

50TH ANNIVERSARY

1908 - 1958

Normanna and Vang Lutheran Churches

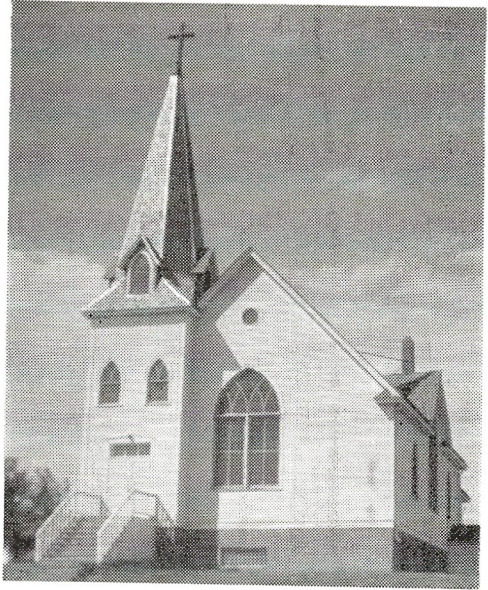
of the

Dunn Center, North Dakota, ELC Parish



CONFIRMATION REUNION, JUNE 14

ANNIVERSARY SERVICES, JUNE 15



NORMANNA LUTHERAN CHURCH
Built in 1915



VANG LUTHERAN CHURCH
Built in 1916

— HISTORY OF NORMANNA CONGREGATION —

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye Lands. Serve the Lord with Gladness: come before His presence with singing" — Psalm 100:1-3

Surely, the members who helped establish the churches of this parish, as well as all who have worked faithfully to further their growth, must be joyful today.

The word "Mission", according to Webster, "Is the act of sending or state of being sent with certain powers, especially to propagate religion". In the early history of the Patriarchs it seemed they followed this pattern on moving to a new location, they pitched a tent, they dug a well, they built an Altar. Let us see if perhaps this isn't an instinct men must follow. . . .

Finding a home where it would be possible to make a living was no doubt the prime motive causing the influx of new settlers during the early years of the twentieth century in western North Dakota. They came mostly from the agricultural states to the east where land was becoming scarce and high priced. Sod houses and small frame buildings dotted the prairie. Community life and spirit, as well as neighborhood ties, were very close. Life was new, conditions unsettled, and each leaned on his neighbor for help, comfort and companionship.

As the Patriarchs of old, after the "tent was pitched", the well dug, life began to settle into a sort of pattern. However, folks soon found out that something was missing . . . the church. The Inner Mission came to the rescue and Rev. Th. H. Larsen of Taylor began having services in homes and schoolhouses in a wide area, extending north to the Missouri River, west to the Killdeer Mountains and Belfield.

On Saturday, February 22, 1908, at Melby schoolhouse Rev. Larsen held services and then helped organize a congregation which was named "Normanna Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America" and this was adopted.

The first group of officers elected were:

Deacons: L. G. Helgeson, Albert Schulberg and Axel Shjeflo.

Trustees: T. A. Helseth, Martin Schulberg and Paul Paulson.

Treasurer: Iver Larson: Secretary: Ole Schulberg.

Auditors: Lewis Granfor and Alfred Finstad.

Rev. Larsen became the first pastor. As the country developed and more people moved in, churches were built in all these areas and in later years he served only his own.

His daughter, Mrs. Sivert Elkins of Richardton, tells of his long trips away from home when he would be gone many days each trip, conducting services, baptisms, weddings, revival meetings or whatever was needed. One time he and Mrs. Larsen drove to Belfield on a very hot day. It was windy and the Pastor let the top of the buggy down to save his horses' strength. It didn't save Mrs. Larsen's complexion however. When they came home the children scarcely knew their mother—she was so burned, with skin blistered and peeling.

Melby schoolhouse was built of sod. It was located on the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ -NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 4, Township 144, Range 94, northwest of the B. R. Iverson home. The present school was built about 1908. Services were also held at Longfellow school and the Bjornson or Gaarder school.

Rev. Larsen held thirteen services a year, that is, in this parish, eight on Sunday and five on week days, and his salary was \$100 per year. He drove horses and never did acquire a car so distances must have seemed very great. Up until October of 1914 the closest railroad was Taylor. Mail and freight came overland. With the natural dangers of a new country, the uncertainty of growing conditions, life was a struggle. Even so, the natural yearning for the church "back home" kept alive much discussion on the possibility of building a church of their own at some future time.

Rev. C. M. Horneland arrived in 1914. With no church and no parsonage it was not easy for the new family. They lived for some time with families of the parish, then for some time in Molly Kjersten's homestead shack not far from Renville school. B. R. Iverson and Axel Shjeflo drove to Golden Valley and brought back lumber for the pastor to build a small house in the west part of Dunn Center. Later he built the large parsonage which was eventually bought by Normanna and Vang congregations.

