

Brief History of Vermont Lutheran Church



High atop a hill in the Township of Vermont stands the stately red brick structure known as Vermont Lutheran Church. Its early beginnings are found to be in September 1855 when a group in the community met to form the congregation that officially began in 1856. Family histories and records indicate that some of the early settlers came as soon as 1850, urging others from Norway to come to the beautiful land. This indeed was a travel that revealed a testimony of faith, courage, and fortitude. The days were rough, the territory new, and a foreign tongue all contributed to the adventure these early immigrants were facing.

The first services of this congregation were held in the Village Hall in Black Earth and when the weather was pleasant services were held outdoors. There were seventy-four communicants at the service held in September 1855. During the following year four services were held and at the last of these four services a protocol was signed by Rev. P.M. Brodahl, thus marking the official beginning of the Vermont Lutheran Congregation on October 3, 1856.

Plans for the first church began with the committee agreeing to the amount of \$794 for the structure. The first log church was brought from Black Earth by twenty teams of oxen in January, 1860. It was located on Hwy. 78 near the junction of Union Valley Road. A historical marker can be found near the top of the hill on Vermont Church Road. This sign was erected just in time for the Sesquicentennial celebration in July, 2006.

The second Vermont Lutheran Church was located at the present site and was built at a cost of \$804.90. To raise this amount of money the congregation voted to tax each farmer \$1 per “forty” or 30 cents for each \$1 he possessed otherwise. There were 64 families at that time. In 1866 Vermont Lutheran Congregation had 645 members according to the parochial school report.

The third and present church was completed in 1914 with dedication services being held in May of that year.

The constitution that was written in 1884 was translated into the English language and revised and was approved at the annual meeting in 1939.

Since these days many changes have evolved:

- Constitution has been updated several times
- Church services and Sunday School held every Sunday
- Services held in English, with celebrations bringing in history of the congregation
- Electricity, furnace and air conditioning installed
- Sanctuary remodeled
- Nursery area made available
- Narthex addition added
- Kitchen remodeled
- Elevator installed
- Pastor’s office constructed
- Library area relocated
- Congregants vote to become a ‘stand-alone’ congregation for the first time in the history of Vermont Lutheran Church with an emphasis on outreach and mission

Pastors who have served Vermont Lutheran Church

The Rev. Peter M. Brodahl 1856—1860

The Rev. John N. Field 1860—1883

The Rev. Olaus P. Syftesad 1883—1890

The Rev. Severin Gunderson 1890—1932

The Rev. Hector Gunderson 1932—1954

The Rev. Oliver Solberg 1954—1962

The Rev. Theodore N. Borgen 1962—1983

The Rev. Jorgen Kappel-Hanson 1983—1987

The Rev. Margaret Hammer 1983—1987

The Rev. Vernon Awes 1988—1992

The Rev. Martha Nack 1988—1992

The Rev. Sally Smith Ankerfeldt 1992—1997

The Rev. Dan Odden 1994—2002

The Rev. Ellen Munter 1998—2002

The Rev. Kari Vadis 2003—2005

The Rev. Timothy Vadis 2003—2006

The Rev. John Shep 2006—2008

The Rev. Chad L. Christensen 2009 - present