



1859
1959

100th

ANNIVERSARY

SIX MILE GROVE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

To each and everyone, we bid a warm and hearty welcome. It is with great pleasure that we present this survey of the history of our congregation. May the message of peace that flows from God's forgiveness, through Jesus Christ, deepen our devotion—not only as we celebrate our 100th anniversary, but as we begin our second century at Six Mile Grove Lutheran Church.

The Centennial Committee

HISTORY of the SIX MILE GROVE LUTHERAN CHURCH

One hundred years ago Six Mile Grove was a forest undisturbed by the European emigrants. The first Norwegians to settle in this part of the state arrived in 1854 and a few made their homes in Nevada Township.

SETTLERS

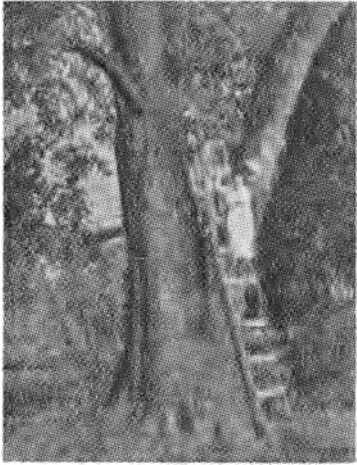
Thov Olson Uvesaker came to Six Mile Grove forest in 1853. He was gone during the winter, but came back in the spring of 1854. The following Norwegians moved and settled in the forest in the course of two years: Hans Swenson and son, Christopher; Thron Kleppo Richardson and son, Ole T.; Mathias Hanson; Knut Kvale; Swend Trasimet; Peter Martin; Gunder Halverson; Ole Thovson; Halver Thovson; Aslak Flaten; Torges Olson; Trond Bunde; Ole Sampson; Frederick Martin; Johannes Martin; Andrew Anderson and sons, Hans C. and Anton.

During the next two or three years came: Herman Amundson and son, Knut; Knut Hage; Francis Hearsh; Thor Larson; Halvor Volstad; Torbjorn Enerson and sons, Sam, Tom, and Nels; Andrew Bergeson and sons, John and Hans; Richard Olson; Jarand Olson; Richard Lunde; Nels Olson, and son Ole Nelson.



The beautiful altar of Six Mile Grove Lutheran Church.

The following settled here between 1858 and 1868: Gunder Knutson; Ole Rue; David Nelson and sons Nels, Ed, and Ole; Torge Guttermson and sons Ole and Gustave; Lars Meyer and son Christian; Knut Tollefson; Jacob Jacobson; Swend Jacobson; Knut Lastine; Dreng Augeson; Knut Stoe; Ole and Jens Stoe; Bjorn Jorgenson; Lars Olson Tuve; Gulbrand Hazelbreck; Ole Severson; Anders Veslehagen and sons Erick and Nels; Lars Arneson; Gunder Ostenson; Tollef Ostenson; Andrew Femriet and son Ingebriet; Gulbrand Morstad and son Tosten; Ole Lastine; Andrew Peterson; Johannes Arneson; Even Evenson; Ole Evenson; and Aslak Flaten.



"The Big Elm Tree" under which the first business meeting of the congregation was held.



Monument erected in 1937 on the H. O. Austinson farm marks spot where "The Big Elm Tree" stood in 1859.

ORGANIZATION

These well known people had belonged to the Lutheran State Church of Norway and while some probably had no spiritual cravings, others were yearning for the "Bread of Life" and looked prayerfully for a servant of God who could preach to them the Word of Salvation and administer the Sacraments of the Lord. The nearest Lutheran Church was at St. Ansgar, Iowa, where the first settlers took their infants for baptism and the young people for instruction in religion, preparatory to confirmation. Marriages were also performed there. Pastors, however, visited the settlement and gathered for devotional services. Among them were Pastors Clausen, Preus and Otteson.