Many new members joined those early years and the first Fall services were in English and Norwegian alternately. By March 12th, 1915, the contract for a church was let to Albert Langley and soon thereafter Ed Pletan, T. A. Helseth and John Knudsvig were appointed to secure a lot at Dunn Center. At this time services were held only at Longfellow schoolhouse.

The committee on planning the church consisted of Peter Shulberg, Axel Shjeflo, Albert Shulberg, T. A. Helseth and B. R. Iverson. Rev. Horneland was commissioned to write the by-laws. The church was to cost \$2,425 and the first annual meeting held in the church was in November 1915. A new organ was bought by the Ladies Aid. Mrs. Victor Ellestad and Mrs. Alf O. Nelson were the earliest organists. The bell was donated by Gilbert Endreson.

There was no available record of the dedication of Normanna church. Those contacted who remember anything about it at all are Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Thompson, Mrs. Nettie Searles, Bertram and Rudolph Iverson, Mrs. Stanley Beaton and Mrs. Sivert Elkins. They agree it was a cold day so most of them thought it must have taken place in the spring or fall. It was known records of some sort would be found in the cornerstone so on the evening of May 26, 1958, the stone was opened by members of the board, Kendall Thompson and Norman Knudsvig. It was found to contain a short history of the church written by P. A. Schulberg which placed the date of dedication on June 23rd, 1918. The box also contained a copy of Lanstad's hymnbook, a record of the 27th church convention at Fargo, one Norwegian copy of "Lutheraneren" and one of "The Lutheran Herald". There were two newspapers, one "The Dunn Center Journal", published by Mrs. R. B. Doherty and sons with C. J. Doherty as editor. The other was "Spring Valley Times" published by R. W. Robertson, also in Dunn Center.

The Journal contained a notice of the coming district meeting of the Lutheran church to be held at Dunn Center June 22-24, with the cornerstone laying and the dedication of the church to take place on the 22nd and 23rd, 1918. The cornerstone was to be laid by Rev. Th. H. Larsen of Taylor assisted by pastors of the Mandan district. The dedication was held on Sunday at 10:30 with services by Rev. I. D. Ylvisaker of Fargo, District President.

Mrs. Sivert Elkins of Richardton gave this story of the festivities— With her brother, the late Dr. John Larsen, and her father, Rev. T. Larsen, they made

the trip out on Saturday. Dr. Larsen had been asked to sing on Sunday and the Pastor to assist with the services. John had borrowed a not-so-new Model T Ford and they came first to the Alfred Kling farm home in the Renville community. She says the table was already set for supper and loaded with every variety of delicious food. Later they drove to Dunn Center where Rev. Larsen stayed at the Horneland home. On to Werner they drove, and Elsie, (Mrs. Elkins) stayed with friends, while John went on to Halliday.

The next afternoon John picked up Elsie and started for Dunn Center. The old Ford had been overheated the day before and was in no mood to be hurried. It spit and sputtered, limped along until within two miles of Dunn Center when it coughed its last. They walked and mostly ran the two miles, carrying a suitcase, and arrived breathless just in time for John to sing his solo. The next day they started for Taylor, coaxing the Ford along all the way by racing down every hill in order to make it up the next. Of the day's services A. J. Thompson says he remembers only John Larsen's song. It was "The Lord's Prayer" in Norwegian, and Mr. Thompson says, "Never have I heard that sung so beautifully as he did that day—he was wonderful!"

By October 1919 Rev. F. J. Swensen and family had arrived and about this time the automobile was beginning to gradually replace the horse for travel. English services were now held every third time. We note here that on January 22, 1921, the secretary's report was written in English for the first time by Ole Kittilson. We recall a visit at our house by the Swensen family one evening. At supper one of the little boys graciously asked the blessing, one eye on a bowl of steaming hot baked beans. Evidently the lowly bean was his favorite for he finished in a hurry saying, "Amen, please pass the beans". Rev. Swensen resigned September 24, 1925 and in 1926 Rev. C. M. Fosmark became the new pastor. Again difficult times besieged the congregation. "The terrible thirties" were hard on everyone and it was difficult to carry on church expenses and the pastor's salary. We owe a debt of gratitude to the memory of this faithful servant who stayed with us in spite of the meager years.

