



**Celebrating 150 Years**  
**September 17**  
**1867—2017**

# September 17, 2017 - Worship at 9:30 AM

## Prelude

## Confession and Forgiveness

*Blessed be the † holy Trinity, the one who fashions us, the one who heals us, the one who reforms us again and again.*

*Amen.*

*Let us confess our sin, calling for God's transforming power.*

*Source of all life,*

**we confess that we have not allowed your grace to set us free. We fear that we are not good enough. We hear your word of love freely given to us, yet we expect others to earn it. We turn the church inward, rather than moving it outward. Forgive us. Stir us. Reform us to be a church powered by love, willing to speak for what is right, act for what is just, and seek the healing of your whole creation. Amen.**

*God hears our cry and sends the Spirit to change us and to empower our lives in the world. Our sins are forgiven, † God's love is unconditional, and we are raised up as God's people who will always be made new, in the name of Jesus Christ.*

**Amen.**

## Gathering Song

The Church's One Foundation

Hymnal #654

## Greeting

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

**And also with you.**

## Kyrie

Hymnal pg. 147

## Canticle of Praise

Hymnal pg. 149

## Prayer of the Day

## Welcome and Announcements

## WORD

## Presentation of Bibles to Three Year Olds

## Scripture Readings

Genesis 12:1-3

Jeremiah 1:4-8

Acts 1:8

Revelation 21:1-5

Psalm 23

*Word of God, Word of Life*

**Thanks be to God**

**Children’s Message**

– Noisy Offering benefitting ELCA Global Missionaries in South Sudan

**Gospel Acclamation**

Alleluia

Hymnal pg. 151

*Please stand, as you are able*

**Holy Gospel**

Matthew 28:16-20

Bible, pg. 812

**Glory to you, O Lord**

**Praise to you, O Christ**

**Message**

*The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song*

**Hymn of the Day**

Just a Closer Walk with Thee

Hymnal #697

**Apostles’ Creed**

Hymnal pg. 105

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Prayers**

Hymnal #752

*At the conclusion of each petition, the assembly sings:*

Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place;  
Lord, listen to your children praying, send us love, send us pow’r, send us grace.

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**Peace**

**MEAL**

**Offering**

*An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.*

**Anthem during the offering**

The Lord is My Shepherd

Allen Pote

## Offertory For Such a Time as This

Could it be that we are called for such a time as this?  
Could it be that we are called for such a time as this?

Other verses:  
... that you are called  
... that I am called

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## Offering Prayer

### Great Thanksgiving

Hymnal, pg. 152

### Words of Institution

### Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

## Music during Communion

### Lamb of God

Hymnal pg. 154

### Anthem Find Us Faithful

Jon Mohr, arr. Jack Schrader

### Hymn Shepherd Me, O God

Hymnal #780

### Hymn Behold the Host Arrayed in White

Hymnal #425

### Anthem Sanctuary *with Take My Life and Let It Be Consecrated*

J. Thompson, R. Scruggs, arr. B. Greer

## Table Blessing

### Prayer after Communion

**SENDING**

## Blessing and Dismissal

*Go forth in peace and with the courage of faith.  
Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,  
and love your neighbor as yourself.  
Amen.*

*Whatever you do in word or deed,  
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks to God through him.  
Amen.*

*The God of hope fill you with joy and peace in believing,  
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.*

**Sending Song**            O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Hymnal #632

**Dismissal**

*Go in peace. Sound the good news.  
Thanks be to God.*

**Postlude**

**Servant Leaders Today**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Altar Care</b>           | Patty Nefstead  |
| <b>Assisting Minister</b>   | Jackie Cunningham   |
| <b>Communion Assistants</b> | Steve Mathison  |
| <b>Communion Servers</b>    | Steve & Jennifer Leitch   |
| <b>Greeters</b>             | Jerry & Elaine Schliep  |
| <b>Lector</b>               | Phyllis Stageberg, Matthew Weiss, Lynn Johnson, Jacob Rosendahl,<br>Marilynn Tiede  |
| <b>Musicians</b>            | Vinje Choir, Tapestry, Shalom Singers, Nova Voices, Joyful Kids,<br>Little Saints, Travis Michelson, Brian Pearson, Nick Mason,<br>Laura Christianson, Madison Thaden, Annette Thompson |
| <b>Offering Pickup</b>      | Steve Mathison  |
| <b>Ushers</b>               | Lynn Peterson, Captain; Ron Haugen, Rosie Ericson, Jerry Baker,<br>Marlyn Bahl, Ray & Nancy Groff   |
| <b>Video Operator</b>       | Paul & Sue Bredeson   |
| <b>Video Prepared by</b>    | Marie Ostby   |
| <b>Welcome Center</b>       | Dee Rosenbrook  |



