

In its growing

... A TIME TO PLANT ...

The Sims Congregation held its 25-year Jubilee in 1909. That same year, in December, T. O. Feland noted in the minutes of the annual meeting that the congregation would hold a Christmas festival with a Christmas tree. Perhaps there were Christmas programs in prior years, but there is no mention of any in the earlier minutes.

A year later, 1910, the following resolutions relating to the Young Peoples meetings and Sunday School were passed:

"Resolved - that Young peoples organization decide when to have their meetings throughout the year.

Resolved - those who come to young peoples meeting, that they protect their animals with blankets or other against wind and cold.

Resolved - The congregation voted to ask the young peoples organization if they would provide a barn or a long shed for 5 or more horses when the weather is cold and to be paid for by congregation treasurer. It must not be narrower than 18 feet and as long as the congregation can provide money for.

Resolved - It was decided on a division of the Sunday school which meets in the old school house on Section 28, Township 138 - R86 Those who shall belong in the new division of school shall meet there and elect a Superintendent and teacher for the school also decide place where school shall be held from time to time."

In 1911, the congregation voted to ask the young people to commit themselves to collect money to build the barn for five or more horses.

1912-Rev. Isolony resigned, and the congregation now had to prepare another letter of call. After several letters, Pastor L. A. Breen of Washburn, North Dakota, met with the congregation, October 26, 1912 at Sims for a special meeting. T. O. Feland recorded the following:

"Special Congregation meeting held October 26, 1912. John E. Olin acted as temporary Foreman. Resolved as follows - Moved by Richert Olson and seconded by A. A. Johnson that the congregation call Pastor L. A. Breen of Washburn, North Dakota, to be the congregations Preacher and soul saver since the congregation's former Preacher Pastor Isolony has resigned his services as the congregation soul saver also has moved from congregation and is now living in Moorhead, Minnesota.

Resolved - that the congregation offers and promises \$600.00 in yearly salary also offering on the 3 holidays that occur in the year when the Preacher preaches here

- after ones conscience and also free house for the Preacher and his family.

Pastor L. A. Breen who was present at the meeting received the congregations 'call' letter with the same salary as that which had been offered Pastor Farseth of Fargo. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland.

In margin.—

As financial committee - E. M. Willman, Jonathan Peterson, Rick Olson, Otto Feland, Sigvald Olson shall collect from every member of the congregation that which they need to get the sum of \$600.00 for preacher salary."

That year the Republic of China was established.

In 1913 the church still had an existing debt so the ladies were asked to hold a basket social in order to help pay it. The minutes of a special meeting in March show the results of that social as well as other important proceedings of the time.

"Special Meeting, March 31, 1913, 2 o'clock afternoon. Pastor L. A. Breen led meeting which opened with a song and prayer. Resolved - that the congregation will ask the congregation ladies aid to hold a Basket Party to help pay for the congregations present debt that rest on the congregation.

This is a list of the basket sale which the congregation ladies had to earn the money.

Theo O. Feland	Basket	1.35
J. F. Shaffner	Basket	1.50
Loui Olson	Basket	1.35
Sigvald Olson	Basket	2.00
Willie Johnson	Grip	3.00
Ole Ellingson	Basket	2.25
Oscar Olson	Hat	2.25
J. Bredvold	Grip	2.80
A. Holritz	Box	1.85
Christianson, Edvart	Basket	2.60
Jake Olin	Basket	2.50
John Jacobson	Basket	1.60
Tobias Olson	Basket	1.30
Arthur Olin	Basket	1.75
Andrew Johnson	Basket	1.35
J. E. Olin	Basket	1.50
Theo. Hanson	Basket	2.10
Otto Christianson	Pail	1.25
Oli Olson	Basket	1.25
Oscar Feland	Basket	1.25
John Larson	Basket	1.00
Robert Gray	Basket	1.25
S. A. Johnson	Basket	1.25
Roy Schollart	Basket	1.00
		\$41.30
	Coffee	5.00
	Total:	\$46.90



Sims Depot
Water Tower & Pumphouse at Sims
Ticket from the last train through Sims
Taking on water
Section workers with handcar at Sims



NORTHERN PACIFIC RY. CO.

From **1516 ALBERT, N. D.**
To *Sims*

Y 5270

GOOD FOR ONE PASSAGE IN COACHES
Within Thirty (30) Days in addition to date of sale stamped on back. Transfers allowed within limit. Non-Transferable. Sold subject to tariff regulations.

Form *C* *Edwards* *St. Paul, Minn.*

CONDUCTORS MUST PUNCH AS INDICATED BELOW

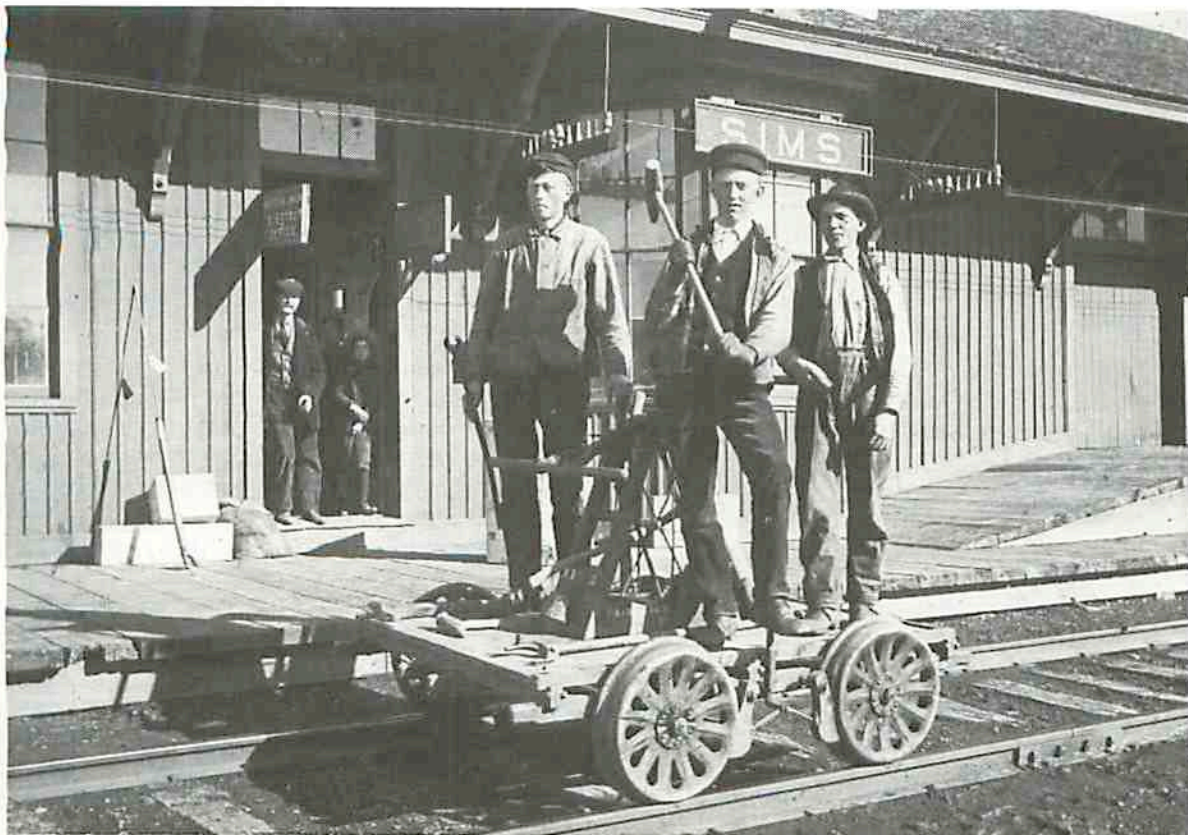
Dakot. L. Service	St. Paul	Fargo	Telegraph
Star	Dot	Dot	Dot
Rocky Mountain	Idaho	Texas	Branch
Dot	Dot	Dot	Line

CHECK to be taken up by FIRST CONDUCTOR

Y 5270 From **1516 ALBERT, N. D.**
To *Sims*

COACH TICKET
Not Good for Passage

Form *C* **NORTHERN PACIFIC RY. CO.**



Alfred Hermanson, Alfred Olin Standing in Doorway - Day, the depot agent, Florence Day

Money was earned to pay the following bill: To Theo O. Feland, \$31.65. For coal \$16.25 Insurance \$15.40 as shown in March 31, 1913 minutes.....

Resolved that the congregation treasurer pay Theo O. Feland first for coal delivered to the church - 5 loads at \$3.25 per load - total \$16.25 and second to pay insurance for the parsonage from the 18th March 1913 to March 18, 1918 - due the sum of \$15.40 - Total debt to Theo. O. Feland \$16.25 and \$15.40 - \$31.65.

Resolved - that the congregation send a hearty thanks to Tinneus Ramsland and all others who contributed for the gasoline lights that were given to the church.

Resolved - that the congregation hold a celebration in the church right before the time when Wm Ellingson shall travel to Norway which most likely will be June or July this year. Preacher will announce a week in advance - also an offering will be taken.

Resolved - that the congregation send Theo. O. Feland thanks for that he will deed all the "land rights" he has for the cemetery - this they did by all standing up.

Resolved - the deed for the cemetery shall be given this congregation trustees as soon as Feland can find time for the same.

Resolved - This congregation resolved that no one shall be buried on this congregation cemetery or burying place unless the dead or those who are in charge of burial - belong to the Christian creed - this is the responsibility of supervisor on the congregations behalf to explain to those who come to him and asks for a grave.

Closed with Lord's prayer. Theo O. Feland. Sec."

On the American scene, the 16th Amendment to the Constitution, gave the federal government the power to levy income tax, while in Europe, World War I was brewing.

Then at the annual meeting, December, 1914, the congregation began talks about constructing a church basement. It was resolved at that time to have a mass meeting in the church of congregation members. The minutes of the ensuing meetings tell the story of the construction of the basement.

"Annual Meeting which should be held Dec. 8 was changed to Dec. 9, 1914. Pastor Breen led the meeting and opened it with prayer and song. Minutes of last meeting read and approved. Resolved - Congregations treasurer presented the congregations accounts as follows:

On hand	\$651.00
Paid preacher salary	\$600.00
Oil	\$ 1.00
Balance in Treas.	\$ 50.00

Sec. for the year: Theo O. Feland; Trustees: John E. Olin, Andrew Holritz, Rolf Bakken, Ole Halverson, Tinnius Ramsland; Deacons: Wilhelm Ellingson, P. H. Hoovestol, John Jacobson; Supervisors for cemetery for one year: John Jacobson and Tinnes Thompson; Organist: Anna Jacobson.

Resolved - that Wilhelm Ellingson and P. H. Hoovestol be reinstated as members of this congregation after their return.

Resolved - that P. H. Hoovestol shall provide for the church and put it in the coal house for the churches use - 5 tons of coal (lignite) for the price of \$2.50 per ton.

Resolved - that the congregation hold a mass meeting in the church, congregations members, and ladies aid and girls club for the purpose to discuss which would be the most successful to do for the congregation either to build a new assembly hall or to build a basement under the congregations church and this meeting shall be held in the church January 30, 1915. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Secretary.

Special Meeting Feb. 12, 1915. Resolved - that since it was necessary for this congregation to build a new assembly hall for the congregation where the members can gather when they transact congregation business both in the holy and worldly welfare for the church and congregation also provide a place for congregations ladies when they have their meetings for the church's welfare and promotion. The members decided that a meeting be held in the church the 21st of February 1915. At the meeting of 30th of January 1915-5 men of the congregation who also as members of the congregation and church were chosen as a building committee for the congregations church and then all who wish come to the same meeting and speak before the named committee everything that can be of interest for the building committee, will be heard and considered by the named committee.