Six Mile Grove congregation was permanently organized November 19, 1859. It was one of the first Scandinavian Lutheran Churches in Mower County. The first business meeting was held under the "Big Elm Tree" on the Thron Kleppo Richardson farm in section 29. Services continued there for a time and later in the homes until the church was built.

PASTORS

The Rev. C. L. Clausen organized the congregation and served the parishes of St. Ansgar, Iowa; Rock Creek, Six Mile Grove and Red Oak Grove in Minnesota. It was called the C. L. Clausen Parish. He served until 1871 with the exception of the years 1861 and 1862 when he served as chaplain in the army.

The Rev. Johan Olson succeeded him and served until 1878. Professor B. B. Geldaker was the next pastor until 1881 when the Rev. J. Muller Eggen was called. During his pastorate, the Rev. P. A. Dietrichson served as assistant part of 1904 and 1905. After serving the congregation for 23 years, the Rev. Eggen resigned on account of poor health. The Rev. N. N. Esser, who succeeded the Rev. Eggen, served until 1912. Professor Olaf Lee of St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, was acting pastor during part of 1912 and 1913 until the next pastor, the Rev. A. Elmer Moe took charge. He served until 1922 with the exception of one year when he did organizational work at Owatonna, Minnesota. During this time, the Rev. G. Storoasli was in charge.



Rev. C. L. Clausen
1859–1871



Rev. Johan Olson
1871–1878



Rev. B. B. Geldaker
1878–1881



Rev. J. Muller Eggen
1881–1904



Rev. P. A. Dietrichson
1904–1906



Rev. N. N. Esser
1906–1912

The Rev. Moe was succeeded by the Rev. C. S. Vang who served until 1925.

The Rev. O. M. Langehaugh served us faithfully for 19 years. 1925 to 1944.

The Rev. M. L. Hostager was here during part of 1945 and 1946.

The Rev. T. G. Torvik was pastor of the congregation from 1946 to 1949.

The Rev. O. T. Boe served temporarily for three months until the Rev. S. V. Gjervik came in December of 1949. He served until 1954.

The Rev. S. O. Stenson was here from 1954 until 1958.

The Rev. Gorden Rasmussen was our Interim pastor from September 1958, until July 1, 1959.

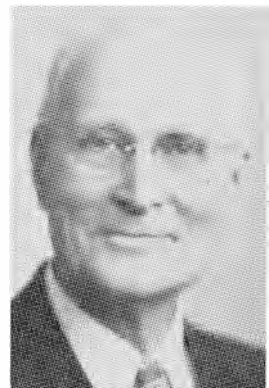
The Rev. Ernest Stolen was Interim pastor from July to September, 1959.



Rev. A. Elmer Moe
1913–1922



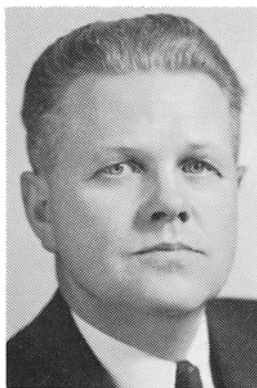
Rev. G. Storoasli
1919–1920



Rev. C. S. Vang
1923–1925



Rev. T. G. Torvik
1946–1949



Rev. O. M. Langehough
1925–1944



Rev. S. V. Gjervik
1949–1954



Rev. S. O. Stenson
1954–1958

CONSTRUCTION

Work of construction of the Six Mile Grove Church was commenced in 1867, but the building was not completed until the following spring. The bricks for the church were made from soil in section 27, known as the Ed Nelson farm. Ole Sampson laid the foundation for the church. The building committee was: The Rev. C. L. Clausen, Hans O. Anderson, Ole Sampson and Gunder Knutson.

DEDICATION

The church was dedicated in the year 1868 by the Rev. Johan Olson.

