

Fiftieth Anniversary

(1901-1951)



SUNDAY, MAY 25th, 1952

Scandia Lutheran Church
Armena, Alberta

Preface

Psalm 100.

With hearts full of gratitude to God we celebrate at this time the fiftieth anniversary of our congregation. "For Jehovah is good: his loving kindness endureth forever and His faithfulness unto all generations." God has promised that He is faithful, that His promise is sure and unchanging unto all generations. As we look back upon God's dealings with the early settlers, we see His faithfulness. We are indebted to these pioneers who, with courage and loyalty, though facing hardships, pressed onward and forward to establish our church.

In our generation with its great developments and changes, we trust with thankful hearts on God's faithfulness. What the future generation may be called upon to face, we do not know. God's faithfulness is also their portion and promise.

May the Christians in our congregation be awake, on fire for Him. These are harvest days for Jesus. He is coming soon. Let us be watchful in prayer and constant in the use of God's Word. May our Christian fellowship be extended, deepened, inspired, encouraged and made strong in the Lord against the enemies of Christianity.

Historical Background

The first settlers arrived at what is now known as Armena, Alberta, Canada, on May 17, 1894. These were Thore S. Grue and family, Mr. and Mrs. S. T. Grue Sr. and O. Movald. O. Movald's family arrived later the same year.

Wetaskiwin was the nearest town and Post Office at that time.

Reasons for locating in the Armena district were several. The main reason was that there was plenty of land available for settling a colony.

The district was settled from that time on, by immigrants mostly of Norwegian descent, from Minnesota, North and South Dakotas and other states, and sons and daughters of pioneer immigrants who came from Norway to the U.S.A. several years earlier.

With the privileges offered these pioneers, came also responsibilities such as the bulding of Churches, Schools and roads.

The foremost in the minds of these pioneers, was to gather for Christian Worship.

Not having a Pastor in their midst, Rev. Bersvend Anderson of Bardo, Alberta, (the settlers of which also arrived in May of 1894,) was asked to come to Armena to conduct services. This he did faithfully for several years.

Much could be said about the work carried out by Pastor Bersvend Anderson, but space will not permit. In spite of his advanced age, he travelled long distances to visit new settlers in surrounding districts with the Gospel.

The first Lutheran Service was held at the home of Thore S. Grue on March 3rd, 1895. Services were continued to be held in the different homes for a period of about three years.

The first Baptismal service and wedding took place on April 19th, 1896, at E. Froen's home.

The first confirmation service recorded was held at O. Movald's home on November 8th, 1896. Confirmed were Tommy O. Movald and Elise Petrine Christenson (Mrs. O. Sware.)

The first Communion service recorded was on January 3rd, 1897 at Thore Grue's home.

The Thordenskjold school was built in the spring of 1898, and served as a meeting place for the community for several years. Its first Board members were Thore Grue, Chairman and Secretary; O. Movald, Treasurer; and Theo. Hanell. The first Christmas program recorded was held December 26th, 1900, at the Thordenskjold school house.

The first term of school opened on January 17th, 1899, with W. T. Gamell as teacher.

On May 14th, 1898, the congregation was named Scandia which was also adopted three and one half years later when the congregation was organized.

The services were conducted in the new school from May 14th, 1898, up to the time the Church was built in 1904.

SCANDIA LUTHERAN CONGREGATION ORGANIZED

The organizational meeting was held at the Thordenskjold school October 26th, 1901. The following members were present: Thore Grue, John Moe, Ole Movald, H. B. Lomnes, Jacob Lunde, John Broen, G. O. Hendrickson, C. Kelstad and Martin Steen. These with their families were charter members. G. O. Hendrickson was elected president and Martin Steen secretary. A committee was named to draw up a constitution for the congregation. Bersvend Anderson of Beaver Lake was to advise the committee.

"Scandia" was chosen as the name for the congregation.

OUR CHURCH IS BUILT

In April, 1903, a church site was chosen on Section 2, 48-21, beside the old cemetery.

On June 21st, 1904, the building was started. The Church was to be 36 feet long, 28 feet wide and 14 feet high. It was completed in 1905.

In 1908 it was moved to its present site and in 1909 it was lengthened 10 feet and a steeple added.

In 1927 a basement was added.