In spite of the difficult times, life went on and so did the work of the church. Folks like to sing and to many it is a relief from tension. Mrs. Velena Olson told me this story. Groups of singers from the other churches of the parish together with the Normanna choir of which she and her husband Martin Olson were members, formed a mass choir and gave a cantata. This had been presented at the other towns first and had been very successful. Finally it was Dunn Center's turn and they felt very happy to know everything had gone so well and they were almost through. Then the unexpected happened—Halvor Skauge, cashier at the local bank was supposed to sing a tenor solo during the concert and Pastor Fosmark a bass solo a bit later—in fact TWO pages later. Evidently Fosmark had been through it so many times he felt sure and wasn't watching his music, at least not too closely. The choir finished a page—he turned TWO pages and got up, forgetting Skauge was to come first. In his powerful bass he sang, "Christ"—then sat down, realizing his mistake. Skauge telling it later to a friend said, "There was a lull of long explosive moments. When I could gather my wits after the Pastor's surprising outburst, I sang my solo".

In 1929 a new constitution was adopted and the word "Norwegian" dropped

marking yet another transition and a gradual pulling away from the customs and the language of old Mother Norway, from where so many of the charter members claimed their ancestry.

In July 1939 Rev. Fosmark resigned and moved to Douglas, N. Dak. Rev. Ellickson of Taylor filled the pulpit for awhile to help out until Rev. L. S. Gjerde arrived in 1940. Many new families came into membership during his short stay until he left for the Navy in 1941.

Many names appear very frequently during the records of the earlier years. Those most frequently found are I. B. Iverson, Tom and Vic Ellestad, G. B. Nyhagen, John and Lewis Knudsvig, Andrew and Lewis Granfor, Alf O. Nelson, John Thompson, Albert Thompson, K. B. Knutson, Iver Larson, Ole Kittilson, Gilbert Endreson, M. A. Olson and Carl B. Knutson.

For the next three years we had no regular pastor but were served by neighboring pastors, Sletten of Taylor, Zibell of Dickinson and pastors from the Iowa circuit. However, the work went on, the spirit was good, Sunday school teachers kept up their work and the congregation held its own.

In March 1945 Rev. M. J. Helleson came and served until after his resignation May 27, 1950. On October 24, 1948 Normanna church celebrated its fortieth anniversary with all day services at the church. The morning sermon was given by Rev. Hans V. Thoresen of Columbia, South America, missionary to that country for three years. He is a former Dunn Center resident. Dinner was served by the Aid. In the afternoon a short history of the church written by Rev. Helleson was read by Mrs. Norman Knudsvig. Lunch was again served by the Aid.

The church was served by Rev. Hageman of Dickinson until Rev. John Nicolai was installed in 1952. Many meetings were held from September 1950 to May 1952 on the matter of building a new parsonage or remodeling the old one. It was finally decided to build. In 1953 three separate funds were started, the organ fund, the cemetery fund and the Altar Guild. A plan to remodel the basement was begun in January of 1954 and was carried out. This consisted of installing new cabinets, electric stove, water heater, steam table, sinks and additional working space. Glass block windows were later installed.

The question of voting privileges for women members was brought to vote in February of 1954. The result was negative, twenty-six against and only two for the motion. The women of Normanna still have not come of age.

An annual clean-up day at Badlands Bible Camp was instituted with volunteer labor. And in June 1954 a campaign for re-alignment of congregations was begun. The plan as carried out took Halliday from our parish and placed them with Marshall and Dodge. The pledge system of taking care of expenses was adopted also.

On July 1, 1955 Rev. Nicolai resigned to accept a call from Bismarck. Max Meier, teacher in the local school and Wayne Granfor helped out by taking charge of services from time to time. In June of 1956 Rev. V. G. Sorensen accepted the call and was installed. Since this time worship services have been scheduled every Sunday in the three churches of the parish.

During July of 1956 the "Every Member Visitation" program was discussed and adopted. In 1957 the church steeple was given a complete re-juvenation with shingles and paint. And in the spring of 1958 the church proper is being given interior decoration of paint and varnish in anticipation of the 50th anniversary celebration on June 15th of this year.

On May 25th, 1958 twenty-one young people were confirmed by Rev. Sorensen at Normanna church and nine at Werner.

Some of the "Firsts" of this congregation have been recorded and we grouped them in order of occurrence for the benefit of anyone interested.

The first congregational meeting was held at the Lewis Granfor home on April 4, 1908. Lewis Granfor tells us that the first discussion meeting on forming a congregation was held at the Halvor Nodland home during harvest in 1907. The first donation of land was three acres by Lewis Granfor and Hannah Larson to be used as a plot for a cemetery. Iver Larson and Lewis Granfor were the first cemetery committee.

The first service in Longfellow Schoolhouse was on Nov. 20, 1909. Pastor Larsen also performed a wedding at this service, that of Axel Shjeflo and Miss Judith Rudd of Yankton, S. Dak. The first service in Melby schoolhouse was on February 22, 1908.

