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In remembrance of the seventy-fifth anniversary, Manitowoc-Gjerpen-Valders congregations. 1925

Ristad, D. G.

[Decorah, Iowa]: [Luthern Pub. House], 1925

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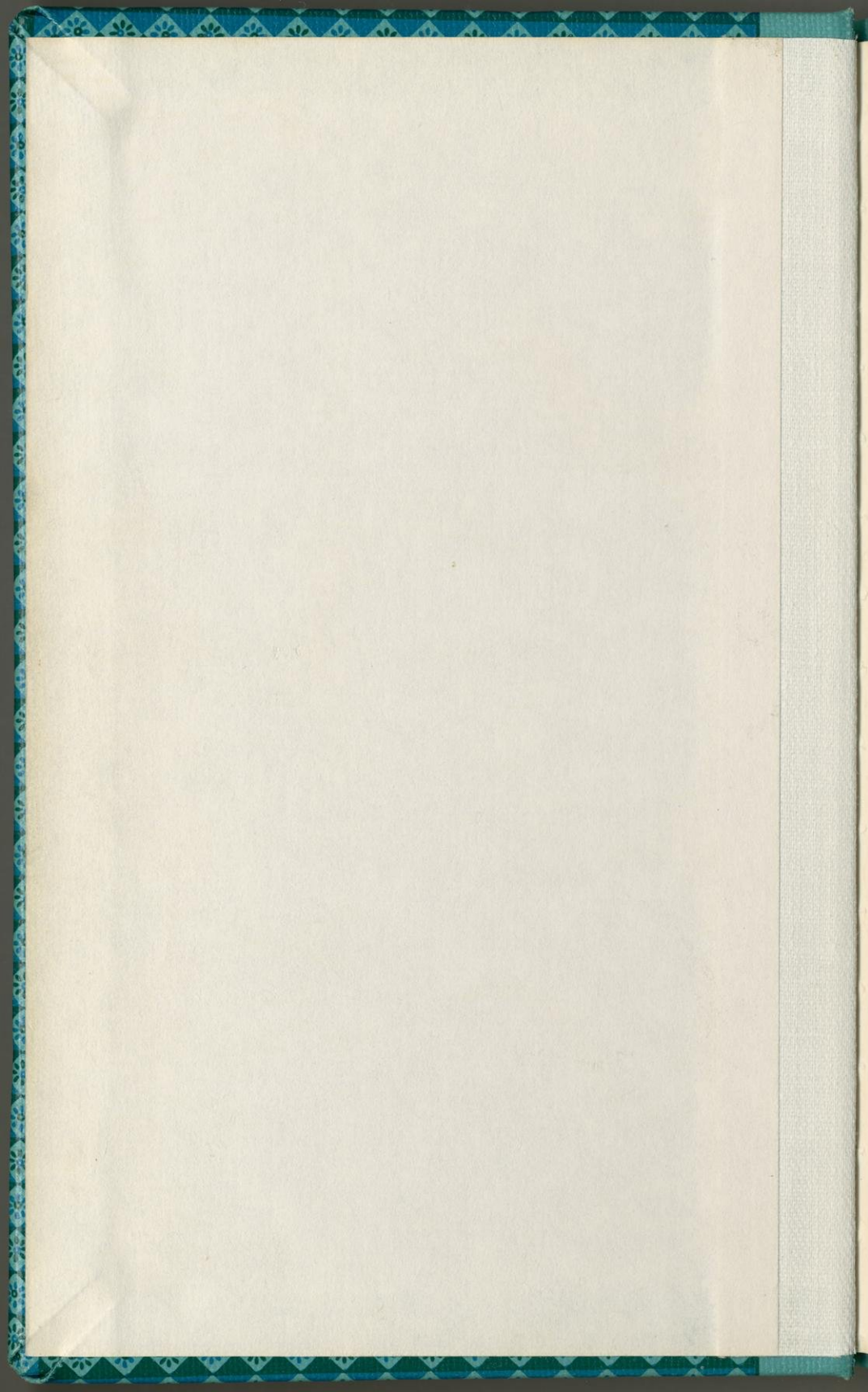
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SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

BY

WALDERS

IN REMEMBRANCE
of the
Seventy-Fifth Anniversary



Manitowoc-Gjerpen-Valders
Congregations

SEPTEMBER 6, 1925



Present Gjerpen Church



Present Valders Church



Gjerpen-Valders Parsonage Today

The Pioneers

*I love this mighty land of God —
My fathers' home and mine, —
Where honest labor proudly trod
In peaceful battle-line.
From Maine and to the Golden Gate
Is flung our free and fair estate
Upon the shining sod.*

*By faith the Pilgrim Fathers fought
To win our nation's right;
The pioneer in silence wrought
The marrow of our might;
He was our fortune's earnest pledge,
The guardian of our heritage,
The foremost in the fight.*

*No better boon in manhood sheer
Ennobled Tyre or Rome,
Than owned the sovereign pioneer
Who made this land our home.
A hero of the living soil
He crowned with honor human toil
Beneath the mundane dome.*

*Unmoved by fear, unspoiled by hoard,
Unbeaten at the goal,
He humbly yielded to the Lord
The homage of his soul.
A comrade of the woods and plain
He tuned his voice to their refrain,
The Maker to extol.*

*His work is done; his day is spent;
He rests among his peers;
A nation is his monument,
His requiem, our cheers.
But still in cottage, town, and mart,
In all we are in mind and heart,
He lives through countless years.*

D. G. RISTAD



First Settlers



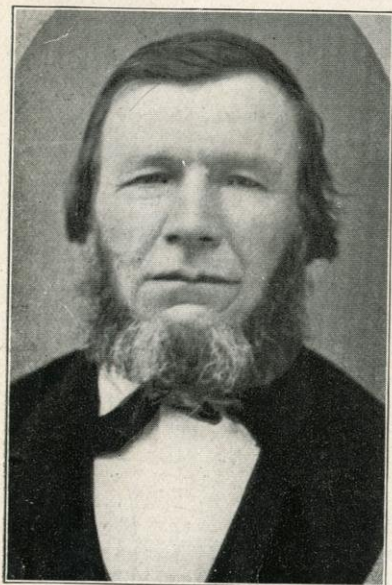
NORWEGIAN immigration trickled like a very small stream into the American colonies during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They are found in New Amsterdam (New York) and in Pennsylvania in considerable numbers. The beginning of Norwegian immigration in modern times is, however, dated from the arrival of the sloop "Restaurationen" which landed in New York in 1825, and was there met by the father of Norwegian immigration, Cleng Peerson, who as the advance agent of the immigrants had prepared a way for an organized settlement of Norwegians on the shores of Lake Ontario in New York state. The commemoration of this event at Minneapolis, June 6-9 this year, in a great centennial celebration is fresh in our memory. These new immigrants created gradually a mighty interest for America among their countrymen in Norway by the letters they wrote, and shipload after shipload of Norwegian men and women arrived in America during the following twenty years. Hardy and fearless pioneers came into Illinois and Wisconsin between 1825 and 1835, and before 1840 Norwegian immigrants found their way through the wilderness, exploring the western shores of Lake Michigan.

Who the first Norwegian man was that set foot on Manitowoc county soil, we do not know. Several may have been here for brief visits between 1843 and 1848. The assurance with which a large movement of immigrants from Norway poured in here from 1847 to 1850 indicates that the place was well and favorably known by Norwegian newcomers. Søren Larsen Ballestad and Gunder Madsen who came to this country in 1843, the latter's brothers, Ole and Hans, who came in 1846 and 1847, respectively, may not have been in the county before 1847. But by that time a considerable number had already arrived and had viewed the land and determined to settle. In 1848 we find that, besides the above mentioned, Anders Aabol, Juul Olsen, Gudmund Gudmundsen, Knud Arnesen Ødegarden, and Ole Olsen, all from Valdres, Norway, had taken land near the present Gjerpen church and had begun to clear it.

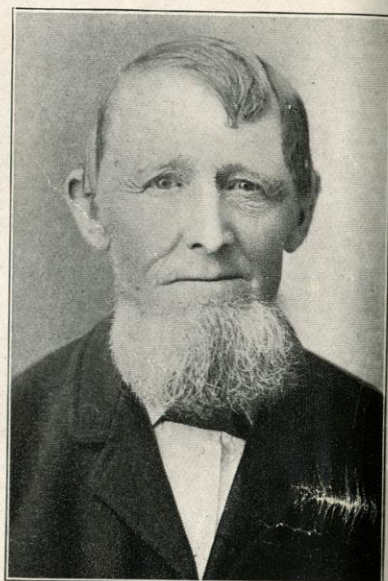
The first settler in the present Vallery vicinity was Ole Evensen and family. Others joined him in this settlement in the spring of 1849. Among them were Knud Oppen, Johannes Knudsen,

Stephen Olsen, Lars Kjær, Nils Kjær, Ulrik Juulsen, Johannes Rebne, Finkel Finkelsen, Gulbrand Sørum, Ole Oppen, Iver O. Berge, Anders Kval, Ole Gigstad, Iver Iversen and Mads Olsen.

It is known that several of these people had come to America previous to the year of their permanent occupation of land in this county. Hjalmar Ruud Holand, in his "History of Norwegian Settlements" (1908), mentions Stephen Olsen Helle as having arrived in 1846, and in the same year having come to Manitowoc county where "he bought several parcels of land." Mr. Holand says further, that Stephen Olsen "is the man who



SØREN BALLESTAD



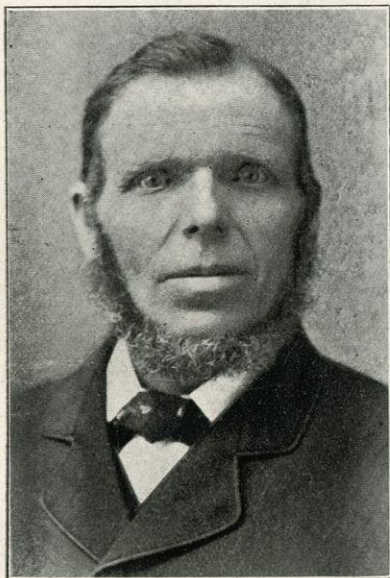
GUNDER MADSEN

Settlers at Gjerpen, 1848. First Trustees

more than any other contributed to further emigration from Valdres (Norway) to America," making two trips, the first in 1848 and the second in 1851, to his home valley in Norway, and on both trips bringing with him a considerable number of emigrants. That the influx of Norwegian settlers into Manitowoc county was most rapid during the latter forties is attested to by the fact that in 1850, 124 men signed the first letter of call extended to the first Norwegian Lutheran pastor to take up permanent pastoral work in Manitowoc and vicinity. In fact, the number of Norwegians in Manitowoc county in 1848 must have been considerably greater than is indicated by the few who in that year made actual entry upon land. The majority of early settlers came from Valdres,

Gjerpen, Bamble, and the towns in the vicinity of Kragerø and the coastline east and west of this city, between Drammen and Christianssand. Western and northern Norway seem not to have been represented to any considerable extent among the early settlers of Manitowoc county.

Outside of the records kept by the pastors and secretaries of the congregations very little is left in writing by the first settlers. There are notations of births and marriages in the old family Bibles, but no diaries or memoranda telling of the more intimate things transpiring in the new settlements during the land-claim-



STEPHEN OLSEN HELLE

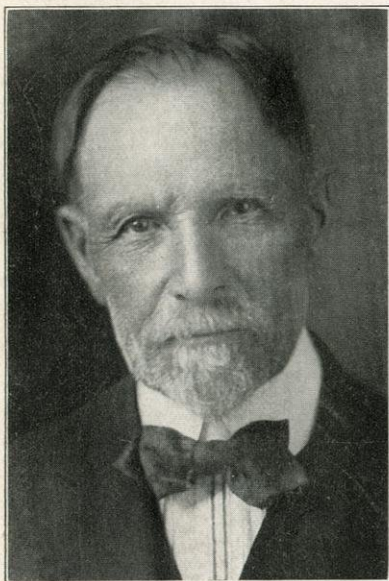
ing and land-clearing period. One reason for this barrenness of literary data is due to the fact that the early settlers did not consider the events of their pioneer days of great importance, except to themselves. Another reason is the lack of men skilled in spinning a story by committing it to writing. A few of the men and women who were born in the settlements during the first years remember incidents from these days told them by the pioneers. Among them is M. G. Madsen, son of Gunder Madsen. He was born in the Gjerpen settlement near the church in 1849. He and Mrs. Even Thompson in Valdres were the two children first baptized in the settlement.

"I remember," says Mr. Madsen, "one Sunday in the old log church. A girl by the name of Anna Madsen (not a relative of

Gunder M.) had a tame deer. Sunday morning it followed her to church. The door had been left open, and after the service had begun, the deer came into the church, jumped over the seats, and walked leisurely around the altar and out through the middle aisle.