On June 20, 1937, *a historic monument with a bronze plate* affixed to it was dedicated. This monument was erected in the H. O. Austinson farmyard by members and friends of Six Mile Grove. It fittingly marks the spot where the congregation was organized 100 years ago and where divine services were held under the Big Elm tree in the early days. The Rev. A. B. Anderson and the Rev. John M. Eggen participated in the impressive dedicatory service. The monument was dedicated by Pastor O. M. Langehough in the presence of the vast audience assembled for this memorable outdoor event.

TRINITY PARISH

In January of 1951, the three churches, Mona, Six Mile Grove and Lyle, that had always been a part of the same parish and served by the same pastors, adopted a parish constitution which united their membership even though they still have the three places of worship.

They sensed the need of a neutral center where they could carry on their joint organizational activities. They purchased the building that was then a furniture store, but had previously been a garage. The renovation began at once and on September 13, 1953, the Trinity Lutheran Parish Center was dedicated.

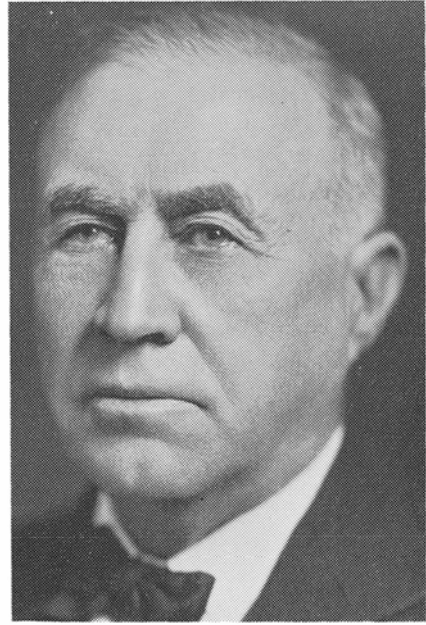
The center is not intended to replace any of the churches. It is not built or dedicated as a sanctuary, but as a workshop. It has become the meeting place of Parish organizations. Joint Luther Leagues, Brotherhood, Gold Band Club, L.C.R., Ladies Aid board and committee meetings use the Parish Center. It is also used as a recreation and community center.

In 1957, a beautiful parsonage was built for the pastor of the three churches. It is located at the north end of Lyle.

Four sons of the congregation who have entered the ministry



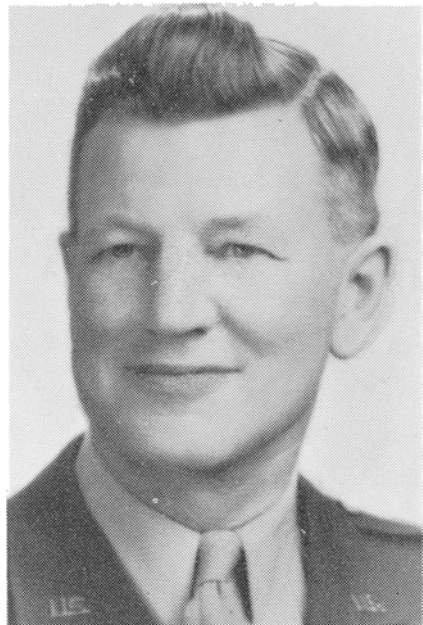
Ole T. Lee



Gustave T. Lee



Alfred B. Anderson



John M. Eggen

CEMETERY

Much of the history of the area is reflected in the church cemetery. Many pioneer names may be found on the tombstones which mark burials of as long ago as 1857. Many of the headstones were made of soft rock found in the area. Erosion has almost obliterated some of the lettering, but here and there can be found readable stones from burials in 1862.

The cemetery which was formerly owned and controlled by the congregation was turned over to the Six Mile Grove Cemetery Association and incorporated March 10, 1913. The Association now has a fund of Thirty-one hundred dollars (\$3,100). The purpose of this fund is the upkeep of a burial place for this community. So far this year we have received Six hundred dollars (\$600) for the purpose of buying additional ground for burial and also, to fix the old monuments that seem to be out of shape. The present officers are: President—Alfred Nelson; Secretary—W. R. Eggen; Treasurer—H. O. Austinson; Directors—Alfred Hofland, Otto Nelson, and C. E. Olson; Sexton—George Peterson.