THE LADIES' AID

The Scandia Ladies' Aid was organized in the year 1900 with the help of their pastor, Rev. Bersvend Anderson. The first meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Jacob Lunde. Mrs. C. K. Kelstad was the first president, Mrs. Jacob Lunde treasurer, and Mrs. John Moe, secretary. The seven charter members were: Mrs. C. Kelstad, Mrs. Jacob Lunde, Mrs. Ole Movold, Mrs. John Moe, Mrs. John Broen, Mrs. Thore Grue and Mrs. Edmund Thompson. Two of the members are still living at the time of writing, namely, Mrs. Thore Grue and Mrs. John Broen.

The activities of the Ladies have been many and varied. In early years full of spinning, carding of wool, knitting and quilt-making brought in good financial returns. Later, yearly sales and bazaars of sewing and fancy work, held yearly, provided necessary funds. Other activities supported were Missions, Pastor's salaries, and in later years Memorials and Broadcasting. Very often when repairs were to be made, kitchen equipment or church furnishings purchased, the ladies helped financially and otherwise.

Life Memberships have been given since 1942 to eleven active members

over sixty years of age. These are Mrs. C. Kelstad, Mrs. Ole Skaret, Mrs. Thore Grue, Mrs. C. Grue, Mrs. K. K. Lyseng, Mrs. H. Hendrickson, Mrs. Bert Lomnes, Mrs. Nils Lyseng, Mrs. Carl Lyseng, Mrs. Edward Lyseng and Mrs. Oscar Grue.

It is hard to measure spiritual values over the years as only eternity will reveal them fully. However, the devotions and spiritual songs and in later years Bible Studies given by various members have been of great blessing. This is shown by the fact that members will take any amount of trouble to get out to monthly aids, even if it means walking, or riding in wagons or hay racks, when roads are impassable for cars.

Much credit is due to the pioneers who by their never failing courage and staunch faith carried on in the face of many difficulties. They laid foundations which have grown into the Womens' Missionary Federation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
—Rev. 2: 10.

SCANDIA CHOIR

It is interesting to know that there was a choir in the community even before there were other organizations. There are no records but pioneers report that choir practice was held in the Thordenskjold school house under the leadership of Thore Grue.

Through the years there has nearly always been a choir and for a number of years a Junior Choir, organized by Bert Lomnes. Various other leaders carried on from time to time. During a period when male singers were few and a choir was not feasible, a Ladies' Chorus took the place of the choir.

Our present choir director is Nels Grue.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

The pioneers of this community recognized the need of instructing the young in God's Word. As early as 1894 the children met at the Thore Grue home for Sunday School and were instructed by him. Later, other homes too were centres for this work. Records for 1906 and 1910 show that the Thordenskjold school was used for this purpose.

Many children have attended our Sunday School. The largest attendance since it began to be held in the church has been about 75. Now, as during pioneer days, Vacation Bible School instruction continues to be stressed. Thank God for these opportunities of sharing His Word. Eternity will reveal the fruits of the efforts of consecrated superintendents and teachers.

Our Sunday School has sent donations to Missions and Lutheran World Action. This year, money was given to the Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute parlor fund and the British and Foreign Bible Society. Testaments are presented to the Confirmands. The Birthday money is sent to Missionary Gerhard Ostrem of Colombia, South America.

LUTHER LEAGUE

November of 1909 marked the organization of a Young People's Society at Scandia. From the time of organization until 1938 the League was known as the Northern Lights Young People's Society. Then in 1938, the name was changed to the Scandia Luther League. For several years after organization the League conducted its regular meetings in the Norwegian language. Throughout the years a number of worthwhile projects have been carried on by the League. Some of these have been: support of the church in regard to fuel and repairs; a library; yearly contributions to Camrose Lutheran College as well as to the International

Luther League; and to the Bible Camps. Exchange programs with neighboring Leagues was also a very popular project of the League a few years ago. Under the guidance of our Pastors and the leadership of the Christian Young People, the Scandia Luther League has taken great steps forward. May it be our prayer on this our fiftieth anniversary that by God's Grace, the Luther League may still continue to go forward and work "to hold and to win young people for Christ."

PRAYER MEETINGS

Throughout the years the prayer meeting with Bible Study has been and continues to be a source of strength and inspiration. During this time of fellowship, many are the petitions that are brought before our Heavenly Father for the salvation of souls, the welfare of our congregation, our community, the church at home and abroad. We pray too as the psalmist, "cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto Thee." —Psalm 143: 8. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." —Ephesians 5: 10, 20.

