



FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH (ALC)

1985

9 N. W. Third Street • Ortonville, Minnesota 56278

SERVICES

Sunday - Sept. thru May

8:15 a.m. Morning Worship

9:15 a.m. Sunday School for all ages

10:30 a.m. Morning Worship

Saturday - June thru Aug.

7:30 Evening Worship

Sunday

9:30 a.m. Morning Worship

We invite you to share with us the joys of Christian Fellowship and Service through:

Circles	•	ALCW	•	Squares	•	Leagues
Day of Love	•	Koinonia Groups	•	Choirs		
Sunday School		•	Confirmation Classes			
Church Boards	•	Ushers	•	Lectors and		
Lay Assistants	•	Altar Guild	•	Visitation Teams		

• You are always welcome at this Church. The Good News of what God has done for us in Christ is shared through preaching, the Sacraments, and various opportunities for Spiritual growth.

We consider ourselves part of a family, the family of God, and specifically the family of First English congregation. Each member of the family is needed to uplift and encourage one another and to reach out in love, witness, and service to the community and the world as the Holy Spirit enables and empowers us.

Loving and caring is a very important part of our lives and the life of this church. Being loved and cared for is also important. We need that. We would like to reach out to you and help you and your family find fulfillment for your lives. Allow us the privilege of letting God love you through us.

OUR CREED

*We believe in God the Father
almighty, Maker of heaven
and earth.*

*And in Jesus Christ
his only Son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy
Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary;
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead and buried;
he descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from
the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of
God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come
to judge the quick and the dead.*

*We believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy Christian church, the
communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

History of First English Lutheran

ORGANIZATION

Rev. John Walseth began serving local Lutheran families when he moved to Ortonville in 1910. Ortonville was grouped with St. Paul's congregation of Bellingham, Minnesota and St. John's congregation of Milbank, South Dakota under Rev. Walseth in 1912. In Ortonville, he organized a Norwegian Ladies' Aid.

After 15 years, the Ortonville group decided to start a Lutheran church that would have services in English every Sunday. As a first step, the Ladies' Aid Society met at the home of Mrs. O.M. Osen on December 2, 1926. Charter members were the Mesdames: S.J. Anderson, John Dobak, Carl Eastvold, L.P. Everson, John Hagevik, Julia Martinson, O.M. Osen, Wm. Randall, A.C. Saeger, Nellie Scholberg, H.J. Shelver, A.H. Sorenson and John Spanyers.

On January 27, 1927, a business meeting of all prospective church members was held in the basement meeting room of the Ortonville library, at which the constitution was adopted, officers were elected, and trustees were authorized to proceed with incorporation.

Since this was the first Lutheran church in Ortonville to have all services in the English language, the name "First English Lutheran Church of Ortonville, Minnesota" was formally adopted by the congregation on February 2, 1927. An application was sent to the secretary of the Southern Minnesota District of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. Since 1962, First English has been affiliated with the American Lutheran Church.

BUILDINGS

The Ortonville State Bank building at 33 Northwest Second Street was purchased to serve as a first church for the new congregation. Services were held there from May 1, 1927 until December 24, 1939.

The building committee purchased the three corner lots at the intersection of Jackson Avenue and Third Street Northwest on April 2, 1939. Architect Thorwald Thorson had drawn up plans for the desired granite structure, and the cornerstone was laid on June 13, 1939. Six months later the first service was held in the church sanctuary.

Dependent on Thorson to supervise the construction of his first church, the council members also served as the building committee. O.M. Osen was general chairman of the building committee; E.J. Martinson, chairman of the congregation; Mrs. J.C. Sanborn, treasurer; J.M. Dahl, secretary; and A.H. Anderson, John Dobak, Carl Eastvold, Ferd Grosenick, J.A. Jacobson, William Klemp and Caspar Weigand comprised the combined council and building committee. They bought a used truck and hired day laborers to haul the granite to the churchsite. Some weeks their progress depended on the size of the Sunday collection.

On November 26, 1950, the last of the church mortgage notes were burned at a church ceremony, ten years earlier than had been anticipated.

The parish education building was erected in 1956 with Thorson, Thorson & Madson of Mason City, Iowa the architects, and Hasslen Construction Company of Ortonville the general contractor. With the ground-breaking ceremony in April 1956, the building was ready for use in September of that year. The addition included Sunday school rooms, a library, church offices and pastor's study. Since then the

building has undergone some remodeling, but the basic structure remains the same.

PARSONAGE

The first parsonage was purchased in 1947 and sold when the lots north of the church were purchased for the education building. One of the houses there was used as the parsonage until the addition was built in 1956. The new two-story parsonage at 744 Highland Highway was built in 1959.

PASTORS

Arling E. Thompson	1929-1937
Otto E. Schmidt	1938-1944
Lavern R. Hanson	1944-1951
Amon O. Johnson	1951-1955
Harold O. Ward	1956-1972
Robert Sorenson	1973-1981
Robert L. Dahl	1982-

As assistant pastor, Rev. Leonard Smestad was added in 1976. Since September 2, 1982, Rev. John R. Vagts has been visitation pastor. Mr. Dennis Johnson was an intern pastor for one year, beginning in September 1984, as well as chaplain at Anothan Chemical Dependency Treatment Center in Ortonville.

Members of the congregation who have gone into dedicated Christian service include: Rev. Carl Ulrich, commissioned into Foreign Missionary Service on June 16, 1957. He is currently at Ashby, Minnesota.

Rev. James Howard Goldsmith, ordained July 19, 1970, is now in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

Rev. Lyle Dean Hoxtell, ordained June 2, 1973, is now in counselling ministry in Jamestown, North Dakota.

Rev. June Eastvold Nilssen, ordained into the ministry of LCA, Fourth Lutheran Church of Springfield, Ohio in June 1974, was installed October 6, 1985 as Senior Pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, ALC.

Fern Olson Cole, graduate of St. Olaf, has been at Rock Point Lutheran Mission of Chinle, Arizona since 1970. She has been translating the Bible into Navaho.

Gary Mikkelsen is presently serving a year of internship at Colton, South Dakota. He will graduate from Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary in 1987.

In addition to the church council, the governing body of the church, and all its committees, there are many service and study groups to carry on the work of the church. Although the names have changed during the years and the emphasis changes with the times, the work continues. These include the choirs, Sunday school, Bible school, altar guild, Lutheran church women, ushers, lectors, acolytes, greeters, youth groups, Stephen Ministry, Day of Love, Search and other Bible Study groups.

Memorial gifts have added beauty and services to the church over the years. The stained glass windows were dedicated on February 18, 1945 in memory of Lt. John Dobak, S.Sgt. Harold Schmidt, Pvt. Maynard Nelson and Pvt. Richard Nelson, who died in World War II. As a reminder of Vietnam, the Gerald Fredrickson Memorial Cross was placed on the church grounds in 1967.

After an initial period of growth, the membership of First English Lutheran Church was stabilized with 937 baptized members in 1984.