Resolved - No one can come forward with some idea or proposal of change of decision of meeting held Jan 30, 1915 any other must be heard by the committee only good advice for undertaking of named building attempted. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland

Special Meeting, Feb. 21, 1915. Present was the committee that was chosen Jan. 30, 1915 as building committee: Theodore Larson, John E. Olin, Rick Olson, John Jacobson, Theodore O. Feland. Resolved - John Olin chosen as foreman and Theo. O. Feland, Sec. Resolved - that this committee advertise in the Mandan Pioneer and New Salem Journal that the named will receive bids to lift the congregations church up and also build with brick, stone or cement a foundation and also put cement floor under the church after specification. Also bids will be received for furnace to be put in the basement under the church. These bids will be received by April 1, 1915 - 2 o'clock p.m. These bids must be sealed and sent to Theo O. Feland. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland.

Committee Meeting April 1, 1915, 2 o'clock. Present: John E. Olin, Theo O. Feland, Rickert Olson, Theo Larson, John Jacobson. John E. Olin was chosen as foreman. Reason for the meeting was to receive bids to raise up the church and to build a basement under the church in accordance with the plan and specifications described in the drawing of M. A. Freeburg. The committee received the following bids:

From J. D. Simons \$1,169.00; From J. D. Simons, No. 1 gravel \$1,193.00; From J. C. Young \$1,497.10. For the above named building project. The bids were overestimated. Since the bid was not satisfactory it was resolved that all bids be rejected and not accepted. Resolved that the committee meet in church the 15th of May, 1915 and receive new bids after having advertised for bids in Mandan Pioneer. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Secretary.

Building Committee met May 15, 1915. Present were: John E. Olin, John Jacobson, Rickert Olson, Theo O. Feland. The lawfully elected committee, Theo. Larson was absent. John E. Olin chosen Foreman for meeting. Theo O. Feland chosen Secretary. Reason for meeting was to accept bids for raising the church and build concrete cement basement under the church of the congregation which stands built on Lot No. 23-24 in Block 22 Terra Cotta addition in Sims.

Following bids received for named building as follows: From Thos Anunsen, Bismarck for complete \$1,350.00. Resolved - that committee shall negotiate with J. D. Simons of Mandan and in case he will complete all work according to his bid of April 1, 1915 - \$1,193.00 then to give the contract to him. In case he will not then give the contract to Thos Anunsen for the sum that he bid \$1,350.00. Resolved - this building committee chose Theo. O. Feland and John E. Olin and they were elected by the committee as a 2-man committee to contact and make a contract after first named resolution for named work of bid as named and congregation pay all travel expenses. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland.

Special Meeting of Building Committee, May 25, 1915. Present were John E. Olin, John Jacobson, Rickert Olson, Theo O. Feland. John E. Olin acted as forman. Theo O. Feland as Sec. made a motion to postpone the meeting to June 5, 1915. Resolved that meeting adjourn until June 5, 1915. Theo O. Feland

Special Congregation Meeting held June 5, 1915. Present were the following members, lawfully elected by the congregation on January 30, 1915. Theo O. Feland, John E. Olin, Rickert Olson, John Jacobson, Theodore Larson was absent.

Resolved - that the building committee will meet on July 24, 1915 and decide if the furnace should be installed while they are building the basement.

Resolved - that John Olin authorized to pay the contractor Simons as soon as the necessary money can be provided and also when the building committee has accepted all his work and find it in good and correct shape in both work and material also see that all painting inside and outside are finished according to contract.

Resolved - that John Jacobson, John Olin, Theo O. Feland, Rick Olson, the building committee of the Sims Scand. Ev. Luth. Congregation, negotiate with Chas. P. Peterson or State Bank of New Salem about borrowing money to pay for the job. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Secretary.

Special Building Committee Meeting, July 24, 1915. Present: Theo O. Feland, Rickert Olson, John E. Olin, John Jacobson. Theo Larson was absent. John E. Olin chosen foreman. Theo O. Feland chosen secretary.

Resolved - to buy and install a furnace in the church basement, a dependable big furnace which will warm the church when it is necessary to have it warmed up for church services and other ordinary meetings where church or basement are needed. To advertize for bids in Mandan Pioneer in 30 days.

Resolved - that the building committee will accept bids up to the 31st of August 1915 for providing a furnace and installing it in a dependable manner and both furnace and other material which is used must be dependable. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Secretary.

Special Meeting of Building Committee, August 31, 1915. Present: John E. Olin, Theo O. Feland, Rickert Olson, John Jacobson. Theo Larson was absent. John E. Olin chosen forman, Theo Feland chosen Secretary.

Resolved - that the bids which have been received be opened. There was a bid from Wm. Carllen of Mandan, North Dakota to install a furnace in the church basement in complete condition with all the material needed for same for the sum of \$250.00.

John E. Olin announced that it might be possible to get it cheaper from a party in Bismarck, N.D. - the committee authorized him to investigate.

Resolved - further that John E. Olin, one of the building committee, is hereby authorized to make a contract with Wm. Carllen of Mandan, N.D. or another party in Bismarck, N.D. for a sum not more than \$250.00 whichever will do it the cheaper but all must be done in a dependable manner and report back in 4 days to the building committee. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Sec.

Copy of John E. Olin report, Sept. 7, 1915. I, John E. Olin, report to the Building Committee of the Scan. Evan. Luth. congregation in Sims, N.D. Morton County, N. Dakota that in regard to the above named committees resolve at the meeting held in congregations church the 31st day of Aug. 1915 - have I made contract with Wm Carllen of Mandan, ND. Mr. Carllen took off \$5.00 therefore instead of his bid of \$250.00 he will do the same work according the the specifications in his bid, for the sum of \$245.00. The work will be done as soon as Mr. Wm Carllen can get it done and get the material sent to Sims by freight which should not take over 2 weeks. Theo O. Feland. Sec.

Special Congregation Meeting, Nov. 7, 1915. John E. Olin chosen temporary foreman. Resolved - this congregation is well satisfied with all basement work that the building committee has accomplished under the congregation's church and here the congregation expresses its hearty thanks for all that has been done both with overseeing that all work was done good and dependable and in negotiating the contract with contractor Joseph Simon was correctly paid in full for this work in accordance with his contract for same.

1. The building is a single-story structure with a gabled roof. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The exterior walls are constructed of brick. The building has a small front porch with a concrete walkway leading to it. The building is located on a lot with a driveway on the right side. The lot is bordered by a fence on the left and back. The building is in good condition.

For the materials and workmanship required in the alterations and remodeling of the "NORWEGIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH" at Sings N.E. for the trustees of the congregation according to the accompanying plans and specifications designed and prepared by N.A. Freeburg, of Singsbak, N.E. Architect, and under his supervision.

The church building which is located within the town limit of Sims N.D. and being in size approximately 28x40 feet with tower extending in front about 4ft, shall be raised up above present grade 3.2' which is also be the future grade.

contractor is to provide all materials and labor
completion substantial erection of everything
essentially implied in the drawings and speci-
this part of the work, including transportation and
required for the work herein specified, all materials to
be of the best kind.

Security

PLANS OF LUTHERAN
CHURCH - SIXTH - N.D.
N.A. FREEDUNG ARCHT.
DICKMARCH N.D.
4218 SHEPHERD

[illegible]

Mr. [unclear] have made a special price
of \$300 per sq. ft. on the shingles as they are
for the church
Dec. 9-1915

The Church
Paid Dec. 9-1915
C. H. Chase Lumber Co.
By L. J. Street
...ensils requ

Mr. John Olm,

C. H. CHASE LUMBER COMPANY
LUMBER, GRAIN, AND BUILDING MATERIAL

1918				
Jan	15	To 1000 g. 5x6-5-125	2	75
"	"	30 ft. 1000 atp		25
			#	300

Got by Mrs. Ellingson
For the Linn Church.
Mrs. Ellingson told us that
are the Treasurers so we
sending this acct. to you

Market Report - Wheat, \$.69; Barley, \$.24; Oats, \$.19. Grocery Specials - 4 pounds coffee, 98c; 9 pound bag of rolled oats, 43c; large box Kellogg's Flakes, two for 23c.

There had been 261 cars of cattle shipped from Sims during the fall season, 28 cars of sheep and eight cars of horses.

Ric Olson was planning to take a ranch between Gurley and Sima. Louis Hanery was to be his general manager.

Johnson purchased the house owned by Mrs. Johnson, located just south of his residence. Jacobson has been busy.

has increased in 300 the last crews of

George Sims, who has been acting as veterinarian at the Timmerman Ranch, came to spend Sunday with his folks.

Sept. 18-S. P. Weekes shipped seven cars of cattle Friday to the Chicago market. His son in law, Cha. Weibke, accompanied him. Amund Johnson also shipped several cars of choice beef steers Friday.

The first reports of wheat harvesting to reach the Pioneer were from the Platt Bristol farm where reaping started August 1. Mr. Timmerman, Sims merchant, was in the city and stated that the potato crop in that section was excellent and that all potatoes were expected to be large size, and "no small ones for the hogs."

P. A. Miller, one of the farmers in the Little Heart district where hail damaged crops the previous week was in the city and collected \$515 in insurance.

The old time ranchers from the Cedar River, north of McIntosh S.D. that they drove many cattle up to Sims for shipment that was the closest shipment point. They would sometimes herd the cattle waiting for

ily. subscribed. (Red Cross benefit dances during this time.)

Resolved - that John E. Olin is authorized to pay Wm. Carllen as soon as the congregation has accepted his work of installing the furnace in the church

also confirm them and preach for this congregation until we get a preacher and to inform the foreman of the United Church the result of this meeting.

Resolved - to write to the Foreman of the United Church to see if he has gotten a preacher or if he can get a preacher who shall come from Bismarck to Preach one time in each month for us until we get a permanent preacher.

Resolved - this congregation will offer Almont \$250.00 or together \$500.00 a year. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Sec."

Still without a preacher in 1922, secretary T. O. Feland wrote to former Pastor Dordahl asking him to take part in the May 17 Festival. According to Sig Peterson, Julia Brathing, who taught school in Sims about 1922, arranged the program for the Styttende Mai Fest for a couple of years. The minutes give the following information on this event:

"Resolutions taken in Sims Congregation church after services held by Pastor Th. Larson of Taylor, N.D. April 30, 1922, that according to a letter from Pastor Dordahl, Rhame, N.D. one of the congregations former pastors, the congregation accepts Pastor Dordahl's offer to come to Sims and preach in Sims congregation on the forenoon of May 17, 1922. The congregation will have an ordinary 17th of May festival in the afternoon. The congregations two Ladies Aids will furnish lunch at noon between 12 and 1 o'clock.

The assembly will hold their congregation meeting making their decision if the congregation is willing to receive Pastor Larson's offer to come to Sims and preach as often as Pastor Larson can get a chance until the congregation gets a permanent Preacher and conditions are that there shall be a collection for Pastor Larson every time he comes to preach in the church. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Sec.

Special Congregation Meeting, May 17, 1922. John E. Olin acted as foreman for this meeting which began with church services by Pastor Dordahl of Rhame, N.D.

Resolved - Pastor Dordahl elected as foreman and pastor's wife and three children as our guests at this meeting the 17th of May festival which is being held in the church basement.

Resolved - that this congregation accept Pastor Larsons offer to come to Sims and preach in the Sims church as often as Pastor Larson has occasion to from today until Sims Scan. Ev. Luth. Congregation gets a permanent 'called' preacher. The congregation after Pastor Larsons request promised to take up a collection for Pastor Larson every time he preaches here which shall be salary for his work here.

Resolved - the 2 Ladies Aids will serve lunch to all who wish it and pay 35 cents for each lunch which will be used by the 2 ladies aids to pay for Norsk religion school or for other requests for the church, improving buildings, preacher salary, or anything else needed in the congregation.

Next held the 17th of May "fest". L. Dordahl gave

Halverson, Wm Johnson. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland. Sec."