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

# Vinje—150 Years

- \* Immigrants from Norway first met in homes to worship with lay leadership
- \* Itinerant pastors were needed to marry, baptize, and preach
- \* Pastor Thomas Johnson was first pastor to serve Vinje (1863-1869)
- \* Articles of Agreement were adopted on September 17, 1867
- \* Built log church in 1869 on SE shore of Swan Lake (where Willmar golf course is now)
- \* Church named Vinje since most parishoners were from that area in Telemarken, Norway
- \* The first resident pastor was Pastor Lauritz Steen who came in late 1868 & retired 1 year later (1868-1869), followed by Pastor O.A. Norman (1871-1873)
- \* Pastor Steen's salary was \$150 annually paid twice a year plus offerings at Christmas and Pentecost.
- \* We are grateful to these pioneer pastors who faithfully witnessed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- \* 1875 Vinje congregation voted to join the Synod of the Norwegian Evangelical Church of America
- \* 1875 land for parsonage & cemetery purchased on E. Becker Street
- \* Congregation led for 2 years by part time Pastor Olaf A Normann (1871-1873) from St Paul followed by Pastor Lars Norman Markhus (1873-1877)
- \* 1877 finally a full time pastor Pastor Ole O Estrem (1877-1992) accepted the call. The congregation grew rapidly and there was a large interest in the religious and English education of children.
- \* 1880 several area congregations decided to establish an education academy which became Willmar Seminary & was located on the site of today's fair grounds. It was led by O.A. Grangaaard and Nils Arnetvedt .
- \* The large congregation growth required the hiring of an assistant pastor, Pastor Anders Larsgaard (1899-1901)
- \* After 25 years Pastor Estrem retired & Pastor Olaf E. Heimdahl (1902-1904) was his successor
- \* Discussion was held to build another church building & parsonage more centrally located so in 1904 the second Vinje church building was built at a cost of \$20,000 at the site of the Vinje cemetery
- \* In 1904 following the resignation of Pastor Olaf Heimdahl, Pastor John N. Andersen from St Paul was called. He served from 1904-1919 and by 1917 the membership was 451 plus many others who attended services and called Vinje their church home.
- \* Under Pastor Anderson's ministry Vinje was part of the merger of 3 small church bodies: the Norwegian Synod, the Hauge Synod, & the United Lutheran Church.
- \* Pastor Andersen also taught at the Willmar Seminary.
- \* During World War I more than 45 young men from Vinje were part of the Armed Services .
- \* By 1935 talk of needing a new church building began as Sunday School classes for all ages crowded into every available space of the Becker Avenue Church.
- \* In 1920 Pastor Arnt Vaaler (1920-1945) was called to be the pastor for Vinje and served for 25 years.
- \* During World War II over 176 men and women from Vinje were in the Armed Forces and Blue and Gold Star mother's chapters were formed.
- \* When WWII ended, Vinje experienced new energy under the leadership of Pastor Harold Kildahl (1947-1954)
- \* By 1947 two worship services were necessary and Vikor Church became part of Vinje congregation
- \* More staff was added: a parish worker, and additional pastor Pastor Kristaps Valters of Latvia
- \* Radio broadcasts of the worship services began on KWLM
- \* The music program included the Senior Choir, 2 children's choirs, men's chorus
- \* The pipe organ was purchased in 1951 by the youth of the church
- \* In 1953 the old parsonage was removed and a new education building was completed
- \* Pastor Paul Hanson (1955-1964) led the congregation along with Pastor Johan Thorson (1955-59) and Pastor Rudolph Simonson (1960-1968)
- \* Difficult discussions began about needing a new and larger worship space and where to build a 4th church

