

140th Anniversary Briefs

Sept. 6, 1883	Pastor Anders Nilsen ordained.
Sept. 19, 1883	Seven men met to organize a Lutheran Church in Watertown.
Oct 23, 1883	Ladies Aid was organized with 8 members. Miss Sarah Bodtker first president.
Dec. 22, 1883	First Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church organized in a room over the Merchants Bank of Watertown. Hans Mathiesen elected chairman of congregation.
Jan. 8, 1884	Congregation held first annual meeting.
July, 1885	Congregation acquired title to present site for church property.
Aug. 1885	Sunday School was organized. Six pupils.
Sept. 26, 1886	Dedication of first church building, Professor Sven Oftedal officiated. Building Was 30x40 with no basement-cost \$2000.00. Altar cloth and altar decorations purchased.
1887	Organ purchased for \$50.00. "Pigeforening" (young girls) organized by Caroline Nilsen.
1889	Ladies Aid bought a communion set and mourning cloth for altar and pulpit.
1890	Ministerial Book and baptismal fount were bought. Congregation joined the "United Lutheran Church of America."
1892	Pastor Nilsen resigned due to failing health-last official act was to perform marriage of daughter Caroline. He passed away November 25.
1893	Ladies Aid bought new furnishings for church-a table, stand, hat rack, looking glass and carpet.
1902	First parsonage built.
1903	"Dorcas Society" took the place of "Pigeforening."
1909	Idea of Luther Hospital was developed which later became Memorial Hospital later merging into St Anne's Hospital and then became Prairie Lakes Hospital.
Dec. 6, 1915	Discussion held on building new church.
Dec. 1, 1916	Due to poor crops, decision was made to wait one more year before building new church.
Mar, 7, 1916	Decided to give 1/3 of "ingathering money" to Augustana College.
June 3, 1919	Congregation voted to build new church.
April 15, 1920	Constitution and by-laws were read in Norwegian and English. Decision was made that English was to be used at all meetings.
Aug. 1, 1920	Cornerstone laid for new church. Official act performed by Rev. George Wigdahl.
May 9, 1921	Name of church changed to Grace Lutheran church.
July 10, 1921	Present brick building was dedicated. Dedication sermon given by Dr. H.G. Stub.
June 24, 1922	Women given voting rights.
Feb. 21, 1923	Grace Mission Society joined the Women's Missionary Federation.
Jan., 1924	Envelope system for offerings approved.

1924	Pastor Okdale started devotional services on radio.
Oct.11, 1927	Lutheran Daughters of the Reformation joined.
Nov. 5, 1931	Junior Luther League organized.
Dec. 2, 1932	Boy scout Troop No. 65 organized. Scoutmaster Leland H. Rhodes.
Oct. 22, 1933	Fiftieth Anniversary observed. Dr. O.J. Aasgaard guest speaker.
Dec. 1, 1935	First radio broadcast of church services on KWTN, now radio station KWAT. Fee was paid by Rev. Okdale.
Dec. 31, 1936	Grace Lutheran Aid began following union of Grace Ladies Aid and Grace Circle.
March, 1937	Bylaws and Constitution of Grace Lutheran Aid adopted.
March 2, 1937	Congregation took over sponsorship of radio broadcasts.
Dec. 3, 1940	Adoption of Ministers Pension Plan approved.
Jan. 11, 1943	Burning of church mortgage of the church we now use. Nine stained glass windows contributed by members and church organizations.
Sept., 1943	Sixtieth Anniversary celebrated.
Oct. 12, 1943	Luther Hospital Association report notes \$3000 mortgage had been paid off, discusses staff intact but for one called to military service, and the directors had authorized the sending of ten students to Augustana college in Sioux Falls as part of the School of Nursing training.
Jan., 1944	Action taken to set up fund to beautify church.
May 6, 1945	Grace conducted 500 th radio broadcast. Congregation approved sponsorship and support for full time missionary.
1946	Approval given for purchase of pipe organ.
Sept., 1948	65 TH Anniversary observed. Dedication of chancel and pipe organ.
1948	Remodeling of church. Statue placed in altar.
1949	Forty One Luther Leaguers off to Saskatoon, Canada for International Convention. Last minute Greyhound bus driver strike cause need to find buses from Yankton to provide rides.
1951	Hymn request program started.
Dec. 9, 1951	Congregation voted to buy a parsonage.
June 12, 1953	Study began on parish education addition.
Jan 11, 1954	Gift subscription to Lutheran Herald for all members approved.
June 19, 1955	First drive-in service held at Melody Drive-In Theater. Farl property acquired- to be used for Sunday School.
Dec., 4, 1955	Choir presented "The Messiah" for 21 st consecutive year, filmed and presented over KDLO-TV on December 11.
Dec., 18, 1955	First program of "Let the People Speak" given on local TV Station.
Jan., 10, 1956	Congregation voted to buy Farl and Lokken properties and the Merty property to provide space for the new Fellowship Hall/education addition.
Jan. 18, 1956	"Through the Porthole," a children's program featuring Captain Dick (Pastor Richard Borrud) first presented over KDLO. Program added to broadcast by KELO-TV in October, 1956.

