

Sixty Years At Skudesnes

If one were to search for just one word to describe the beginning and growth of Skudesnes in this very brief outline of its sixty years, "Faith" is the word that instantly comes to mind.

The first pioneers in the Skudesnes district arrived in 1903 bringing with them the deep-rooted faith of their father-land, faith in God, His Holy Word, and faith in the teachings of Luther's catechism. This faith transplanted to a new land, grew into Skudesnes congregation as we know it today.

Ingvald Hustvedt was the first pastor to serve Skudesnes. He preached his first sermon at Odin Jacobson's the summer of 1905. Bernhart Berg and Tolline Sather were the first couple united in marriage, at the Olaf Berg home.

By 1906 there was quite an influx of settlers, and the sod houses and shacks were too small for worship services. The pioneers hauled trees and branches 15 miles from the banks of the Saskatchewan River and built a kind of bower on Olaf Berg's homestead (later the Kerney farm). This bower records several firsts, for within these shady quarters Skudesnes held its first official meeting August 1, 1906. The first members of the congregation were Jacob Haugen, Lars Akre, Nils Aadland and family, Mr. & Mrs. O.M. Akre. On that day the first child was baptized - Myrtle Christine Aadland, now Mrs. Melvin Hetland, Prince Rupert. Here too, Hagbert Syhre, now of Salem, Oregon, was confirmed as the first confirmant.

On Dec. 4, 1906, a committee was appointed - Jacob Haugen, O.M. Akre and Mandius Olson - to draw up a constitution which was adopted Feb. 13, 1907. The first officers were: Secretary: Mandius Olson; Treasurer: Lars Akre; Trustees: Ludvig Akre, Jacob Haugen, Nils Aadland; Deacons: Mandius Olson, O.M. Akre and Bernhardt Meier.

The site for Skudesnes was chosen in 1907, and the congregation called its first pastor. Pastor W.M. Hagen accepted the call and arrived early in 1907. A sod house was erected at Elbow and here he and his family resided for three years. Pastor Hagen's wages were \$75.00 a year to be increased to \$100 if the membership grew!

Among his first ministerial acts we find the following: Olaf K. Meier was baptized May 26, 1907. He united in marriage Kristian Arneson and Ingeborg Lagerud on June 25, 1907. The first class of confirmants were confirmed May 17, 1908 at Bright School with seven pupils.

The foundation was made for the church in 1908 and the year following the church was built, the lumber being hauled from Davidson. It had neither spire nor basement and was smaller than our present one. On March 17, 1912, it was decided to add a spire and entrance to the church. The basement and chancel were added in 1929.

Pastor Hagen returned to the States in 1910, and he was succeeded by Pastor H.S. Storebo who served until 1915. The pastors that followed were: J.O. Reitan 1917-1920; Pastor H.S. Quanbeck 1921-1923; P.M. Fosse and O.B. Sanders, interim pastors through summer of 1917 and 1920; Pastor K.J. Gjesfjeld 1924-1931; Pastor Rue 1934-1941; Pastor P. Overlid served between these two periods, serving both Hawarden and Elbow parishes. Pastor C.O. Ostby followed Pastor Rue, and between calls student Pastor L.A. Rasmussen and Pastor P. Overlid served the congregation.

In the 1940's Skudesnes again became self-supporting after being a Home Mission charge during the depression. In 1945 the first Bible Camp week was held at Skudesnes Church grounds. The following year it moved to the Elbow Camp site and in 1965 was moved to its present site further east due to the construction of the South Saskatchewan River Dam.

Pastor Ostby left in 1947, and Amos Dyrud served during the summer. Pastor J. Lokken came in 1948, remained till 1951 and Student Pastor Oscar Johnson served that summer. Pastor T.F. Dahle arrived in Oct. 1951, and returned to the States in 1956. A layman, Mr. O.K. Ose served during the winter months. Pastor A. Sandness served the congregation from 1957 to 1962; Student pastors Marvin Haave and Arne Jensen had services until Pastor Lars Knudson, our present pastor, arrived in the summer of 1963.

Skudesnes is indeed thankful to God for all these 'Shepherds of His little flock' who have labored for Him so faithfully through the years.