As a result of the war effort Lutherans at Sims and

the 17th of May speech in English which was like all of Dordahl's Speeches, Very Good.

Next Tobias Olson gave a talk. O. K. Overgaard sang a song after his own request. P. R. Peterson of Sims Congregation was song leader for all singing. Next there were small talks and small children songs in English by children from Curlew and Benson Schools. Sims Young Peoples Society sang several good songs, Norsk National songs. Next the whole congregation sang America.

Resolved - that the congregation thanks all who have taken part in the 17th of May festival and a special thanks to Pastor Dordahl for the lucky thought which had come to him to come to Sims and help us to hold the 17th of May fest. Pastor Dordahl and family are here regarded as guests and this congregation gave them a standing vote by all standing for Preacher and his family.

Resolved - that this has been a good meeting and will long be remembered. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Secretary."

Also, in 1922, the trustees resolved:- "that the church shall be remodeled on the inside. It shall be rounded out in the ceiling so that the sharp corners are taken out and there shall be put on tin or iron ceiling under the roof which shall extend down on the wall two feet. The wainscoting from windows to the floor shall be taken off and put back when the 'Roack shell' finishing, for sides and walls. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland."

1923-It seems that whenever money was needed to remodel or refinish the church, it was the Ladies Aid and the girls clubs that were called on to help pay the expenses. Subscriptions, however, were the main source of revenue for the pastors wages. In the early years, the Ladies Aid cleaned the church for the service and other gatherings. For the last 20 or more years, until his death in 1983, Willard Johnson took care of most repairs and did the custodial work.

During this time when the congregation was without a resident pastor, the Rev. T.H. Larson of Taylor served the congregation on a part time basis, mainly from 1920 to 1923. Several pastors were called, but it was not until 1924, however, that Rev. J. Thornell of Chicago, Illinois accepted a call and came to serve this congregation on the prairies. In North Dakota at that time in the early 1920s, the state-owned North Dakota Mill and Elevator in Grand Forks began operating; In India, Mohandus Gandhi became leader of the Indian National Congress and started a program of nonviolent disobedience against the British, and Japan suffered an earthquake that destroyed much of Tokyo and Yokahama. Elsewhere, around the world, the Panama Canal opened; the League of Nations was established; the Fascist party seized control of Italy and Benito Mussolini became dictator; and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was established. In America, the U.S. Census showed that, for the first time, the majority of Americans lived in urban areas; the 18th Amendment prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages nationwide, became effective; and the 19th Amendment gave women

complete suffrage.

1925 found the Church in need of repair again. Before these repairs were complete, secretary T. O. Feland died. During his funeral, P. R. Peterson heard the floor start cracking. He told his daughter, Valborg, who was the church organist at that time, to continue playing. He then went to find some timbers to reinforce the floor. Several members, then, did set timbers during the funeral. That year the Ladies Aid paid for a well that was dug on the cemetery. Church services were held in the Curlew school beginning in 1926. Then in 1927, Rev. Thorne resigned, and again another pastor had to be found. This time, in the fall of 1928, T. G. Monson was 'called' with a salary offer of \$1,000 per year, \$500 from the Sims' congregation and \$500 from Almont's. The minutes show that Rev. Monson preached a sermon at Sims November 25, 1928. However, it is unclear as to when he actually began serving as the pastor.

.... A TIME TO WEEP....

Then came 1929 - the stock market crash which started the Great Depression. The National Lutheran Church suffered through these years as well as the local congregations. Clifford Nelson in his book LUTHERANISM IN NORTH AMERICA summed up the decade of the 20s in these words:

"The decade of the '20s now ended had been an exciting one for America. The revolution in manners and morals, the growing hedonism and self indulgence in society at large, the expansion of communications especially by radio, the growth in mobility by automobile and airplane, and the pre-1929 economic boom - all these had contributed to the strange and somewhat "unreal" world of America just before the Great Depression."

In America the Golden Age of radio broadcasting had begun. Charles A. Lindberg had made his first solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean. THE JAZZ SINGER, the first successful motion-picture "talkie" had appeared. And, then, the stock-market crash brought financial ruin to thousands of investors.

This Depression hit America and Americans hard. People kept thinking better times would come, but that did not happen. The very stability of the country was threatened. Malnutrition among children, deterioration of physical facilities, and drastic reduction of academic budgets took their toll. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. described the conditions graphically when he said, *"The fog of despair hung over the land."* (LUTHERANISM IN NORTH AMERICA.)

To illustrate in greater detail the depressed conditions across America, Nelson quoted Ambrose Hering, executive secretary of the Lutheran Welfare Society of Minneapolis-St. Paul:

"Let no one minimize the critical emergency this winter....About 25,000,000 unemployed and their dependents need aid. Hunger marchers appeal to their bankrupt cities without avail and are clubbed down by police. In Albany the other day, a ten-year-old child collapsed in school and actually died of starvation....In

Pennsylvania miners are keeping their families alive on four cents a day per person....That we are facing "the hardest winter in many years, perhaps in the country's history," is now the sober statement of those who know the facts....Will the Christians of the land share what they have (with) the hungry and naked...?"

Nelson also wrote, *"No part of the continent suffered longer nor more acutely than the Great Plains. It is sometimes forgotten that an agricultural depression antedated the general collapse by almost a decade."*

Sims Lutherans lived in the heart of the Great Plains. Their plight was no different than that of so many others in the rural areas. During this time, one couple from Sims had little or no money. The husband got a job on the WPA for which both were grateful. Hard times were not only their lot, at that time, but others fared the same. Banks went broke. Foreclosures were common. They both told of the "clouds of grasshoppers" that darkened the sun. When they landed, the husband said, *"They ate everything that could be eaten including forkhandles."* - The dust was forever on the window sills and floor even though they were dusted and swept several times a day. One year, his wife said they received a welfare check of \$35.00 or something like that; however, because she was a good gardener, and she had good ground for a garden, she managed to grow and can enough food to provide for the family through the years. She also said that before they got any welfare money, someone came out and actually checked the amount of food she had canned which was stored in a root cellar. Even though she hated this inspection, she felt good when the inspector told her that the food looked pretty in the jars. This woman is still an artist when it comes to growing and preserving food.

How did the Sims Congregation survive this period? When I asked those who had lived through those times, by and large they mostly felt a sense of happiness mixed in with the despair. Times were hard, but people usually had time for each other--and, all were in similar circumstances. They held basket socials to raise money for the congregation's needs. The Ladies Aid had "sales and suppers" to help pay the preacher's wages. The girls clubs embroidered and knit items for sale with the proceeds going to the church. The preacher had to take a cut in his wages, but those who could helped to provide him with some produce from their gardens.

The entire Great Plains and sections of the Midwest suffered the dust storms. Nelson wrote in his book:

"On November 12 and 13, 1933, an enormous dust cloud covered an area stretching from Texas in the south to the Dakotas in the north, forming a triangle with its point over Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The sun was hidden and just penetrated dwellings no matter how tightly sealed. Reports of dust at sea came from ships off the Atlantic coast. A widespread and continued deficiency of rainfall struck the mid-continent with the ferocity of war and revolution."

The following letter to the editor which Nelson quotes in his book sums up the situation well for the Sims area residents as well as the other Americans.

"Seven years ago I bought a farm of 240 acres. I made a small payment down and the first few years I was able to make enough so that I could pay my interest and taxes and a little on the principal; but the last two years my income has been so small that I have been unable to pay interest and taxes....We have enough to eat; but could easily use more clothing. My Sunday suit and shoes were bought in 1929 and my overcoat in 1919 and my wife's and children's clothes have been mostly made-over things for many years....With wheat selling at 28 cents a bushel, butterfat at 12 cents a pound, eggs at 10 cents a dozen, turkeys at 16 cents a pound, and cattle and hogs at from 1 to 4 cents a pound, you can easily see where a farmer is....There are thousands of farmers in just as bad shape as I am and many much worse. I write this so that pastors and others who seem to think that there is nothing but willingness and right spirit lacking among our people may see that there are very good reasons why not so much is coming in in donations from our farmers....It is not just miserliness in regard to God's work. It is plain helplessness and no one feels worse about it than the farmers themselves."

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The celebration plans were recorded in the following minutes:

"This meeting was called to discuss and agree to resolutions with respect to those at the annual meeting's agreed resolutions to celebrate 50 years of the congregations organization in 1884. The meeting opened with devotions by Pastor Nelson. Resolved - to hold the festival September 9-10 and 11th. Resolved

- that our district - the Circuit - be invited to participate. Resolved - to invite all Preachers who have served this congregation in these years.

The following committees chosen: Finance: John Olin, President, Pete Thorson, Oscar Olin, Thorval Larson. Entertainment: Mrs. John Olin, President, Mrs. John Jacobson, Mrs. Oscar Olin, Tillie Johnson, Mrs. Pete Thorson, Mrs. Tobias Olson, Mrs. Andrew Torgerson, Mrs. Joseph Olson. Decorations: Oscar Thorson, P. R. Peterson, John Jacobson.

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The Sims Congregation had reached its midlife. A time for joy amid all the hardships. It was now....

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....A TIME TO DANCE....

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....A TIME FOR PEACE....



Market Report - Wheat, \$.69; Barley, \$.24; Oats, \$.19. Grocery Specials - 4 pounds coffee, 98c; 9 pound bag of rolled oats, 43c; large box Kellogg's Flakes, two for 23c.

There had been 261 cars of cattle shipped from Sims during the fall season, 23 cars of sheep and eight cars of horses.

Elc Olson was planning to take a ranch between Curlew and Sims. Louis Hamery was to be his general manager.

Johnson purchased the house owned by Mrs. Johnson, located just south of his residence. Jacobson has his business in the city.

has increased in 300 the last crews of

George Ims, who has been acting as veterinarian at the Timmerman Ranch, came to spend Sunday with his folks.

June 1 (1934)

In true fashion, farmers are making plans for the storm of drought. Blank and other men are making plans with Dr. Sheppard at F. urge the Government to buy cattle in the drought areas. Suggested prices are per head for cattle over 2 years of age; \$12.00 for yearlings, \$6.00 for calves. The

Sept. 18-S. P. Weekes shipped seven cars of cattle Friday to the Chicago market. His son in law, Cha. Weibke, accompanied him. Amund Johnson also shipped several cars of choice beef steers Friday.

The first reports of wheat harvesting to reach the Pioneer were from the Platt Bristol farm where reaping started August 1. Mr. Timmerman, Sims merchant, was in the city and stated that the potato crop in that section was excellent and that all potatoes were expected to be large size, and "no small ones for the hogs."

P. A. Miller, one of the farmers in the Little Heart district where hail damaged crops the previous week was in the city and collected \$515 in insurance.

The old time ranchers from the Cedar River, north of McIntosh S.D. that they drove many cattle up to Sims for shipment that was the closest shipping point. They would sometimes herd the cattle waiting for

Resolved - that John E. Olin is authorized to pay Wm. Carllen as soon as the congregation has accepted his work of installing the furnace in the church basement. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Sec."

The church now had a basement in which to hold its fellowship activities. In the world scene, though, trouble had already begun. World War I had started in 1914 when Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria, Hungary, was assassinated. Young men from the Sims area served in the service in the later war years and were honored at a Homecoming at the Church in 1918.

In 1915, at Sims, Pastor Breen resigned at the end of that year, and in North Dakota, the Nonpartisan League was founded.

It seems this congregation had to spend some time searching for pastors in the early years. Perhaps the prairies created the feeling of loneliness or desolation. Perhaps the pastors felt a call to move on. Whatever the reason, 1916 found the Sims congregation without a pastor. It was during this time that the United Church of Almont joined Sims in a joint pastor call. The Almont congregation wanted a minister who could preach in the English language, also. And, so, after several calls had been refused, the Rev. L.D. Dordal of Madison, Wisconsin accepted a call to move to Sims. Also, beginning in 1916, the Christmas Tree Festival was held on second Christmas Day, a tradition that continued until the late 1960s. More business - at the annual meeting of the congregation, December 8, 1917, the following two resolutions relating to construction on the church and parsonage were passed.