LADIES AID AND MISSION CIRCLE OFFICERS—

Front Row—Mrs. Harlan Olson, Mrs. Lloyd Hanson, Mrs. John Farlinger, Mrs. Lavern Austinson.

Back Row—Mrs. Clifford Mayzlik, Mrs. Donald Patterson, Mrs. George Ransom, Mrs. Thorman Olson and Mrs. Arthur Rohne.



SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS—

Front Row—Mrs. Clifford Mayzlik, Mrs. Lavern Austinson, Elaine Klusmeier, Mrs. John Tow, Mrs. Lloyd Hanson.

Back Row—Mary Dralle, Mrs. Arthur Rohne, Patricia Irvin, Sandra Skou, Mrs. Thorman Olson, and Mrs. Neil Haskins.

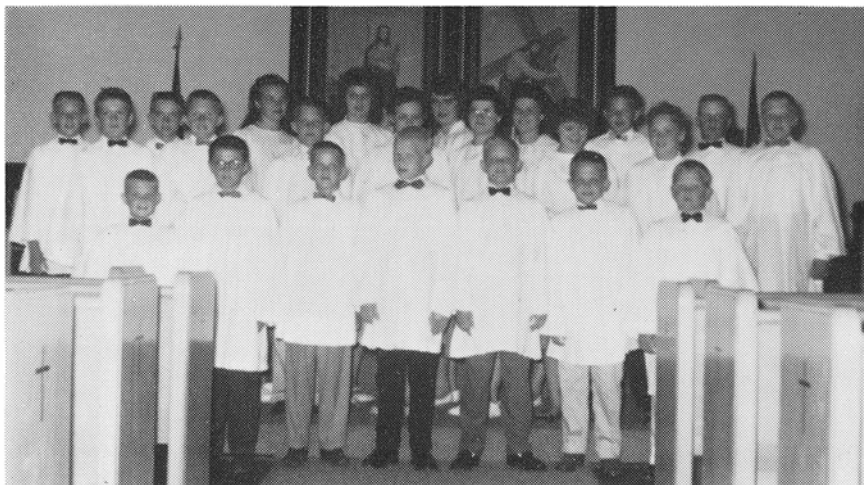
Absent—Mrs. Merle Nelson, Mrs. Leora Enerson, Beverly Nelson, Mrs. Lyla Prindle, Mrs. Melvin Rohne and Elaine Hofland.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS

The first term of Parochial School in the settlement was taught in the Hans Swenson Twinglee home. This was a log house in section 32. The first Parochial Schoolteacher was Anders Peterson.

The Ladies Aid Society has been a loyal supporter of the local congregation. It was organized in 1872 by the Rev. Johan Olson. It meets the first Thursday of every month in our church.

Sunday School has been in operation since the first years of the church's organization. Mr. L. M. Eggen was Sunday School Superintendent for twelve years. When he was injured in 1928, the vice Superintendent, Newell Nelson became superintendent. Mr. Nelson served for twenty-one years. Since then, many have served for a year or two. Some of them are: Norman Nelson, Merle Eggen, Elaine Eggen Thompson, Lavern Austinson, Marilyn Klusmeier Nelson and Elaine Klusmeier. The Sunday School teachers assisted a few years, too.



JUNIOR CHOIR—

First Row—Derry Olsen, Donald Irvin, Dean Hanson, Eugene Rohne, Derby Olsen, Dennis Olson, and Arleigh Austinson.

Second Row—Robert Irvin, Billy Klusmeier, Jerry Sampson, Marie Johnson, Mary Dralle, Marilyn Anderson, Sherry Enerson and David Olson.

Third or Back Row—Jerry Reuter, Merle Hanson, Linda Skou, Sandra Skou, Patricia Irvin, Shirley Mae Patterson, Steven Olson and Dennis Tow.