Comparisons from the Records

- Baptisms - 1906 - 1907 - Myrtle Aadland, Olaf Meier, Clarence Aadland, Minnie Aadland, Clifford Olson, Gerhard Kvinge, Signe Arneson, and Lillian Akre.
- 1966 - Chris Alan Akre, Brenda Elaine Vollmer, Dean Michael Vollmer, Vivian Margaret Stromberg, Marvin Lee Pawlivsky.
- First Confirmands - 1906, 1907, 1908 - Hagbert Syhre, Lewis Aadland, Tillie Aadland, Edwin Bernt, Conrad Ingebretson, Otto Jacobson, Marie Jacobson, Olaf Sather.
- Last Confirmands - 1966 - Lionel Aadland, Owen Akre, Murray Cole, Virginia Hagen, Jane Joel, Daniel Knudson, Janice Pederson, Lorna Sanders, Myrna Vollmer and Lyle Johnson.
- First Church Wedding - June 30, 1928 - Alf Anderson and Mabel Tjosvold.
- Last Church Weddings - 1966 - Wayne McMurphy and Wanda Ferkingstad, July 30, and Ernest Paetsch and Frida Johnson, July 23.
- First Funerals - Julius Nygaard, Sept. 10, 1908, Margaret Sather, Dec. 4, 1908.
- Last Funerals - Nils Andreas Aadland, 1962; Tamer Kermit Jackson, 1963; Mrs. Karen Svenning, 1966.

Organizations of the Church

The Sunday School has always been an integral part of the congregation. It was first held in homes, then in Pleasant Ridge, Bright, and Wildon schools, with many willing and faithful leaders. In 1939 Pastor Rue helped to organize a joint Sunday School to be held in the church. The Sunday School has shared in the Mission work of the church and in 1954 purchased the front doors of the church and donated towards new pews and other furnishings.

Skudesnes Luther League saw its beginning on Sept. 20, 1925 when a group of young people gathered at the church to organize a Christian Young People's Society. The constitution was drawn up by Pastor Gjesfjeld and Mandius Olson. On Sept. 27, 1925 the following officers were elected: Pres: Pastor Gjesfjeld; Vice Pres: Iver Olson; Sec: Cora Quanbeck; Treas: Evelyn Tastad. The name chosen for the Society was "Nordstjaernen", (North Star) and meetings were conducted in Norwegian until 1933. On Aug. 3, 1941 its name was changed to Skudesnes Luther League and joined the Luther League Federation with the motto: "Young People for Christ and His Church". Meetings are held as regularly as possible and the Luther League is in charge of a Youth Service one Sunday a year.

L.C.W. - (Lutheran Church Women) as it is today, enjoys an interesting history and an important part in the work of the church. Its history goes back to the Hope Mission Society organized May 3, 1906 by four ladies: Mrs. Olaf Berg, Mrs. B. Berg, Mrs. Nils Aadland, and Mrs. O.M. Akre. Mrs. Ludvig Aadland joined at the next meeting. The first picnic was held July 4, 1906 at Olaf Berg's. This society was dissolved in 1910, and on July 17, 1910 the families gathered at Ludvig Aadland's to form "Haabets Missions Forening", an organization for both men and women and very active throughout. The last recorded meeting was held at Mons Langager's on Jan. 14, 1953.

Another Society was the Alpha Ladies' Aid started in

the early 1900's by Grandma Jacobson. Early members were Mrs. O. Kaldor, Hilda Bugge, Mrs. Ingebretson, Mrs. Melling, Freda Arneson, and Minnie Joel, and they supported Missions as well.

Skudesnes Lutheran Ladies Circle was formed Aug. 27, 1941, when Pastor and Mrs. Rue met with the ladies to help organize. In 1945 the Circle joined the "Women's Missionary Federation" with Mrs. Mearl Vollmer, the first president. Their motto was "Work for the night is coming". After the merger the W.M.F. disbanded to become the L.C.W. (Lutheran Church Women) with the same aims and interests as before - Missions, local work of the church, Christ-centered Bible Studies, and the Elbow Bible Camp. The picnic this year was held at Olaf Sather's in June. There is now a General LCW, which meets four times a year at the church, and carries on the main business of the LCW, with an afternoon Circle (Dorcas) and an evening Circle, (Faith). At present the total membership is about 35 ladies. The women also have a Bible Study and Prayer Group which meets Wed. mornings - just begun this year.