"I can not remember of any white settlers having taken land in that vicinity before the 'Norwegians' came, except a man by the name of Monroe, a woodsman and lumberjack, who occupied a shanty in the woods.

"Sometime later an Irishman by the name of Robinson came.



M. G. MADSEN



MRS. EVEN THOMPSON

First children baptized in Gjerpen-Valders, October, 1850

His doings in the settlement during his short stay—about three years—were the subject of much wonder among the Norwegians. The report was that he was a wealthy landowner in Ireland, but had sold and come to America with the then princely fortune of \$16,000. He bought a large tract of land from the government, and set about to open it and do farming on a big scale at once. He built a large two-story house, 60×24 feet. It was built of fine planks in the old 'elevator style.' Fine barns were also built, and a wonderful washmachine of the rocking type, but so large that it stood out in the open and could not be moved. The rockers of the machine rested on two big logs. Each end of the box holding the water for the clothes was balanced by huge boulders.

It may have been needed to take care of the washings of his prospective estate. He planned to build a dam in the river, giving him a sixty-foot head to furnish power for extensive milling and manufacturing operations which he had in mind. The land was covered with heavy timber. He hired the Norwegian settlers, who were experienced woodsmen, to fell trees. The price for felling to be \$6 per acre. All trees to be felled in the same direction. The plan was then to set fire to the whole clearing and burn the entire clearing in one great firing. About a hundred acres were cut down; but the season was wet, and the stuff would not burn. It cost him a lot of money. He cleared enough for a fine orchard and planted apple trees—perhaps the first who in

First Certificate of Baptism, Manitowoc Congregation

"But," says Mr. Madsen, "this bold and forward-looking gentleman only succeeded in spending his money, and had to be given help to return to his native land. The hundred acres of cut down forest became a wonderful blackberry and raspberry wilderness, yielding much fruit to the settlers. The big house was robbed of its windows, sash, and doors. For many years the young folks celebrated the Fourth of July with dances on its spacious floors. Finally it was sold to Stephen Olsen for \$40."

not because his ideas were wrong, but because he fitted into the circumstances like a square peg into a round hole.

The settlers who succeeded did not speculate, but plugged.

The homes were very simple and inexpensive. An ox team and six men built such a house in one day, except for the roof. In these rude homes life was must frugal. The people who lived here, however, are those who cleared the land, broke and seeded the fields. They made the first roads, built the first schoolhouses and churches, and helped to organize an orderly, law-abiding, and dependable community.

The settlers themselves made most of the tools required for their work, such as wagons, sleds, harrows, even threshing machines. It was rude and imperfect, but it did the work. The women did not only do the work in the primitive home, but had a large share in the heavy outdoor work. They were healthy, strong, pious, and capable wives and mothers. A few of those who helped to lay the cornerstone of the house of prosperity in Gjerpen and Valders are living to tell the fascinating story of their experiences, and at ninety and more years old still sound in mind, though their bodies show the marks of the battles with the wilderness.

Necessity is the mother of invention. "Gulbrand Christensen proved that when he found himself with a good crop of wheat, but without a barn in which to thresh it," says Mr. Madsen. "In the winter a pond in his field froze over with clear strong ice. Gulbrand carried his sheaves down on the ice. With a flail he threshed, and with a hand fan he winnowed the wheat and scooped it into bags. One of his sons, Emil Christensen, later became a noted pioneer preacher in South Dakota."

It is customary to "point with pride" to the sons and daughters that have honored the settlement by achievements in new fields. These settlements are no exception. Judges on the bench, professors in universities, many preachers, physicians, and men in other professions were reared in these communities, or descend from settlers who broke ground here. The distinction of mental and spiritual aspiration is worthy of remembrance, and reflects creditably upon the ideals and progressive spirit that characterized the pioneers. But there is, perhaps, no distinction more worthy of recognition than the steady, unassuming, patient, loyal service in community activities in school, church, and in all the duties falling to the average man and woman to perform in the everyday affairs of life, so unflinchingly and cheerfully contributed by the so-called "common people" that maintain the homesteads in country and town.

The early settlers rendered their full share of this service.



Historical Sketch

THE brief historical sketch here following is largely based on addresses and newspaper articles by the Rev. A. O. Alfsen, prepared at the time of the fiftieth jubilee of the congregations held in Valders, Sept. 23, 1900. In the preparation of this sketch the writer has omitted matters that are found in other articles of this jubilee pamphlet, and added information which serves to complete the story told by Rev. Alfsen.

The late Rev. H. A. Stub came in 1848 to America on a call from the congregation established at Muskego in Racine Co., Wisconsin. News of his arrival had reached the Norwegian Lutherans in Manitowoc county. Christian Andersen, later a light-house keeper at Manitowoc, sailed down to Muskego and arranged with Rev. Stub to visit the settlers in Manitowoc. Others may have been interested in this enterprise, and Andersen may have been delegated by his countrymen here to make the trip. The further circumstances in connection with this matter we quote from the record.

In reviewing a meeting held in "Maple Grove" (Gjerpen), Oct. 4, 1854, the fourth anniversary of the founding of the charge by Rev. Stub, Rev. Ottesen brings in the story of how Stub was called to come to Manitowoc county to assist in founding the church work. Together with this we get an authentic story of the trials Rev. Stub and his family had been through. This recital is worthy of greater publicity, as it undoubtedly is typical of what the pioneers, both pastors and the members of his flock, had to go through in those early days. We quote from Rev. Ottesen's record:

"I had recently received a letter from Rev. Stub who had founded the congregations here. As I knew that many would enjoy to hear what he had told me in the letter, I read part of it to them. Rev. Stub tells in the letter that his two youngest children have been down with whooping cough and measles, also his hired man and four hired girls, one after the other as they succeeded one another in coming to help. Rev. Stub then went from house to house to find help to take care of all these, but everywhere he came the same conditions prevailed—all were ill, up to 10 and 12 sick in each family. At last he got a girl at Yorkville; but in five days she left, having been called home by the

illness of her mother. Rev. Stub himself, worn and exposed on his long trip in bad weather, took ill with 'billious fever' and thought he was the victim of cholera. Then his eldest son (the present president emeritus, Dr. H. G. Stub) came down with ague, and shortly afterwards both his wife and daughter were similarly afflicted, and at last also the smaller children. All were sick, and one could not help the other. This, moreover, was the situation in the whole settlement. A neighbor's daughter was the first to be able to come to the parsonage to help, and after a while the plague ceased."



CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN
First Trustee, Manitowoc

In connection with this matter Rev. Ottesen gives the following interesting facts: "The first trustees elected here after the meeting, Oct., 1850, was Christian Andersen from the city of Manitowoc, secretary, Michael Michaelsen, and Gunder Madsen. The first to be instrumental in bringing Rev. Stub here and by the help of God and the Northmen's devotion to the faith of their fathers, gathered into a Lutheran congregation, was Christian Andersen. He went down to Rev. Stub (at Muskego) to have a couple of children baptized by him. At this time a move was on foot (in Manitowoc county) among some to call Paul Andersen from Chicago, and a letter had already been sent with a request that he come and start a congregation here. The congre-

gation would (if he had come) then have left the sound Lutheran position and become a part of the Frankean Synod. But when Rev. Stub came, the majority preferred to be organized in the Lutheran faith of their fathers in the old homeland, and Paul Anderson was notified not to come."

Another document of much historical interest is the first appeal to members of the congregation to subscribe toward the purchase of the forty-acre land now owned by Gjerpen and Valders for parsonage purposes. It reads:

"Dear Friends of Manitowoc congregation (the joint congregations):

"As the greatest number of us, Norwegians in Manitowoc and vicinity, are agreed to have a church built to introduce Christian order in agreement with the Lutheran religion, we, the trustees, have endeavored to ascertain where the most convenient place would be to build a church for the settlement. We have an option on 40 acres land situated on the Winnebago Road belonging to Anders Aabol . . . and the price is \$64. If the money can be raised within a short time, we as trustees are willing to collect each in our district. Each one paying, places his name on a list that the collector may have to show. It is our hope that all who are interested in a Lutheran congregation are willing to pay his share in said parcel of land, each one according to his pleasure or ability."

Fraternally, in behalf of the congregation,

C. ANDERSEN, M. MATHISEN, GUNDER MADSEN.

Dated Dec. 28, 1850.

"The appeal seems to have been written by Johan Christian- sen, at that time employed as a tailor by C. Andersen, now merchant and dealer in clothing, provisions, etc., being now known as John C. Johnsen, ship owner, etc. M. Mathisen died as farmer in Nov., 1853, and willed \$100 to the church, for which song-house, pulpit, and altar have been bought. G. Madsen has a farm near the church," says Rev. Ottesen in further explanation.

Anders Aubol was the next secretary.

In 1849 we find Rev. H. A. Stub on a visit in Manitowoc and vicinity. The first visit led to other visits, and in 1850 a congregation was organized and a call issued to Rev. J. A. Ottesen, a recently graduated theologian from the University of Christiania, Norway.

"The first meeting was held in Manitowoc city in Amund Salvesen's house, October 4, 1850. Here five short paragraphs (constitution) were adopted, and a letter of call issued to the Rev. Jacob Aall Ottesen in Norway. The call is dated on this day and had 113 signatures of adult members.

At a meeting of the congregation held in the home of Ole Larsen Ballestad, June 16, 1851, a more complete constitution and 12 by-laws were adopted and signed by 62 members." (Alfsen.)

Other names were added as new members joined, and the list bears 124 signatures. It is worthy of mention that the great majority of these people personally signed their names to the instrument, though a few used their "mark," not being skilled in the art of writing. None of these people were illiterate, however, every one of them having been trained in the study of the catechism and confirmed in the Church of Norway.

"The meeting June 16 was adjourned to Manitowoc June 17, 1851. At this meeting it was decided to buy 40 acres land, the land to be fenced, and a home for the pastor to be built on it. It was also decided to point off a certain parcel of this land as a graveyard for the Gjerpen and the Valders districts.

"Just at what time the building of the first Gjerpen church was begun is not clear from the records. But the first meeting



REV. H. A. STUB



REV. J. A. OTTESEN

held in it after it was up, took place November 29, 1852. The last report of a meeting held, with Rev. H. A. Stub presiding, is one held February 16, 1852, and the first report signed by Rev. Ottesen is dated in Manitowoc city November 14, 1852.

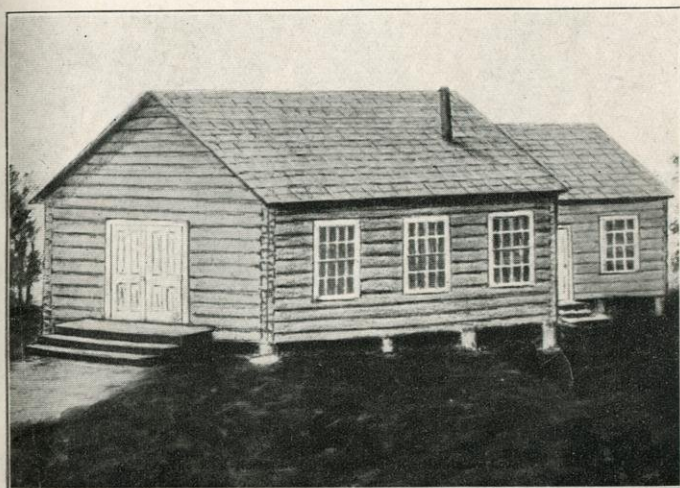
"Until the parsonage could be ready for occupancy, the pastor and his wife (Cathinka Døderlein, a cultured young woman of prominent family in Norway) stayed at the home of Hans Madsen.

"The Gjerpen district was looked upon as the principal congregation in the charge. It received in the beginning one-half of all the services and paid one-half of the current expenses. The other one-half was divided equally between Manitowoc and Valders. At a meeting of the congregations December 27, 1852, definite resolutions were adopted for the building of a parsonage. Shortly afterward the Gjerpen congregation was left in the will of Michael Michaelson \$100 for a 'Song-house' and its equipment.

"Building of a church in the Valders district was begun in March, 1853. Michael Blekkeliien directed the building operations, and by the middle of summer of 1854 the first service was held in the new church, an octagonal structure." (Alfsen.)

Before this time the services were held in private homes or together with the Gjerpen congregation in its new log church. The record kept by the Rev. Ottesen is illuminating as to the difficulties that arose and had to be overcome these first years. It took both tact, patience, and a fine sense of humor on the part of the pastor to iron out all the wrinkles that constantly appeared.

