

The prairie was changing. What had once been a quiet hunting ground where great herds of buffalo grazed had seen many changes, but the turn of the century brought a great onslaught of settlers such as it had never before seen. As the iron horse roared through, new communities sprang up. It was not long before the new settlers began to look for ways to express their faith and churches began to spring up around the area. Evanger Lutheran Church was founded in 1902, Hamerly Lutheran Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tolley in 1903, and Prosperity Lutheran Church in 1904. The city of Sherwood was founded in 1904 and its people longed for a venue to express their faith.

In August of 1906 Rev. N.M. Ylvisaker of Mohall, accompanied by Rev. Martin Teigen of Landa, drove to Sherwood and then six miles west to the Nels Nelson farm where the first worship service of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Sherwood was held. We don't know much about that first service, but it was likely in Norwegian, as that was the language spoken by so many of the area's first settlers. On a Sunday in November of that year the charter was issued and the new church was birthed with charter members Nels Nelson, Tom Brown, Charles Beckedahl, Eric Arneson, K.T. Robie, and E.O. Slind, and with Rev. Ylvisaker as the first pastor. That first meeting was held in a room above Slind's Drug Store.

Though women were not officially listed as charter members of the newly formed congregation, they were instrumental in the life of the newly formed congregation; it was with funds from the newly formed Ladies' Aid that the first church building was purchased. That first building was owned by the

Presbyterian congregation in Sherwood that had been without a pastor since 1905. A short time later, through a transaction with Perry Brown, the building was traded for the Lutheran Free Church building. The original building was remodeled into a home which remains occupied. That second building is the one that most members remember as the original church and is owned today by the Masonic Lodge in Sherwood.



At some point in the early years of the congregation, the name was changed to The English Lutheran Church. Many of the early services of the church were held in Norwegian, but when it became a problem for the younger members to understand, the services were conducted in English.

During its early years, the congregation was a part of the Mohall Parish, with pastors living in Mohall. In 1921, the congregation voted to form a parish with Evanger and Prosperity Lutheran Churches and purchased a parsonage in Sherwood. In 1923, a basement was dug and a furnace installed in the church; the new space meant room for church suppers and added space for Sunday school.

The young parish (and its pastor) suffered a blow when, in 1927, the parsonage burned to the ground and the parish records with it. The pastor, it seems, needed to make some visits on a cold winter day and heated motor oil on the kitchen stove in order to start his car; the results were disastrous and the loss of those early records is still felt these many years later.

The depression years were difficult for the people of Sherwood in many ways and the congregation was not able to support a full-time pastor during those years, but was served by pastors from Glenburn and Maxbass. During the years of WWII, the congregation again became a part of the Mohall Parish, with its pastors residing in Mohall, and the new parsonage, purchased in 1931 remained empty much of the time, except for the times that an intern lived there.

In 1950, the building was completely remodeled, a new propane furnace was installed in 1951, and in 1952 chimes were added to its steeple, calling the faithful to worship on Sunday mornings. So too, 1952 brought the calling of a former intern to be the new pastor residing in Sherwood to serve the congregations of Sherwood, Evanger, and Prosperity. The new parsonage had also been damaged by fire in the winter of 1949-50 and during this new pastor's term, it was remodeled and enlarged. The Luther League took on the project of enlarging the basement, and the additional space was often used for their meetings.

It seemed to come without warning, but the size of the Sunday school classes began to exceed the available space in the little church, and the congregation began to discuss the options of enlarging the present structure or building a new one. On August 13, 1960, the congregation gathered at the site following their morning worship service and broke ground for the new building on the corner of Main Street and Fourth Avenue. Less than a year later, on June 11, 1961, the new building was formally dedicated. Total indebtedness of \$21,000 was reported at the annual meeting in 1962. The old building, that had been a home for so many years, was put up for bids and purchased by the Masonic Lodge for the sum of \$1000.99. That same year, Prosperity Lutheran Church disbanded and many of its members joined the Sherwood church.



In 1963, the congregation changed its name to Our Savior Lutheran Church.

With great joy, the final payment on the loan for the new church was made and the mortgage was burned at the annual meeting in January of 1969. Then it was time to think of new pews and dividers for the Sunday school rooms downstairs.

In 1976, the congregation began to realize that the parsonage was beginning to show its age and, when a new, larger home was made available, they decided to purchase it to serve as their parsonage. The debt on the parsonage was paid off in 1982. The house continues to serve as the parsonage as well as housing the pastor's office.

Many improvements have been made to the church and the parsonage since they were first built; a ramp was built at the church, making the first level of the church accessible and the kitchen was given a complete makeover in 1991; a deck was built at the parsonage that has hosted graduation open houses and parish BBQs, and the swallows return to nest in

the eaves of the church each year as they did that first summer after the new church was built.

