rice the potatoes. Add while still hot 1/4 c. sugar, 1/3 c. heavy cream, 1/3 stick butter, 1/2 cup lard, and 2 tsp salt. Mash well. Allow to cool overnight. Rice again. Add five to six cups of flour until the right consistency. Roll out thin as possible and bake on hot stove. Throughout those years the price of the smorgasbord only varied from \$1.25 to \$1.50. Through today's eyes, this must have been the greatest bargain since the world began.

In 1952, the yearly budget of First Lutheran was \$10,000. The congregation had a \$5,400 indebtedness of the parsonage. But they knew the educational wing needed to be built, and they also knew the heating and electrical systems were inadequate. In 1954 they made a \$5,000 loan from the Bank of Barron. The Smorgasbords were hard work for the ladies, but they were earning money to help the local church, foreign missions, and various other concerns. So, as they worked together, they were happy. As Otis Berger, one of the chairmen, stated so well: "One of the greatest experiences in the life of a Christian is that of helping to build a church. To extend the services of his church to the community is to widen his own horizon of a Christian living and fellowship. Until we have made an investment in the building of a church, we are more or less accepting the far-sighted charity of others every time we or our children use a church."

In 1955, \$90,430 was budgeted for the Sunday School addition. The council bought property west of the church and borrowed \$65,000 from the Lutheran Brotherhood. The congregation had taken the plunge. They had the faith and vision necessary to do this. And God's love continued to lead them.



The cornerstone of the educational building was laid in 1955, and work was started in earnest. Sometimes this was with difficulty because Rev. VanTassel resigned on October 10 and delivered his farewell sermon on Christmas Day, 1955. Then 1,015 souls were members of First Lutheran. When Rev. VanTassel left, there was an active Luther League, Brotherhood, and Ladies Aid that gave him and his family a farewell party.

And with the whole congregation aiding in reaching their goals, the new educational building was completed and dedicated on September 23, 1956. The cost of the addition was \$102,000, but the growth in Christian education was immeasurable. "Suffer the little children to come to me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." This the congregation could recite proudly and did imprint it on the new building. Rev. VanTassel had not only urged the expansion of room, but he saw a need for two services on Sunday and encouraged the members to hire student pastors to assist.



Rev. E.J. Nessel
1956 - 1957

Rev. E.J. Nessel was pastor during the completion of the building program, and in spite of ill health, he led the congregation well and helped them understand they were lucky the problem was lack of room rather than too much.

God continued to lead the members of First Lutheran, and their vision and His Word worked in their hearts. Time, effort, and sacrifice went in to the venture, but God's love helped the congregation to feel confident of their decision to incur this indebtedness as they sang, "How shall the young secure their hearts and guard their lives from sin?" They heard the answer in the words: "Thy word the choicest rules imparts to keep the conscience clean."

By January 27, 1957, Pastor Nesset's health did not allow him to continue, and several student pastors from the seminary assisted with the services until Rev. Carmen Thronson accepted the call. He was installed by Dr. Austinson on August 11, 1957. There were 1,447 souls.



Rev C.P. Thronson
1957 - 1970

Just previous to his installation, Lorraine Haugen was commissioned at First Lutheran by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. She had accepted a call to serve as a foreign missionary in the Sudan Mission Field. The commissioner was Dr. Rolf Syrdal, Executive Secretary, and the liturgist was the Rev. Carmen Thronson. Lorraine, daughter of this congregation, served in the Cameroun in Africa. She exemplifies with her life II Corinthians 5:15: "And He died for all, that they should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again."



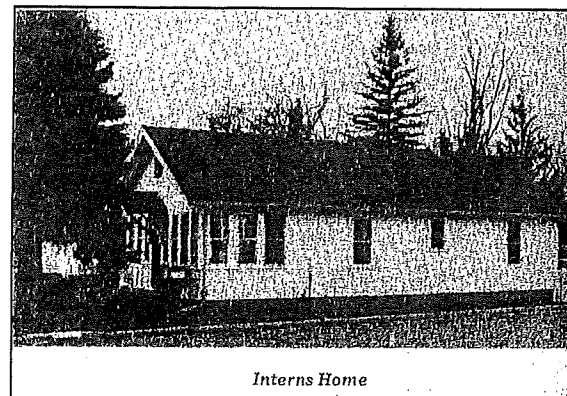
Lorraine Haugen, Missionary

Through those difficult years the Ladies Aid continued to be a strong spoke in the wheel that kept First Lutheran moving forward. They sponsored a Girl Scout troop of brownies, purchased a nine-dozen set of good china for the dining room, packed Christmas boxes for the aged and shut-ins, purchased new curtains for the kitchen and dining room, served cafeteria suppers and held bazaars, painted the church a pale green in the interior, furnished flowers for the altar vases, held suppers for 60¢, sold 200 cookbooks for \$1.00 each and soon there were five circles instead of four.