The first joint annual meeting of the congregations, held in the new Valders church, sat June 24, 1856. It must have been at



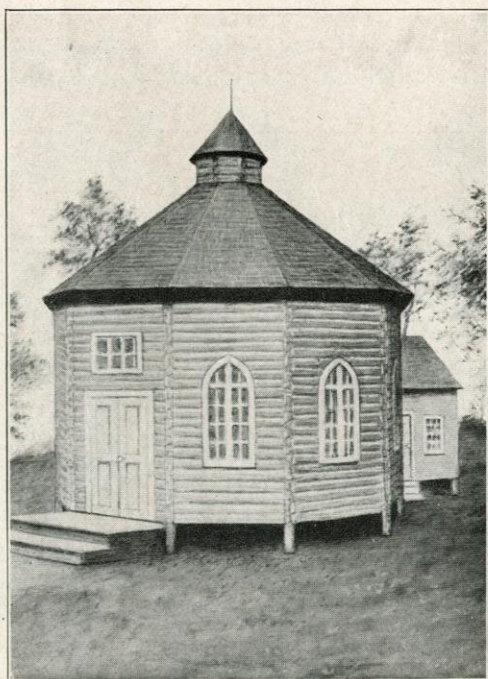
The First Norwegian Lutheran Church in Manitowoc County, Gjerpen

this meeting that plans were made for the formal dedication of the churches at Gjerpen and Valders. The dedication at Gjerpen took place September 26, and at Valders September 27, 1856. Coöperating with the local pastor in the dedicatory exercises were the pastors A. C. Preus from Koshkonong, Dane county; H. A. Preus of Spring Prairie, Columbia county; and O. F. Duus from Waupaca.

"In the city of Manitowoc, services were for some time conducted in the public school building. The building was later bought by the congregation and used for church purposes. On September 4, 1865, it was decided to buy ground and on it erect a new church. In the following year the church was taken into use, and it was dedicated by Rev. Ottesen February 28, 1869." (Alf-

sen.) K. S. Aaberg superintended the building of the church. He also had charge of the building of the new church at Valders, which was completed in 1869. In Gjerpen the cornerstone for a new church was laid in June, 1875, and on September 17, 1876, this new church was dedicated. Peder Knudsen and Knud Nyhagen were the builders. For this church Søren Larsen Ballestad provided as a gift a pipe organ at the cost of between \$600 and \$700.

"The Manitowoc congregation tore down its old church and



First Church in Valders

built a new. The cornerstone for the new church was laid December 10, 1899, and on June 10, 1900, the new church was dedicated. The cost of the church was \$10,000. The Young Ladies' Society raised \$1,200, and bought a pipe organ for the church." (Alfsen.) The architect was Olavus Aslackson.

The Norwegian Lutheran Congregation of Manitowoc and Vicinity, as the charge was named, was incorporated under the laws of the state of Wisconsin August 22, 1859. This incorporation remained in force until 1871, when the congregation in Manitowoc parted from the original call under its own pastor. This

congregation was incorporated under the name The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Manitowoc on May 16, 1871. In 1924 legal name adopted was The First Lutheran Church of Manitowoc.

The country congregations were incorporated November 11, 1880, under the name Gjerpen and Valders Congregation.

"The ministerial acts officially performed during the period of the joint pastorate were 1956 baptisms, 800 confirmants, 323 weddings, and 339 funerals."

"Rev. J. A. Ottesen served the joint congregations from 1852 to May, 1859, when he accepted a call from the Koshkonong congregations, but made occasional visits to the charge until July 21, 1861, when he delivered his farewell sermon. The new pastor who had come from Norway, the Rev. L. M. Biørn, held his first sermon October 6, 1861. In 1871, when the charge was divided, Manitowoc called Rev. Biørn as its pastor, and included in the charge congregations at Gibson and Kewaunee. Gjerpen and Valders remained together and called the Rev. A. O. Alfsen, who was introduced in Gjerpen July 20, 1873, and in Valders July 27 the same year." (Alfsen.)

The old parsonage in Gjerpen has always been the residence of the pastor for the country charge. When Rev. Biørn moved to Manitowoc he built himself a home on 711 N. Ninth street. This became the possession of the congregation upon Rev. Biørn's removal to Zumbrota, Minnesota, in 1879, and has been the pastor's residence ever since. Both the Gjerpen parsonage and the Manitowoc parsonage have been twice remodeled, enlarged, and modernized.

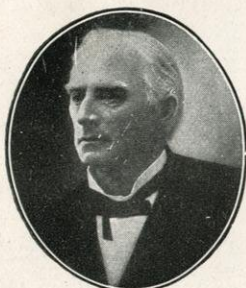
The joint congregations were members of the Norwegian Synod until the days of the great controversy in the eighties. To maintain peace the charge withdrew its membership. Manitowoc and Valders again joined the Synod, but Gjerpen congregation did not again resume formal membership, though they continued to support the Synod denomination as before. In the Manitowoc and the Valders congregations a split came about, causing the duplication of pastors and churches. However, when the Union of the Synod, the United Church, and the Hauge Synod was effected in 1917 all these congregations became members (Valders in 1918) of the united denomination, though the local churches still remain separate units. Remnants of the Gibson congregation have joined a call served by a German Lutheran pastor in that neighborhood, while others in that vicinity and at Kewaunee are served by the pastor of the St. Paul Lutheran Church in Manitowoc, who also serves the seceded Valders congregations.

Toward the close of his address Rev. Alfsen says: "As we now are gathered for this festival (50th jubilee, 1900), we re-

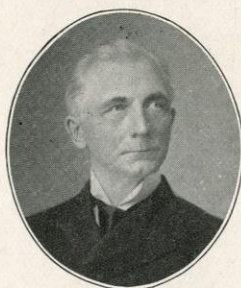
member gratefully what God has done for us during the past years. But we also wish and hope that the younger generation, which has not tasted the trials of the pioneers, nor can be expected to fully realize the sufferings that their fathers and mothers had to endure in the days of the new settlers' battles, and what it has cost to prepare the beautiful farms and comfortable homes they now possess—never may despise the inheritance left them, but honor and keep the Word of God as a priceless treasure, that the faith of the fathers may be preserved."

To this illuminating sketch of Rev. Alfsen, written twenty-five years ago, may be added a few observations of interest to those who had no part in the first fifty years of church work in this vicinity:

In the book containing the record of the joint congregations from the organization of "The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran



REV. L. M. BIØRN



REV. A. O. ALFSEN

Congregation in Manitowoc and Vicinity," October 4, 1850, to the peaceful parting of the ways in 1871, when the Gjerpen and Valders congregations consented to a brotherly separation of the Manitowoc congregation under its own pastor, a wealth of information is found, throwing light on the conditions under which the congregations lived, grew, prospered, met the problems which from time to time arose, and filled the mission of a church for the pioneers in a new land. The sailing was not always smooth. There were difficulties within, and often serious troubles coming from without, which tested the loyalty and the faith of the members. There were sorrows often hard to bear; but also joys to encourage and stimulate to praise and thanksgiving. Even in the days when outward rupture threatened the feeling of brotherly fellowship in Christian service with disruption, there remained at the bottom of the hearts and in the consciousness of the minds an essential unity in spirit and character. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that in spite of divergent opinions in minor matters, in all fundamental things the members stood upon the same foundation, namely, the doctrine of the catechism and the truth

of the Lutheran confession. In this matter there was a beautiful unanimity, controversies and outward splits to the contrary notwithstanding. The teaching of all the young in the precepts of Luther's catechism has been the greatest cementing and uniting force in the church of our fathers, and remains so among their descendants in faith today.

This lesson permeates and flows through the records of the congregations as the living energy and the most powerful current from first to last.

The "Record" opens with a copy of the law enacted by the "territory of Wisconsin," providing for the legal "incorporation of the Protestant Episcopal Church and other religious societies," and approved February 8, 1847. On a page which was originally left blank is a copy of the articles of incorporation of "The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Manitowoc and Vicinity," dated August 14, 1859, and witnessed August 22 the same year, stating also that the articles are "recorded in the Registry of Deeds of Manitowoc County, Vol. I, of Church Record, pages 27 and 28."

On the same leaf is added the articles of re-incorporation of "Gjerpen and Valders Congregation," November 11, 1880.

The first entry is made in the handwriting of Rev. H. A. Stub, who also has written the first formal constitution into the records as well as the proceedings of the meetings of the congregation until the arrival of Rev. Ottesen in 1852.

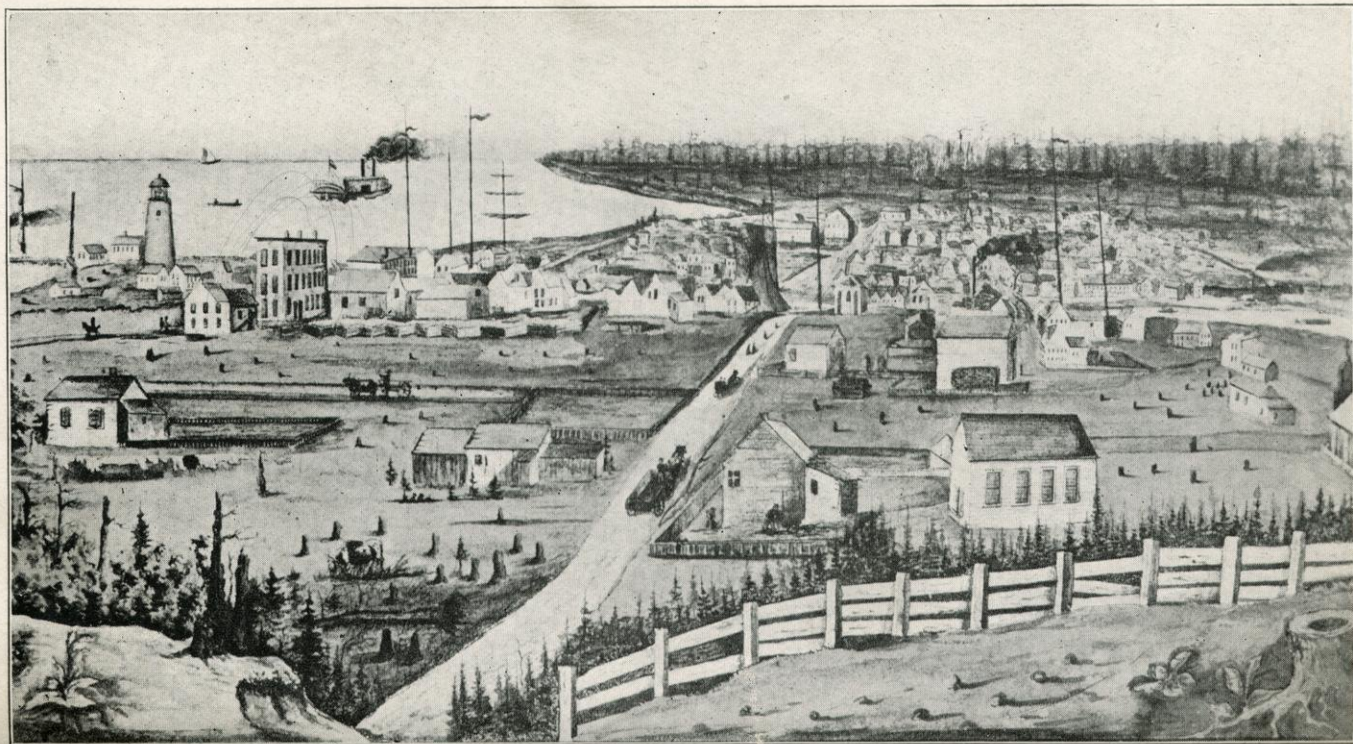
This constitution left a permanent imprint upon the method of conducting the business matters of the organization in all three congregations, especially upon the two rural churches, where the old rules have become well established tradition.

At the same meeting it was decided to delegate to Rev. Stub the power to hire a teacher by the name of Rasmussen, "un-ordained reader," to serve the congregation one year, the salary to be \$200. Without waiting to hear from Rev. Stub, this "reader" at once seems to have taken up his work. But in so doing he had exceeded the propriety of a "lay" preacher by assuming the full prerogatives of the "ordained minister." Hearing of this, Rev. Stub returns to Manitowoc, Sept. 3, preaches in Manitowoc, Two Rivers, and Gjerpen, and calls the voting members together to have the matter about Rasmussen straightened out. At the close of the record of a meeting in Ole Hjelle's house, it reads: "I proposed that the people furnish him (Rasmussen) traveling expenses and let him depart, which I hope will be done."

In this connection Rev. Stub mentions Christian Andersen of Manitowoc as first trustee of the organization. In July, 1852, Anders Aabol, H. Mørstad, and I. Satter are recorded as trustees, with Aabol as trustee-secretary-treasurer.

MANITOWOC 1855

From a drawing



Present First Lutheran Church on site lower left corner of this picture.
Three-story building still at corner of Sixth and York Streets.