July 12, 1956	Architect authorized to go ahead with plans and specification for new Parish Hall.
Sept., 23, 1956	"Every member Visit" plan started.
May 19, 1957	Ground breaking for Parish Hall.
April 20-27, 1958	Dedication week for the Parish Education Annex which cost approximately \$350,000.
Dec., 7 1958	25 th presentation of "The Messiah."
Sept., 2 1959	Special congregational meeting discussed to start of a new congregation on the north side of Watertown.
Oct. 26, 1959	Congregation voted to extend credit up to \$65,000 to the new congregation.
Nov 6, 1960	Godspeed Service was held for 212 members and 50 families transferred to daughter church, Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer on north side of Watertown
1961	Drive-In services moved to East Park Drive-In Theater. New Public Address system installed in sanctuary, six hearing aid units provided.
Jan., 10, 1962	Training for Bethel Bible Study teacher begun.
1963	Easter Services begun at Watertown Civic Arena. Average attendance at services in 1963-1,170.
Dec., 22, 1963	80 th Anniversary. Congregation had a membership of 3,154 baptized, 2,083 confirmed. Theme for sermon – "Hold Not Back" 1480 th radio broadcast.
1963	Start of congregational phase of the Bethel Study Program. 210 adults took part.
1964	Grace Lutheran Foundation established.
1964	Sharon Vik leaves to serve as a nurse in Ethiopia under World Brotherhood Exchange.
1965	Parsonage on 18 th 4 th St. SE sold. Purchased home at 315 7 th Ave. NE. Shore Acres purchased as future site of Drive-In services.
1971	Lenten Service theme-"What I Did with Jesus"-a series of impersonations of people who met or lived with Jesus.
1971	Congregation voted support for Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth Mesplay in New Guinea. Plans to remodel sanctuary and enlarge church entry approved. Congregation did not approve loan for project.
1971	Saw beginning of new concept for Confirmation and First Communion. Introduction of Children's Sermon. Organization of a "Couples Club."
1972	Remodeling work done in church basement for classrooms. Purchase of Born house.
Sept. 15, 1973	90 th Anniversary celebrated. Congregation included 3,0078 baptized members, 2,209 confirmed members. Average attendance 958.
Dec. 7, 1973	The Final Payment of the Mortgage on the Educational Annex was paid.

Dec. 9, 1973	Celebrated 2000 ^{0th} consecutive broadcast of Grace Lutheran Hour on KWAT.
1974	Sale of parsonage approved by congregation. Congregation approves remodeling of church narthex. Dedication of Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer.
Jan. 1, 1975	United Mission Appeal for the A.L.C. Grace Lutheran's pledge
To	was for \$26,400. The U.M.A. was completed on April 25h with \$49,587
April 25, 1975	pledged on a basis of 3 years with 262 families pledging towards the appeal.
1975	Bids let for remodeling of church narthex. Groundbreaking for remodeling of church narthex.
Sept. 28, 1975	Laying of cornerstone for new narthex.
Nov. 30, 1975	Dedication of new narthex and remodeled sanctuary, and Fellowship Hall. Project cost approximately \$350,000.
Dec. 25, 1976	Annual Community Christmas Supper began with Kermit and Buff Johnson organizing.
1977	New Articles of Incorporation and a new Constitution approved by congregation. Pony Express Program for stewardship project approved.
1978	Grace Lutheran sponsored two refugee families from Viet Nam.
Sept. 24, 1978	Celebration of 95 th Anniversary.
1978	Women's fall church bazaar started later renamed Nordefest.
1979	Board of Deacons recommend adoption of new Lutheran Book of Worship.
1980	Lexon Covering on stained glass windows. Introduction of new (Green hymnal) Lutheran Book of Worship.
1981	Purchase of bus for church use. New system for hard of hearing installed as memorial to Les Mathiesen
1982	Purchase of land in old school block for parking space.
1983	Adoption of Biblical Stewardship program.
Sept. 18, 1983	CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION-100 Years of Grace. Radio Broadcast from Grace Lutheran Church, number 2500, will be part of the Centennial Festival on Sunday, September 18.
1983	Education committee approves Marcia Jelsma to train as a Parish Education Associate at Augustana College as per Synod guidelines.
1983	Individualized confirmation program adopted.
1983	Search Bible Study introduced.
1984-1989	Rev. Bob and Susie Waite serve as missionaries to Central African Republic.
1985	Stephen Ministry begun.
1987	Vote to merge ALC to become ELCA approved by congregation.
1989	Launching of "Keeping Faith" fund drive.
1990	Grace Lutheran Sponsored a Polish refugee family.
1990	Divine Drama and Crossways Bible Study introduced.
1992	Installation of elevator to the Sanctuary and basement.
1993	Grace Lutheran Preschool started with Sylvia Lehman and Kay Yackley.