First Lutheran was an active, busy church, but it was to become even more so under the dynamic leadership of Rev. Carmen Thronson, who stayed with this congregation for thirteen years. His zeal and enthusiasm led to increased activity in every phase of the church: nine circles growing out of Ladies Aid, three outstanding choirs, Luther League, Brotherhood, a good parish newspaper "The First Lutheran", a full-time secretary, the use of interns Jerome Lee and Richard Consear, an Altar Guild, a library, active participation in World Day of Prayer, a Scout troop, Sunday School rooms bursting at the seams, Every Member Visitation, a strong evangelism program, living concern for the sick, the shut-ins and the elderly.

With boundless energy, Rev. Thronson led the congregation forward. In 1958 additional parking lot land was purchased for \$9,000. This increased the indebtedness to \$23,000, but the congregation remained firm in their belief that they were doing God's will. Interns added much to the life of the church. Welcoming committees were found at each of the Sunday services. A head usher was appointed and ushers were selected for each month. Bible Camp attendance was emphasized and many youth attended each summer.

By 1960 First Lutheran was now officially part of the American Lutheran Church. The baptized membership was 1,219 and the Poskin church was being invited to join First Lutheran. Pastor Thronson proclaimed 1960 as "a wonderful year". The congregation had raised \$9,691.27 for the synodical budget and had paid \$7,080 on their debts. The total receipts were \$35,559.04. The next year Poskin did join the membership of First Lutheran.



Interns Home

By 1962 the house south of the church had been purchased for the use of interns and their families, and a full-time parish secretary was hired. The church service hours were changed to 8:30 and 10:00 and the Lutheran Standard was ordered for every home. The membership now totaled 1,346 baptized members.

By 1963 there were 1,397 baptized members. In 1964 the pastor's salary was raised slightly to \$8,434 and the Salsbury property was purchased for \$9,200.00. However pledges, memorals and generous contributions by the members brought the indebtedness by year's end to an unbelievable low of \$3,600.

It was also the year of the 80th anniversary. This was celebrated on July 12 with much joy and thanksgiving. As Rev. Thronson stated so beautifully: "A congregation observing an 80th anniversary owes much to the fathers who gave such a rich heritage. They gave willingly because they loved the Lord. The members of First Lutheran now and always must behold the fields to be cultivated and give likewise so those who follow will also owe much."



Rev. Kenneth A. Jensen
1966 - 1969

For a period of time the congregation thought it was wise to call an assistant pastor. In 1966 and 1967 a very fine pastor, Rev. Kenneth Jensen, served in this capacity. He was installed by Dr. Theodore Ohlrogge. Rev. Jensen was an excellent youth leader and a fine speaker.

Even though the indebtedness again was \$8,130.30, the congregation recognized that the church needed some remodeling, especially in the kitchen and the Old Fellowship Hall. This was undertaken in 1970 along with roof repairs. A leaking roof was always one of the headaches that caused much expense and extensive redecorating from time to time.

After Pastor Thronson retired, Rev. Richard Kelling served First Lutheran from January 1971 to July 11 when Rev. Alf Hjemboe was installed by Dr. Theodore Ohlrogge. Rev. Alf Hjemboe quietly but capably guided, taught and inspired this congregation with his strong faith and steady assurance of God's love. He taught this congregation to love each other, to serve, and to do God's will.



Pastor Alf W. Hjemboe
1971 - 1983

His confirmation classes were taught thoroughly and well. The shut-ins and those hospitalized were been visited. The unchurched were invited to come to First Lutheran. The Mininsterial Association brought a closer relationship between the other churches in the community.