The first report entered by Rev. Ottesen is dated November 14, 1852. In these first reports "Maple Grove" is used to designate what later is called Gjerpen congregation.

Rev. Ottesen urged the congregation to have a representative present at the meeting, which historically became the beginning of the Norwegian Synod.* The meeting was to be held at Muskego. At a meeting of the congregation December 27, 1852, Hans Madsen was elected representative, and Nils Madsen alternate.

As a building committee for a parsonage served, besides the minister and the trustees, Nils Riis, Hans Madsen, Michael Blekkeli, Stephen Olsen, and Johannes Eriksen. In the first meeting of this committee the contract was let to Michael Blekkeli for \$415, but he turned the job over to Stephen Olsen.

At the annual meeting 1853 we find record of a complete set of officers in the congregation. Trustees: For Manitowoc, Jacob Halvorsen; for Maple Grove, Hans Madsen and Nils Riis; for Western part (Valders), Anders Christophersen; for Twin River, Even Gjeraldson. Assessors: For Maple Grove, Gulbrand Prestegard, Ole Bolstad, Jacob Madsen, Jens Gundersen; for Manitowoc, Osul Torjussen (Torrison), Amund Salvesen, Michael Michaelsen; for Twin Rivers, Ole Aabol, Nils, Sørensen, Boje Amundsen; for Western, Thomas Olsen Helle, Knud Oppen, Nils Aslaksen. The congregation empowered the pastor to name his deacons.

Just a few matters of this kind are mentioned in order to indicate that these people who here were making new beginnings in Lutheran church work in the then far west, and who came to this work without any previous experience in the management of free and independent congregations, tackled their problems in an orderly and intelligent manner, inaugurating a representative system of government in the congregation so fully in harmony with the fundamental law and the spirit of the United States. These Norwegian newcomers practiced American principles in the foundation of their church work. They were true Americans before they mastered the American language, or had been trained under American institutions. In this the pioneer pastors and the pioneer laymen thought and acted in full harmony.

In 1854 Osul Torrison, Ole Bolstad, Gulbrand Christensen (here Gjerpen is used as name for the middle congregation), and Ole Gigstad (Gjestad) are elected trustees.

About 1860 the names Gjerpen, Valders, and Manitowoc had become common usage in the record.

The Manitowoc-Gjerpen-Valders charge became interested in other fields in need of pastoral service. Gibson and Kewaunee

* An observer at the very first attempt at Synodical organization on Rock Prairie was elected, and may have been present.

soon became served from this charge. Later Claybanks and Sturgeon Boy looked to Manitowoc for assistance, and Sheboygan was for a number of years taken care of by the pastor in Manitowoc. The distance as well as the local needs in the home congregations made this arrangement unsatisfactory both to the outlying missions and to the home charge. Yet, the pioneer pastors here showed a willingness to make the long trips and to bring the comfort and the blessings of the church to the early settlers, that speak well of their zeal and their unselfishness. The remuneration was often less than nothing.

The first visit of inspection to the charge by the president of the Synod is recorded September 20, 1864. The late venerable Right Rev. H. A. Preus has entered under this date the following:

"From September 13 to 20, 1864, the undersigned president of the Norwegian Lutheran Synod in America visited (inspected) Mishicot, Kewaunee, Valders, and Gjerpen congregations. I examined also the pastor's record of congregational proceedings as well as the record of ministerial acts. A regularly kept record of the members belonging to the congregations, a record for the school, and a copy of the pastor's official correspondence are wanting. In spite of all imperfections that I found, my testimony is that pastor and congregations work together as the Lord's shepherd and the Lord's flock according to the Word of God."

As the men of the Manitowoc congregation were away, either as sailors or on jobs in town, no meeting could be held, but the president catechized the children and preached a sermon in the evening.

In his notations to the president's visit the Rev. Biørn says: "These days were rich in evangelical comfort, earnest reproof and admonition for the pastor and congregations alike. The Lord bless him (the president) for every word he spoke, and help us to keep them in our hearts!"

At a meeting held April 3, 1871, the request of the Manitowoc congregation for "brotherly release" from the charge came up. At first the members of the country congregations frowned on this move. After lengthy deliberations consent was given, with the understanding that the Manitowoc congregation receive the amount it had furnished for the parsonage, \$175.



Matters of Interest to Gjerpen and Valders Congregations

THE records in possession of the Gjerpen and Valders congregations are quite complete, both for the period of the united charge and for the period after the release of Manitowoc from the charge.

As a historical document it is invaluable. The possession of a list of members' signatures, most of them in their own handwriting, of 62 persons who signed the enlarged constitution of June 16, 1851 (at the home of Ole Larsen Ballestad), is in itself a treasure of rare value.

From the very beginning the Gjerpen (in the records, Jerpen) congregation ranked as the principal district in the charge. Here the first immigrants from Norway to Manitowoc county viewed the land as early as 1846, or before (Søren Ballestad, Gunder Madsen), here the first parcels of land were acquired (Stephen Olsen Helle), here the first settlers took up a permanent residence (Anders Aabol, Juul Olsen, Gudmund Gudmundsen, Knud Arnesen Ødegaarden, and Ole Olson, 1848). Here the first church was built, the first graveyard staked out, and the first parsonage built. This settlement also was first in the number of settlers, and the men of leadership, perhaps also in point of age and prosperity, settled. Of this congregation the Rev. Alfsen says in his historical sketch of 1900: "Concerning Gjerpen it may be said that this congregation in one respect has been an exception to the other congregations here in its ability to remain outwardly united. While in most places the seed of dissension and disunion grew abundantly, this congregation has until the present time stood as a united whole. . . . Though not untouched by the spirit of strife, no great secession has taken place."

That the home of the pastor was located here gave Gjerpen a place in the charge as the Head parish (hovedsogn). During a long period of years this congregation took upon itself one-half of the material burden, and thus naturally felt that it was entitled to fuller service.

The Valders settlement, which began in 1849 with the pioneer Ole Evensen and his family, and during this and the following year saw Knud Oppen, Johannes Knudsen, Stephen Olsen, Lars and Nils Kjær, Ulrik Juulsen, Johannes Rebne, Finkel Finkelsen,

Reformed of or for the year:

W. O. Sub Rector of the Norwegian Lutheran
Church in Minnesota and vicinity

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 2. + Michael Mathisen | 34. Ole Mathisen |
| 3. + Gunder Mathisen | 35. Anders Mathisen |
| 4. + Nils Mathisen | 36. E. Anders Mathisen |
| 5. + Hans Mathisen | 37. W. Mathisen |
| 6. Ole Olson | 38. Andreas Mathisen |
| 7. + Gudbrand Gudbrandson | 39. Christian Mathisen |
| 8. + Peter Mathisen | 40. Anders Mathisen |
| 9. + Nils Mathisen | 41. Nils Mathisen |
| 10. Jacob Mathisen | 42. Johan Mathisen |
| 11. + Sam Mathisen | 43. James Mathisen |
| 12. + Juel Olsen | 44. Jacob Mathisen |
| 13. Knud Mathisen | 45. Mikael Mathisen |
| 14. + Johannes Mathisen | 46. Amund Mathisen |
| 15. + Gudbrand Mathisen | 47. Sam Mathisen |
| 16. + Finkel Mathisen | 48. Jens Mathisen |
| 17. + Joack Mathisen | 49. Lars Mathisen |
| 18. Ole Mathisen | 50. Jens Mathisen |
| 19. Ole Mathisen | 51. Christen Mathisen |
| 20. + Loren Mathisen | 52. Lars Mathisen |
| 21. + Ole Mathisen | 53. Gunder Mathisen |
| 22. Knud Mathisen | 54. Lars Mathisen |
| 23. + Lars Mathisen | 55. Lars Mathisen |
| 24. Halder Olsen | 56. Oled Mathisen |
| 25. Ole Mathisen | 57. Anders Mathisen |
| 26. + Ole Mathisen | 58. Nils Mathisen |
| 27. Ole Mathisen | 59. Lars Mathisen |
| 28. Johannes Mathisen | 60. Anders Mathisen |
| 29. Knud Mathisen | 61. Ole Mathisen |
| 30. + Tiffen Olsen | 62. Helge Mathisen |
| 31. Thomas Olsen | 63. Mathisen |
| 32. Hans Mathisen | 64. Mathisen |
| 33. Gudbrand Mathisen | 65. Mathisen |

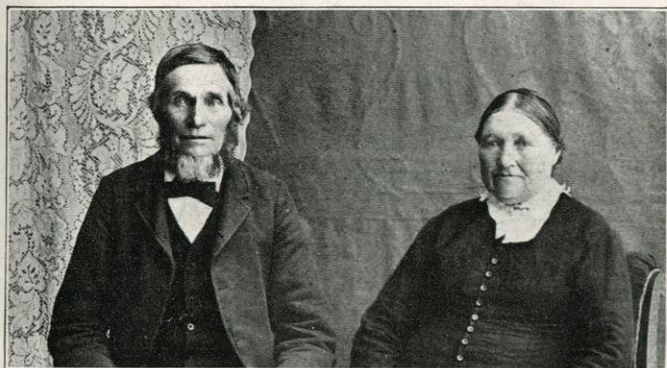
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Signatures to Constitution of June 16, 1851

Gulbrand Sørum, Ole Oppen, Iver O. Berge, Anders Kval (or Qual), Ole Gigstad, Iver Iversen, and Mads Olsen as members of the colony, soon grew in importance, both on account of the number moving in, and the activity of the members. Today it is the largest congregation of the original three.

This settlement grew rapidly, but the first settlers were largely young people, many of them without families. In the early days this was called the Western district or settlement, as distinguished from the Central district or Maple Grove. But Gjerpen and Valders soon became the names by which both the settlements and the congregations were known. Valders began building of its first church in the spring of 1853, an octagonal log structure.

Both settlements were originally covered with heavy timber, hardwood and pine, and the labor involved in the clearing of the



OLE AND INGEBORG EVENSON

land with the grubhoe and ax required a courage, physical strength, and endurance, a patience, and a vision of future returns, that the people who today live on these broad and fertile farms can not fully appreciate. These settlers represent a type of frugal pioneers that are worthy to be remembered in song and story. The men and women worked, endured, and suffered together. It was only their hardiness, their faith in their ability to win, and their confidence in the fertility of the soil and the suitability of the climate that pulled them through. Fever, cholera, and later on war, came to test the temper of their wills and the power of their endurance. The Gjerpen and Valders of today are testimony to the splendid quality of the manhood and womanhood that turned the wilderness into a garden.

The first meeting of importance after the first one, October 4, 1850, was held at the home of Ole Larsen Ballestad, June 16, 1851, when a formal constitution and by-laws were adopted and signed.

This meeting was led by the Rev. H. A. Stub, who also has entered the proceedings upon the records of the congregations. The Manitowoc congregation could not have been fully represented at this meeting, since we find that this congregation adopted the same documents at a meeting the following day.

Services were in the beginning held around in the homes of the settlers. On Sept. 4, 1851, Rev. Stub says that he on that day preached in Ole Helle's house. Again February 16, 1852, services are held at the same Ole Olsen Helle's house, and at a meeting following the services, the congregation ratifies the call sent to Rev. Ottesen.

It has been said that the early ministers showed a tendency to rule over the congregations. Reading through the minutes of the church records of Gjerpen and Valders, one does not receive that impression. In every difficult matter the pastor asked the will of the congregations and did abide by their resolutions.

In the building of the first parsonage as well as in building of the first churches, it took much time and deliberation before the work was started, and after it was started there was no little difficulty in raising enough funds to pay for the buildings. In Valders it proved a great problem to obtain unanimity for a place to build the church. Rev. Ottesen says: "There has been a sorry controversy in the matter of selecting a place for the church. . . . Three years ago (1851) beginnings were made to clear a site on Stephen Olsen's land, burials were even made there, but the majority wanted the church near the Winnebago Road."

In March, 1853, "the present church (octagonal) was begun." Things now moved rapidly for a while under the energetic leadership of Michael Blekkelién. But matters soon began to lag, and the following summer found the walls up, but no roof, windows, doors, or floors. Still services were held here; but Rev. Ottesen remarks, "With no roof and no floor, a few boards were laid to place a table on, but the boards would tip, and my foothold was uncertain." The church was finally dedicated in September, 1856, the day after the dedication of the Gjerpen church.

The congregations released Rev. Ottesen to accept the Koshkonong call in 1859. This release "in peace and love" was made in the Gjerpen church May 6, in the Valders church May 8, and in Manitowoc May 22, 1859, "to take effect next spring." Under these dates Rev. Ottesen says "constitution and by-laws were accepted" in all congregations. The constitution has 12 paragraphs and the by-laws 11, and they are signed by Jacob Aall Ottesen, Boye Amundsen, Nils Johnsen, Jens Gunderßen, Gulbrand Olsen, G. Gulbrandsen, Ole Knudsen Gigstad, I. Knudsen, Jacob Halvorsen.