- \* From 1955-1961 there were changes made in educational programs because of lack of church space: school release time replaced Sunday School for grades 3-12, Sunday school was only for K-grade 2
- \* 1966 Sunday school was reintroduced
- \* April 1960 three large synods (ALC,ELC,UELC) merged to create the American Lutheran Church
- \* By 1961 land was purchased in Ramblewood addition in SW Willmar for a new building, & architecture firm of Sovik, Mathre, Madson were engaged
- \* August 1961 a unique building plan was accepted and ground broken
- \* April 7,1963 Palm Sunday - the last worship service in the Becker Avenue building. After worship the entire congregation in one group marched down 5th Street to Willmar Avenue to the new church building
- \* Because of financial shortfalls, only the sanctuary & East wing St. Matthew Hall and West wing St. Luke Hall were completed
- \* North wing St. Mark Hall & South wing St. John Hall were not completed until 1964
- \* Pastor Paul Hanson resigned in 1963 and Pastor Fred Mueller was called in 1964. Additional staff were Pastor Rudy Simonson, and Pastor James McBride as youth pastor
- \* In 1966, following completion of entire church building, formal dedication services were held. Dr. Frederick Schiotz, national President of American Lutheran Church & Dr. Edward Hanson, Bishop of the SW Synod, were part of the service
- \* 1966 Pastors of the congregation were Fred Mueller, Rudolph Simonson, James McBride
- \* Total cost of the building project was \$1,100,000 including installing the 23 rank Reuter organ, fixtures, furniture, kitchen equipment
- \* After construction emphasis from 1952-1966, emphasis switched to additional Bible studies, adding another worship service, neighborhood outreach, adult baptisms, importance of regular worship in the family & at church
- \* In 1966 baptized membership reached new peak of 2225, confirmed membership 1553, and 720 family units
- \* 1967 Vinje church Centennial Jubilee was celebrated for an entire year. Festivities included Music festival, reunion picnic, Centennial Banquet, Mother/Daughter banquet, festival worship weekend
- \* 1969 Pastor McBride resigned and Pastor Lawrence Lystig was called. In addition a third pastor, Pastor Keith Lentz was also called
- \* In 1970 the baptized membership was 2281 & the budget was \$157,142
- \* Pastor Robert Ostergaard was installed and in 1973 the Bethel Bible Study began (a 4-5 year commitment for adult study lay leaders & 2 years for congregation members)
- \* 1973 brought Pastor Lowell Larson to lead the Vinje Congregation along with Pastor Lentz & Pastor Ostergaard. Pastor T G Wicks served as visitation pastor
- \* In 1975 Vinje was very involved in the community resettlement of refugees from Vietnam. The 9 member Tong family were welcomed & sponsored in 1975 as well as the Trans family in 1980
- \* New committee structure for the Council was established for the organization, planning and implementation of congregational work by lay members under guidance of Pastor Lowell Larson
- \* In the 1970s Operation Bootstrap Tanzania was an emphasis and financial contributions made possible the building of 8 elementary classrooms in Tanzania
- \* Missionary support was given to the Merrifield family in Cameroon, Africa, the Homdroms in South Africa, and Dr Ruth Goehle in Cameroon
- \* In 1977 Dennis Johnson was hired as the first lay Youth Ministry Director
- \* In 1978 the new Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW-green hymnal) was introduced. Orion Lee was adult choir director and Hazel Hedlund was the organist. Main worship service was at 9:30 am with education at 10:30. Morning Matins was at 8:00