Refugee families have found a welcome here. In 1975 the Lao Vang family and their three children came under First Lutheran sponsorship. A fourth child was born while they were here. First Lutheran loved and cared for them until the family moved to Des Moines, Iowa.

Five years later, First Lutheran sponsored the Xai Yang family and their four children for two years until they moved to Manitowoc, WI. Both of these families were Hmongs from Laos, refugees of the war. "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethern, you did it to me." Matthew 25:40.

Another project First Lutheran shared with other churches in town was the establishing of a Coffee House above City Hall. Bruce Nelson, an intern was especially effective in working with the youth, along with Father Dan Dahlberg from the Catholic Church. Youth of many faiths came to fellowship together. The purpose was to be an outreach ministry by the Senior Luther League to the young people of the community.

During Pastor Hjemboe's leadership, the congregation adopted a new constitution and by-laws which included a revised plan for the local church government. Now the Church Council was increased to eighteen members with its usual officers. Ten standing committees were formed, and each member was assigned to one of the committees. A very important step in the life of the church was a much more extensive use of lay people. Sometimes eighty or more served on the various committees, and lay people were used regularly as assistants with such things as baptism, communion, and the reading of the lessons.

In 1971 work was completed on remodeling of the lower level of the church. This included a new heating plant, an air-circulating system, a complete renovation of the kitchen, and bright floor covering, which gave the dining room the name "The Red Carpet Room" for awhile.

To meet the needs of the entire congregation, a Couples group, a Singles organization, and a combination of the two called "Sets and Singles" were organized and met at various times for fellowship together. In 1972 the Tuesday morning men's Bible Study met at 7:00am. It began as a Scout project which Mark Zachary conducted for several weeks. The name of the parish paper was also changed to Focus at First. And a tenth Women's Circle, Lorraine, was also added in 1975.

The Hawkinson Fund was established to support mission congregations, give assistance to seminary students and to aid special projects in the areas of mission and evangelism. A strong intern program was also maintained by Pastor Hjemboe with the following making great contributions to First Lutheran: Bruce Nelson, Al Moen, Bob Preuss, Wayne Shelksohn, Dennis Reinhart, Sharon Betcher, Scott Tunseth and Chet Prashad.

In 1976 the Congregation debated as, as they had many times previously, the possibility of building a new church. Those who loved the present structure and felt it should be retained were persuasive, and the congregation voted to re-design the chancel and to install a new 23-rank Cassavant Organ. The entire sanctuary and chancel were re-wired, giving new and beautiful lighting to the focus area of the church. This brought indebtedness again, but the congregation worked hard, gave willingly, and prayed earnestly that all of this was to the glory of God.

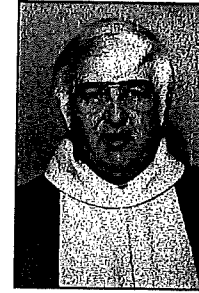
But after all the years of repairing, remodeling, expanding, and building, six years later in 1983 First Lutheran was finally debt free. The last mortgage had been paid, the last loan was covered, the last interest payment was made. It was indeed a time to remember and to rejoice, to praise God for His love. But since it was also a time to renew, First Lutheran once again had the vision to look to the future, to access the need for a new narthex, a new entrance to the church that will assure every person an easy access to the building.

After several congregational meetings and a great deal of study and planning by the Property and Building Committees, ground was broken on July 3, 1983, for a 42 by 91-foot addition to First Lutheran. This much needed and useful structure included a large narthex, ramps to both the sanctuary and the lower level, three new church offices, meeting room with a kitchenette, washrooms that are designed to accommodate handicapped persons, and a full basement for recreation and storage. The Church Library was moved from the educational wing to this area.

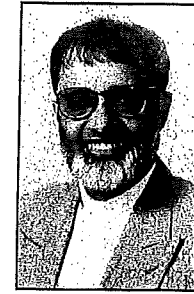


The following are highlights of the last 25 years of our congregation:

1985: Members 1344, Sunday School 339; Bible School made 96 Health Kits; LWR Clothing Drive; Food for Barron Emergency Food Pantry; Installation of new carpeting in downstairs hallway and fellowship hall. Tinted glass for west doors; New entrance sign placed on NW corner of new addition.