At the annual meeting August 4, 1859, Michael Michaelsen

and Osuld Torkildsen resigned from the congregation, Torkildsen "because there was so much strife in the meetings," and Michaelsen "because the minister had refused him the good gifts of the congregation, and had remarked that M. did not have any clearer conception of a matter than the stove."

At the annual meeting June 25, 1860, Rev. Ottesen is present. Answer to call of minister from Norway was slow in coming, and some members, among them Stephen Olsen, thought that the congregations should not wait, but look for a minister somewhere else. Rev. Ottesen then offered to present the Gjerpen church with a silver altar service and chasuble, also to cancel \$100 debt for his outlay in the parsonage, on the condition that the congrega-



Gjerpen-Valders Parsonage after first rebuilding

tions would call a minister "from our own Synod." This was accepted. Meanwhile Rev. Ottesen promised to visit the congregations four times a year until a new pastor arrived.

At a meeting in Gjerpen church, July 19, 1861, Rev. Ottesen announces that candidate in theology, L. M. Biørn of Norway, had accepted the call to serve the congregations.

The first entry in the record by Rev. Biørn is made July 13, 1862. In a notation under June, 1863, he states that the financial affairs of the country congregations are in good shape; there was a surplus in the treasury. "This proves that the congregations have not only prospered outwardly, but that the fruit of the Word thereby is become manifest."

In 1864 a resolution was passed to call a teacher to instruct the children 10 months of the year at a salary of \$15 and board per month. In 1867 it was decided to place the parsonage on a stone foundation and to wall up the cellar with stone. The foundation of wooden blocks had rotted away.

It seems that the practice had now become common to hold the annual meetings alternately in the different churches. In 1868 it was held in the Valders church. Here the matter of separation of Manitowoc from the charge came up, but not for action. But it was decided that the cost of repairing the parsonage be borne by the two country congregations (\$250).

In 1869 it was arranged that each of the three congregations elect trustees at their own meetings, and that each handle its finances; this, however, changed in 1870 by resolving that the districts nominate the candidates for trustees, and the general meeting elects them. The same year a letter from the congregation at Manitowoc proposes that each of the congregations run their own affairs independently, the one of the others, however, with one pastor and with joint ownership in the parsonage. This involved separate incorporation. Committees to meet the Manitowoc committee were chosen both by Gjerpen and Valders.

The report of this committee is very interesting. Gjerpen and Valders do not favor the proposed arrangement, and offers elaborate reasons for their position, and the committee report discourages separation.

The Manitowoc congregation, however, decided to separate and call its own pastor, if this can be done in a "brotherly spirit and in peace."

This matter was settled, and at a meeting held in the Gjerpen church, May 17, 1871, Gjerpen and Valders congregations adopt a new constitution of 24 paragraphs, and by-laws, 13 paragraphs. At the same meeting the following candidates for minister to these congregations are selected: Ole Juul, Kristian Krogh Tonning (Norway). May 27 the Gjerpen and Valders congregations resolve to share alike in the expenses of the charge. The first trustees are for Valders: Knud K. Snortum, Ove Zakariasen Berge, and Anders O. Jordet; for Gjerpen, Søren Andersen, Andreas Kjerra, and Aslak Torbjørnsen.

In January, 1872, another candidate for minister, Prof. I. D. Jacobson from Koshkonong, is mentioned. A movement is also on foot in the interest of temperance. This question is discussed at a meeting held in the Valders church.

Under the date of January 25 of the same year, Rev. Bjørn gives a graphic account of a trip that he made to Claybanks to visit a Norwegian settlement there. After many difficulties he came to Captain Anders Larsen, where he was hospitably entertained. Services were held in Gulbrand Andersen's and in Osmund Olsen's homes, and in a school house. The result was the organization of a congregation, "Tanum Congregation," with 52 voting members. He states that 68 owners of land lived in the

settlement. He promised five services annually, three during the summer and two during the winter.

As no answer had come from the call to Rev. Jacobsen, a meeting held in the Valders church, August 21, 1872, resolved to extend call to Rev. Adolph O. Alfson, Mound Spring, Jackson Co., Wis.

January 6, 1873, at a meeting in Gjerpen church it was resolved to "tear down the old parsonage and to build on the old foundation a new."

The first entry in the record by Rev. Alfson is dated September 7, 1873. At a meeting in the Gjerpen church, May 22, 1874, building of a new church is discussed.

A complete statement of the cost of the new parsonage shows that the total cost was \$1303.25.

At a meeting in Valders church, May, 1877, it was resolved to leave it to the pastor, whether he will have confirmation services as heretofore only in one of the churches, or if there is to be held confirmation in each church for the classes belonging to it.

Meanwhile the health of Rev. Alfson had been rather poor, and he was advised to spend some time in a milder climate. At a meeting, October 26, 1877, in Gjerpen, presided over by Rev. Bjørn, Alfson was granted leave of absence to spend some time in Texas, where he was to look after some Norwegian settlements there. The leave of absence to be six months, and Rev. Bjørn would in Alfson's absence look after the needs of the charge.

In 1878 the congregation voted the pastor \$100 additional salary and three offerings in case he needed an assistant. In 1880 the question as to the legality of the incorporation of the charge came up for consideration. A year later the committee to look after the incorporation matter reported that it had been attended to. That the incorporation was not legal came up ten years later.

Under date of December 8, 1884, is entered report of Rev. I. B. Frich as visitor to the congregation. Both pastor and congregations are commended.

At a meeting in the Valders church, May 14, 1885, the controversy concerning the doctrine of predestination is thrown in by the request of 10 members. The matter was temporarily kept out of open meetings by a resolution to await an opinion from the theological faculty of the Church of Norway.

A special meeting of the congregations at the Valders church, February 27, 1889, decided by 114 to 30 votes (two members did not vote) to withdraw membership from the Norwegian Synod, and not to join any other synod or denomination except by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the churches.

The meetings during this and the following year were to a large extent taken up with the discussion of the doctrines in-

volved in the great controversy which led to the secession of the so-called Anti-Missourian Brotherhood. Great efforts were put forth to avoid a split in the local congregations, but the minds were so agitated by the question that a rupture finally came. The Gjerpen congregation, however, remained united, but in Valders a new congregation was organized by those who objected to the doctrinal declarations of the Norwegian Synod in the points involved.

In 1891 the matter of the legality of the incorporation of the congregations again came to the attention of the annual meeting. An exhaustive legal opinion rendered by Judge Oscar M. Torrison cleared matters. (Dated Chicago, June 4, 1892.)

At a meeting of the two congregations in the Valders church, June 30, 1892, a resolution was unanimously adopted to re-incorporate each of the congregations separately. A committee on constitution was elected. For Valders served Mathias Reinertsen, H. K. Roble, and C. J. Gilbert; for Gjerpen, Ole Nilsen, Jens Gundersen, and Hans Madsen. Resolutions to carry out the new incorporation were adopted for Gjerpen, October 3, 1892. The legal name of the congregation to be "Gjerpen Evangelical Lutheran Congregation."

The Valders congregation took similar action at a meeting held November 2, 1892, under the name "Valders Evangelical Lutheran Congregation." A constitution and by-laws were also adopted for the congregation.

While the two congregations are thus entirely independent, each under its own legal incorporation, they continue to be served by one pastor, and to own the parsonage property in common.

On May 31, 1898, the Valders congregation was approached by a committee representing those who had withdrawn from the congregation and organized another congregation, asking whether the old congregation would permit the use of the old church for their services, and in case this permission was not granted, if the old congregation would refund the seceding members their interest in the church property. The answer to this request was a polite, but firm refusal to both alternatives, giving the reasons why the requests could not be granted.

In 1900, fifty years had passed since the organization of the church work in Manitowoc county. A jubilee festival was held September 23, 1900. The founder of the congregations, the Rev. H. A. Stub, was the principal speaker. "The day was beautiful," says Rev. Alfsen. "The participation in the festivities was general, not only by people from Gjerpen, but from Valders and Manitowoc, some also from Gibson." There was a letter of greetings from Rev. J. A. Ottesen, an address by Rev. P. A. Thorson of Manitowoc. Greetings came also from Rev. M. P. Ruh. Prof.

R. B. Anderson of Madison delivered a lecture, and Judge O. M. Torrison of Chicago gave an eloquent tribute to the pioneers. Brief remarks were offered by Hon. Thos. E. Torrison and Rev. O. A. Strøm. Rev. A. O. Alfsen read a carefully prepared historical sketch of the church work during the past half century.

Rev. Afsen resigned from the pastorate in 1917. During 44 years the venerable pastor had served the congregations. They had been the recipients of the strength of his youth and the mature judgment of his manhood days. In the Gjerpen parsonage he and his family had dwelt and shared the joys and sorrows of these many years. It could not be but a sad parting. But it



REV. P. A. THORSON



REV. A. O. WHITE

was a parting in peace. The congregations gave him a generous offering as a parting gift.

January 29, 1917, the congregations joined in the following resolution:

"Rev. A. O. Alfsen, who during 44 years has been our minister and pastor, has decided to retire from the ministry, and is soon to leave us. Our financial responsibilities over toward him, and his responsibilities over toward us, will cease. We will always owe him gratitude for his faithful services during these many years. As we part it is our desire to hand him a generous gift of money to which each one of us has contributed."

The present pastor, Rev. A. O. White, began his work in the charge September 16, 1917.

Among the officers who have served the congregations are Gunder Madsen, Ole Larsen, O. Gigstad, Torkel Osuldsen, Boye Amundsen, Anders O. Aabol, Gj. Gjermundsen, Knud Johnsrud, Ole T. Helle, K. K. Roble, Henry Gilbert, Ole Nelsen, O. Lotten. Most of these have acted as trustee-secretaries, or secretaries.

In Valders, B. Amunds, Ole T. Helle, N. N. Qualle, K. Johnsrud, Reier Trondsen, Ole Lotten, and others.

The Christian school has been maintained by teachers hired for a period of years in the early days, by teachers who taught during the vacation period, and lately also the Sunday school. The vacation school and the instruction by the pastor of the confirmation classes have been the most successful sources of Christian teaching. In the early days, and for many years, the catechization of the children in the church after or during the Sunday service was an important help in teaching of the catechism, and is still retained by the Valders congregation.

The transition from Norwegian to English in the work of the congregations has come about gradually, but in recent years the English work has the prominence, and both preaching and teaching in the American language have increased rapidly in importance, though services in the Norwegian language are still enjoyed by a large membership in the congregations.

The women of the congregations have always been active in their support of the local work of the church, and contributed to the general work of the denomination. This support was not organized in these congregations until about forty years ago, when societies of the women began holding regular meetings. These meetings have been held around in the homes every three weeks. In the Gjerpen church two societies are at work, one with a membership of 35, and the other 15. In the Valders congregation only one society is maintained, with a membership of 75.

A young women's society numbering 10 members is working in the Gjerpen congregation. The contribution of these societies in the aggregate represents many thousands of dollars.

About 27 years ago Young People's societies were organized, Harmony society in Gjerpen, and Concordia in Valders. Each of these societies has a membership above forty. The work of these societies has always been in loyal support of the congregations.

The first president of the Gjerpen Ladies' Aid was Mrs. M. G. Madsen, 1876. First officers of the Valders society were: Mrs. Ole Gigstad, Mrs. Martha Peterson, Mrs. Ole Dovre, and Mrs. Gulbrand Berge. These four formed the beginning of the society.

Present officers at Gjerpen are for the two societies: Mrs. A. C. Pederson, Mrs. N. O. Nelson, Mrs. Peder Mason, and Mrs. Walter Wigen.

In Valders the present officers are: Mrs. Oscar Berge, Mrs. Gilford Berge, and Mrs. Thomas Larson.

Officers of Concordia are: Philip Gigstad, Lillian Johnston, and Alice Berge. Ralph Paulson and Marie Madsen are officers of the Harmony society.

In the early days cantors, generally the schoolmasters, led the singing at the services in church, but soon choirs were organized, and organs installed, aiding the music of the congregation. In spite of the ever changing membership the congregations have for many, many years maintained choirs. The singers generally meet once a week for rehearsals, and the voices numbered from 12 to 30. The present organist for both congregations is Miss Marie White.

Among the cantors and schoolmasters well remembered in the early days were Søren Andersen, Capt. Rhode, Knud Johnsrud, and Rev. T. P. Shesvold. These men also taught the Christianity school in the congregations.

In later years teachers have been hired from year to year to teach in the vacation school. In the Valders congregation a fund is maintained, the interest of which pays for the teacher of the vacation school.

