

History of First Lutheran

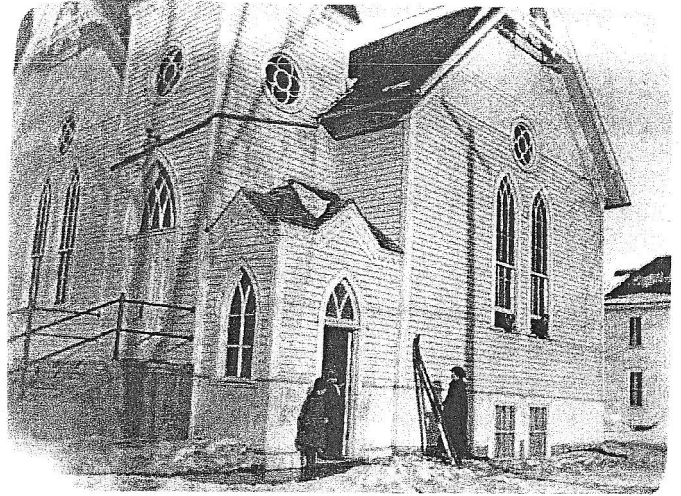
It was during the 1880s that the Lutherans in the Renville area decided to begin a church. A meeting was called on October 25, 1886 and officers were elected, and Articles of Incorporation of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of Renville were adopted. Shortly thereafter the land was purchased and in 1889 the church was completed. It was located on Highway 212 and Second Street Northeast.

However, the church was not to exist for long, when on June 27, 1894 a cyclone struck and the frame church was destroyed. The baptismal font was the only thing that survived, and the lumber was used to build a parsonage east of the church. A new church was constructed on the site of the old and the cornerstone laid on June 30, 1896. The congregation had built two new churches within 10 years!

Over the years, there were numerous improvements to the church that included a pipe organ in 1921.

Five art glass windows and three rose windows were placed in the church in 1944 in memory of pioneer families. These windows along with storm windows cost a grand total of \$1,444.50. They were beautifully incorporated into the new church.

For those who remember their original installation, they provide a meaningful memory of the heritage of First Lutheran. For those who see them for the first time, they are nothing less than a beautiful inspiration.



*Mabel Lien Appleton Agar with skis.
Photo taken before 1934 when church was stuccoed*

It was the shortage of Sunday school rooms as well as a general shortage of space that prompted thoughts about a new church, and in 1958 the site of the present church was purchased.

The ground breaking service for the new church was held on Sunday, April 21, 1963 and the service of dedication was celebrated on August 30, 1964. The former church was purchased by St. John's Lutheran and now provides a park-like setting adjacent to St. John's.

A festival service with mortgage burning and dedication of a new copper steeple was held October 28, 1979.