1995	GLCW financed new carpeting and wallpaper in the church offices.
1998	Established a maintenance fund for emergency maintenance from Clara Mathiesen Estate.
1999	Installation of the internet to Grace Lutheran. West parking lot paved from donation by Carl Nelson. Wednesday School added as part of the Education Program. Watertown Christian School began leasing classroom spaces for their school classrooms.
2000	New windows installed in the 1957 addition as a result of many donations from faithful members of the congregation.
2001	The creation of a new Chapel completed just off the northeast entrance.
2002	Watertown Banquet started using the Grace Fellowship Hall on Monday evenings.
2002	Blessing and Dedication of Upper Room-youth meeting room. Contemporary Worship Services began under direction of Pastor Bill and Karen Hamill and Jerod Jordan. Large screens, projector and cabinet for power point from Fremont Forsberg.
2003	A garage was constructed.
2005	The stained glass windows in the sanctuary were restored and thermal glass installed.
2006	Major upgrade of audio in sanctuary.
2006	Installation of chair lift in education wing and automatic door openers installed. New sound system and video projector installed in Sanctuary.
2007	Carol Bergan hired as part time parish nurse. Darlene Olson hired as part-time Volunteer Coordinator. LATI campus ministry began. Organ in sanctuary rebuilt.
2007	Sanctuary remodel. Carpet removed and old wood floors were refurbished. Chair lift installed by pulpit area. Painting of cross on wall behind pulpit added after removal of red drapes. New blue pew cushions added. Rededication of remodeled sanctuary.
2008	Beautification of the courtyard started as an Eagle Scout project and completed by Tony Bresson, head custodian. Conference table designed and constructed by Tony Bresson for use in the Conference Room.
Sept. 20 & 21, 2008	Stained glass windows in Narthex, Frosted windows in Chapel.
2011	125 th Anniversary noted for Grace Lutheran. Grace web page established. Entrance enclosures added to Education Wing and Sanctuary. Kitchen remodeled. New Stove installed.
2017	Larger cross installed on bell tower of church. Cranberry Hymn Books introduced.
2016	Projection screens and TV as well as cameras installed.