Some years ago a Sunday school was organized in the Gjerpen congregation. Mrs. A. O. White is the present superintendent.

A Memorial Association was organized about twenty-five years ago. Its purpose was to commemorate with appropriate exercises the services of the veterans of past wars. The association meets on Decoration Day, and with addresses, recitations, and a musical program inaugurates the annual decoration of the graves of the heroes of war, and the heroes who have fallen in life's peaceful battle for the building up of the community and the state. The initiative to the formation of this organization was taken by Walter Larson, a teacher in the Knapp school district. The exercises are generally held in the Valders church park.

The record of ministerial acts for the two congregations shows that since the congregations became one call in 1873, there have been performed 1615 baptisms, 1469 have been confirmed, 394 couples married, 959 burials. This, together with the record for the years of the union of the three congregations, give a grand total of 3579 baptized, 2297 confirmed, 718 married, and 1302 buried.

If to these figures are added the ministerial acts performed and recorded in the Manitowoc congregation since 1874, there have, in the past 75 years within the three congregations, been 4384 baptized, 3072 confirmed, 940 couples married, and 1647 buried.



Matters of Interest to the First Lutheran Church, Manitowoc

THE FIRST LETTER OF CALL

THE first letter of call is found in the records of the original congregation, which was incorporated under the laws of the state of Wisconsin by the title: "The Norwegian Lutheran Congregation in Manitowoc and Vicinity." A copy of this letter of call is found in a record kept by Rev. J. A. Ottesen for "that part of the Norwegian Lutheran Congregation in Manitowoc and Vicinity belonging to Manitowoc and Twin Rivers."

The letter reads:

"We, the undersigned, dwellers in Manitowoc and vicinity, induced by a sincere desire and longing for the church and its blessings, have decided to unite in an Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, wherefore we to this end adopt and resolve as follows:

1. The name of the congregation shall be: The Norwegian Lutheran Congregation in Manitowoc and Vicinity.

2. The doctrine of the congregation shall be the one revealed in the Holy Scripture's canonical books, interpreted according to the Norwegian Lutheran Church's symbolical books or confessional writings.

3. The church discipline and outward ritualistic forms shall be those prescribed in our Fatherland, Norway's church ritual, with such modifications as circumstances may make necessary.

4. The teacher and minister shall be one in the Norwegian Lutheran Church regularly consecrated and ordained minister, who shall declare the doctrine demanded in paragraph two, pure and unadulterated, and administer the sacraments according to the Holy Scriptures and the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church.

5. All secular and civic affairs are to be performed by the trustees of the congregation. The spiritual and ecclesiastical affairs to be served by a council of the congregation, of which the pastor shall be chairman, and the deacons of the congregation, these to remain in office during one year, at least.

In order to have the church established among us on this basis, we do call Jacob Aall Ottesen, regularly consecrated minister in the Church of Norway, to be our pastor, to whom we

pledge ourselves, with respect to the outward circumstances, the following obligations:

Since we as Christians are familiar with the admonition of the apostles "that he who preaches the Gospel shall live of the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14), and furthermore, "Let him that is taught in the



First Lutheran Church, Manitowoc

Word communicate unto Him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. 6:6), hence we also are willing heartily, within our ability, to furnish this our above mentioned consecrated and called pastor the necessities of a frugal sustenance for him and his family, and stipulate and determine as follows:

1. We pledge ourselves to build a suitable dwelling for the minister somewhat in the center of the rural settlement in the vicinity of Manitowoc. The house shall be 30 feet by 22 feet, having a sitting-room, a bedroom, a study, a kitchen, and pantry. The house is to be 12 feet high in order to make provisions for upstairs rooms. The house shall have a small entry and a stairway leading upstairs. A cellar shall be dug under the dwelling, also a well, and necessary outbuildings. The minister shall also have for his use 40 acres land bought by the congregation, and it shall be cleared as far as possible by the congregation.

The above described dwelling house we pledge ourselves to build as soon as we are able to do so; and meanwhile we pledge ourselves to rent a suitable house for the pastor.

2. We pledge ourselves to pay the minister an initial salary of \$300 (three hundred dollars) annually, one-half in cash, and the other one-half *in natura* (grain, butter, vegetables, meat, etc.), and the same to be contributed to by all confirmed members, either by free will subscription or by assessment through the trustees of the congregation, and to be paid in three installments, the first to be due in November, the second in February, and the third in the month of June every year. The trustees guarantee that regular payments be made.

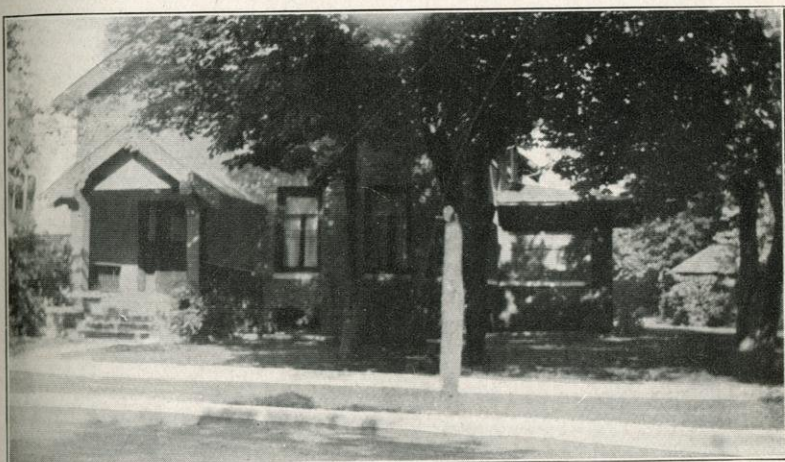
3. Every confirmed member shall render the minister an offering on each of the three great annual festivals, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost; the amount to be offered is voluntary and according to the disposition and means of each.

4. Incidental fees for services at weddings, entrance of mothers, baptism, confirmation, burial is left to the discretion of the individual.

Dated Manitowoc, October 4, 1850.

Signed by the following persons and members of the congregation: Michael Mathisen, Anders Aunundsen, Christian Andersen, Lars Mathisen, Anders Aubol, Knud Arnesen, Karl Solberg, Michael Michaelsen, Isak Larsen, Anders Grini, Christen Nilsen, Ole Syvertsen, Anders Isaksen, Gabriel Abrahamsen, Ole Andreassen, Isak Hansen, Gulbrand Gulbrandsen, Johannes Knudsen, Juul Olsen, Ulrik Juulsen, Nils Riis, Ole Oppen, Knud S. Aaberg, Boye Amundsen, Even Gjeraldson, John Lassesen, Haldor Olsen, Ole Olsen, Ole Jørgensen, Ole Sigurdson, Knud Svensen, Johannes Rabne, Ole Johannesen, Anders C. Qual, Finkel Finkelsen, Ole Andersen, Ole Tøresen, Osul Torjussen (Torrisson), Stephen Olsen, Helge Gulbrandsen, Gulbrand Olsen, Knud Syvertsen, Gulbrand Gulbrandsen, Gulbrand Sørum, Hans Gulbrandsen Sørum, Østen Østensen, Iver Gulliksen, Michael Olsen, Ole Olsen, Gulbrand Gulbrandsen Vorum, Thomas Olsen, Knud Knudsen Snortrum, Ole Rundberg, H. M. Hanson, H. Hansen,

Torjus Kjøstulsen, Jacob Madsen, Torjus Abrahamsen, Ole Even-
sen, Gudmund Gudmundsen, Ole Olsen, Mads Olsen, Hans Mad-
sen, Ole Christensen, Gunder Madsen, Nils Madsen, Ole Madsen,
Elias Halvorsen, Peder Madsen, Søren Larsen Ballestad, Ole
Larsen Ballestad, Gjerulld Hansen, Isak Isaksen, Lars Isaksen,
Ole Svendsen, Johan Christiansen, Ole Torjussen, Jacob Halvor-
sen, Jens Gundersen, Jens Halvorsen, Knud Olsen, Iver O. Berge,
Ole Olsen Berge, Isak Andreas Pedersen, Nils Gulliksen, N. T.
Nilsen, Lars Simonsen Høen, Elbert Andersen Langsjøen, An-
dreas Halvorsen, Lars L. Langsjøen, Gulbrand Christensen, Lars
L. Gulseth, Ole Christensen, Charles Gustafsen (Swedish), Oliver
Thompson, Lars Larsen Sannes, Christen Larsen, Lars Larsen,



First Lutheran Parsonage, Manitowoc

Gunder Anenson, Nils Larsen, Lars Knudsen, Anders Knudsen,
Ole Halvorsen, Helge Mørstad, Rasmus Leikaas, Gudmund Olsen
Qvale, Ole Kr. Gigstad, Michael Blækkeliën, Lars Salvesen, Isak
Isaksen Sætre, Thorsten Knudsen Rogne, Gulbrand Gulbrandsen.

On other occasions the following have signed the protocol
previous to the arrival of the minister: Amund Salvesen, Nils
Aas, Hans Kjøstulsen, Lasse Olsen, Jens Bolstad, Peder Jørger-
sen, Rasmus Drekaasen, Knud Knudsen Berge, Knud Thoresen
Døvre, Johannes Eriksen, Gullik Iversen, Anders Knudsen. In
all 124.

The above letter of call, together with the list of names, is a
verbatim copy of the original document, which is hereby attested
to by my personal signature.

JACOB AALL OTTESEN,
Minister to the Congregation.

In addition to the above the Rev. J. A. Ottesen has also included the following paragraphs of the by-laws of the congregation, which were adopted at a meeting of the congregation at the home of Ole Larsen Ballestad, June 16, 1851, and consisted of twelve paragraphs. Only paragraphs 1, 2, 7 and 9 are included in the record especially prepared by Rev. Ottesen for the congregation in the city of Manitowoc:

1. Plurality vote of the members present shall be deciding in every matter before a regularly constituted meeting (of the congregation).

2. The trustees and other officers shall be elected on the regular day of election, St. John's Day, or if this occurs on a Sunday, on June the 25th.

7. All expenses of the congregation for parsonage, minister's salary, church and graveyard are collected by free will subscription of all adult members of the congregation if the funds can be raised in this manner. But if the congregation by circumstances sees fit, it may raise it by assessment. The assessors shall appraise the property of the individual members and return lists to the trustees, who shall calculate the true per cent to ascertain the amount to be paid by each member, whereupon they are entered in a record, then lists are made for the treasurer for collection, in the which the assessors shall assist the treasurer.

9. The trustees shall have the same power to collect subscriptions or assessments as have the legally elected town and county officers in the collection of taxes and other fees.

The correctness of this copy is attested as being in agreement with the principal record, and I hereby authorize this record (the book containing these records) to be used for accounts and minutes of meetings for the Manitowoc section or part of "The Norwegian Lutheran Congregation in Manitowoc and Vicinity."

JACOB AALL OTTESEN,
Minister to the Congregation.

"Further, it is decided that anyone who will join this congregation shall personally meet at the annual meeting, and before the deliberations of the meeting begins sign the roster of the congregation.

Admission to membership may be had at any time by reporting to the pastor, bringing release from the pastor of the congregation of which he last was a member."

The following names are appended in the pastor's handwriting as having "accepted the above rules and joined the congregation in the city of Manitowoc."

This list of members, which was prepared sometime before the year 1855, is interesting as it gives in many instances the locality in Norway from which they emigrated:

Amund Salvesen, Michael Michaelsen, Jacob Halvorsen, Anders Johannesen Grini, Karl Solberg, John Johnson, Osul Torjussen (Torrison), Oliver Thompson, Chr. Nilsen (Danish wheelwright), Ole Christensen Vivelstad (Lier), Haaver Haaversen (Aker), Gunder Aanensen (Tvet), Ole Jørgensen (Slidre), Andrew Christopherson, August Gulbrandsen (confirmed in Manitowoc), Peder Hansen, Ole Anderson (Christiania), Svend Olsen (Asker), Gulbrand Hansen (Asker), Ole Christensen (Asker), Elias Sørensen (Kragerø), Knud Syvertsen, Ellert Annundsen (Kragerø), Gunder Halvorsen (Langvik), Omund Johnson (Lillesand), Andreas Halvorsen (Kjerkenes), Gullik Jørgensen (Slidre), Knud Knudsen Skattebo (Slidre), H. Olsen (Eker), Torger Hansen Linderud (Modum), Mons Henriksen Fladager (N. Urdal), Hans Hansen (Aker), Jacob Georg Petersen (Borre), Iver Knudsen (Slidre), Erik Jensen (Ø. Slidre), A. Anderson (Christiania-Jeweler), Anders Olsen (Gjerpen), Christopher Evensen (Gjerpen), Ole Torjussen, Ole Toresen, Boje Annundsen, Gullik Gulbrandsen (Slidre), Engebret Evensen (Valdres), Ole Knudsen Skoven (Valdres), Ole Nilsen Bergsbakken (Valdres)—the last four living at Two Rivers—Syvert Jensen Manit (Ø. Slidre), Lars Larsen Sannes, Mathias Olsen, Hans Gunder sen (Bamble), Kitil Torstensen (Gjerpen), Hans Guttormsen (Christianssand), Gunder Gundersen (Grimstad), Salve Aanonsen (Christianssand), Reinert Aannunsen (Walle), Sander Sandersen (Hollum), Christen Olsen (Langvik), Abraham Simon sen, Didrik Christensen, Syver Aanensen, Ole Evensen (Gjerpen), Halvor Gulliksen, Iver Pawlsen, Lars Hansen, Iver Aaberg, Peder Larsen (Bamble)—the last nine seem to have moved away—Bertel Eriksen (Kragerø), A. Nerby (Christiania).