Pastor James Sjolie
1984 - 1993



Pastor Chaitram Prashad
1984 - 1993

- 1986: Members: 1362, Sunday School: 330; Radio Ministry; Jail Ministry; Altar Guild purchased new linens for the altar; Library catalogued 1195 books; Redesign and painting of the parking lots; Installation of new thermo glass windows and floor at the South entrance; Procurment of video equipment; Start of the "Good Samaritan Fund"
- 1987: Members: 1411; Sunday School: 227; W/ELCA sold cookbooks; Outreach committee formed; 72 choir members; 8th grade Confirmation changed to the fall; Prayer Chain organized; New door and frame for main entrance; LaSalle parsonage had 2nd floor bathroom remodeled.
- 1988: Members: 1439, Sunday School: 206; Bible School (VBS) made 73 health kits; Paid position of Director of Education was begun; Cards and goodies sent to college students; Christmas boxes sent; Portland parsonage was upscaled; Pastor Prashad and family moved into Portland parsonage; Mill St. parsonage was renovated and rented to Monty Shearer.
- 1989: Members: 1461, Sunday School: 212; Pew padding put on pews; 225 quilts made by women; 2 new microphones for the pulpit and lecturn were procured; Two microphones were placed on the walls outside of the congregation for the radio broadcast; VBS made 77 health kits; 50 choir members.
- 1990: Members: 1310, Sunday School: 228; Chairs purchased for balcony; Improvements on LaSalle and Portland parsonages; New quartz lights installed on south and west sides of church parking lots; Pew Bibles purchased; VBS made 45 health kits.



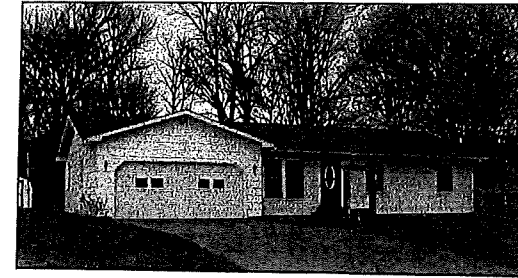
Bruce Degerman, Radio Broadcast

- 1991: Members: 1348, Sunday School 304; New copy machine for secretary's office; Two phones for pastors offices; Over 50 choir members; First communion for 5th graders; "Young Couples Club" organized; Turkey dinner started; Stained glass windows on north side of ramp.
- 1992: Members 1320, Sunday School: 220; New sound system installed; 1/2 of the church pews refinished; Repair of 50 year old stained glass windows; "Gift from the Heart" organized; Six circles; Pew Bibles purchased; Planning of addition and remodeling with a \$864,565.00 budget; Song Service - Jubilee.
- 1993: Members: 1363, Sunday School: 197; Puppet ministry; Finished the pew refinishing project.



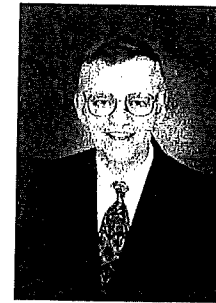
Rev Rodney Bringen
1994 - 1995

- 1994: Members 1415; Christmas Dinner begun; Planning for renovations and improvements of our church building; Architect was hired.
- 1995: Members: 1429, Sunday School 170; Remodeled kitchen with new cupboards, coffee maker, dishwasher, stove, refrigerator; Third grade made trip to Wood Carving Museum in Shell Lake; Youth made lefse; W/ELCA 12 serving groups; Sanctuary carpet installed.



Edgewood Parsonage

- 1996: Members 1427, Sunday School: 151; Norman Anderson left a lot and home to our congregation in his will. The lots was sold and the home became our second parsonage, now called the "Edgewood Parsonage". Redecorating of the Edgewood parsonage began; Wine and grape juice served at communion; Lighting over tained glass windows, entrance on Mill street was added; New windows in the education wing; New exit on the southwest corner of Luther Hall basement; New carpet installed in the Education Wing; Air Conditioning added to the Sanctuary; Nursery remodeled; Repaving of the parking lot; "Disaster Canteen."



Pastor Bruce Beyer
1997 - Present



Pastor Jeffrey Schlesinger
1998 - 2003

1997:

- Members: 1425, Sunday School: 157; Remodeled LaSalle Parsonage; Sold Portland Ave parsonage; Purchased "With One Voice"; Purchased Clavinova.
- 1998: Members 1439, Sunday School 156; Habitat for Humanity; Updating computer system; Serving coffee between services during summer months; Protecting our children and youth from sexual abuse; Free standing altar; Limit 30 people in balcony; "FLYS" First Lutheran Youth Singers, New phone system for church offices, Flat roof areas replaced.