2018	Removed tiles from floor in Fellowship Hall and asbestos from the 1957 addition. Fellowship Hall and hall floors rebuffed. Fellowship Hall floor stained and Hallways covered with epoxy.
2018	Replaced boiler and water (pipe) lines.
2020	New metal roof on Sanctuary.
2020	Church closed for Covid 19 Pandemic-Worship changed to recorded services for radio with video upload to YouTube and Facebook. Began uploading video of weekly worship to Grace website at glcwtn.org
2020	Spring-Parking lot services were held with staff and musicians using south Fellowship Hall windows and outside staging with congregation sitting in their cars in the parking lot. Confirmation held through ZOOM. Service of confirmation held in parking lot wearing mask and social distancing. In fall services moved to sanctuary with 6 foot spacing, masking, without passing offering plate, and no singing by the congregation.
Apr 4, 2021	Easter-Services offered in sanctuary with singing through masks, communion allowed to come forward again, with communion packets still available in pews, offering plates remain in back of sanctuary.
July 18, 2021	Celebration-100 th Anniversary of laying of cornerstone of Grace building.
Dec. 19, 2021	First Las Posadas held to celebrate Spanish speaking Christmas Celebration.
2021	Floors in Fellowship Hall and hall tile removed and renovated. BeFriender program start with members visiting members.
2022	Roof on 1957 addition replaced. Many of the sidewalks around the church replaced. Updated the phone system. Committee descriptions were updated. New lightweight tables purchased in fellowship hall (25 long/16 round). Watertown Fruit was purchased to sell fresh fruit seasonally and dried fruits, nuts and candy as Watertown Fruit by Grace.
2023	Church sign replaced with digital sign. Updated church management software from PowerChurch to Aplos. QR codes added to online Giving. Grace sponsored a Ukrainian Refugee family and a single Ukraine Refugee. Removing tiers of choir room to single level Multi-purpose room begun.
Sept 10, 2023	Confirmation students return to Acolyte during service. Ushers returned to passing the plate then presenting to altar.
Sept. 17, 2023	Radio broadcast 4587 th consecutive regular broadcast over KWAT on our 140 th Anniversary celebration which was live streamed. 140 th Anniversary Celebration held on September 17 th Daughter church LCOOR returned with choir and bell choir to combine with Grace in celebration of 140 th . Pastor(s) Dan and Laura Overbo assisted. Bishop Constanze Hagmaier proclaimed the Gospel.

*Thanks be to God for those who have
Blessed the mission and ministry of
Grace Lutheran Church Through the Years*

Senior Pastors of the Grace Lutheran Congregation

Anders Nilsen, 1883-1892; Franz C. Norman, 1892-1899; A.C. Barron, 1899-1907; J.B. Reinertsen, 1907-1912; O.J. Edwards, 1913-1922; H.A. Okdale, 1922-1937; Oscar C. Hanson, 1937-1941; B.R. Biorn 1942-1949; Conrad M. Thompson, 1949-1951; Carroll Hinderlie, 1952-1954; Norman Hammer, 1954-1959; George P. Larson, 1959-1968; Walter Kirkegaard, 1968-1978; Diedrik A. Nelson, 1978-1989; Howard Mars, 1989-1994; Gary Westgaard, 1995-2004; Stephen Lauricella, 2005-2012; Janet Miller, 2014-2019; Cheryl Rondeau-Bassett, 2020 -.

Assistant and Associate Pastors

Edgars O. Kiploks, 1950-1951; Kenneth E. Christopherson, 1950-1951; Harris E. Kaasa, 1956-1967; Gustav Kopka, 1958-1959; Charles H. Akre, 1959-1963; Ogden L. Lovdokken, 1963-1965; Julius Roehl, 1965-1967; John R. Meyer, 1968-1970; Dean Larsen, 1970-1975; Dennis Reiman, 1976-1979; Stephen Lien, 1980-1984; Robert N. Dovenmuehler, 1985-1992; Gary Hanson, 1985-1986; Suzanne Benidt, 1987-1992; Robert Waite, 1990-1992; Tedd Rieke, 1992-1995; John Sandstrom, 1996-1999; Del Oliver, 1997-2000; William "Bill" Hamill, 2000-2005.

Visitation Pastors

Edward O Erickson, 1951-1957; John B Rockne, 1957-1963; Joel E. Nelson, 1963-1972; Arthur H. Johnshoy, 1973-1984.

Lay Visitation Minister

Ray Kierstater, 2003-2006.

Former Interns

Herbert A. Loddings, 1938-1939; Reuben A. Wangberg, 1939-1940; Lowell A. Holte, 1940-1941; Reuben Gornitzka, 1941-1942; Gilford Helgeson, 1942-1943; Leonard Hultgren, 1943-1944; Eugene W. Nilsen, 1945-1946; Wallace J. Asper, 1946-1947; Raymond L. Brien, 1947-1948; Archie Lovaas, 1948-1949; Philip S. Froiland, 1954-1955; Myrwood A Bagne, 1954-1955, Richard J. Borrud, 1955-1956, Wilmer C. Frieseth, 1956-1957; Jay Spoonheim, 1965-1965; Kathy Waltz 1995-1996, Brenda Handle-Johnson, 2021-2022.

Interim Pastors at Grace

Bill Loughmiller, 1994-1995; Gene Peterson, 2004-2005, Dennis Hansen, 2012-2014.