The first service in the Bjornson or Gaarder school was in November 1914. This was an annual meeting and the first recorded for this school.

The first annual meeting held in the new church was on January 4, 1916.

The first secretary's report in the English language was on January 22, 1921.

The first record of confirmation in this congregation was on October 23, 1910 and the members of this class were Edwin Wade, Lawrence Helgeson, Axel and Minne Schulberg and Agnes Helseth.

The first wedding on record is that of Nettie Bertina Endreson and Gage Wislon Searles at the Endreson home.

The first baptism at the new church was that of Inez Ellestad, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Vic Ellestad, on Christmas Day 1915.

Longfellow school was at first located near the Ole Schulberg place. Mrs. Lillian Krieger recalls it was later moved to a spot two miles farther south. It later burned down. She also recalls the many ice cream socials held each summer at the various homes. A moonlit eve would be picked so folks could play games out of doors while others took turns at the huge freezers that were turning out the delicious home made ice cream which brought welcome revenue for needs of the congregation.

A reminder of the newness of the country is found in the document called "Articles of Incorporation of Normanna Church", signed on August 26, 1914.

Note the different postoffices—

C. M. Horneland, Dunn Center, N. Dak. M. H. Bergerud, Brooks, N. Dak.

Alf O. Nelson, Manning, N. Dak. B. R. Iverson, Dunn Center, N. Dak.
(Formerly Melby)

John G. Knudsvig, Bailey, N. Dak. Ole Schulberg, Manning, N. Dak.

—Written by Clarrissa Evenson Morrell (Mrs. Earl Morrell) May, 1958.

IN 1913-14 the first Aid was formed. Ladies from miles around attended. Then on February 18, 1915, the group decided to form two Aids—one being named The East Normanna and the other being named The West Normanna. This meeting was reportedly held at the home of Tom Ellestad.

East Normanna became the present Normanna W. M. F. The officers at this first meeting were:

President: Mrs. B. R. Iverson; Vice President: Mrs. Bert Nyhagen; Secretary: Mrs. Victor Ellestad; Treasurer: Mrs. John Thompson.

The aim of this newly organized Aid, as stated in their constitution, was to "support the church financially, according to the decision of the society."

To-day the aim of our W. M. F. has broadened into the aim of the general W. M. F. stressing first the consecration of the individual to a personal Savior and thus becoming an effective channel for the extension of God's Kingdom unto the uttermost parts of the earth. In 1955, our constitution was re-written by the executive committee, and submitted to the members for acceptance. This constitution was patterned after that of the Synod.

Many of the first meetings were held in the homes and food sales, soup sales, etc., were held in business places down town. Much of the financial assistance to the church was gained through ice cream socials, fancy work sales, lutefisk suppers, silver teas, soup sales, annual dinners, basket socials and regular monthly suppers. During the 1930's soup sales and food sales were held to finance the painting and repair of the church.

Early projects centered mainly around local needs such as helping pay for the church, organ, hymnaries, furnace, painting, rugs, kitchen equipment and often giving assistance to the budget.

To-day we still look to similar local needs but have extended beyond. The W. M. F. has long taken part in all phases of W. M. F. work. Suggested program material and Bible studies of that organization are used in the meetings. The Aid regularly contributes through Mission boxes, self-denial and thank offerings. These latter ones are encouraged to be free will offerings on the part of the individual. Regular annual donations are made through Lutheran Welfare, House of Mercy, St. Luke's Home, Box Work and many other well deserving projects.

Now each year a Life Membership pin is awarded a faithful worker. An In Memoriam is also given each time a member passes to her reward. Babies baptized are enrolled in the Cradle Roll.

Thus far 21 Life Memberships have been given. 17 In Memoriams have been given to families of the deceased. Since 1944, 70 babies have been enrolled in the Cradle Roll.

In the very recent years, the members have worked faithfully during the building of the new parsonage and the remodeling of the church parlors. The Normanna W. M. F. presents the radio program twice or three times yearly over K. D. I. X. A share of the upkeep and maintenance of a cabin at the Badlands Bible Camp is taken care of by donations from the Aid.

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I also." May we continue to gather together to work for His Kingdom.