Absent—Jerry Patterson, Roger Patterson and Marlene Bahr.

The Young People's Society was organized in 1906. Now, they meet in three different groups—L.C.R., Junior High League, and Senior High League—at the Parish Center.

Two Mission Circles, the Eudora and the Ithial, were organized in 1912. In 1929, they were reorganized into four mission circles. They meet in the homes the second Thursday of every month with Bible Study and offering for missions amounting up to \$1,000.00 a year.

During the Rev. C. S. Vang's years with us, the Jewish Mission Society was organized. It is a small, but active group, consisting of members of the Mona, Lyle, and Six Mile Grove congregations. This group meets in the homes once a month.

Mrs. Andi Flaten Jacobson was the first white child born in Nevada Township and Mrs. Anna Sampson Everson the second.

The first wedding in Six Mile Grove Church was when Helen Martin was united in marriage to Francis Hearsh.

The first funeral in the congregation was that of Aslak Knutskaas in 1856.

Eight of the early members of the congregation served this country during the Civil War. Johannes Martin, Even Evenson, Corp. Knut Amundson, Johannes Bergeson, Sam Enerson, Christopher Swenson, Jacob Jacobson and Oscar Tieman.

After the first World War, a beautiful bronze tablet was presented to the congregation. The tablet commemorates the response made by our soldier boys to our country's call. One of whom died on a battlefield of France. The principal donor of this tablet was Mr. Lauritz M. Eggen. Mr. Eggen, who passed away in 1940, was one of the very faithful workers in our church being active in every department of the church.

The present Ladies' Chorus has sung together for about 35 years.

The church bell at the cost of \$325 was presented to the congregation by the Ladies' Aid in 1881.



LADIES CHORUS—

First Row—Elaine Klusmeier, Mrs. John Farlinger, Mrs. Walter Eggen, Mrs. Harold Dralle and Mrs. Andrew Steene.

Back Row—Mrs. Melvin Haugland, Mrs. Walter Leidall, Adeline Lastine, Mrs. Lyla Prindle, and Mrs. Newell Nelson.

Absent—Mrs. Anders Knudsen.

The first organ was purchased for our church in about 1889. Mrs. Laura Waldeland was the first organist. She was about twelve years old at that time.

In surveying the history of the Six Mile Grove Church the one hundred years of its activity, we recognize with sincere gratitude the guiding hand of Our Heavenly Father, who in His kindness and mercy so wonderfully blessed our efforts to build His Kingdom in this community.

It is our common prayer on this our One hundredth anniversary, that He may continue to bestow His blessing upon our church activities, so that they may redound to His glory and honor and to the salvation of many souls.

Together with the Psalmist, we would say: "This is the day which the Lord hath made. We will rejoice and be glad in it." Ps. 118:24.



I love thy kingdom Lord;
The house of Thine abode;
The church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

O ne'r may I forget
Her welfare nor her woe
Lest every joy my heart forsake
And every grief o'er flow,

To God alone, who hath given to us His Holy Word and made us partakers of His all glorious grace,
To our faithful forefathers, who laid the foundations and who built so well,
To the beloved pastors who broke to us the Bread of Life,
To those of this generation whose duty and privilege it is to take up the torch and carry it high and forward to the honor of Our Saviour's Name,
This little booklet is in love dedicated.

The Centennial Committee



CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE—

First Row—Alfred Hofland, Lavern Austinson, Merle Nelson, Harold Dralle, Andrew Steene, Max Patterson.

Second Row—Walter Eggen, Mrs. Arthur Rohne, Mrs. Ronald Nelson, Mrs. Hamlin Ashley, Adeline Lastine, Mrs. Newell Nelson, and Newell Nelson.

Absent—Herman Austinson, Melvin Martin and Elaine Klusmeier.



The present officers of the Six Mile Grove Church are:

President -----Merle Nelson
Secretary-Treasurer -----Walter Eggen
Deacons-----Lavern Austinson, Newell Nelson, Alfred Hofland