GIRLS' ORGANIZATIONS

The Sunshine Club was organized at the E. E. Olson home in 1911 for the girls of the Scandia and Fridhem congregation. The annual May 24th picnic with sale of fancy work was an event looked forward to by all. The proceeds were divided equally between the two groups and used for various worthy causes.

On November 19th, 1940, our girls, 16 in number, affiliated with the national organization of the Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation. All the programs are highly inspirational. The money, raised by free-will offerings, is used for various projects of Home and Foreign Missions. Donations were made towards the local hymn book and pew funds, and the mimeograph machine. Recently the girls entertained the mothers at a much enjoyed banquet.

We especially rejoice in the spiritual growth of our L. D. R. May you constantly "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." —2 Peter 3: 18.

The Dorcas Society, a social gathering for the young people, began March 15th, 1918, at the H. C. Hanson home. There was handwork done followed by a devotional period. The money, raised by sales, was used mainly for Foreign Missions.

THE BROTHERHOOD

In the year 1944, under the Direction of Pastor Rude, the men of the congregation were organized into "The Men's Club." Then in 1946, during Pastor R. O. Olson's ministry, the Armena Lutheran Brotherhood was formed, with Oscar Grue as its first president.

The Aim and Purpose of the Brotherhood is mainly to bring men to Christ and Christ to men, and to extend the kingdom of God in the Church, in the home, and in the community.

One of the main objectives of the Brotherhood is to sponsor and promote an aggressive program of Boy's work in our church and community. This they have succeeded in doing very completely by being instrumental in the forming of the First Armena Boy Scout Troop (consisting of Cubs and Scouts) in the summer of 1947. Besides the sponsorship of Boy's work, the Brotherhood also sponsors the Church Bulletin published monthly by our Pastor.

The meetings of the Brotherhood are held once monthly in the various homes of the congregation. All the men of the congregation may be members of this Brotherhood.

BOYS' CLUB AND BOY SCOUTS

Work among the boys began during Pastor Rude's ministry when they gathered at the parsonage for various activities. Later under the Leadership of Lester Lomnes and Pastor Olson, the boys of the congregation were organized into the Boy's Club in 1945. This club held its meetings on Saturdays in Lester Lomnes' workshop where he instructed the boys in various hobbies and crafts including taxidermy and wood-working. In 1947 this Boy's Club was changed to the First Armena Boy Scout Troop with Vernon Lyseng and Robert Young as Scout Masters and Kenneth Knudson and Marville Skaret as Cub Masters. This Scout Troop has had varied activities including summer camps at Miquelon Lake; various "good turns" in the community, and last year one "good turn" was to beautify the church yard. In 1949, The First Armena Troop was represented by five of its scouts at the First Canadian Boy Scout Jamboree in Ottawa.

Boys, God has a place for you, a place that He wants you to fill. May you dedicate your life completely to Him. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." —Col. 3: 1.

OUR PASTORS

We have been blessed in that our pastors through the years have been men of prayer, men of deep consecration to the things of God. The first pastors left organized congregations in the States, to follow their people to Canada and with them experienced the difficulties and hardships of pioneer life in the North West. Records show that calls were accepted on the promise of \$50.00 or \$75.00 a year, but to these men as to our present day pastors, money was not of primary importance. We, today, are sharing in spiritual blessings because pioneers of old were faithful to their God, heeded His call to, "Go ye," and above all, because they gave their lives that the young might be instructed and grow up to be men and women of Christian principles. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," (Prov. 20: 27) became a living fact as these men of God comforted the sorrowing and brought the light of the Gospel into homes and communities.

As has already been mentioned, Pastor Bersvend Anderson of Bardo, Alta., conducted services in this community from 1895 until shortly after the congregation was organized.

Pastor A. E. Hanson of Peterson, Minnesota, called November 12th, 1901, was the first pastor of the Scandia congregation. He also served Norden congregation at Beaver Lake, now known as Bardo, until August 1904, but continued his work in Scandia until October 23rd, 1904. As well as caring for his pastoral duties, he farmed a couple of miles north of the church.

Pastor Frojen, newly ordained, served our congregation from June 1st, 1905, until July 28th, 1906. He homesteaded in the Lake Demay district.

Pastor T. T. Carlson was called August 18th, 1906. From 1911 to 1915 as well as continuing his work here, he served Camrose, New Norway and other places.