A few more names are added in lead pencil. Whether they were members or just prospects can not be determined from the record.

The following pages give the accounts of the congregation from 1854 to 1860.

The economic conditions of the members as well as the demands upon their willingness to contribute to the maintenance of the congregation are reflected in these accounts. The largest individual annual contribution during the first year is \$4, and no contribution up to 1860 exceeds \$5. In this is not included fees for weddings, baptisms, and offerings. Though the contributions seem insignificant, they may have represented a sacrifice equal to that required today. It was not until 1860 that the congregation in the city had been able to meet its share of the obligations to the call, and even at this time there was a debt of \$75, representing a loan made to it by the Rev. Ottesen.

Whether there had been no congregational meetings held for the Manitowoc congregation alone, or the records of such meetings have not been preserved, the first full record of such a meeting is dated August 31, 1855.

At this meeting a committee was appointed to supervise the building of the parsonage at Gjerpen. Gunder Halvorsen and Michael Michaelsen were elected to "look after the interests of the congregation at Manitowoc." Part of this record is a resumé of an address made at this meeting by the Rev. Ottesen, in which he states that he had held 72 services during the year. He complains that the attendance has not been what it should be, and that the Christian conduct of the parishioners had not been such as to be a proper example for the young people growing up in the congregation. He admonishes the members of the congregation to more diligent use of the Word of God, to prayer, and thanksgiving.

At this meeting the question of joining the first synodical organization, "The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America," came up at the initiative of the pastor. The congregation thought well of it and joined the just organized Synod. One voted against this motion.

Osul Torjussen (Torrison) reported to the meeting concerning the finances of the congregation. He had evidently been the treasurer during the year, but turned over the books to trustee Chr. Evensen. The next treasurer is Gunder Halvorsen.

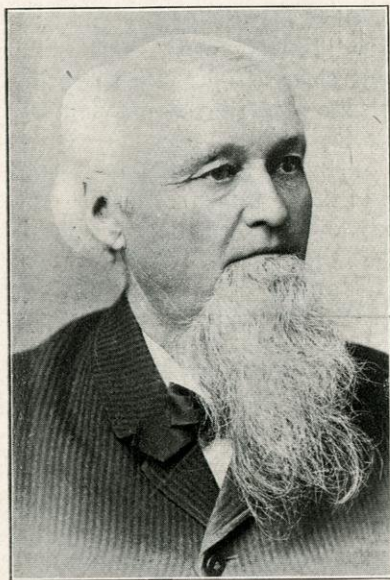
At the close of the report the pastor makes an explanation "why the rural congregations belonging to the call did not join the Synod at this time."

The next meeting of which there is a record was held June 29, 1856. The cost of living had gone up perceptibly during the fifties, and the congregations had voted to offer the pastor \$100 increase in his salary. When this matter came up at the meeting of the Manitowoc congregation, sentiment seemed to favor the raise. But the pastor discouraged the increase in the fixed salary, but suggested that the congregation might show greater liberality in the fees and the contributions to his table.

At this meeting the matter of division of services between the three congregations in the call also came up, as well as the relative interests in the parsonage and land. It was finally agreed to between the congregations that Manitowoc city and Valders should own each one-fourth in the parsonage property, and Gjerpen the other half. The services should be distributed equally between the three congregations and each to pay a third of the running expenses. The minutes of this meeting also make reference to a meeting of the Manitowoc congregation, October 20, 1855, when a start was made to raise funds to build a church. It seems that \$140 was subscribed at that meeting, later subscrip-

tions made the promised sum of \$300, "to which also the Yankees gave liberally," says the record. At the June meeting, 1856, a committee of three, Osul Torjussen, Jacob Halvorsen, and K. S. Aaberg, was elected to secure a lot to build the church on. Prices were pyramiding on city property, and the congregation felt that before another boom set in, a site should be secured.

At this meeting the pastor also earnestly admonishes the congregation to greater spiritual activity. The conduct of the young people is worrying him, and he says: "How can there be any improvement when the congregation itself does not watch over them, when neither parents nor others by discipline attempt to warn



OSUL TORRISON

Pioneer Leader

and admonish the young." And in closing he says: "I asked the congregation most earnestly to give its attention to this matter. It is a sacred duty and a great responsibility that rests on all who will be Christians."

The interests of the broader field of church work in the new Synod are also introduced at this meeting, when the pastor requests the privilege to be absent to serve on a committee which the Synod had appointed to visit universities and higher institutions of learning, for the purpose of ascertaining in what manner young men might be educated and trained for the Lutheran ministry.

At a meeting, July 19, 1857, the committee appointed to se-

cure a lot for a new church reported. A lot could be had that is located behind "Shove's house" for \$200, "which is only half of the price it is worth," says the record. The committee was given power to make the purchase of the site "on the most reasonable conditions possible." Ten years later a lot was bought and a church built.

Outside of this business transaction the meeting was given over to a lengthy discussion of a disciplinary case, the proper observation of Sunday, and whether "private confession should be introduced in the congregation." The report of this, as of other meetings, indicates that Rev. Ottesen with great zeal and much patience endeavored to instruct and guide the members of the congregation in Christian knowledge and conduct, and though the discussion at times did not favor the pastor's views, his kindness of method and his clear insight into the principles involved, as well as his knowledge of his flock, won him both the respect and the support of his parishioners.

On July 18, 1858, the financial report showed a rather discouraging deficit in the treasury. Many had moved away, others had refused to pay, owing to their dislike of "private confession." The minister gives the interesting information that at this time 1000 families of Norwegian Lutheran immigrants, living west of the Mississippi River, were as yet without pastoral care. "These people," he said, "are willing to make any sacrifice if they could have the privilege of the Word and sacraments." "I mentioned that it might become my grave duty to accept a call to serve some of these people."

At a meeting of the Manitowoc congregation, May 22, 1859, Rev. Ottesen announced that he had received a call to become pastor for the congregations at Koshkonong in Dane county, Wisconsin. The congregation accepted his resignation, which was to take effect the following spring, as he promised to visit the congregation from time to time until it could have a new pastor. At this meeting it was decided to call a pastor from the Church of Norway.

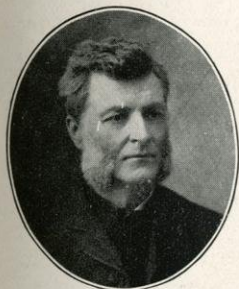
The last meeting recorded for the Manitowoc congregation was held August 21, 1859. Through the efforts of Christian Iver Knudsen the finances were in good shape.

The last entry in the record by Rev. Ottesen is made June 25, 1860, and a receipt for salary due is signed by him, July 29, 1861, the last sentence of which reads: "Now the city has paid me all I have coming, except a loan of \$75."

This brief summary of the early beginnings of the "First Lutheran Church" proves the truth of the old saying: All beginnings are difficult. Most of the parishioners were unused to the free and independent, democratic institutions of the new church

in a new land. Most of them came here with empty hands. But they were neither ignorant, nor lacking in a sense of responsibility, and their previous religious training had made them look to the church for comfort, guidance, and strength to win in the battles of life. The record penned by the late venerable Jacob Aall Ottesen permits us who live today to appreciate the difficulties of the early beginnings of Lutheran church work in the city of Manitowoc, as well as of the wisdom and foresight with which these early beginnings were made.

If a secretary's book was kept for the Manitowoc congregation between 1860 and 1878, it has been lost. No proceedings of meetings in the congregation are recorded in any of the books belonging to the present archive during this period. The city congregation decided to become a separate call with its own resident pastor in 1871. The part of the record which concerns the entire call is found in the secretary reports now in possession



REV. C. F. MAGELSEN



REV. J. C. K. PREUS



REV. E. A. BOYD

of the Gjerpen-Valders charge; but the matters which concern the Manitowoc congregation alone during this period are missing. The first entries in the record of ministerial acts begin January, 1874. Minutes of the meetings of the council of the congregation begin February, 1878. A fairly complete record of the proceedings of the congregation begins in January, 1881, when Thomas E. Torrison was the secretary of the congregation.

After the removal of Rev. L. M. Biørn, Rev. M. P. Ruh served the congregation until 1880, when Rev. C. F. Magelssen accepted the call and became its pastor. He remained in the charge until 1892. During the following year the congregation was served by Rev. Alfsen temporarily. Rev. E. Hove was called, but returned the call, and Rev. J. O Hougen as second choice was called and entered upon his duties in the spring of 1893, serving the congregation until 1897. He was succeeded by the Rev. P. E. Thorson, who was in the pastorate here from July, 1898, to February, 1907. In July of the same year the Rev. J. C. K. Preus was conducted into the pastorate of the congrega-

tion by president J. Nordby, and served until 1913, when Rev. E. A. Boyd became the pastor. He preached his first sermon on the day of Pentecost. In the fall of 1922 he accepted a call from the congregation at Edgerton, Wisconsin. From that time and until April, 1923, the congregation was served by outside pastors. The present pastor of the congregation is D. G. Ristad.

Records of the proceedings of the council of the congregation from 1878 to 1900 indicate that coöperation between the pastors and the congregation was intimate and effective. That the council has been serving during the following years is evident, but there is no record of its activities until 1923.

There is no record of the proceedings of the board of trustees outside of those included in the reports of the meetings of the congregation. It was not until 1881 that there is a record of the election of trustees and other officials of the congregation. Christopher Evensen and Gunder Halvorsen were among the first elected trustees during the pastorate of Rev. Ottesen. Others mentioned as active workers for the financial welfare of the congregation are: Osul Torrison, Iver Knudsen, Gabriel Morbek, Anders Olsen, Lars Sørensen, Jacob Halvorsen, who also personally seem to have been the most liberal contributors.

It appears as if the pastor rendered the principal service as secretary during the early years of the church. Since 1880 or 1881 the following have served as secretaries for the congregation, or acted in that capacity: Thomas E. Torrison, G. G. Gilbert, Nils Carlsen, C. Knudsen, Lars Pedersen, A. C. Hansen, G. H. Kiland, K. G. Nyhagen, Norman G. Torrison, H. Halvorsen, August Eriksmoen, John L. Olsen, C. F. Carlson, Wm. Torrison, C. A. Hansen (the first body of minutes written into the record in the English language is entered by G. H. Kiland, October 6, 1908, and since that time the official business language of the congregation has been English), Isaac Aastad, A. A. Anderson, R. M. Hansen, Roland M. Hansen, Hugo Behn, Edgar G. Hansen, Jr., Wm. Larsen, and Walter A. Dorsch, who is serving as secretary of the congregation as well as of the council.

The trustees functioned as a committee of finance, and the congregation did not establish the office of treasurer until January, 1892, when it was decided that one of the trustees act as the treasurer of the congregation. It appears also that the secretary, who also served as trustee, made the financial report to the congregation at the annual meetings up to this time.

The late Halvor Halvorsen served as treasurer a great many years, later Alfred Aarhus, and the present treasurer is Clarence A. Wigen.

The first official demand for services in the English language appears at a meeting of the congregation in January, 1891. This

led to the resignation of Rev. Magelssen and to the stipulation in the call to the next pastor that he must be proficient in both languages.

As a number of matters in the history of the congregation is briefly set forth in a paper read by Mr. A. C. Hansen at a festival celebrated by the congregation January 23, 1908, part of it is appended here:

"During the past 57 years the average voting membership has varied between 60 and 75. The first church building was a small public school house on Sixth street, where the second ward school now stands. Here services were held until 1866.

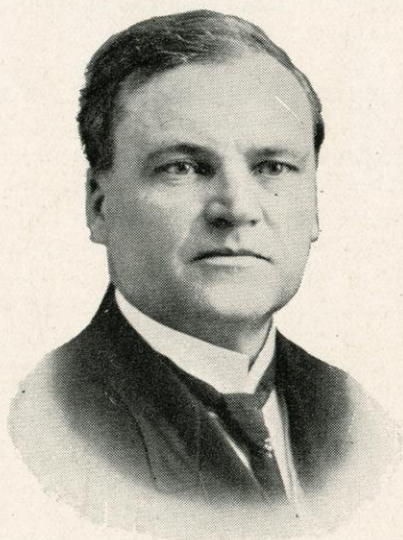
"On September 4, 1865, the congregation purchased a lot for \$375. A church was built and eventually paid for by subscription. The dedicatory exercises were held by Rev. J. A. Ottesen, February 28, 1869.