Following is a list of Past Presidents in the order they served and the length of each term:

Mrs. B. R. Iverson, 1 year	Mrs. Oscar Ebeltoft, 2 years
Mrs. Alfred O. Nelson, 1 year	Mrs. Grant Brown, 3 years
Mrs. Chas. Ebeltoft, 1 year	Mrs. Chas. Ebeltoft, 1 year
Mrs. C. M. Horneland, 2 years	Mrs. Tole Hansen, 1 year
Mrs. F. J. Swensen, 2 years	Mrs. Carl Sword, 1 year
Mrs. Tom Ellestad, 1 year	Mrs. Fred Brendemuhl, 2 years
Mrs. Bert Nyhagen, 1 year	Mrs. Invold Holt, 2 years
Mrs. B. R. Iverson, 2 years	Mrs. Kendahl Thompson, 2 years
Mrs. Iver Larsen, 1 year	Mrs. Matt Remsing, 2 years
Mrs. C. M. Fosmark, 1 year	Mrs. Blaine Fockler, 2 years
Mrs. Lewis Knudsvig, 1 year	Mrs. Adolph Krieger, 3 years
Mrs. William Taylor, 3 years	Mrs. Fred Fritz, 2 years
Mrs. Ingvold Holt, 2 years	

— 1958 NORMANNA W. M. F. OFFICERS —

President, Mrs. Sherman McConnell; Vice President, Mrs. Norman Knudsvig; Secretary, Mrs. Charles Neustel; Treasurer, Mrs. Adolph Krieger.

Is this the time, O Church of Christ! to sound retreat?

To arm with weapons cheap and blunt

The men and women who have borne the brunt

Of earth's fierce strife, and nobly held their ground?

Is this the time to halt, when all around

Horizons lift, new destinies confront,

Stern duties, wait the nations, never wont

To play the laggard, when God's will was found?

No! rather, strengthen stakes and lengthen cords,

Enlarge Thy plans and gifts, O Thou elect,

And to Thy Kingdom come for such a time!

The earth with all its fullness is the Lord's.

Great things attempt for Him, great things expect,

Whose **love** imperial is, whose **power** sublime

Fills all the earth, if we, who follow Him—

Build in this world, **His Church**, unconquerable!

