

Rearview Mirror

Looking back as we move forward

By Bob Lind and Friends

January, 2010
Part 2

In the last chapter, we left Bethel Church in ruins – literally.

Its first building, an abandoned schoolhouse near the present Fargo City Hall, where a small group began worshipping in 1891, had been destroyed in the Great Fargo Fire of 1893 which leveled much of the business district of Fargo.

It was called “The Mission Church” then. But it appeared its mission was ended.

But it wasn't.

The handful of faithful people who had been attending pooled their money and bought a small parcel of land at Fourth Street and Third Avenue, close to the site of the building which had burned. The price for that land: \$725, no small amount in 1893.

Then a frame building seating 150 people was constructed, and The Mission Church was back in business: the Lord's business.



The congregation began to grow. The first Sunday School classes were held.

And, as was the case when the church was formed two years earlier, the only language spoken in the services was Norwegian. So perhaps it's not surprising that in 1894, the congregation changed its name to the Scandinavian Congregational Church.

From then until the early 1900s, the church was served by six different pastors. But it had both its low and high points.

The low:

In the late 1890s, the membership went down, down, down, bottoming out at six. Those six couldn't afford to keep Scandinavian Congregational operating in its building, so it discontinued services there.

The high:

Again, the tiny group of people wouldn't quit. With their eyes focused on the Lord and with faith He would see them through, they began holding tent meetings, praying this would revive the congregation.

It did. More and more people began coming to the services in the tent. The result: They heard God's Word and many of them accepted Christ.

Soon, Scandinavian Congregational began to grow. And grow. And grow.

And in 1897, the congregation was back in its building. Changes were on the horizon, however.

Before long, the congregation would have a different building. And a different name.