- 1999: Members 1365; The confirmation ministry became a 6-8th grade program in the fall.
- 1998: Members: 1329; Policy for "Protecting children and youth"; Welcome baskets; "SWAT" (Students with a testimony) team; Storage shed installed on Edgewood parsonage property; Improvements in Edgewood parsonage; Sided garage on church property; Put metal shield on west entrance lower step to protect from snow plow; Carpeted west entrance to church; Painted east entrance steps; Doors and shelves installed in storage room; Painted several rooms in church; "Children's choir; Circles assisted pastors with Holy Communion at Nursing Homes and Maplecroft.
- 1999: Members: 1295; Global Health Ministries; Parking lot repaired.
- 2000: Members: 1297; Sold youth house on Mill St.; Improvements on Edgewood property; Tuck pointing; chimney lowered 7 ft, brick problems repaired; "Meal from the Heart" started; Telephone ministry begun; SWYG (Second Wednesday Youth Group) begun for middle school age children.
- 2001: Members 1267, Sunday School: 150; Tuck pointing completed and painting wood trim on Bell Tower; Pictures in attic displayed in church; Recaulked windows; New Roof; Boiler system installed; A fire response plan and tornado response plan put in place.
- 2004: Members 1269, Sunday School: 176; Protective glass for stained glass window on west side of Luther Hall installed. Conversion of the pneumatic controlled thermostats to electronic controls.



Pastor Lisa Shank
2005 - Present

- 2005: Members: 1250; Improvements to Edgewood parsonage and lot and the LaSalle parsonage; New sign on the east side of church; Friendship Circle joined the Lorraine Circle; New refrigerator to store flowers.
- 2006: Members: 1236; Improvements to Sacristy; LaSalle parsonage, Edgewood parsonage and church; Three new computers for offices; Grand Piano; New carpet in celebration room; Addition of a Website;

- Trinity Circle joined Lorraine Circle and changed their name to the Harmony Circle.
- 2007: Members 1270; Vision Team enacted; Two new fans in Sanctuary; Parking lot improvements; Windows in bell tower were rebuilt and covered with protective glass; Improvements to LaSalle and Edgewood parsonages; Repair the main circulating pump in the heating system; Remodeling finished in the Sacristy; Addition of a new Lighted Sign on the west side; SHYG Senior High Youth Group.
- 2008: Members 1269; Parish Fellowship Committee; New Circle called "Circle of Friends", which brings us to 4 circles now; BeFriends group implemented; "Blood Pressure checks begun; Remodeled Edgewood parsonage kitchen; Repair LaSalle parsonage; Backside of bell tower was tuck pointed; Installation of new sound board.
- 2009: Celebrating our 125th anniversary!

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Reflections
By Arnold Ellison

One hundred and twenty-five years ago
A church building and congregation was in the k now.
The Barron Norwegian Lutheran, indeed
Was to fill the need.
Two pioneer Lutheran pastors, in 1869,
Walked through the wilderness, dense with pine.
Small settlements of people they did find,
And a belief in God was needed for the mind.
So, these pioneer pastors planted the seed
To fulfill the urgent need.
Seeds of salvation planted in the past,
Must be nurtured, or do not last.
Thanks to former pastors and former people of many talents
Barron First Lutheran has a solid faith foundation.
It is designed from the Bible for a Christian congregation.
So, as Barron First Luthearn celebrates in exultation
We pass this heritage to the next Generation!

READ, BELIEVE, LIVE THE BIBLE!



As we celebrate the 125th anniversary of First Lutheran Church, we give thanks that God has blessed its life and ministry in so many ways. From generation to generation God has been present to inspire us as we worshipped, studied the scriptures, and reached out in loving service to those who needed us.

In gratitude we will continue in the covenant God made with us in Holy Baptism. As we boldly follow Jesus into the future, we will strive to live in the spirit of our congregation's mission statement:

Being called by God through Baptism and strengthened by Word and Sacrament Of our Lord's Table, God guides First Lutheran Church To teach, preach, live, and spread the Word of God.