- \* A plan for stained glass in the sanctuary designed by Minneapolis artist William Saltzman was approved and installed by Gaytee Studio. The windows are crafted of 2000 feet of handblown antique glass from Germany and are a contemporary depiction of "the Spirit of God moved..." The windows were dedicated in 1979.
- \* By 1980 baptized membership was 2080 and the budget was \$297,609
- \* In 1980 Brent Pederson was the Youth Director joined by his wife Sheri in 1983 and Rosemary Ulland was called to be the Director of Education Ministries
- \* The Children's Courtyard was developed in 1981 and a terra cotta sculpture "Christ and the Child" created by Norman Holen was dedicated. Handprints of children from the congregation were in the concrete paths and a granite bench was also installed.
- \* Holy Communion began to be offered every Sunday in 1982 after study by the congregation. Worship returned to services at 8:30 & 11:00 am with the education hour at 10:45 am after a period of one service at 9:30 because of the national energy crisis.
- \* In 1984 the original building mortgage was burned
- \* Pastor Glenn Taibl was installed in 1984 to serve with Lead Pastor, Lowell Larson and shortly after Pastor Steven Kruse joined the ministry team.
- \* Trying to create more Sunday School rooms resulted in large dividers being installed in the Fellowship Hall in 1985
- \* A remodeling project in 1985 included air conditioning for the Fellowship Hall, refurbishing the Youth Room, Heritage Room, and exterior painting
- \* Organist Hazel Hedlund's 54 year faithful music ministry to Vinje congregation was celebrated in 1987
- \* After a year of study, a Task Force recommended a fulltime Director of Music Ministries be hired. In 1988 Daniel Oie was hired as organist, conduct the Senior Choir, and oversee other choir directors
- \* 1989 Pastor Lowell Larson retired from active parish ministry
- \* Jane Jepson was hired to be Director of Youth Ministries in 1990
- \* In 1990 a major capital campaign was initiated for the 125th church anniversary. It included renovation to the building with roof replacement, air conditioning for the sanctuary, debt retirement, establishment of an endowment fund, and a gift to Luther Seminary. Funds pledged (\$560,000) exceeded the goal!
- \* 1991, a Jewish/Christian dialogue & a study with Jewish congregation Beth Jacob happened
- \* Pastor Steven Kruse took a new call in 1991
- \* 1992 Vinje celebrated its 125th anniversary with the theme "O God Our Help in Ages Past, Our Hope for Years to Come"
- \* 1992 Pastor Steven Knudson was installed as Associate Pastor to work with Pastor Glenn Taibl
- \* 1993 Rosemary Ulland retired and was honored for her years of Education Ministry at Vinje & Cynthia Biddlecomb was installed as Director of Education a year later
- \* Loving Arms began as a ministry of Vinje in 1995 and eventually incorporated Room to Bloom preschool
- \* Daniel Oie and Jane Jebson resigned in 1996
- \* 1996 Sunday School rotation system began; remodeling of the kitchen with new appliances, and wall & floor coverings; the NW courtyard was enhanced for outdoor summer worship
- \* In 1997 Pastor Taibl resigned & Pastor David Wall served as Interim Pastor. Phillip Holzman became the Director of Music Ministries & Jen Hovland was hired as Director of Youth Ministry
- \* Pastor Steven Knudson was installed as Lead Pastor in 1998 and Pastor Barbara Johnson was called to serve as Pastor for Congregational Life. Pastor Floyd Olson served as Visitation Pastor
- \* By 1999 Loving Arms & Room to Bloom were merged with Nancy Hafner serving as Director, and coordinator of Young Children Ministries
- \* The bell choir JuBELLation began in the early 1990's under the direction of Barb Youngquist. The Baldwin grand piano was purchased in 1994; a used organ console was purchased in 2005 when new organ pipes were installed & voiced