"Resolved - If the ladies aid has sufficient money, they have the congregations permission to build a veranda or porch on the front of the parsonage. Resolved - that it is permitted for the "Holly Willing Workers" to build a 12 inch or 1 foot high platform in the inner end of the church in Sims which shall follow the advice of the congregations trustees eyes and supervision. All work shall be done correctly by the congregation trustees direction. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland."

As a result of the continuing war in Europe, the Lutheran Church in America requested an in-gathering from the member congregations. Secretary T. O. Feland wrote the minutes for a special meeting February 17, 1918.

"Special Congregation Meeting February 17, 1918 by request of the Lutheran Church of America."

Organizers in the gathering (for soldiers and sailors of Army and Navy of U.S.) elected Pastor Dordahl as subscriber chairman, also as preacher judge in congregation. Next Theo C. Feland was chosen as captain for gathering and chose 10 members of congregation as collecting solicitors. Theo O. Feland, the captain, has chosen as solicitors for the task (\$750,000) to help gather as much as possible by February 26, 1918 were as follows: Rev. Dordahl, Jacob Johnson, P. H. Hoovestol, Andrew Holritz, Oscar Feland, J. O. Jacobson, P. R. Peterson, Nils Seim, Ole

Halverson, Wm Johnson. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland. Sec."

As a result of the war effort, Lutherans at Sims and across America became more unified. Students of all ages knit mittens, scarves, and sweaters for the soldiers; they rolled bandages for use by the Red Cross that they felt the importance of having a preacher, loyal to both church and country is illustrated by this excerpt from minutes of a letter to be written to the Norwegian United Lutheran Church office, July 20, 1918. *"....ask the Norwegian United church's foreman or district foreman's help and together work to get us a strong fearless Preacher man both as preacher and loyal American Citizen, that this is necessary more now adays than in the past. To get a loyal preacher for the reason that this country and France, England and Italy are engaged in war with Germany in the biggest war known in history. It has been going on since 1914. For that reason the Congregation needs more than ever a man that is fearless as a preacher and soul saver, also is a loyal spirit and a good understanding leader and citizen that can lead all mission work as is our duty, to help so we can win over Germany and do them helpless and incompetent as a war power on this earth and have complete peace on earth."*

The Rev. H. D. Halverson accepted this call and came in 1918 but resigned in 1919, and with this resignation.... A time to tear....the Sims congregation and her sister Congregation began to have relationship problems. Like many other congregations they needed to learn now to work together so that over the years.... a time to tear....could become....a time to mend....

The year 1920 found the Sims Congregation still without a preacher but still carrying on its work. In support of the women's rights activities happening on a national level, the congregation passed its own new article on women's rights in the congregation. The resolution was as follows:

"Resolved - The congregation voted about a change in the congregations constitution so that all baptized and confirmed women of the Lutheran creed who are 21 years old and who are members of the Scandinavian Ev. Lurh. congregation in Sims, Morton County, N.D. shall hereafter have the same rights as the men's voting rights and can be voted to hold office in the congregation as long as it does not conflict with the constitution of the United Church of North America. All members voted for the constitution change - no one voted against it."

The Sims Congregation supported the constitutional change on women's right to vote. And Pastor T. H. Larson of Taylor agreed with them on the following at a special meeting August 21, 1921.

"Special Congregation Meeting August 21, 1921. Pastor T. Larson, Taylor preach the sermon on this day. Following church services the congregation held a meeting in the basement."

The reason for this meeting was to decide who the people wanted to have 'read' with the confirmants and

May 27 - The following
drafted men left last Friday for
Camp Lewis, Wash.: Peter
Thorson, A.W. Johnson.



Art Olin, Depot Agent, John
Larson Leaving for Camp
Lewis, Washington

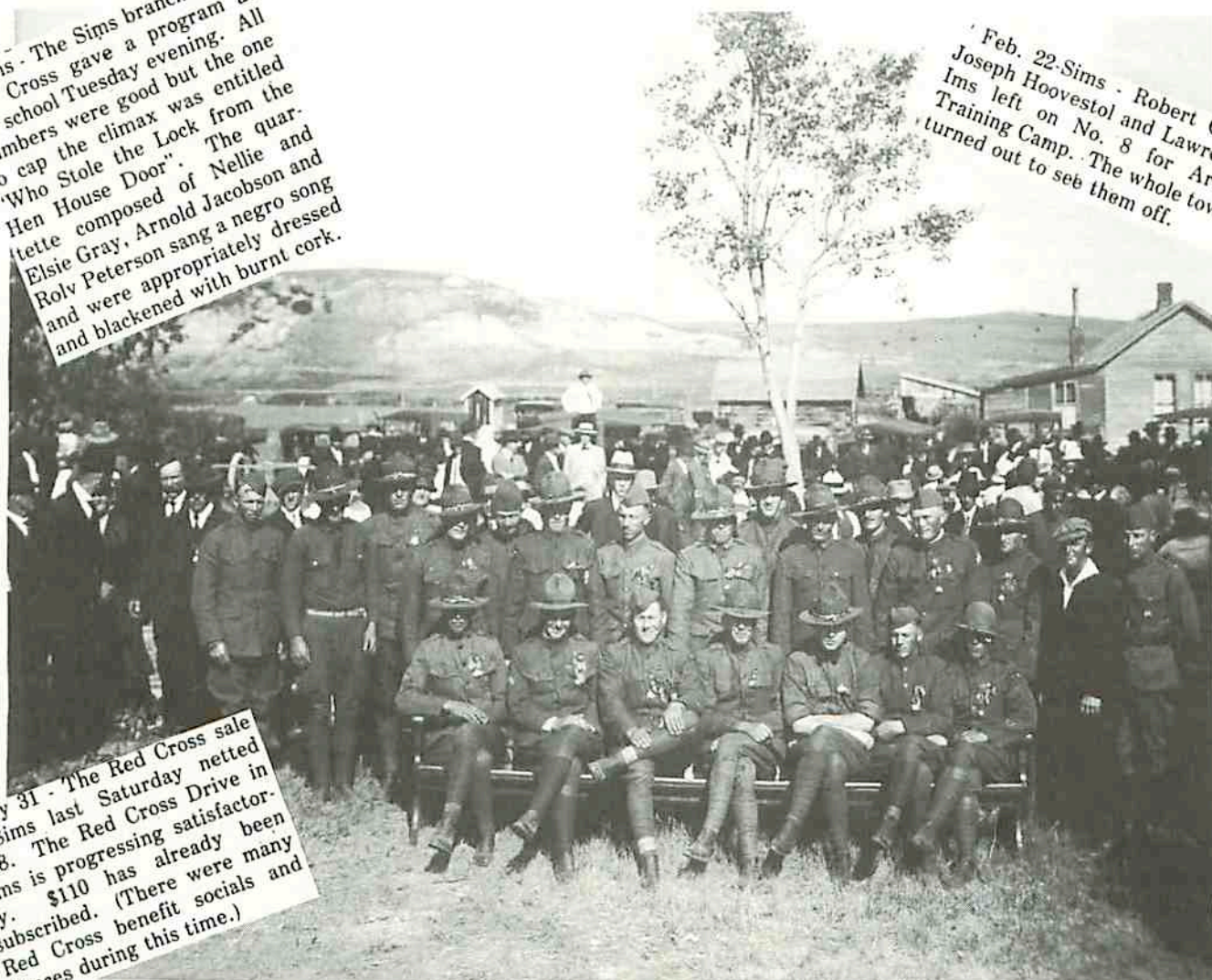


Memorial Day Military Grave Side Salute
Oscar Feland, Joe Olson, Bill Johnson, Mike Olson, Art
Olin

Sims - The Sims branch of the
Red Cross gave a program at
the school Tuesday evening. All
numbers were good but the one
to cap the climax was entitled
"Who Stole the Lock from the
Hen House Door". The quar-
tette composed of Nellie and
Elsie Gray, Arnold Jacobson and
Rolv Peterson sang a negro song
and were appropriately dressed
and blackened with burnt cork.

Feb. 22 - Sims - Robert Gray,
Joseph Hoovestol and Lawrence
Ims left on No. 8 for Army
Training Camp. The whole town
turned out to see them off.

May 31 - The Red Cross sale
at Sims last Saturday netted
\$138. The Red Cross Drive in
Sims is progressing satisfactor-
ily. \$110 has already been
subscribed. (There were many
Red Cross benefit socials and
dances during this time.)



World War I Homecoming 1918 at the Sims Church

also confirm them and preach for this congregation until we get a preacher and to inform the foreman of the United Church the result of this meeting.

Resolved - to write to the Foreman of the United Church to see if he has gotten a preacher or if he can get a preacher who shall come from Bismarck to Preach one time in each month for us until we get a permanent preacher.

Resolved - this congregation will offer Almont \$250.00 or together \$500.00 a year. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Sec."

Still without a preacher in 1922, secretary T. O. Feland wrote to former Pastor Dordahl asking him to take part in the May 17 Festival. According to Sig Peterson, Julia Brathing, who taught school in Sims about 1922, arranged the program for the Styttende Mai Fest for a couple of years. The minutes give the following information on this event:

"Resolutions taken in Sims Congregation church after services held by Pastor Th. Larson of Taylor, N.D. April 30, 1922, that according to a letter from Pastor Dordahl, Rhame, N.D. one of the congregations former pastors, the congregation accepts Pastor Dordahl's offer to come to Sims and preach in Sims congregation on the forenoon of May 17, 1922. The congregation will have an ordinary 17th of May festival in the afternoon. The congregations two Ladies Aids will furnish lunch at noon between 12 and 1 o'clock.

The assembly will hold their congregation meeting making their decision if the congregation is willing to receive Pastor Larson's offer to come to Sims and preach as often as Pastor Larson can get a chance until the congregation gets a permanent Preacher and conditions are that there shall be a collection for Pastor Larson every time he comes to preach in the church. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Sec.

Special Congregation Meeting, May 17, 1922. John E. Olin acted as foreman for this meeting which began with church services by Pastor Dordahl of Rhame, N.D.

Resolved - Pastor Dordahl elected as foreman and pastor's wife and three children as our guests at this meeting the 17th of May festival which is being held in the church basement.

Resolved - that this congregation accept Pastor Larsons offer to come to Sims and preach in the Sims church as often as Pastor Larson has occasion to from today until Sims Scan. Ev. Luth. Congregation gets a permanent 'called' preacher. The congregation after Pastor Larsons request promised to take up a collection for Pastor Larson every time he preaches here which shall be salary for his work here.

Resolved - the 2 Ladies Aids will serve lunch to all who wish it and pay 35 cents for each lunch which will be used by the 2 ladies aids to pay for Norsk religion school or for other requests for the church, improving buildings, preacher salary, or anything else needed in the congregation.

Next held the 17th of May "fest". L. Dordahl gave

the 17th of May speech in English which was like all of Dordahl's Speeches, Very Good.

Next Tobias Olson gave a talk. O. K. Overgaard sang a song after his own request. P. R. Peterson of Sims Congregation was song leader for all singing. Next there were small talks and small children songs in English by children from Curlew and Benson Schools. Sims Young Peoples Society sang several good songs, Norsk National songs. Next the whole congregation sang America.

Resolved - that the congregation thanks all who have taken part in the 17th of May festival and a special thanks to Pastor Dordahl for the lucky thought which had come to him to come to Sims and help us to hold the 17th of May fest. Pastor Dordahl and family are here regarded as guests and this congregation gave them a standing vote by all standing for Preacher and his family.

Resolved - that this has been a good meeting and will long be remembered. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland, Secretary."