Sumner Hoyt

Rev. Th. H. Larsen



1908—1914

Rev. C. M. Horneland

**No
Picture Available**

1914—1919

Rev. F. J. Swensen



1919—1925

Rev. C. M. Fosmark



1926—1939

Rev. L. S. Gjerde



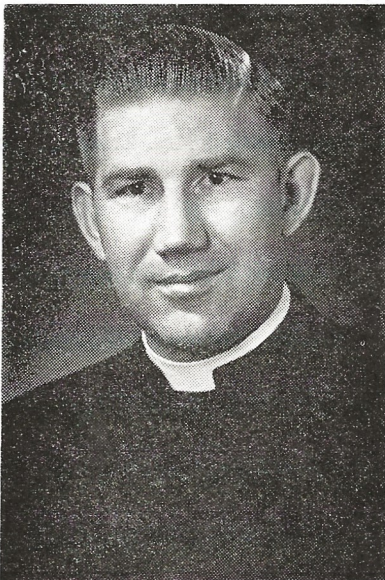
1940—1942

Rev. M. J. Helleson



1945—1950

Rev. J. H. Nicolai



1952—1955

Rev. V. G. Sorensen



1956—

— 1958 CHURCH OFFICERS of NORMANNA —

Secretary — Donald Childs

Treasurer — Omar Whitaker

Financial Secretary — Kenneth Knutson

— TRUSTEES —

Norman Knudsvig
Kendahl Thompson
Claude Brown

— DEACONS —

Reuben Knutson
Charles Neustel
Henry Krieger

— BOARD OF PARISH
EDUCATION —

Mrs. Lyle Granfor
Mrs. Fred Fritz
Mrs. Milton Guenther

— ALTAR GUILD —

Mrs. Victor Sorensen
Mrs. Wilbur Freer
Mrs. Kendahl Thompson

— CUSTODIAN —

Fred Zaske

— ORGANISTS —

Claudia Brown
Harold Sorensen

— LIVING CHARTER MEMBERS —

Lewis Granfor

Mr. and Mrs. Alf O. Nelson

Axel Shjeflo

— GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES —

Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Thompson

Mr. and Mrs. Erick Bergan

Mr. and Mrs. Gottfried Fritz

— FROM THE RECORD —

Baptisms	432
Confirmands	262
Marriages	88
Funerals	129

1958 CHURCH OFFICERS of VANG —

Secretary — Harlin Kling

Treasurer — Randolph Nodland

Financial Secretary — Martin Synnes

— TRUSTEES —

Raphael Hauck
Alvin Nordsvén
Bernard Nodland

— DEACONS —

Leonard Hendrickson
Arnold Wermager

— ORGANIST —

Harold Sorensen

— CUSTODIAN —

Marvin Synnes

— LIVING CHARTER MEMBERS —

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Evenson

Andrew Johnson

Mr. and Mrs. John Nordsvén

Jens Opdahl

Mrs. Ed Raymen

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Skjefte

Nels J. Thorstad

Mr. and Mrs. Nels N. Thorstad

Morris Torgerson

Mrs. Osmund Twingley

Carl Wisted

— GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES —

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Kling

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Evenson

— FROM THE RECORD —

Baptisms	265
Confirmands	192
Marriages	26
Funerals	70

— HISTORY OF VANG CONGREGATION —

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" — Psalm 118-24

The history of Vang congregation during the early years until they built their church in 1915-16, is closely knit to that of Normanna. As a new community it had much the same trials. The people met for services in homes and schoolhouses; tables or sewing machines might serve as the pastor's pulpit; neighborhood bees to accomplish needed work and travel was by foot, by team or horse back to services, to aid or to call on a sick friend. A cherished china bowl might be suddenly elevated to a baptismal bowl for perhaps several babies. This was the case on January 5, 1910 at the Nels N. Thorstad home when Rev. Th. H. Larsen baptized Olai Thorstad, Kenneth Evenson (the first) and Agnes Hendrickson.

A meeting at the Halvor Nodland home in harvest time, 1907 was probably the first community effort towards establishing a church. Lewis Granfor, who was there, says that ways and means of beginning the project were discussed and that an attempt to find out what each would be willing to contribute created much banter and merriment.

There seems to be no records of the earliest years. From early members we find that the first confirmation was held at Renville schoolhouse about 1900 and the class of three were Walter Kling, Oscar Nodland and Cornel Nodland.

The second confirmation was held at Eaglenest school, east of the present church. This class also had three members—Peter Nodland, Clara Pollestad and Berdien Kling. This took place on November 19, 1911 with Rev. Th. Larsen conducting the service.

The first record tells of a meeting at the Halvor Nodland home October 27, 1914 where they decided to take on part of the expense of the parsonage at Dunn Center. A committee was picked to collect money for the building of a church. These were Hans Torgerson, Chairman, Halvor Nodland, Carl Pollestad and Ed Raymen. Rev. C. M. Horneland was present at this meeting.

Rev. C. M. Horneland was installed as pastor at Vang in the Renville schoolhouse on July 12, 1914 by Rev. Th. H. Larsen, Taylor, N. Dak. There was also confirmation that day and the little schoolhouse could not house half the crowd. The class consisted of the following: Olga Wermager, Curtis Thorstad, John Simonson, Christ Simonson, George Kling, Martin Thorstad, Simon Nodland and Agnes Pollestad.

On March 15, 1915 at a meeting at Nels N. Thorstad's the church board was chosen. These were: Deacon, Carl Pollestad; Trustee, Carl Wisted (three years); Treasurer, Cornel Nodland; Precentor, L. Fixen.

The committee to check a possible building place were Alfred Kling, Henry Wermager, and Carl Wisted. The building committee consisted of Nels Synes, Iver Wisted and H. Wermager.

On April 25th of the same year a meeting was held at Renville School. Alfred Kling reported that a lot could be had if the congregation was incorporated. It was also decided to build a basement and Carl Evenson was elected to head the excavation work. Each member was supposed to donate one day's work at scraping and hauling rock. The size of the church was decided and

the work was started on June 4th. Hans Torgerson was elected Sunday school Superintendent.

The carpenters building the church were Nels Synnes and Iver Wisted and they were hired at Renville school on May 30, 1915.

Carl Evenson reported that some were slow about helping on the basement so it was decided he could hire the help needed. The church lot was bought for \$24 with an expense of \$3.08. This was September 5, 1915.

On December 14, 1915 Alfred Kling and Oscar Nodland were authorized to audit all bills. The church building was halted until more favorable weather the next spring. At a meeting on January 10, 1916 it was decided to try to complete the building by July 4th. Parochial school was planned for the summer. On July 24, 1916 they held their first congregational meeting at the church although the building was not yet completed.

We found no record of the dedication of the new church but we are indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Carl Evenson for the following information: The dedication took place in late fall, about the first week in November 1916. There were three visiting pastors besides Rev. Horneland, who was in charge. Rev. F. J. Swensen of Beach, Rev. Th. H. Larsen of Taylor and Rev. Jacob Tander were the three visitors. Rev. Tander gave the sermon and performed the dedication with the assistance of the others. It was an all day affair with dinner served by the Ladies Aid. They recall that all the pastors as well as Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Thompson and Stella of Dunn Center were supper guests at their house after the day's festivities.

An organ was bought at Minot by the Ladies Aid the same year and on January 8, 1917 Agnes Pollestad became the first organist. Carl Evenson was hired as janitor at \$15 per year and held this job until 1951.

Later organists were Mrs. Cornel Nodland and Olga Stromme. Harold Sorensen is the organist at the present time.