- \* Several staff changes occurred during the years 2000-2008. Youth ministries leaders were Jane Jebson, Anita Grue, Tom Erdman, Laura Anderson; Education leaders were Cynthia Biddlecomb, Ann Trochlil, Linda Switzer.; Visitation leaders were Pastor Olson, Phyllis Saunders, Greta Kray
- \* By 2006 a building renovation plan "Renewing God's House" was developed & significant work began on the entire building: sanctuary floors and pews were refurbished, sound baffles were installed, gathering entry space was built, offices were relocated, bathrooms moved, youth room & theater reconfigured
- \* During the renovation worship services were moved to the Fellowship Hall.
- \*The new Lutheran Book of Worship was introduced in 2007
- \* A new worship schedule was developed in 2006. 8:30 worship was a traditional service and the 10:45 service was a contemporary praise service. The educational hour was between services
- \* Phil Holzman resigned in 2007 & John Jahr joined the staff as Minister of Music Ministries in 2008.
- \* By 2009 the renovation was complete and the remodeled building was dedicated
- \* New pastors joined the team with Pastor Steve Knudson in 2010: Pastor Mary Hovland was Pastor for Parish Care & Pastor Chad Peterson was the Associate Pastor
- \* The monthly Community Meal program working with other Willmar churches began in 2010
- \* In 2011 Pastor Steve Knudson accepted a new call and Pastor Jeffrey Engholm became the interim pastor. In Fall 2011 Sunday morning bus service to worship began
- \*In 2012 Pastor Engholm was called to be the Lead Pastor
- \* 2012 Vinje celebrated the Year of Jubilee - 50 years of worship in the current building
- \* Worship services were at 8:30 and 10:45am with the education hour held between services. The services were a blend of contemporary and traditional styles of worship. Holy Communion was served at every worship service
- \* The St John's Bible prints were purchased and installed in the new gathering space & hallways
- \* Several Director changes occurred during the years 2013—2017 at Loving Arms Childcare. Donna Brau, Pamela Appel, and Chris Stark have all led this ministry.
- \* Pastor Amy Juel became the Coordinator for Faith Formation in 2014
- \* Pastor Engholm took a new call in 2015 and Pastor Steve Cook came as a contracted congregational study advisor. Pastor Chad Peterson became the Acting Lead Pastor
- \* In 2014 the Welcome center was added to the Gathering Area and was staffed by congregation volunteers
- \* Anfinson & Thompson became the congregation's financial consultants
- \* 2015 Rally Day Sunday worship service for "God's Work Our Hands" was introduced
- \* During 2016 there were more staff changes. Pastor Chad Peterson and Pastor Amy Juel accepted new calls
- \* In June 2016 Pastor Justin Ask joined the Vinje congregation as Lead Pastor; Pastor Mary Hovland continued as Pastor for Congregational Care
- \* The worship schedule was changed in 2016 to one Sunday service at 9:30 am and one Wednesday evening worship service at 6:00 pm. An evening meal was provided before the service.
- \* Confirmation and other children's ministries followed the Wednesday service. Volunteers from the congregation took the responsibility of organizing and directing the educational program.
- \* In 2016 planning for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation began
- \* A celebration for the 150th anniversary of the Vinje Congregation from its beginnings in 1867 to the present began in 2017
- \* In 2017 Pastor Dane Skilbred was installed as Pastor for Discipleship
- \* Vinje congregation celebrated its 150th anniversary Sunday September 17, 2017 with a celebratory worship service followed by brunch. September 17 was the actual date of the signing of the original Articles of Agreement to form the congregation

# Vinje Lutheran Church Sanctuary

## The Sanctuary

The Sanctuary is in the center of the building, as worship is central to the life of the people of God. The holiness and majesty of God, eternity, heaven, etc. is suggested by the ethereal “blue sky” space, the gold leaf in the “lantern” in the ceiling and the circular design. The sound boards are arranged to the Norwegian hymn, “Behold the Host Arrayed in White.”

## The Altar

The altar is a round table made of oak. The altar rail does not “fence” off a special holy place but is a series of “prayer desks” linked together. There are not two rooms, a nave and a chancel – but one, with the entire congregation gathered around the table. In effect, the sanctuary is one large “chancel” for believer-priests! The uncarpeted terrazzo floor keeps the worshippers aware of other people! From this altar we are one in Christ reaching out to the world in the name of Jesus.

## The Baptismal Font

Baptism is a “means of grace” with which the living Christ makes disciples. The baptismal font is made of granite, in the shape of an egg – a symbol of new life – with a three-part basin symbolizing the triune being of God in whose name we baptize. It stands on a mosaic representing the water of baptism, a “sign of the kingdom and cleansing and rebirth”.

## The Pulpit

The pulpit is a place of proclamation of the Gospel of Christ as Lord and Savior of the world. As Christians we reach deep into the word to grow in faith; the word draws us together reaching inward, forming the community sharing the Word of the Lord.

## The Cross

The Greek cross, with arms of equal length is used throughout the building. It can be viewed as a symbol of outreach to the “four corners” of the earth. A “cross of victory”, it proclaims the Lordship of Christ. On the cross above the altar, five nails have been superimposed to represent the wounds of Christ, together with a circle suggesting the “completeness of his sacrifice.” The original processional cross was crafted by artist, Robert Orr, a member of Vinje. The processional cross we use now was given by the Myhre Family.