Also, in 1922, the trustees resolved:- "that the church shall be remodeled on the inside. It shall be rounded out in the ceiling so that the sharp corners are taken out and there shall be put on tin or iron ceiling under the roof which shall extend down on the wall two feet. The wainscoting from windows to the floor shall be taken off and put back when the 'Roack shell' finishing, for sides and walls. Adjourned. Theo O. Feland."

1923-It seems that whenever money was needed to remodel or refinish the church, it was the Ladies Aid and the girls clubs that were called on to help pay the expenses. Subscriptions, however, were the main source of revenue for the pastors wages. In the early years, the Ladies Aid cleaned the church for the service and other gatherings. For the last 20 or more years, until his death in 1983, Willard Johnson took care of most repairs and did the custodial work.

During this time when the congregation was without a resident pastor, the Rev. T.H. Larson of Taylor served the congregation on a part time basis, mainly from 1920 to 1923. Several pastors were called, but it was not until 1924, however, that Rev. J. Thornell of Chicago, Illinois accepted a call and came to serve this congregation on the prairies. In North Dakota at that time in the early 1920s, the state-owned North Dakota Mill and Elevator in Grand Forks began operating; In India, Mohandus Gandhi became leader of the Indian National Congress and started a program of nonviolent disobedience against the British, and Japan suffered an earthquake that destroyed much of Tokyo and Yokahama. Elsewhere, around the world, the Panama Canal opened; the League of Nations was established; the Fascist party seized control of Italy and Benito Mussolini became dictator; and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was established. In America, the U.S. Census showed that, for the first time, the majority of Americans lived in urban areas; the 18th Amendment prohibiting the sale of alcoholic beverages nationwide, became effective; and the 19th Amendment gave women

complete suffrage.

1925 found the Church in need of repair again. Before these repairs were complete, secretary T. O. Feland died. During his funeral, P. R. Peterson heard the floor start cracking. He told his daughter, Valborg, who was the church organist at that time, to continue playing. He then went to find some timbers to reinforce the floor. Several members, then, did set timbers during the funeral. That year the Ladies Aid paid for a well that was dug on the cemetery. Church services were held in the Curlew school beginning in 1926. Then in 1927, Rev. Thorne resigned, and again another pastor had to be found. This time, in the fall of 1928, T. G. Monson was 'called' with a salary offer of \$1,000 per year, \$500 from the Sims' congregation and \$500 from Almont's. The minutes show that Rev. Monson preached a sermon at Sims November 25, 1928. However, it is unclear as to when he actually began serving as the pastor.

.... A TIME TO WEEP....

Then came 1929 - the stock market crash which started the Great Depression. The National Lutheran Church suffered through these years as well as the local congregations. Clifford Nelson in his book LUTHERANISM IN NORTH AMERICA summed up the decade of the 20s in these words:

"The decade of the '20s now ended had been an exciting one for America. The revolution in manners and morals, the growing hedonism and self indulgence in society at large, the expansion of communications especially by radio, the growth in mobility by automobile and airplane, and the pre-1929 economic boom - all these had contributed to the strange and somewhat "unreal" world of America just before the Great Depression."

In America the Golden Age of radio broadcasting had begun. Charles A. Lindberg had made his first solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean. THE JAZZ SINGER, the first successful motion-picture "talkie" had appeared. And, then, the stock-market crash brought financial ruin to thousands of investors.

This Depression hit America and Americans hard. People kept thinking better times would come, but that did not happen. The very stability of the country was threatened. Malnutrition among children, deterioration of physical facilities, and drastic reduction of academic budgets took their toll. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. described the conditions graphically when he said, *"The fog of despair hung over the land."* (LUTHERANISM IN NORTH AMERICA.)

To illustrate in greater detail the depressed conditions across America, Nelson quoted Ambrose Hering, executive secretary of the Lutheran Welfare Society of Minneapolis-St. Paul:

"Let no one minimize the critical emergency this winter....About 25,000,000 unemployed and their dependents need aid. Hunger marchers appeal to their bankrupt cities without avail and are clubbed down by police. In Albany the other day, a ten-year-old child collapsed in school and actually died of starvation....In

Pennsylvania miners are keeping their families alive on four cents a day per person....That we are facing "the hardest winter in many years, perhaps in the country's history," is now the sober statement of those who know the facts....Will the Christians of the land share what they have (with) the hungry and naked...?"

Nelson also wrote, *"No part of the continent suffered longer nor more acutely than the Great Plains. It is sometimes forgotten that an agricultural depression antedated the general collapse by almost a decade."*

Sims Lutherans lived in the heart of the Great Plains. Their plight was no different than that of so many others in the rural areas. During this time, one couple from Sims had little or no money. The husband got a job on the WPA for which both were grateful. Hard times were not only their lot, at that time, but others fared the same. Banks went broke. Foreclosures were common. They both told of the "clouds of grasshoppers" that darkened the sun. When they landed, the husband said, *"They ate everything that could be eaten including forkhandles."* - The dust was forever on the window sills and floor even though they were dusted and swept several times a day. One year, his wife said they received a welfare check of \$35.00 or something like that; however, because she was a good gardener, and she had good ground for a garden, she managed to grow and can enough food to provide for the family through the years. She also said that before they got any welfare money, someone came out and actually checked the amount of food she had canned which was stored in a root cellar. Even though she hated this inspection, she felt good when the inspector told her that the food looked pretty in the jars. This woman is still an artist when it comes to growing and preserving food.

How did the Sims Congregation survive this period? When I asked those who had lived through those times, by and large they mostly felt a sense of happiness mixed in with the despair. Times were hard, but people usually had time for each other-and, all were in similar circumstances. They held basket socials to raise money for the congregation's needs. The Ladies Aid had "sales and suppers" to help pay the preacher's wages. The girls clubs embroidered and knit items for sale with the proceeds going to the church. The preacher had to take a cut in his wages, but those who could helped to provide him with some produce from their gardens.

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SIMS LUTHERAN CHURCH HISTORY NOTES THE MANDAN DAILY PIONEER

Sims Lutheran Church Mark Golden Jubilee

Members of original congregation will be among honored guests.

Founded in 1884 when the village of Sims was one of the furthestmost outposts of civilization, the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church of that community will on Sunday, September 9, celebrate its Golden Jubilee, commemorating fifty years of service to Sims and the territory surrounding the village.

Prominent among the attendants and occupying places of honor at the celebration will be a group of members of the original congregation, which includes: Mr. and Mrs. John Olin; Mr. and Mrs. T. (Theodore) Larson; Mrs. A. A. (Arjan) Johnson; Mrs. Theodore Larson; Theodore Ramsland; Mrs. J. Olson, Mrs. G. Peterson, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hoovestol, and Mrs. Theodore Ostring. The history of the Sims Church, the history of the village, and the lives of these early pioneers are closely related.

Settling in the village in the early eighties, these men and women courageously endured hardship and privation to establish homes and make for themselves and their families a permanent "place in the sun."

Sims, in the early days, was a beehive of activity. The mining of lignite coal occupied a goodly part of the population, and a prosperous brickyard brought much revenue to the growing village, which served a large area as a trading center. Fertile farm lands surrounding the village were settled, dairy herds made their appearance, and with the coming of more settlers, many of them of Scandinavian origin, the need of a place of worship and regular religious service was (sic.) of paramount interest.

A parish house was erected in 1884 and served as a combination home for the pastor and meeting house, the second floor of the building being used for the church services, with Rev. O. J. Norby as the first pastor. He served from 1884 until 1893.

START NEW CHURCH

Increased membership of the congregation and a desire for a more appropriate church home induced the church members to erect the fine bulding that now serves them, and it was completed in 1900.

To Rev. T. K. Gustad, who was pastor of the church from 1893 to 1906, and his wife is due much of the credit for the successful financing of the new building, and is said to have been the first person to conceive and push the idea of its erection. Little parties, food sales, entertainments were given by the ladies of the church under her direction to help in securing the

necessary funds. Both Mrs. Gustad and her husband will be present at the Golden Jubilee Celebration.

The building of the church was not without its difficulties, for when the structure was well underway, with the walls nearly completed, a miniature cyclone visited the town, causing much damage and leveling the partly completed church to the ground.

However, the congregation was not discouraged and again went to work and repaired the damage of the wind, and the new church was dedicated in 1900, and for thirty years has been the center of the religious activities of the congregation.

For the past year and a half, Rev. Carl Nelson has been pastor of the Sims Church, and under his direction, with the assistance of the committees, the program for the golden jubilee has taken form and all is in readiness for the anniversary services Sunday. Preceding Rev. Nelson, in the order of their services with the church were Rev. O. J. Norby, the first pastor, followed by Rev. O. Gustad, Rev. N. Isolany, Rev. Breen, Rev. Dordal, Rev. Halvorson, and Rev. Thornell.

Rev. Nelson and his committees have extended invitations to all former members of the congregation, and friends of the church to be present Sunday at the anniversary services, and they have arranged a most fitting program.

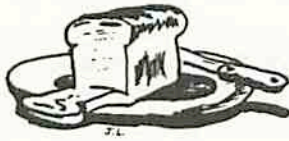
The morning service will start at 10:30 under the direction of Rev. Nelson. Musical numbers to be rendered in the morning include: duet, "*Built on a Rock the Church Doth Stand*," by Rev. and Mrs. Nelson, and a solo by Raymond Jacobson.

The morning sermon will be delivered by Rev. T. K. Gustad, pastor of the church from 1893 to 1906. Afternoon services will begin at 2:00 o'clock, and besides addresses by visiting pastors, will include a musical composed of an anthem, by a mixed quartet, Mrs. Palmer Feland, Mrs. J. S. Johnston, Raymond and Leon Jacobson, and a duet by Mrs. Feland and Mrs. Johnson, and a violin duet by Sigard Peterson and Chris Halvorson.

Rev. L. Dordal, a former pastor of the church, now located at Larimore, N. D., will also be a guest of the congregation at the jubilee.

A third service will be held in the evening, and Monday and Tuesday there will be a meeting in Sims of the Mandan Circuit of the Lutheran Churches, which will be attended by laymen and pastors from neighboring towns.

Monday evening will be featured by a service at Almont, where, with Rev. O. O. Andvek, Mandan, delivering the dedicatory sermon, a new altar will be christened at the Almont Lutheran Church. An appropriate musical program has also been arranged for this occasion.



**SIMS LUTHERAN CHURCH MARK GOLDEN JUBILEE
CONGREGATION AND PASTORS CELEBRATE
FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY
REV. T.K. GUSTAD TO DELIVER SERMON
MEMBERS OF ORIGINAL CONGREGATION
WILL BE AMONG HONORED GUESTS**

Founded in 1884 when the village of Sims was one of the furthestmost outposts of civilization, the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran church of that community will open Sunday, September 9, celebrate its golden jubilee, commemorating fifty years of service to Sims and the territory surrounding the village.

Prominent among the attendants, and occupying places of honor at the celebration will be a group of members of the original congregation, which includes Mr. and Mrs. John Olin, Mr. and Mrs. T. Larson, Mrs. A. A. Johnson, Mrs. Theo. Larson, Theo. Ramsland, Mrs. J. Olson, Mrs. G. Patterson, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hoovestad, and Mrs. Theo. Ostring.

The history of the Sims church, the history of the village and the lives of these pioneers are closely related.

Settling in the village in the early eighties, these men and women courageously endured hardship and privation to establish homes and make for themselves and their families a permanent 'place in the sun.'

Sims, in the early days, was a beehive of activity. The mining of lignite coal occupied a goodly part of the population, and a prosperous brick yard brought much revenue to the growing village, which served a large area as a trading center. Fertile farm lands surrounding the village were settled, dairy herds made their appearance, and with the coming of more settlers, many of them of Scandinavian origin, the need of a place to worship, and regular religious service was of paramount interest.

