

Early History of Redeemer Lutheran Church

The Rev. H. M. Tjernagel served as pastor of the Saude and Jerico congregations from 1923-1940. During that time, he published a monthly parish newsletter called *The Assistant Pastor*. After Tjernagel's death, his son, the Rev. Neelak S. Tjernagel, succeeded him as pastor of the parish and continued the publication of *The Assistant Pastor*. It is during the younger Tjernagel's tenure from 1940-1945 that we find the early history of Redeemer Lutheran Church.

Following are select articles from *The Assistant Pastor* that trace Redeemer's early history and the role the Jerico and Saude congregations played in the establishment of this congregation.

October, 1940

Ordination Service

After several years of thinking of the fact that "something ought to be done in New Hampton," Sunday, September 8, brought to realization one of the dreams of your former pastor [H. M. Tjernagel]. On that day Candidate Nils Oesleby was ordained into the holy ministry by Rev. J. B. Unseth at the American Legion Hall. 175 persons were present.

There was a very churchly and solemn atmosphere about the service as it approached the climax of the candidate's vow. The order of service for ordination made a most impressive setting for the beginning of the candidate's ministry of the Gospel. It is our earnest prayer that the God of Grace will make him an effective instrument in the ministry of the Gospel.

Assisting Pastor Unseth in the ordination were Pastor Wunderlich of the Missouri Synod and Pastors E. Hansen, S. Sande, M. Galstad, H. A. Preus, and N. S. Tjernagel of the Norwegian Synod. Mr. Milton Robinson was at the piano, and two vocal selections were rendered by the male choir of the Synod Lutheran congregation of Somber, Iowa, which Candidate Oesleby served one year as Christian Day School teacher.

Members of the Saude and Jerico congregations will find a warm welcome at the services conducted by Pastor Oesleby each Sunday at 10:30 A. M. at the Legion Hall.

October, 1941

A Golden Opportunity

For over a year now Pastor Oesleby has been preaching the word in New Hampton. Each month he has sent a report of his work to the Home Mission Board which called him and which has supported him, and those reports have shown that conditions are favorable for the organization of a congregation. On the recommendation, therefore, of the Home Mission Board Pastor Oesleby has called on the people of New Hampton to speak to them personally about the matter, and on Sunday, October 26th, I preached a sermon at New Hampton which sought to

bring the guidance of God's word to assist the people in making their decision in this important matter. Then on the evening of the same day a meeting was held in the Legion Hall to which all those were invited who were interested. Pastor Oesleby and I led the discussion, calling attention to the facts that must be considered in deciding whether or not to organize a congregation. It was finally decided to present the matter to the Saude and Jerico congregations and ask them for their counsel in the matter.

It goes without saying that this matter is of the greatest concern to the Saude and Jerico congregations. They would, of course, lose a few members, but the home congregations would have the privilege of sponsoring a daughter congregation, and of doing a blessed thing in the furthering of God's kingdom on earth. Because of the importance of this matter, I am taking this issue of the Assistant Pastor to present to the people at Saude and Jerico the whole situation as it stands at New Hampton. Because I believe it will help you to determine what course ought to be followed, I am printing the sermon preached at New Hampton, together with the main part of the discussion that was held at the evening meeting last Sunday in the Legion Hall.

On November 14th, Friday evening, at 8 o'clock, the joint meeting of the Saude and Jerico congregations requested by the New Hampton people will be held in the Jerico church. I want to address this urgent appeal to all the voters of both congregations that they be present at this meeting. Please do not think to yourselves that since you live here in the country this matter is of no concern to you. The work in New Hampton can not be carried out without your good will and support. I have in mind to present to the home congregations and to the people in New Hampton a plan whereby the congregation in New Hampton can be organized, and whereby the Saude and Jerico congregations will also be benefited. Please do not fail to be present.

November, 1941

Joint Meeting

At a special joint meeting of the Saude and Jerico congregations held at the Jerico church on Friday evening, November 14, the following resolution was passed:

Resolved that the Saude and Jerico Congregations give releases with God's blessing to their members in New Hampton who desire to organize a congregation there;

that the Saude and Jerico congregations promise to all the members of the New Hampton congregation who shall have been released from the Saude and Jerico congregations, the privilege of their cemeteries;

and that until such time as the New Hampton congregation shall have its own church the Saude and Jerico congregations shall grant the use of their churches for funerals, and for such other occasions as may necessitate the use of a church edifice.

December, 1941

Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church

On Sunday evening, November 30th, 1941, a number of those persons who have been worshipping in the Legion Hall in New Hampton under the ministry of Rev. Nils C. Oesleby, formally organized a congregation. A constitution and by-laws were adopted, and the name Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church was chosen. Officers were elected, and application was made for membership in the Norwegian Synod. The duplex weekly envelope system was adopted, and other matters of importance attended to. The last business matter before the congregation was a resolution, which was passed unanimously, to call Rev. Nils C. Oesleby as the congregation's Pastor.

Thus has God blessed the work that has been done in New Hampton, and brought to pass this enlargement of His Church on earth. May the Lord of the Church bring future blessings and prosperity to this new congregation.