The Girls' Sunshine Club is another organization within the church whose aim has been and still is to spread rays of sunshine at home and abroad. Their contribution has been to cheer and comfort the sick with a gift or card, financial gifts to the church, church furnishings, such as the baptismal font, contributions to Home and Foreign Missions, support of native workers and students on the mission fields, Christian Schools and Elbow Bible Camp. The first recorded meeting was at Mrs. Ludvig Aadland's Aug. 6, 1921 with Ellen Aadland, Pres; Gunda Aadland, Vice pres; Mabel Tjosvold Sec. Treas. The theme song has always been "Jesus wants me for a sunbeam".

The Busy Bees Girls' Club was another early organization and organized by Aadel Jacobson. With the proceeds of their many projects they bought the pulpit and helped pay for the Altar rail. No records were kept so no statistics can be given, but needless to say

we are thankful for their various contributions to Skudesnes. May the work of all the present organizations continue, and bear much fruit in the Kingdom of God!

Sons of the Congregation who have entered the Ministry

Dr. Iver Olson, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Dr. S. T. Jacobson, Saskatoon, Sask.

Pastor Ole E. Aadland, now deceased

Pastor Adolph K. Odland, Vancouver, B.C.

Pastor George Strand, Winnipeg, Man.

Pastor Ole K. Olson, now deceased.

Gordon Olson, son of Pastor Ole Olson and Evelyn Olson (Tastad) now in his last year at Seminary in Minneapolis, Minn.

Pastor Marlin Aadland, Wetaskiwin, Alta.

The First Ordination at Skudesnes

It seemed very fitting indeed when Skudesnes held its first ordination on this, their Jubilee Year. The Ordination service for Pastor Marlin Aadland was held on June 12, 1966 with Pastor Lars Knudson and Pastor L. Sogge, Fort St. John, B.C. taking part. Pastor C. Kopperud, Moose Jaw, delivered the message, and Pastor C. Satre, Saskatoon, performed the ordination.

Skudesnes the last ten years has seen some changes, and many improvements to the church. In this period Skudesnes also made the transition from the Lutheran Free Church of fifty years to the newly merged Church with much prayer, and trusting in the Almighty Hand of God. As for material things - a new furnace was installed; an electric organ has taken the place of the original one; chancel and aisle rugs, floor coverings, new chimney, chancel lights, storm windows throughout, re-decorating the interior of the church, as well as cement floor and wallboard walls and ceiling in the basement, are among the improvements. The old kitchen range has been replaced by an electric stove, new folding tables made for the basement, and every family donated towards new chairs. Twelve

additional pews have been added, the church roof shingled and painted, and the old choir loft and railing have been removed. The old parsonage was sold and a new parsonage and garage were built at Elbow. Plans for the near future include improvement of the yard, and the outside of the Church. There has been an amendment to the Constitution that the Church year begin Jan. 1 and end the following Dec. 31; the annual meeting to be held in January. During the past ten years there have been 83 Baptisms, and 52 have been confirmed (since 1955), 19 Burials, and 24 marriages. At present the congregation consists of about 40 families with 106 Confirmed members.

Only a small number of the original pioneers remain. To the best of our knowledge these are - Mrs. Lena Akre, Mr. Mons Langager, Mr. & Mrs. Ludvig Akre, Mrs. Hannah Tastad, Mrs. Louise Aadland, Mr. & Mrs. Otto Jacobson, Mr. & Mrs. Adolph Odland, and Mr. & Mrs. B. Kaardal.

May God grant the present congregation, and those in the future, will hold fast to that Faith of the pioneers - the "Faith of our Fathers, Holy Faith" - and also promise - "we will be true to thee till death".

In concluding this brief outline of the sixty-year history of Skudesnes, may we make this our prayer for Skudesnes now, and in times to come -

"Ever be near our side,
our Shepherd and our Guide,
Our Staff and Song;
Jesus, Thou Christ of God,
By Thine enduring word,
Lead us where Thou hast trod,
Make our faith strong!"