Rev. F. J. Swensen began his ministry at Vang in 1919. On January 9, 1920 it was decided to have English services every third time. This was a much discussed subject as the older members clung to the Norwegian language. Carl Evenson tells of walking home from church with a member who was very much opposed to change, especially the change to English services. He said, "Can you imagine that!—they are going to preach in English when they can't talk it, and no one understands it anyway!"

Attendance was good over the years. The Renville community at one time was thickly settled and many families were large. Carl again tells of one Sunday morning when a Model T Ford came chugging up the west hill to church. The people jumped out and the driver seemed in a big hurry. Carl said, "Aren't you going to stay?" He answered as he drove off, "No, no, I've got to get back for another load, so I have to hurry".

Rev. Swensen preached his farewell sermon on November 25, 1925 and Rev. C. M. Fosmark came that fall and served until December 1938. These were hard years for all. Crops were poor and incomes very low. The Ladies Aid worked very hard and helped to carry part of the expenses. Rev. Ellickson of Taylor served until Rev. L. S. Gjerde was installed in 1940. He resigned and left for the Navy in 1941 and for the next three years visiting pastors helped at intervals.

Rev. M. J. Helleson was installed in March of 1945 and served until May 27, 1949. Then Rev. Hageman of Dickinson held services until Rev. John Nicolai was installed in 1952. He served until July 1955 when he accepted a call to Bismarck. Max Meier, teacher in the local school and Wayne Granfor

held services until Rev. V. G. Sorensen came in June of 1956.

On August 29 of 1954 a special meeting of the congregation was held to vote on re-alignment. This was adopted and the Vang church was grouped with Normanna and Werner.

—Written by Clarissa Evenson Morrell (Mrs. Earl Morrell) May 1958

— VANG W.M.F. —

Shortly after Rev. Th. H. Larsen helped organize the congregation at Melby schoolhouse in February of 1908, the women of the Renville community decided to organize the first Ladies Aid Society. This group met on March 23, 1908. They adopted a constitution in which they pledged themselves towards helping to build a church. The following officers were elected: President, Mrs. Nels N. Thorstad, Vice President, Mrs. Joseph Berquist, Secretary, Miss Othilda Wisted and Treasurer, Mrs. Carl Evensen.

They met once a month on afternoons. Although distances were great and mode of travel by horse or afoot the attendance was good. Lunch was served and each paid 5c at first, but later this was raised to 10c. Naturally the treasury did not gain very fast and the first year's receipts were only a little over \$10.00. But these women were of sturdy stock and not easily discouraged.

The president bought yard goods for the members to make up into garments, these to be sold at the annual sale held each year. They would have a big dinner and also sell ice cream which was made right there. It was usually a big chore to first find where ice could be obtained, then go and get it. Then during the day the men would take turns at the freezers, which was hard work, but cheerfully done for the cause.

The sale of finished articles took place during the afternoon. Bidding was usually lively, encouraged now and then by some challenge from Auctioneer Alfred Kling. This was one of the ways the women of Vang helped build a church. Ice cream socials during the summer were popular, while as the cooler weather approached, oyster suppers and the ever popular "lutefisk" suppers were favorites. So as the years rolled on Vang Ladies Aid increased in membership and power to accomplish their purpose.

For many years the Norwegian language was used in their devotions as well as their secretary reports and business dealing. The years also changed that. At one time the church had two separate aid societies, one of them having twenty-three members. When the church was completed they bought the seats and other furnishings. They helped finish payments on the church and the parsonage and often helped pay the pastor's salary.

During the thirties many of the settlers moved away and membership decreased so it was decided to join forces and again have but one aid society.

The church was not yet quite complete but it was possible to have the first confirmation there on October 29, 1916. C. M. Horneland, the pastor was in

charge. It must have been a happy occasion for the men and women of Vang who had worked so hard, as well as for the first class.

Mrs. Iver Wisted, who was a member of the class, says it was a thrilling day, but a bit cold since there was as yet no way of heating the church. They set up kerosene stoves and little kerosene heaters here and there which did not help much in a building that size. The members of this class were: Esther Wendt, Christine Nodland, Theodore Thorstad, Bennie Thorstad, Bert Fizen and Arthur Torkelsen.