By Resolution of the congregation the following letter is addressed to the Saude and Jerico Congregations:

A Letter to the Saude and Jerico Lutheran Congregations:

Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church of New Hampton, Iowa, sends greetings to its sister congregations at Saude and Jerico.

We wish to acknowledge our gratitude to God for the interest which your former Pastor, the sainted H. M. Tjernagel, took in us.

Also we wish to thank your present Pastor, the Rev. N. S. Tjernagel, for his interest in our welfare.

We are indebted to the Saude and Jerico congregations for their gifts to the Home Mission Treasury of the Norwegian Synod, for these gifts have, in part, made it possible for us to have a missionary Pastor in our midst.

Especially do we thank those members of The Saude and Jerico congregations, living in and near New Hampton, who though they could easily have attended worship in their own churches, nevertheless by their presence and contributions at the New Hampton Mission, gave encouragement and support to us and to our Pastor.

To these and all others we extend a cordial invitation to attend our services as often as it is convenient and desirable for them to do so.

Redeemer Evangelical Luth. Congregation,
New Hampton, Iowa

Charter Members

The charter members of the New Hampton congregation are as follows, and those of them who formerly held their membership in the Saude and Jerico congregations have been given their release:

Mr. and Mrs. John A. Anderson, Mary Lou, Ardis and Laura; George Braham; Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Johnson, Bernice, Verna, Leland, Wallace, Allan; Mrs. John Kelly; Mr. and Mrs. Alfred A. Knutson and George; Mr. and Mrs. Peter Ronnie, Paul and Luella; Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Swenson, Arlene, Sheldon, Rocile, Marolyn, Arthur and Sandra; and Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Erickson, Shirley and Martin.

November, 1942

Redeemer Congregation at New Hampton has been served by student Ralph Danielsen of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, since September. However, he has now been released to assist Rev. Stephen Sande at Hartland, Minn. Rev. Sande has been seriously ill the past month. The pastor of the Saude and Jerico congregations will serve the New Hampton people temporarily while arrangements are being made to secure a more suitable place of worship than the American Legion Hall. The Church Extension Committee of the Synod has promised to cooperate with Redeemer Congregation in making a loan which will enable them to secure a suitable property in New Hampton. The time has come when no further progress can be expected in New Hampton so long as the present place of worship is employed, and we hope soon to provide a more edifying place to worship.

December, 1943

Church Dedication

Sunday, November 28, 1943, has become an important milestone in the history of the Redeemer Lutheran Congregation, New Hampton, for on that day the congregation was privileged to dedicate a new place of worship.

Redeemer congregation was organized during the ministry of Rev. Nils Oesleby on November 30, 1941. Mission work had been begun in New Hampton on September 8, 1940, when Rev. Oesleby was called and ordained by the Home Mission Board of the Norwegian Synod. The ordination took place in the Legion Hall, which was used as a place of worship from that time until the dedication of the new place of worship.

From the beginning the work in New Hampton has had both the moral and financial support of the Home Mission Board of the Synod. Now, when the opportunity was offered to secure a more suitable place to hold services, the pastor of Redeemer congregation consulted with the Church Extension Board of the Synod, asking its advice as to whether it would be advisable to

purchase the residence property that was available. A representative of the board came to New Hampton to inspect the property, and approved it, urging the congregation to make the purchase, promising the fullest support of the Church Extension Fund.

Immediately upon receiving this advice, the congregation acted to purchase the property. \$100 available in the treasury was applied on the purchase. \$400 was borrowed from the Church Extension Fund. The balance, \$1,800, was borrowed on a first year mortgage at 4 per cent interest. Part of the house has been rented out a rental that will approximately cover the interest payment and expense on the property.

During the coming year the members of the congregation will make the greatest possible effort in making contributions to reduce the amount of the mortgage.

Some time during the year 1944 the pastor will also solicit contributions from members of the Saude and Jerico congregations for the assistance of Redeemer congregation's building fund. Redeemer congregation is, in every sense of the word, Saude and Jerico's daughter congregation, and will, I am sure, give it the same support a parent might give its daughter. Such solicitations have not been made now, because the pastor did not wish to interfere with solicitations for the "Second Jubilee Drive." That members of the Saude and Jerico congregations will receive kindly the request that they assist this daughter congregation has already been shown by the fact that \$220, entirely unsolicited, has already been contributed by four donors, all members of the Jerico congregation.

When Redeemer congregation is mentioned, we often hear the remark, "there are so few." But Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Because of this new mission congregation, many have been enabled to hear the word regularly where they were unable to do so before. As pastor of that little group, I can say it has been a blessed work. We pray that God will continue to bless this little flock. That God's blessing does rest upon it is shown by the fact that He has now enabled us to secure our own chapel where we may worship Him in surroundings more edifying than we have had in the temporary place of worship that has served the congregation during the past three years.

January, 1945

The Redeemer Church Building Fund is growing beyond our best expectations. I have begun making calls on the members of the Saude and Jerico congregations to solicit contributions for this cause, and the response has been very gratifying. I hope to complete this work in the near future. I may say here that about \$400.00 was contributed by the first twenty persons I visited. We need this congregation in New Hampton. There are more than twenty families of our faith living there, and they need this church.