

From the Pages of History — Lincoln Journal-Star May 9, 1948

Co-operative Effort Results in New Church in Cordova

CORDOVA, NE—A story of co-operative effort on the part of 28 families in the congregation of St. John's Lutheran church here is being climaxed on Sunday with dedication of a new church building.

The effort started October 10, 1945, when the congregation agreed to build the new church. A building fund was started.

By August of 1947, however, the building fund had grown to only \$1,200 and members decided more direct action was needed. They voted to start work immediately, members to do all possible work themselves.

On August 18, 1947, the men invaded the old church with hammers and wrecking bars and started to tear it down. With 24 of the 28 families in the congregation farmers the work needed to be done before time to seed wheat. As soon as the old building was down, they moved in with tractors, shovers and earthmoving equipment and dug the basement.

By November 9, the basement was ready. On that date the cornerstone was laid and the contractor took over the more technical work. Even then the congregation did as much of the work as their abilities would permit. The modern farmer is handy with tools of all kinds.

They did such jobs as shingling and rough carpentry, helping out wherever they could. One of the big jobs was hanging the heavy bell.

Chris Finke, Jr., local trucker, and chairman of the building committee, spent much of his time on the job. He and his partner, Mrs. Bessie Noler, hauled all the material that went in to the church. Much of the trucking they did free and the remainder at rates which little more than covered their expenses.

The women did their part by sanding and refinishing the old pews to make them worthy of the new church.

The first service was held in the new church February 1, 1948. The building was not entirely completed so soon because of cold weather and because the art glass windows did not arrive until April.

According to Rev. G.W. Mueller, the church is valued at \$12,000. He estimates the value of the work done by the congregation at \$4,500. The contract was on a pay-as-you-go basis with the contractor being paid each week.

Financing was by voluntary contributions and pledges. As a result the congregation now has a new church debt free.

Rev. Mueller praises the enthusiasm of the congregation and gives particular credit to members of the building committee: Mr. Finke, George Noler, John Peeks, John Grandorf, Henry Wellman, and Alvin Zastrow. Others who made particularly valuable contributions include: Mrs. William Nickel, who died while the church was being built, Mrs. Marie Mawhiney, and Chris Finke, Sr.

Dedication services are being conducted morning and afternoon. Rev. H.F. Krohn, Deshler, NE, has charge of the morning service. Rev. William Peterson, Garland, NE has charge of the afternoon service, assisted by Rev. Melvin Tassler, pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Lincoln.

Rev. Tassler is formally presenting the pulpit and altar, which was formerly used by his church. Dinner for the congregation will be served at the church.