Pastors Ordained at Grace Lutheran Church

Arthur Wigdahl, 1945; Cecil Tellekson, 1946; Merlin I. Seal 1949; 1; Robert Henriksen, 1953; Gary E. Clark, 1963; H. Allen Vik, 1963; Bruce Williams, 1967; Keith O. Hanson, 1972; Stephen D. Swenson, 1975; Kathy Boadwine, 1979; Jim Pollard, 1981; Roger Berner, 1982; Robert Waite, 1984, Randy Emgarten, 1999; Jared Rakness, 2006.

Pastors who are Sons of Grace but Ordained Elsewhere

Gene Sikkink, 1960; Willard L Olsen, 1965; Walter J. Rasmussen, 1968; David Geo. Larson, 1974.

Educational Directors and Associates

Erwin B. Overby, 1960-1961; Willis V. Hanson, 1961-1964; Marcia Jelsma, 1983-2014, Beverly Scriver, 1992-1999; Chris Benson, 2000-2002; Jerod Jordan 2002-2011, 2015-2020; Becky Sprouse, 2021-2023; Josh Casper, 2023.

Business Administrators

Miles Nysetwold, 1961-1966; Judy Everson, 1995-2014; Cindy Vander Liest, 2014-2023; Kat Anderson 2023-

Parish Workers

Rev. H.J. Hetien, 1921-1922; Gertrude Larson, 1926-1928; Rev. Geo. Wigdahl, 1927-1937; Viola Stene, 1949-1950; Hulda Simenson, 1951-1955; Betty Ellingboe, 1955-1959; Ruth Harrington (Stadhem), 1957-1960; Shirley Skoglund (Flagstad), 1965-1967; Agnes Syltie, 1967-1968; Marian Herr, 1968-1970; Ardella Hjelle, 1970-1974; Susan Wolf, 1974-1978; Alice Waldow, 1978-1982; Lindsey Miller, 2015; JoAnn Spartz, 2015-2017; Jennifer Landon, 2018-2020.

Parish Secretaries

Mildred Christopherson, 1944-1948; Marlene Megard, 1948-1950; Carol Beglou, 1950; Violet Halse (Field), 1951-1953; Elvira Lee, 1953-1957; Helen Crandall Wareham, 1957-1958; Doris Shaha, 1958-1959; Ruby Hippe, 1959-1961; Marlys Muller, 1961-1970; Ardell Johnson, 1970-1974; Nancy Nehring, 1974-1975; Cindy Haug, 1975-1976; Deb Palucci, 1976-1979; Cindy Erickson, 1979-1980; Julie Jensen, 1978-1971; Buff Johnson, 1980-1997; Shirley Kumm, 81-83; Linda Rakness, 1983-1987; Charlene Piehl, 1995-1997; Becky Leddy, 1997-1999; Elva Sigurdson, 2000-2003; Renee Ploof, 2004 -2009; Mary Beth Lauricella, 2009-2012; Jody Norsworthy, 2012-2014; Kathy Kruiter, 2012-2020; Liz Dunn, 2014-2020; Will Rogers, 2021-20122; Breanna Hemiller, 2022-2023.

Pre-School

Syliva Lehman, Kaye Yackley, Lisa Goens, Bobbie Jenner, Kara Julius, Kalli Green, Dani Dobberpuhl, and Maia Brooks.

Organists

Mrs. E.C. Davey, Mrs. Cecil Tellekson, Mrs. Marie Bjornsrud, Mrs. Esther Mikkelson, Mrs. Lucille Billington Evenson, Mrs.s Art Henrikson, Velma Johnshoy, Doris Nelson, Blair Titze, Barb Kirkegaard, Gretchen Rogotzke, Angie Eickmeier, A.J. Sherrill, Mike Stusiak, Judy Everson, Marcia Jelsma, Isaac Montemeyer.

Custodians and Assistants

Ole Gesley, Ole Slostad, Ben Edwards, John Carlson, Rev H.A. Okdale, Rev. G.O. Wigdahl, Oscar Monson, Steve Johnson, Seymour Peterson, Simon Engels, Herb Englund, Arthur Vogt, Ray Ostrander, John Gonzalez, Merle Stark, Lew Fjerstad, Willie Redemske, Al Satter, Don Seim, Charles Schnackenberg, Judy Cordell, Jerry Urban, Judy Gilbertson, Chris Bensen, Myron Namken, Jerod Jordan, Elton Bresson, Dan Brekke, Rich Dunn.

*Any additions of corrections should be emailed to Pastor Cheryl for future reference at:
cherylgracelc@midconetwork.com Thank you!*