Through the years, the congregation has enjoyed a close fellowship with Camp Metigoshe, faithfully supporting it, both prayerfully and financially. Many children have spent a part of their summers, first as campers and then as counselors, forging deeper relationships with their Savior. The camp also puts on a day camp at the church each year. So too, our quilters have spent countless hours creating many beautiful quilts that have brought in needed funds for the camp at its annual quilt auction. The tradition continues as, once again, we have campers and a counselor from Our Savior at Camp Metigoshe.

2004 was a banner year for Our Savior. With great pride, the congregation celebrated the ordination of two of its own members. Nathan Keith graduated from Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa and is serving Trinity Lutheran in Bismarck; Lisa Johnson Lewton graduated from Luther Seminary in St Paul, MN and is serving Holy Nativity Lutheran in New Hope, MN.

The congregation has continued to minister to the community of Sherwood. At its seventy-fifth anniversary, it was noted that the population of the community was dwindling and the size of the congregation with it; today the community continues to diminish in size and we have especially noted the smaller numbers of children in our schools. This past year, the education committee recommended that we move our Sunday school to Wednesday after school; the result has been a larger and more faithful attendance.

The congregation has enjoyed a long-standing partnership in ministry with a sister congregation, Evanger Lutheran of rural Kenmare. In May of this year, the congregations voted to enter into a new partnership to include Evangelical Lutheran of Tolley and, on August 1, the three churches will become the Sherwood Area Lutheran Parish. This new partnership is expected to help the three churches continue their ministry amid dwindling populations.

There have indeed been many changes in this community on the prairie over the past century, but God has been our help through all those years and continues to be our hope for years to come.

Over the years the congregation has been served by pastors Rev.N.M. Ylvisaker, Rev. E Struxness, Rev. H.A.L. Hjermstad, Rev. A.N. Eggen, Rev. S. Meisel, Rev. T.O. Svare, Rev. J.M. Erickson, Rev. E.M.Bakken, Rev. Harold Olson, Rev. LeRoy Elster, Rev. Eldred Johnson, Rev. Elwyn Nissen, Rev. Byron Edwards, Rev. Marvin Unseth, Rev. Palmer Ringdahl, Rev. Richard Bahe, Rev. Bruce Adamson, Rev. Thomas Stenzel, Rev. Eugene Anderson, lay pastor, Kathy Paulson, and currently Rev. Janet Gwin.

Recognizing that many of our members have their roots in churches that have since closed, notably Prosperity Lutheran Church and Hamerly Lutheran Church, it seems only fitting to include, indeed no history would be complete without, a brief history of these congregations in our history on this occasion:



Prosperity Lutheran Church, first named Pleasant View Lutheran Church, began its first worship services in homes in Stafford and Prosperity townships and was officially organized in 1903. The first pastor of the congregation,

Rev. Sigurd Fladmark, traveled from Kenmare, but by 1906, the congregation began to be served by pastors from Mohall.

The church building was constructed in 1917-18 and, because of its location, the name was changed to Prosperity Lutheran Church. In 1921, the congregation became a part of the Sherwood parish with Our Savior and Evanger Lutheran Churches and its early church records suffered the same ill fate when the parsonage in Sherwood was destroyed by fire in 1927.

On December 31, 1961, the congregation officially closed and most of its members transferred to Our Savior or Evanger. The church stood for a time, but the cemetery remains well-tended with the bell from the church and a plaque marking its entrance.

Hamerly Lutheran Congregation was organized as a Lutheran Free Church in 1903. The church building was erected in 1909. The chancel, narthex, and steeple were added later with other improvements. In 1961 a new basement was constructed, the church was repositioned, and an enlarged narthex was built.

The church was affiliated with the Lansford parish until 1930, served by a Lutheran Brethren pastor from 1930-37, became a part of the Carpio parish in 1937, and was a part of the Tri-Lutheran Parish of Tolley, Greene, and Hamerly from 1974 until the church closed in 1999.

The church building was sold and moved from the location. The altar and rail have been moved to Zion Lutheran Church in Mohall where they are used in the chapel. The cemetery remains well-tended with the bell from the church and a plaque marking its entrance.





Rev. N.M. Ylvisaker
1906-1909



Rev. H.A.L. Hjermstad
1912-1917



Eldred P. Johnson
1945 - 1952



Elwyn Nissen
1952-1956



Byron Edwards
1956-1962



A. N. Eggen
1918-1919



T. O. Svare
1921-1924



J. M. Moe
1925-1927



Marvin Undseth
1962-1965



Palmer Ringdal
1965-1972



J. M. Erickson
1928-1934



Harold L. Olson
1940-1943



Leroy Elster
1943-1945