Pastor Olaf Ellingson cared for Scandia together with Camrose, New Norway and St. Joseph congregations from March 1916 until his resignation on August 18th, 1923.

Pastor T. J. Oppedahl was here from the spring of 1925 until September 1928 ministering to the same parish.

Pastor N. N. Carlson was called in 1929. On December 12th, 1936, a special meeting was held in Camrose with representatives from Scandia and St. Joseph concerning the dividing of the call, as Camrose needed a full time minister. This separation was made in 1937. Then at a meeting in Scandia, on May 24th, 1937, this congregation, with Bethlehem and St. Joseph, formed a new

call and decided to either build or buy a parsonage in Armena. Pastor Carlson resigned July 18th, 1937.

Pastor Solheim served this parish in 1937 and 1938 in the absence of a regular pastor.

Pastor S. J. Rude was our minister from 1939 to 1945 and the first one to reside in Armena. The Sunday School Teachers' Training Class conducted by him was one of the highlights of these years.

Pastor R. O. Olson, one of our own boys, served from 1945 to May, 1951. He, as all our pastors have, stressed evangelism. The musical ability of Pastor and Mrs. Olson added much to our gatherings. It was during these years that many of our young people found Christ at Bible Camp, as well as at Camrose Week and at home in our own parish.

Pastor J. Rostad from our Canadian Luther Seminary came in June, 1951, and God is blessing his service.

Of all these pastors who have ministered here, only the above three are living.

We pay tribute not only to our pastors but to their wives who with their prayers, encouragement and untiring efforts have assisted in the work.

From Scandia congregation the following are in full time service in the Kingdom: Pastor G. J. Ostrem, 320 Hunter Ave., Joliet, Ill.; Pastor B. Ostrem, Newark, Ill.; Pastor P. Olson, Provost, Alberta; Pastor R. O. Olson, Edmonton, Alberta and Pastor Gerhard Ostrem, Missionary in Columbia, South America. Pastor N. N. Carlson's son, Nels, and Pastor Rude's sons, Milton and Stanley, also are in the ministry.

VISION OF FAITH

Vision of faith, lead on, lead on!
Christmen of past generation
Left us the torch, the triumph song
Hallowed in soul consecration.
Spirit-born light for pilgrim feet,
Lead us today as ages meet,
Singing the song of salvation!

Builders in faith foundations laid—
Hear the memorial bells ringing!
This is the day the Lord hath made;
Let us rejoice and be singing—
Out from the homelands far they came;
Built the church in Jesus' Name,
Blessings to us ever bringing.

Anniversary Program

MORNING WORSHIP SERVICE — 11:00 a.m.

Prelude — Mrs. Lief Nisi
Opening Prayer
Hymn — "Praise to the Lord" (3)
The Collect
Epistle: 1 Peter 3: 15-17
Confession of Faith
Hymn — "The Church's One Foundation" (80)
Announcements
Offering
Choir Anthem — "O Bread of Life"
Sermon — Pastor J. H. Rostad
Hymn — "O Take My Hand Dear Father" (312)
Closing Prayer
Lord's Prayer
Benediction

ANNIVERSARY SERVICE — 2:30 p.m.

Hymn — "Thy Word, O Lord" (84)
Scripture and Prayer — Martin Hendrickson
Scandia Sunday School
Norwegian Solo — Oscar Grue
Greetings — Pastor S. J. Rude
Choir Anthem — "Today There is Ringing"
Greetings — Bennie Anderson
Ladies' Trio — Mrs. G. Lyseng, Mrs. J. Kolisnyk, Mrs. J. Moore
Greetings — Pastor R. O. Olson
Greetings —
Male Quartette — Pastor J. Rostad, V. Lyseng, L. Lomnes, E. Grue
Hymn — "O God Our Help In Ages Past" (142)
Anniversary Thank Offering
Choir Anthem — "Vision Of Christ"
Hymn — "Now Thank We All Our God" (242)
Benediction
Doxology

EVANGELISTIC SERVICE — 8:00 p.m.

Hymn —
Scripture and Prayer — Norman Moe
Choir Anthem — "A Life in God"
Duet — Pastor and Mrs. R. O. Olson
Solo — Bennie Lomnes
Sermon — Pastor Palmer Olson
Quartette — Mrs. Donald Miller, Grace, Verneal and Lillian Grue
Choir Anthem — "Golden Harps"
Doxology
Benediction