A parish house was erected in 1884, and served as a combination home for the pastor and meeting house, the second floor of the building being used for church services, with Rev. Norby as the first pastor. He served from 1884 until 1893.

START NEW CHURCH

Increased membership of the congregation and a desire for a more appropriate church home induced the church members to erect the fine building that now houses them, and it was completed in 1900.

To Rev. T.K. Gustad, who was pastor of the church from 1893 to 1906, and his wife is due much of the credit for the successful financing of the new building, and is said to have been the first person to conceive

and push the idea of its erection. Little parties, food sales, entertainments were given by the ladies of the church under her direction to help in securing the necessary funds. Both Mrs. Gustad and her husband will be present at the golden jubilee celebration.

The building of the church was not without its difficulties, for when the structure was well under way, with the walls nearly completed, a miniature cyclone visited the town, causing much damage and leveling the partly completed church to the ground.

However, the congregation was not discouraged and again went to work and repaired the damage of the wind, and the new church was dedicated in 1900, and for thirty years has been the center of the religious activities of the congregation.

For the past year and a half Rev. Carl Nelson has been pastor of the Sims church, and under his direction, with the assistance of committees, the program for the golden jubilee has taken form and all is in readiness for the anniversary services Sunday. Preceding Rev. Nelson, in the order of their service with the church, were Rev. Norby, the first pastor, followed by Rev. O. Gaustad, Rev. N. Isolany, Rev. Breen, Rev. Dordal, Rev. Halvorson, and Rev. Thornell.

Rev. Nelson and his committees have extended invitations to all former members of the congregation, and friends of the church to be present Sunday at the anniversary services, and they have arranged a most fitting program.

The morning service will start at 10:30, under the direction of Rev. Nelson. Musical numbers to be rendered in the morning include a duet, 'Built on a Rock the Church Doth Stand,' by Rev. and Mrs. Nelson, and a solo by Raymond Jacobson.

The morning sermon will be delivered by Rev. O. Gaustad, pastor of the church from 1893 to 1906.

Afternoon services will begin at 2:00 o'clock, and besides addresses by visiting pastors, will include a musical program composed of an anthem, by a mixed quartet, Mrs. Palmer Feland, Mrs. J. S. Johnston, Raymond and Leon Jacobson; a solo by Raymond Jacobson; a duet by Mrs. Feland and Mrs. Johnson, and a violin duet by Sigard Peterson and Chris Halvorson.

Rev. L. Dordal, a former pastor of the church, now located at Larimore, N. D., will also be a guest of the congregation at the jubilee.

A third service will be held in the evening, and Monday and Tuesday there will be a meeting in Sims of the Mandan Circuit of the Lutheran churches, which will be attended by laymen and pastors from neighboring towns.

Monday evening will be featured by a service at Almont where, with Rev. O. O. Andvik, Mandan, delivering the dedicatory sermon, a new altar will be christened at the Almont Lutheran church. An appropriate musical program has also been arranged for this occasion.



LUTHERAN
CHURCH

In its struggling

....a time to keep....

The beginning of the second fifty years was the continuation of a time of struggle. Because of the drought and depression, many people had moved away from the area reducing the membership of the congregation. Times were difficult for the members individually and for the church collectively. Thus, 1935 marked the beginning of the second fifty years. That year Pastor Nelson resigned; the Ladies Aid was given permission to put the church's kitchen fixtures; Palmer Feland was to repair the church bell; and Nels Seim was elected president of the Board of Trustees for 1936. That year also, the Rev. R. P. Haakonson accepted a call to come and serve the Sims and Almont congregations. He, however, resigned within the year giving no explanation for this decision. On August 29, 1937, the congregation held a special meeting at which P. R. Peterson recorded the following minutes.

"On Sunday August 29, 1937 Pastor Haakonson presented his resignation. He had accepted a call from LaMoure, N.D. The same day an extra ordinary congregation meeting was set for Sept. 9, 1937. Report of Extra Ordinary Meeting held in church basement in Sims Sept. 9, 1937. In absence of the preacher was John E. Olin elected as foreman. Moved by J. T. Johnson to request the preacher to give the reason why he has resigned and if he does this, he can leave when ever he wants to. Seconded and carried. Moved by Theodore Larson and J. T. Johnson to accept Pastor Haakonson's resignation if he gives the reason why he will move. In case he has no reason to give then the congregation will request that he stay here the legal resignation time namely 3 months from resignation date. This resolution was seconded and carried, Adjourned, P. R. Peterson, Sec." The congregation accepted Pastor Haakonson's resignation; however, he volunteered to serve them with one service per month until a new pastor arrived. They accepted the offer, and agreed to pay him \$7.50 per service. The years rolled by and at the annual meeting in 1937, the yearly meeting date was changed from December 8 to October 15. In 1938 the minutes of a Trustees Meeting held March 4 noted the following: *"Resolved that the secretary write Rev. Stoeve and inform him of the ghost stories that have been going around here for years. There are supposed to be supernatural things in and around the parsonage. Ask him to communicate with Rev. and Mrs. Nelson and Rev. and Mrs. Haakonson in regard to what they know about such things. Then inform secretary. Mrs. Walter Bakkan, secretary."* The secretary did write to Rev. Stove, District President at the time; no response to that letter is found in the church records. The story reported was that a ghost woman was seen walking about the house at night. She would walk up the steps to the second story after which organ music was sometimes

heard. At other times, the ghost woman walked through the house and disappeared right through a wall. Later pastors were asked about these incidents, but their report were that they had had no such experiences, but the stories did persist.

While Sims was dealing with a declining population and whether or not to deed the cemetery to the county, Germany was getting ready to invade Poland, an act that started World War II. Japan was already engaged in a full-scale war with China, that had started in 1937, and was to be a part of the Second World War also. The Rev. C. O. Brecto had accepted a call from the parish and arrived in the area in 1938. At the fall annual meeting, the congregation organized the cemetery board of three members, a sexton, secretary, and treasurer, and a motion was made to have two English services rather than one English and one Norwegian.

According to Clifford Nelson, in LUTHERANISM IN NORTH AMERICA, when he related the church to its time nationally, there was much diversity in the theological attitudes of the Lutheran Church bodies during the thirties. There was intercommunion and fellowship among its members, and theological problems were disturbing questions. Sims may not have been directly involved with these national concerns because of their own pressing needs of daily life, especially due to the trying times, the minutes, at various times, state concerns similar to what the church nationally was experiencing.

Little business is noted in the 1940 minutes; however, Rev. Baily of Almont gave his four dollar commission on the fire insurance policy that he wrote on the church, back to the church. In 1941 the following action was taken at the annual meeting: *"The parsonage should be reshingled as soon as possible. Olaus Christianson was appointed to set date for work and supervise same. Joe Olson, Pete Pederson were appointed to purchase safe for pastors use. To check corporation church property, as to any record recorded in the court house. Also get in contact with Felands in regard to purchase of two acres of land to be added to Sims cemetery and be used for grave lots."* that year in December, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and the United States entered World War II.

Although according to Nelson in LUTHERANISM IN NORTH AMERICA, Lutherans did not support this Second World War as they had the First, there was still widespread support for the war effort. At the 1942 annual meeting, the congregation made the following motions: *"Our pastor apply for mission aid for congregation; that cemetery committee purchase markers for neglected graves; that cemetery committee buy a \$100.00 War Bond from cemetery funds; that Mrs. Tollef Christianson take charge of next Memorial Party. Motions accepted. Song Doxology - Meeting adjourned. Mrs. Walter Bakken Sec."*

In 1943, Pastor C. O. Brecto resigned from serving the congregation in order to enter the military service as a chaplain. As a result, the congregation held two special meetings. The minutes are as follows: *"June 6,*



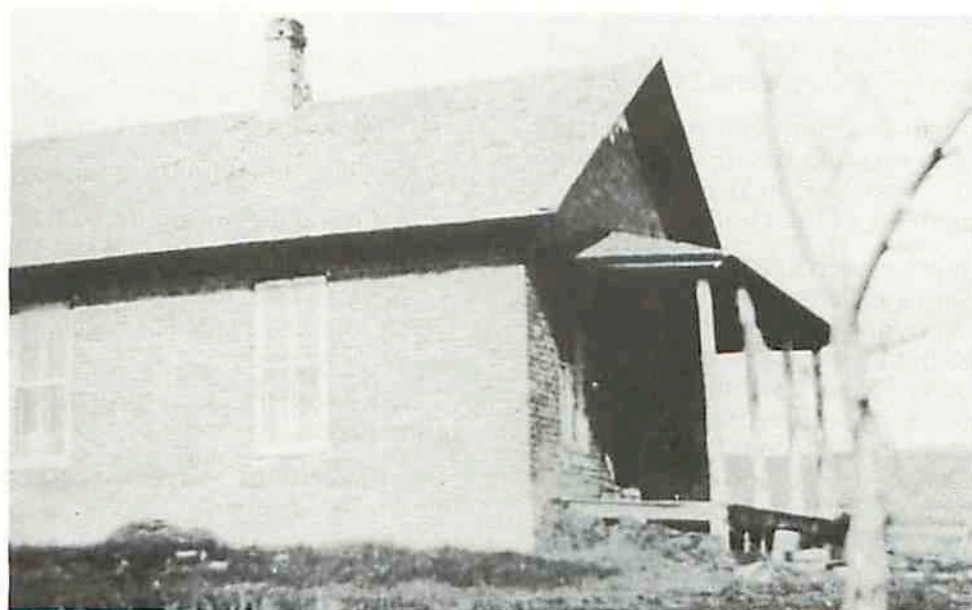
Maintainer's house at Sims



Section house in Sims (Tobias larson in foreground- Church in background)



Carl & Frances Kilen
(House behind the church)



1943 Rev. Brecto tendered his resignation as pastor from Sims Lutheran church to enter the U.S. Army as Chaplain. Officers of the congregation met the same day and accepted resignation. Rev. Brecto was asked if he would consider returning after the war. His answer was 'resignation final.' Mrs. Brecto to remain in parsonage for the present. Rev. Brecto was invited to be present when congregation celebrates the 'Home Coming of our boys who are in armed services. Secretary was to write Dr. Stoeve in regard of calling another pastor. Mrs. Bakken sec."

"Special meeting July 7, 1943. Opened meeting by prayer by Tobias Olson. Secretary read Dr. Stoeve's letter in regard to increase in salary if we are to get a pastor. Motion made and seconded that Sims congregation pay a pastor \$800.00 a year. Motion made and second that someone get church incorporated. Motion made and seconded that Arthur Olin and Joe Olson get Sims church incorporated. Accepted. Motion made and carried that our church should be named Sims Lutheran Church. Pete Thorson, Thorvald Larson and Mrs. Bakken were appointed delegates to meet with Almont Congregation in calling a pastor. Motion made to adjourn. Mrs Bakken Sec. Special meeting was held in church. Sims and Almont congregations decided to call Rev. Dalside as a temporary pastor."

By the time of the annual meeting on October 15, no pastor had accepted a call to serve the two congregations. At that meeting, the congregation granted permission for cutting the tables and benches in two. Thus, was the status of the church in the fall of 1943.

The war continued and so did the congregation. In the fall of 1944 the congregation adopted a plan to build on an addition to the west end of the church as soon as lumber was available. Because they were still without a resident pastor, and because Dr. C. J. Fylling was filling in temporarily, the congregation held a special meeting and the following motion was made: "If we could possibly keep Dr. Fylling and if he was willing we wanted him to serve for the duration of the war of World War II. Letters were sent to Dr. Stoeve and Dr. Fylling."

By 1945, the two parishes, Sims and Almont, had agreed to keep trying to secure a pastor, and to offer a salary of \$1800.00 a year, and held a celebration honoring the early pioneers of the church.