The charter members of Vang Ladies Aid are:

Mrs. Alfred Kling	Mrs. Carl Evenson
Mrs. Joseph Bergquist	Mrs. Marit Kvale
Mrs. Lars Birk	Mrs. Melvin Burns
Mrs. Sten Williams	Miss Thea Wisted
Mrs. Nels N. Thorstad	Miss Othilda Wisted

The years have brought many changes. Membership and officers changed with the years. It would naturally be difficult in the short time allotted to this work to follow up the history to the present time. Time does not permit contact with members who have moved away and records are often incomplete. We find in checking with a few early members that so many of the families prominent in the early history have moved away. We could not name any, for fear of missing some. However, the spirit of the pioneer still lives. The group still here, although small, keep the work moving ahead, with hope for the future, ever mindful of God's blessing in years past. In the words of the beloved hymn:

**"Now thank we all our God,
With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
in whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today."**

Present officers serving the Vang WMF are: President, Mrs. Arnold Wer-mager; Vice President, Mrs. Martin Synnes; Secretary, Mrs. Bertha Nodland and Treasurer, Mrs. Adeline Evenson.

— VANG SUNDAY SCHOOL —

The Vang Sunday School was organized June 4, 1915. Mr. Hans Torgerson became the first superintendent. There is no complete record of this phase of the congregation's work in Christian education, but it was maintained during the periods when there were few children of Sunday School age in the community.

Vacation Bible School has been conducted in the congregation as the need was present. It has been a vital part of the Christian instruction program for the children and young people. This year, 1958, Mrs. G. Riemer, assisted by Miss Sherry Hendrickson, has just completed a week (full-days) of such instruction.

— VANG LUTHER LEAGUE —

The Vang Luther League was organized in 1914 during the time that the Rev. Gaylerd Falde of Jewell, Iowa, came to serve the parish for a few weeks. The League was very active several years with considerable number of young folks participating. It fulfilled an important part of the congregation, especially the young people, for spiritual expression, service and fellowship.

— NORMANNA SUNDAY SCHOOL —

At the Annual meeting of the Normanna Congregation on November 23, 1921, Mrs. Mina Boe was elected Sunday School Superintendent. This appears to be the beginning of the present Normanna Sunday School which has filled an important need in the church and community many years. Many children and young people, especially, have received much of their Christian education through the Sunday School. Many confirmed young people and adults have found in Sunday School teaching and administration an effective way of serving the Lord in His Kingdom. Officers and teachers who have served this year, 1958, are:

Superintendent, Mrs. Milton Guenther
Mrs. Lyle Granfor
Clair Kittilson
Mrs. V. G. Sorensen
Maude Engeland
Joan Granfor
Georgia Granfor

Secretary, Mrs. Carl Pedersen.
Mrs. Walter Benz
Ardis Kittilson
Mavis Fritz
Claudia Brown
Kay Whitaker

Vacation Bible School has long been recognized as an essential phase of the congregation's program of religious instruction. During the past several years as many as sixty to seventy children and young folks have enrolled. This year, 1958, sixty-six were in attendance. The instructors were: Mrs. Orville Bergan, Superintendent; Mavis Fritz, Sharon Anderson, Georgia Granfor, and assistants Kelly Goth and Harold Sorensen.

— NORMANNA LUTHER LEAGUE —

The Normanna Luther League was organized November 28, 1920. A Constitution was adopted December 5, and the following officers were elected: President, Professor Oglum; Vice President, Phillip Ebeltoft; Secretary, Clara S. Nyhagen; Treasurer, Herbert Ebeltoft; and Choirister, Mrs. Alf O. Nelson. Pastor of the congregation at the time was the Rev. F. J. Swensen.

The Luther League has served these many years as a channel through which especially the young people of the congregation and community have had opportunities for Christian growth, fellowship and service. An important part of the congregation, the League has continued active in the program of the congregation through the years. The 1958 Officers are:

President, Donald Kittilson; Vice President, William Klundt; Secretary, Kelly Goth; Treasurer, Roger Fockler; Sponsors, Mr. and Mrs. August Klundt.

DEDICATED

To the Glory of the

TRIUNE GOD

Who

**So loved all men . . . that He gave His
Son, Jesus Christ, to Redeem them . . .
Who by His Holy Spirit Calls men to Life
with Himself.**

**May His Redeemed
of this generation continue to Live and to
Labor as their fathers have done . . . that
men everywhere shall know and glorify the
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit . . . to Whom
be Glory forevermore! Amen.**

— IN APPRECIATION —

We trust that this 50th Anniversary booklet will please you; that it will continue to call forth pleasant memories of this memorable occasion, even in future years; that it may be an encouragement to greater faithfulness on the part of all of us.

Many significant tasks have been performed by many unheralded individuals of Normanna and Vang congregations these fifty years,—and no special recognition has been given of many such labors for the Lord's Kingdom among us. Let it simply be said: "Thank you all!" The Lord remembers every task, great or small, undertaken and done in love for Him and those He has redeemed.

A "thank you" to everyone who helped to prepare materials for this Anniversary booklet; to the women of the congregation, to the men, to the young people, for all preparations in anticipation and realization of these Fiftieth Anniversary events.