"About 1883, during the pastorate of Rev. Magelssen, a controversy arose in the Norwegian Synod in regard to some doctrinal points. In many localities the strife became very bitter, causing a split in many congregations. This congregation, however, sought to avoid a discussion of the matter, and succeeded for a time. To avoid strife and rupture the congregation severed its connection with the Norwegian Synod. But the storm finally broke over the congregation in spite of all precautions. During the latter part of the pastorate of Rev. J. O. Hougen the membership of the congregation became divided over the mooted question. A meeting to hear the question discussed by leaders of both sides was held in the church in December, 1896. The defenders of the Synod position were Rev. O. P. Vangsnes of Minneapolis, Prof. H. G. Stub of Luther Seminary. The opposition was lead by the late Prof. J. N. Kildahl and Dr. Schmidt. Instead of bringing the parties together, the meeting hastened the break in the congregation. About one-third of the members separated themselves and withdrew from the old church. In a settlement of the property rights the members retaining the old property agreed to pay \$3000 to the seceding members. The money was paid over April 26, 1898. This parting of the ways is one of the saddest memories of the Lutherans in Manitowoc."

(By this transaction the congregation assumed a debt of \$3000. But the amount was quickly raised. Osul Torrison and the members of his family subscribed \$1000, the Ladies' Society \$400, and others contributed liberally.)

"On September 10, 1899, the congregation resolved to build a new church, and a committee was appointed. Thomas E. Torrison, Hans Meyer, Halvor Halvorsen, Olavus Aslackson, and A. C. Hansen were chosen to see the building operations through. Work was begun at once. The laying of the cornerstone was done by

Rev. O. P. Vangsnes December 10th the same year. The building was completed during the winter, and the church was dedicated June 10, 1900, by the Rt. Rev. A. K. Sagen. The total cost was \$9711, and with the cost of the organ, presented by the Young Ladies' Society, the church furniture and heating plant, the total cost was \$11,700. Together with the \$3000 paid the members who withdrew, \$14,700 was spent by the congregation within a period of eight years, not counting the running expenses. If the total cost to the congregation of maintaining itself during the past half century is calculated, not less than \$50,000 has been paid out by this congregation for church purposes since its organization." So far Mr. Hansen.



REV. D. G. RISTAD

As the years passed, the membership no longer was "Norwegian" in its racial antecedents. A great many had joined the church who were descendants of people of other nationalities and who did not understand the Norwegian language. A gradual increase of services in the English language became imperative. All the teaching in the Sunday school was conducted in this language, and the confirmation classes taught in it.

Some ten years ago the congregation had become English speaking, and as far as language was concerned it had become an English Lutheran church. When the constitution was revised and adopted in 1924 the congregation changed its corporate name to "First Lutheran Church of Manitowoc." In language as well as in membership it is now characteristically American—American Lutheran in spirit and in its ideals.

The Ladies' Aid Society is the oldest organization of the women in the congregation. The present society was organized at the parsonage on Ninth street on the 21st day of May, 1879. Rev. Biørn was then the pastor. Several years previous to this date the ladies had come together occasionally, largely for social pleasure, but not as an organization and not directly in the interest of the activities of the congregation except to assist in raising funds. But on the date mentioned, a formal organization was affected and officers were elected. Twenty-six joined as charter members. The first president was Mrs. John (Marit) Fylken, and the youngest member present, Miss Jørgine Tostenson (Mrs. Thomas E. Torrison), was elected secretary-treasurer, and she and Mrs. Lars Pedersen (of St. Paul's church) are now the only living of the original organizers.*

The society has always been active in raising funds for local needs, for the synodical work, and for missions and charity. The funds have been raised by monthly dues, by suppers, rummage sales, bake sales, and by bazaars, and many a time the Ladies' Aid Society has been the organization that pulled the congregation across bad spots on its financial road.

The meetings are always opened with devotion. As long as the great majority of the women were Norwegian speaking, Norwegian was the language of the society, but now, and for many years past, the language is English. Its constitution and by-laws were amended a couple years ago to meet the present situation. The present membership is about sixty. Mrs. Chas. Kunz is now president; Mrs. H. C. Madsen, secretary; and Mrs. Edw. Braunel, treasurer. Mrs. Clarence Wigen is vice-president.

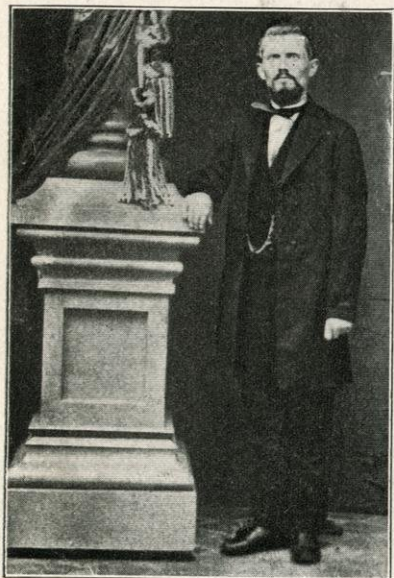
The Prisca Society was organized at the home of Mrs. Thomas E. Torrison, May 5, 1903. Paragraph 2 in the constitution states: "The object of this society shall be to promote spiritual and social welfare of its members and the welfare of the local church . . . and also, as opportunity and ability admit, of the church at large."

The charter members were: Mrs. Thomas E. Torrison, Mrs.

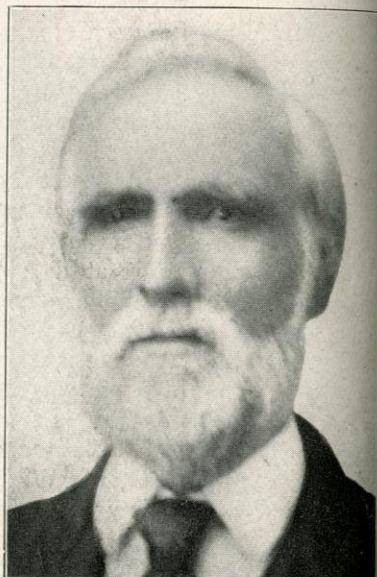
*The living members have kindly furnished the following names of charter members. They are correct, but not quite complete. If there were a record of the constitutional meeting, it has been lost. Besides the names of the first president and secretary-treasurer, the following were among the 26: Mrs. Haaken (Marit) Roble, Mrs. Ole (Guri or Julia) Hansen, Mrs. L. M. (Borli) Biørn, Mrs. Lars (Marit) Olsen, Mrs. Knud (Gjert-rud) Olsen, Mrs. Tosten (Marit) Presthegge, Mrs. Iver (Marit) Knudsen, Mrs. Gulbrand (Marit) Kjøk—these two Marits were sisters of Mrs. Tostensen, Mrs. Thomas Torrison's mother,—Mrs. Christian (Sara) Andersen, Mrs. Helge (Ingeborg) Gulliksen, Mrs. Gjermund (Anne) Gjermundsen, Mrs. Ingeborg Hansen Findal, Mrs. Osul (Martha) Torrison, Mrs. Anders (Maren) Hansen, Mrs. Anders (Torbjør) Olsen, Mrs. Knud (Maren) Nyhagen, Mrs. Lars (Kjersti) Pedersen, Mrs. Iver (Marit) Tol-lefsen, Mrs. Christian Thompsen, Mrs. Aunun (Karen) Salvesen.

O. P. Thorson, Mrs. A. C. Hansen, Mrs. G. Hougen, Mrs. Knutson, Mrs. C. L. Kunz, Mrs. J. G. Johnson, Mrs. A. W. Hansen, Mrs. E. Hansen, Mrs. Marthe Paulin, Mrs. O. S. Solveson, Mrs. Alvin Hanson. Mrs. O. Berge joined in June, and Mrs. E. M. Jacobs in July of the same year. Fifty-six have from time to time joined; some have died, others have withdrawn. The present membership is 31.

The society was organized at a time when a number of women who did not understand the Norwegian language had come into the church. The official language of the Prisca has, therefore,



OLE GUNDERSEN
First Cantor, Manitowoc



KNUD JOHNSRUD
Teacher and Cantor

always been the American language. Regular and systematic Bible study has been pursued by the society. To this work it added active service in helping the financial needs of the church, and from time to time contributing toward worthy causes in the church work at large. The present officers are: Mrs. Wm. Raetz, president; Mrs. W. Rathsack, vice-president; and Mrs. Edw. Larson, secretary-treasurer.

A Young Ladies' Society was active during a number of years. It was this society that gave the church its present fine pipe organ, and furnished funds for the equipment of tableware for the church kitchen, and otherwise worked for the interest of the congregation.

A Young People's Society has been active many years; and the little girls are maintaining a society under the name of Willing Workers. This society has been active in supplying material needed in the Sunday school.

Two years ago a Men's Club was organized. It meets on the first Friday evening of each month. Lectures, music, and a social time to bring the men of the church into closer acquaintance are the objectives. The membership is now between 80 and 90. Its officers are: H. L. Vits, president; A. L. Hougen, vice-president; W. A. Dorsch, secretary; and Roland Hansen, treasurer.



CHRISTIAN KNUTZEN

First Organist, and Choir Director of "Norden," Manitowoc

In the early days, instruction of the children in Christian knowledge was supplied by the parents, especially the mothers, and by teachers hired to instruct the children. Later on this instruction was supplied in the so-called vacation school that was held between the terms of the public school sessions. But the Sunday school and the preparation of the confirmant classes by the pastor have during a great many years past been the principal agencies of Christian instruction of the children. The men and women who have devoted their time to this work have rendered the congregation and the church at large inestimable services. Today the organization of the work in the Sunday school, as well as its equipment, is more effective than ever. Quite recently Sunday school teachers' institutes for the training of Sunday

school teachers have been conducted, and First Lutheran Church of Manitowoc was the first congregation in the Manitowoc—Green Bay and Sturgeon Bay circuit to invite this institute.*

"Norden" was the name of a society that flourished during many years in the seventies and eighties. It was a literary society and acquired quite a library of books in the Norwegian language. When it disbanded, it presented its collection of books to the Manitowoc Public Library. A male chorus by the same name also flourished at this time.

The musical leadership in the congregation was in the early days in the hands of a cantor (klokker), who led the singing of the congregation. When the church was equipped with an organ and later a choir was added, the cantor's office was abolished. Among the cantors, Ole Gundersen, Knud Johnsrud, Christian Knutzen, Christian Andersen, and Ole Henriksen are well remembered.

The first organist was Christian Knutzen, who played by ear. After him came Inanda Torrison (Mrs. A. Bredesen), Emilia Sørensen (Mrs. A. C. Hansen), Anna Magelssen (Mrs. Ramberg), Emilia Nyhagen (Mrs. John Miller), Rose Meyer, Rena Gilbert, Eugene Skaaden, Franklin Horstmeier (both of whom were most excellent musicians), Bertha Klingholz, Jeane Anderson, and Ella Anderson who is serving at present.

SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

The committee in charge of the anniversary had the following membership: First Lutheran Church, Norman Torrison, A. C. Hanson, D. G. Ristad; Gjerpen, M. G. Madsen, Ole Stephensen, Almer Halvorsen; Valdres, Otis Marken, Ole Vindingstad, and Otto Berge; and at large for Gjerpen and Valdres, Rev. A. O. White. Rev. White acted as chairman and D. G. Ristad as secretary.

It was resolved to invite Rev. J. A. O. Stub, D.D., of Minneapolis, to deliver the jubilee sermon. He is a grandson of Rev. H. A. Stub on the father's side, and of Rev. J. A. Ottesen on his mother's side. Rev. A. O. Alfsen, Rev. J. C. K. Preus, Rev. E. A. Boyd, former pastors, and Rev. Hans Magelssen, Rev. Norman Madsen, Rev. Walter Gigstad, Rev. I. B. Torrison, Rev. O. K. Espeseth, and others received special invitations to be present. All former members now living in other parts of this and other states, and neighbors and friends from Manitowoc and vicinity, received a general invitation.

Mr. M. G. Madsen had charge of an exhibit of antiquities, and an auxiliary committee of ladies representing the ladies' societies of the congregations participated in the arrangements.

The jubilee pamphlet was prepared by Rev. D. G. Ristad.

* Walter Bugenhagen is now president of the Sunday school directorate, and Mrs. Otis Granger and Ernest Kruck are leaders.



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