In North Dakota plans were being finalized for the construction of the Garrison Dam which was to begin in 1946. In Europe, all during World War II, Sweden had remained neutral, but in Norway, German troops had occupied the country from 1940 through 1945. That year an American airplane flew over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, and the first atomic bombs were dropped. World War II ended in Europe on May 7 and in the Pacific on September 2. That year also, the United Nations was established, of which the United States was a charter member. At Sims, it was both a time of mourning and embracing, because of those men and women involved in the war from the local area and because the war had ended it was a time to rejoice.

With the end of the war, the expansion and growth of business and industry was just beginning. It had been a time of war, but now it was hoped that it would be a time of peace. For the town of Sims, however, it was a time to die. The population had declined to almost nill. The railroad was planning to reroute its main line which meant that Sims and Almont would have no rail service. At the 1946 annual meeting, the congregation was still calling a pastor, and the Ladies Aid sent 93 pounds of clothing to the Norwegian clothing drive center in Minneapolis.

At the 63rd Annual Meeting of the Sims Lutgheran Congregation, October 29, 1947, the following motions were passed: "That copies of the constitution be printed and distributed to all families of the congregation; (note: the original constitution had been lost)....Willard Johnson and Clarence Jacobson were selected as a comittee to see that is done; that the board of trustees be given authority to use more than \$250. in obtaining furnace for church...decided on Tuesday, Nov. 4th to burn grass on cemetery; that Pete Thorson, Art Olin, Joe Johnson and Clarence Jacobson plan for repairing basement...; Meeting adjourned with Lord's prayer. C. W. Jacobson, Sec'y" That year, the following article appeared in the MANDAN MORNING PIONEER.

"Sims Gives Up the Ghost After Fifty Year Skid From Population of 2000" by George Moses.

"Sims, N.D. - (AP)- This silent community of red brick buildings, as empty as they are ornate, became a ghost town this week.

The process had been going on for more than 50 years, ever since the death of the brick factory and coal mines which once made Sims one of North Dakota's liveliest communities west of the Missouri river. Sims is about 35 miles west of Mandan.

But abandonment of Sims by the Northern Pacific Railroad, which this week began service over its New Salem-Glen Ullin cutoff, drove the last nails in Sims' coffin.

It was almost a one-man show. When S. A. Johnson, veteran Sims postmaster and storekeeper, died last May, his nephew, Ervin Olin of Almont took over his duties.

So Olin, an Almont cream buyer, has:

1. Closed the Sims railroad station. He was acting station agent.

2. Closed the pumping and water treatment plant which supplied the N.P.'s steam locomotives. He was caretaker of both.

3. Closed the Sims post office. He was acting postmaster.

4. Closed Sims' one remaining general store. He was interim storekeeper.

Olin also arranged with the telephone company to remove its station from the shuttered store building.

Just one family, a section worker's, lives in the ghost town for which great things were once predicted and



Simon Johnson



he'll probably move now.

High hopes of a thriving brick industry and coal needs of the Northern Pacific combined to give Sims a lusty youth.

The first lignite mine was opened in 1879. The Northern Pacific needed coal. It was also used for kilns of the Carbon Pressed Brick and Lime Company, a speculative venture which looked good because of the nearness of good clay, coal and water.

The brickyard, marked today only by red dust on a hill, furnished brick for the original North Dakota capitol building in Bismarck.

At one time, oldtimers say Sims had a population of nearly 2,000.

But the Northern Pacific found better coal deposits elsewhere and the brickyard failed. Sims began to die, slowly and easily.

The Red Trail, forerunner of U.S. Highway 10, once looped down through Sims. Highway engineers pointed the way for the railroad a generation later by rerouting the highway across the top of the V...Sims is near the bottom.

Contrasting with the Victorian gargoyles on the empty brick homes built in Sims during the 80's are a simple white frame schoolhouse and a white frame church.

The schoolteacher lives miles away, however, and the church congregation is drawn from miles around.

There's one Sims landmark which change and decay have bypassed. A beautiful spring of clear, cold water still rushes out from a rocky bed in a hillside on the edge of town. It courses through green, mossy grass and gathers in a small reservoir before it begins its trip, as Sims Creek, to the Gulf of Mexico.

The water is as sweet as it ever was – even if the N.P.'s Diesels don't need it anymore."

From all visible appearances and for all practical purposes, Sims had died. However, the spirit of Sims still lives on.

Little is recorded in the 1948, 1949, 1950, and 1951 minutes. On the world scene though, Israel became a country; Mohandas Gandhi was assassinated; the Chinese Communists defeated the Nationalists and established the People's Republic of China; Canada, the United States, and 10 Western European nations formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); in the United States, television became a part of most American homes; the United States entered the Korean War; rural electric lines reached many farm homes for the first time, including those in the Sims area, and the Sims church had electric lights for the first time in 1950. Prior to that time, a windcharger had been the source of electrical energy; and prior to the windcharger, kerosene lamps and candles had been the lighting systems. And in 1951, oil was discovered at Tioga, N.D.

In 1952, the congregation voted to pass the

collection plate. Previously, the offerings had been altar offerings.

Finally, in 1953 after several years without a full-time pastor, the Rev. Norbert Jolivette accepted a call and moved into the area. That year the congregation purchased the Albert Stegmier home for \$4000 to be used as a parsonage. Although they were pleased to have a new pastor, many were sad that Dr. Fylling was to retire. He had served them for 10 plus years on a part-time basis. In 1954 the congregation celebrated its 70th Anniversary with more than 400 in attendance. The following portion of a news item from the MANDAN DAILY PIONEER, October 5, 1954 tells of that occasion.

SIMS LUTHERAN CHURCH, OLDEST WEST OF MISSOURI, NOTES 70th DATE; SCANDINAVIANS HOST 400

"The Sims Evangelical Lutheran congregation was host to over 400 guests Sunday, Sept. 26, in observance of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the church which is the oldest Lutheran Church west of the Missouri River.

Festival services were held at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Three former pastors were present for the occasion: C. G. Nelson, Minot; C. Brecto, Makoti; and Dr. C. J. Fylling, Bismarck.

Present Pastor Norbert Jolivette conducted the morning worship service, greetings were extended from Rev. Brecto and Dr. Fylling gave the sermon. Special music at both services was by the Sims-Almont choir. Miss Caroline Larson was organist.

Loud speakers were installed by Willard Johnson of Sims for members and guests who crowded the church basement and outside listeners. The Ladies Aids of Sims and Curlew served a noon luncheon. Ideal weather made it possible to set tables in the church yard to accommodate the crowd. The serving table in the basement was centered with a large cake, a replica of the Sims church, made by Mrs. Sam Thiel. It measured 22 inches long and 10 inches wide. An ornamental white face of frosting around the base completed the setting. The cake was served after the afternoon service.

Pastor C. F. Brien of Mandan's First Lutheran Church brought afternoon greetings. The history of the church was read by Rev. Jolivette and Rev. Nelson gave the sermon. Others pastors present were the Rev. Magnus Lutness of Trinity Lutheran Church in Bismarck and the Rev. Raymond Brien of the Hazen Lutheran Church."

**SIMS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
OBSERVES 70TH ANNIVERSARY
SEPTEMBER 26TH**

Sims Evangelical Lutheran congregation were hosts to over 400 guests on Sunday, Sept. 26th, 1954 in observance of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the church, and the oldest Evangelical Lutheran west of the Missouri.

Festival services were held at 11:00 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Three former pastors were present for the occasion, namely: C. G. Nelson, Minot; C. Brecto, Makoti, N.D. and Dr. C. J. Fylling, Bismarck.

At the morning service, Pastor Jolivette conducted the worship service: Pastor Brecto extended a greeting and Dr. Fylling brought the gospel message. In the afternoon, Pastor Nelson presented the Gospel Message and Pastor Carsten Brien, of Mandan, brought a greeting in behalf of the Bismarck Circuit. Pastor Jolivette read some of the many greetings, which had been sent from Pastors and former members who were unable to be there and he also read the History of the church.

The Sims - Almont choir provided special numbers at both services.

A loud speaking system had been installed, which amplified messages in word and song, to the many persons in the basement and out-of-doors who were unable to get in the church proper.

At noon, ladies of the Sims and Curlew Aids served a luncheon to everyone. Because of the beautiful day, folding tables were set up out-of-doors to accommodate every one in less time.

The serving table, in the basement, was centered with a huge cake made by Mrs. Sam Thiel and which was truly a master piece. The cake was a replica of the Sims church, in every detail - to the belfry with a swinging bell, cross on the steeple, windows, steps and entries. It measured 22 inches long and 10 inches high. It was placed on a base 22 inches by 34 inches and an ornamental white fence, made of frosting, completed the setting. The cake was served and cut with the lunch served to all following the afternoon service.



Much credit is due the ladies for their share in all of the work there was to do in preparing for such a big affair.

At the 1955 annual meeting some members expressed concern for the need to have an active Sunday School again. Later, in November, they made a decision to re-organize the Sunday School. That year, also, the altar kneeler was upholstered, and plans were underway to purchase either an organ or a piano.

After serving the parish for three years, Pastor Jolivette resigned to move back to Iowa. This time in the interim, Phillip Olson and Richard Quamme were hired to conduct services, alternating Sundays. Then, in 1957, the Rev. O. L. Olsrud from Beach, N.D., accepted a call to serve. Pastor Olsrud was instrumental

in making some organizational changes in the parish. He started the Parish Board the same year that he came as a means by which the business of the two congregations could better be conducted. Also, he started the "Cottage Bible Studies" or Bible study in the homes during the lenten season. Pastor Olsrud also held an afternoon Bible study for the older people. In 1957, the question of incorporation was still not settled and, Mrs. Walter Bakken was going to find out if the church was incorporated. On the world scene, Russia launched Sputnik I. During these years, the congregation was quite active in sending clothing and money to Lutheran World Relief, Indian Mission, and missionary support. In 1958 the congregation received a letter from the North Dakota Secretary of State informing the congregation it was not incorporated, and that year also, they decided to purchase a church organ. At the annual meeting that year, Clara Christianson, secretary, noted the following: *"Our 75th Anniversary for the church will be noted in the fall of 1959. The motion was made to have Rev. Olsrud choose committee to start work on the project."* Plans were now underway for the celebration and for repairs and improvements on the church building itself. Again it was to gather and rejoice. Even through the years of struggle, the church continued. With this celebration they would again have....

....A TIME TO LAUGH....

....A TIME TO EMBRACE....

....A TIME TO MEND....

....A TIME TO LOVE....



SCANDINAVIAN EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SIMS
75th ANNIVERSARY

September 19, 20, 1959



1ST LUTHERAN CHURCH WEST OF RIVER SIMS LUTHERAN CHURCH MARKS 75TH ANNIVERSARY

Approximately 450 persons from a wide area attended the 75th anniversary observance of the founding of the Sims Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church held Sunday, Sept. 20, with both morning and afternoon program as well as a Saturday evening service. Co-operative weather made possible the large crowd which was also served dinner at noon in the church basement.

The church is believed to be the oldest Lutheran church west of the Missouri River, having been established in 1884 with fifty charter members. None of the original founders now remain. First pastor to serve the church was the Rev. O. J. Norby. In all, 16 pastors have served the congregation. Present pastor is the Rev. O. L. Olsrud.

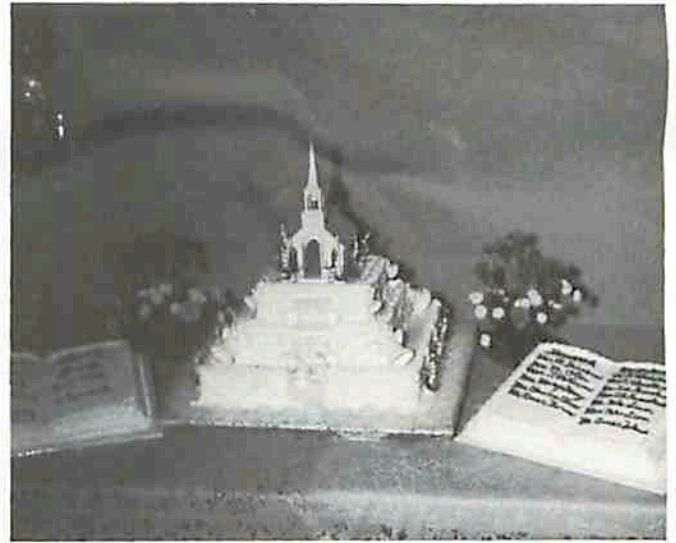
A history book dedicated to the pioneers of the church had been prepared and was available for everyone. The 16-page booklet also contained pictures of all the pastors and the development of all phases of church activities in the past 75 years.

