

Rearview Mirror

Looking back as we move forward

December, 2009
Volume 1

The Church, made up of all the followers of Jesus Christ, is about 2,000 years old.

Bethel Church, made up of Fargo-Moorhead area followers of Christ, is 118 years old.

The Church as a whole had its beginnings in what is now embattled Israel.

Bethel had its beginnings near the spot where the embattled Ten Commandments Monument is located near City Hall in downtown Fargo.

Let's visit about Bethel's history, both today and in future articles.

Bethel started when 15 people pooled their money and bought an abandoned school building near the present location of the Ten Commandments Monument in Fargo. They remodeled it and began worshipping there, calling that first congregation simply "The Mission Church." The year was 1891, two years after North Dakota become a state and when Fargo's population was a whopping 6,000.

The first pastor was L.J. Pederson. And all the services were conducted in Norwegian.

All went well for the small but vibrant church. Then came 1893. And disaster.

A small fire started on what is now Main Avenue. Winds spread it. Soon, most of downtown Fargo was in smoldering ruins. The frame building housing The Mission Church was among the buildings lost in what has become known as The Great Fargo Fire. It appeared the end had come for the tiny congregation.

But God had other plans.

We'll talk about them in the next article.