SIMS WAS LIGNITE AND BRICK CENTER

The congregation organized at the time Sims was a beehive of activity due to the mining of lignite in the area and the operation of a brick yard in the town which employed men from the neighboring community.

The first house of worship constructed in 1884 served both as the pastor's home and "meeting house," with services being held in the quarters on the second floor. The Rev. O. J. Norby was the first pastor of the church and also conducted services in Mandan when a Lutheran congregation was organized there in 1887.

The Rev. O. Gaustad became second minister to serve the church, coming in 1893 and remaining until 1906. During his pastorate the need of a new church



75th Anniversary Cake Baked by Elvira Thiel

building became more acute and steps were taken to erect the structure that still stands today.

WINDSTORM LEVELS SECOND STRUCTURE

Its construction was not without misfortune, however, as walls of the building were nearly enclosed over the foundation when a miniature cyclone levelled the partly completed church to the ground. Work was resumed, and though in 1900 the church as it stands today, was dedicated.

SIXTEEN PASTORS IN CHURCH'S HISTORY

Of the 16 pastors who have served the church since 1884, the first seven are as follows: Rev. O. J. Norby, Rev. T. K. Gaustad, Rev. Breen, Rev. Dordal, Rev. Halvorson, Rev. Thornell and Rev. Carl G. Nelson who was in charge at the golden anniversary celebration in 1934.

A well known North Dakota pastor who served the congregation for ten years was the late Rev. C. J. Fylling who filled the pulpit from 1943 to 1953. He was succeeded by the Rev. N. O. Jolivette. Present pastor is the Rev. O. L. Olsrud. The Rev. Jolivette, now of Wallingford, Iowa, delivered the diamond jubilee sermon at the Saturday evening service. The Rev. Carl Nelson of Alexandria, Minnesota, gave the Sunday morning service, and the Rev. R. Haakonson of Moorhead, Minnesota, appeared as guest speaker at the special afternoon service. Special musical numbers were by the Almont Male Chorus, Sims and Almont choirs, a quartet and soloists. Organist, for the occasion, was Mrs. Wayne Schwartz of Mott.

Women of the church served a ham dinner at noon and after the afternoon service a reception was held. Serving the anniversary cake, prepared by Mrs. Sam Thiel, were Mrs. O. L. Olsrud and Mrs. Rachael Jacobson. presiding at the reception table was Miss Hilda Johnson. Keeping the guest book was Mrs. Oscar Jacobson.



In its Changing

...a time to embrace...

The beginning of the last 25-year segment of the Sims Congregation followed a decade that was considered by most sociologists and psychologists to be quiet and passive. The sixties, though, were not quiet and passive. It was a time when both church and society were forced to look at their traditions and reevaluate them. Kent State, Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, and the assassination of the President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, are remembered by those who lived through those times. The Lutheran church bodies nationally, too, were struggling with questions of change and conscience. What, in the church, in its beliefs should be embraced? Clifford Nelson in *LUTHERANISM IN NORTH AMERICA* stated the problems and their times as such: *"The powerful forces unleashed by the depression and two World Wars brought Lutheranism into the 'mainstream of American life.'"* By the '60s this communion faced another identity crisis, not unlike that in the early years of the 19th century. Numerous questions seemed to demand answers. For example: within the spectrum of American Christianity did Lutheranism have a viable future as a separate confessional church? In the face of the so-called 'great issues' of the last third of the 20th century was there anything unique, and therefore worthy of preservation, about Lutheranism? Did the staggering problems of the racial crisis, the Vietnam War, poverty, the Third World, and youth's clamor demand a posture that minimized Lutheran particularity; or could Lutherans under the Lordship of Christ practice a fruitful coexistence and collaboration in the amelioration of massive social, political, economic problems (secular ecumenism) while remaining unabashedly and unapologetically 'particular' and 'confessional.'"

These were the times in which the congregation started its fourth 25 year segment in 1960. At the annual meeting in the fall, Vendora Johnson, secretary, noted: *"Rev. Olsrud expressed his concern and thoughts for world and social conditions. He has written to Rev. Engebretzen and others for social action. There are no results as yet but we shall be awaiting further reports."* Earlier in the year, the church council had discussed the Stewardship Program sponsored by the National office. The 1961 minutes, again, report the Pastor's concern for world affairs.

The parish discussed plans to build a new parsonage in Almont at the 1962 meeting. That year the congregation made plans to put in an approach by the church so that the cars could circle the church yard, and secretary, Joan Johnson, recorded: *"Rev. Olsrud reported that Japan is progressing very rapidly. World problems were discussed including the economics of this country."* In 1963 the congregation was checking

again on the Articles of Incorporation for the church. And, the new parsonage was begun in the fall. 1964—the Sims Sunday School was reorganized, and the group Bible studies in the homes began. In 1965, a motion to amend the constitution so that one week instead of 10 days was required in which to have an official meeting was made, with action to be taken in 1966. Then it was then passed unanimously. That year, also, a committee was set up for church improvements, and Rev. Olsrud retired from the ministry to move to Bismarck, N.D.

Because no repairs had been made in the church basement by the 1967 annual meeting, the same committee of three was to continue and get samples of panelling or other materials needed to finish the basement walls; plus, they were to get estimates on shingles. While the parish was without a pastor, Raymond Bangs served on a part-time basis. 1968—some progress was made by the improvement committee. Samples of wall panels were available from which the congregation could select. That year in April, Rev. Leo H. Anderson, Belmont, Iowa, accepted a call to Sims and Almont. He stayed only one year, due partly to the health of his wife, so in the interim, Richard Durkop of Bismarck served the parish on a permanent part-time basis. That year 1969, Ben Ramsland, secretary, recorded the following motion: *"that Lo Ann Leach, Sunday School teacher, (Supt.) to set her own day for the Christmas Day Sunday School program. She would like to have it before Christmas Day instead of after Christmas Day."* Until this change, the program had been held on the second Christmas Day or December 26. That year there were 17 children in the Sunday School.

The sixties had been a time of change for the Sims Congregation in that after several years, the Sunday School reorganized, and Pastor Olsrud kept the congregation informed of the changes in the world, the church, and society. On the world scene, the following noteworthy events occurred during that decade. Russia agreed to the United States demands that missiles be removed from Cuba, ending a serious Cold War crisis; Russia, the United States, and Great Britain signed an agreement banning the testing of nuclear weapons above ground; the second Vatican Council ended. Roman Catholic leaders had modernized the church; Israel defeated Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and other Arab states in an Arab-Israeli war; two Americans became the first men to walk on the moon; the Vietnam War escalated; and the new American Lutheran Church came into existence.

For the church nationally, the ecumenical movement was continuing. This concept was to have an effect on the Sims and Almont parish in the seventies. During that decade, they began to share a pastor with the Presbyterian church in New Salem, a relationship that is still effective in 1984.

1970—the congregation decided to fix the wall behind the altar, and then later, to decide what to do with the side walls. In 1971 the congregation issued a call to Douglas Brandt, a seminary graduate. The Rev.

Douglas Brandt accepted the call and came to the area in the early summer. That fall at the annual meeting they were to vote on a new constitution because the present one had not been updated since the formation of the new American Lutheran Church in 1960. Because the members felt they were not ready to vote on the change that night, the meeting was postponed for two weeks then, at which time Vendora Johnson, secretary, recorded the following: "A discussion was held on some of the sections that were considered to be not favorable to our congregation. It was decided to remove the words 'in good standing' as to membership. No members even though inactive have ever been denied membership, and it seemed to be the united feeling that that policy continue." The members voted to approve the constitution. Later, the congregation agreed to use the Contemporary Communion Service for communion and voted to work together with the New Salem Presbyterian Church in a cooperative ministry.

A telephone and carpet were installed in the church in 1972. That fall the emphasis of the church was on 'Key 73.' The secretary noted: "Key '73 focuses entirely on mission. What is mission. Mission begins right here in our congregation; it reaches out to the people in our church, our community and all the way to the ends of the earth. Mission deals with people; it means action, caring, sharing, loving, forgiving, witnessing, proclaiming, saving, helping etc. The emphasis this year in our congregation should be to think seriously about our mission and become more mission minded by putting what we believe into action." With these thoughts in mind, at a council meeting the following month, Pastor Brandt shared excerpts from the National ALC convention. They are as follows:

"Dr. Kent Knutson reported on the purposes and activities of the Conventions. Dr. Knutson's dream was that we will live by the gospel and become a new church. We would live by the grace of God and be free to be his and serve him. Grace is given without any price to all men. Our aim should be to proclaim Christ and make the gospel alive through evangelism. We are also, to rejoice in the gospel." Hence, this rural congregation became aware of a vision of a better world. It was a time to keep and a time to throw away.

There was little noted in the minutes of the 1973 year; however, in 1974 the congregation started planning a 90th Anniversary celebration. That year the theme was, "By the Grace of God-90 years," and Dr.

Leon Jacobson from Chicago, former area resident addressed the Congregation.

Pastor Brandt resigned in 1975 and the Rev. John Leitel, graduate of Wartburg Seminary, was called. He accepted that call and is still serving the congregation.

1976-little is reported in the minutes other than the regular organizational business. In 1977, however, Jeanette Anderson, secretary, recorded: "The congregation voted to change the wording of the constitution to read, clergy instead of reading clergyman referring to the women workers in the church." Little was recorded in 1978 and 1979. In Iran, however, Americans were held hostage for months. In 1980, a centennial Committee was formed to plan for the 100-year celebration. In a time of recession, 1981, 1982, and 1983, the congregation voted to repair and paint the church, and plans continued for the centennial celebration. "A century of Praise and Worship" was the theme chosen. Jeanette Anderson, secretary, reported: that the tree beside the church was 80 years old and suggested that a plaque be hung on it. Then, Carole Olin recorded the following at an August 26, 1983, meeting: "It was decided to have a pie and ice cream social on Sept. 18, at 2 o'clock at the Sims Church basement. We need to earn \$250 on this social for the Centennial. Lutheran Brotherhood will match our \$250 with their \$250...There will be a film shown at the social on the life of Corrie Ten Boon. A craft and food sale will also be held that day. Each lady in the church is to bring three pies to be served with homemade ice cream. The ice cream is to be furnished by Jeanette Anderson, Cora Monson, Carole Olin, and Lucille Larson." Also in 1984 - the congregation voted to use the Concordia Communion Service again.

Now, almost 100 years after that September 30, 1884, meeting it is a time to celebrate. A heritage that had begun centuries before and was brought to our country, to Sims, by our ancestors 100 years ago, continues. It is a time to reflect on what has been our gift from our ancestors, and what is to be our gift to our descendents 100 years from now. As we near the twenty-first century, it is again,

....A TIME TO EMBRACE....

....A TIME FOR SILENCE....

....A TIME TO LOVE....

....A TIME FOR PEACE....





Hilda Johnson

Celebrations



Rick Olson 90th Birthday



Three Golden Anniversary Couples Walter & Anna (Olin) Bakken
Arthur & Delia (Jacobson) Olin Thorvald & Lucille (Olin) Larson



25th Anniversary
Linda, Irene & Clarence Jacobson



Roderick, Alton, Mable, Marjean, Melton Olin