## The Circle of NAMES

Continuity with the people of God of all times is symbolized by the names of representative “witnesses” from the histories of the Old and New Testament and of the church. The blank spaces are for the worshipper’s own name, and those of witnesses who have gone before us, and witnesses yet to come. The “cloud of witnesses” verse is from Hebrews 12 and was carved by sculptor Arnold Flaten of Northfield. *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer of our faith.*

# Vinje Lutheran Church Sanctuary

## The Stained Glass Windows

The theme of “witness” is continued in the transparency of the sanctuary to the world outside. Stained glass, dedicated on Epiphany, 1980, was designed by artist William Salzmann and fabricated by Gaytee Studios, all of Minneapolis. The windows consist of 2,000 square feet of antique handblown glass imported from Germany. This glass has a unique texture that so reflects light as to appear “jewel like”. This curvilinear design of the windows compliments that of the worship space. All seven colors of the spectrum have been used to suggest the seven days of the creation. The band of red that flows without interruptions around the entire area is intended by the artist to represent the “stream of life”. Some have called the red band the thread of salvation which gives life to all. The theme of God as the Spirit of Life and the creator of the community of faith is symbolized by the phrase from Genesis: “And the Spirit of God Moved”, which was written in the band of red to the right of the pulpit. The abstract expression permits flexibility in the viewer and allows freedom to grow with the art and to continue to find new meaning.

## Choir Balcony and Organ

The choir balcony is to the side of the sanctuary where the choirs can visibly be part of the congregation gathered around the Lord’s table. The original organ, made by the Reuter Organ Company of Lawrence, Kansas, consists of a console with two manuals, pedals and 23 ranks of pipes. The shape of the balcony and the arrangement of the organ pipes also correspond to the “curvilinear” design of the sanctuary.

## The Courtyards

The world into which the church is sent is represented by four courtyards that are visible to the worshippers. The Children’s Courtyard was dedicated in the Fall of 1981. Plantings were chosen and arranged by Thomas Thorson, a landscape architect from Minneapolis, to represent the variety of nature. The courtyard contains handprints and names of children of the congregation, gathering places for children, and a terra-cotta sculpture of the “Christ and the Child”. The sculptor, Norman Holen, of Minneapolis, used actual people to model for the two figures – a 6 year old neighbor and a welder who sang in a choir in a Lutheran Church. The figures turn to face each other in order to suggest movement, which invites the observer to walk around the composition to see it in its entirety.

# Vinje Lutheran Church Sanctuary

## Miscellaneous

The name "Vinje" comes from a place in Norway. There are at least three churches in Norway named Vinje, one in Telemark (near the famed heavy water plant blown up by the Norwegian underground in WWII), one in Gubransdal, and one in a little town named Vinje near Bergen. One history of the congregation suggests we trace our name to the parish in Telemark. The buildings of the congregation were designed by the architectural firm of Sovik, Mathre and Madsen of Northfield, Minnesota and erected by the Nelson Construction Company of Willmar. They contain 38,000 square feet of floor space, 8,000 of them in the sanctuary. The sanctuary is 100 feet in diameter and 48 feet high at the center. Originally the official seating number was 760. This is the fourth sanctuary of the Vinje Congregation. The first was a log cabin that stood on the present site of the Eagle Creek Golf Course. The second is now a duplex at 510 East Litchfield Ave. The third was a traditional brick church on the corner of Becker Ave and 5<sup>th</sup> Street SW and was razed. The bell in the tower located on the edge of the parking lot near Willmar Ave was cast in 1890.

## Congregational Memories & Write-ups

I'm in 9th grade and a youth member here at Vinje. I just recently went on a mission trip to Milwaukee with a group of youth. We did tons of stuff to create memories and serve others, while building stronger relationships with my fellow youth. I always remember that trip for the rest of my life. Thanks to that trip I am a lot closer to all of the youth here and closer to my pastor, Justin Ask. Being a youth here is a great experience for me. Our Pastors are very good at combining what kids like to do now for fun, yet still building our faith. I'm looking forward to the years to come and making my faith stronger.

**Jacob Rosendahl**

Vinje Brotherhood is a group of guys that come together to do a project for the church and the community; the annual Vinje Lutefisk and meatball supper held the first Tuesday in November every year. This year (2017) is the 100th annual lutefisk supper. This is the only fundraiser the Brotherhood does to have funds to provide financial help for special projects that are not covered by the church budget. The lutefisk supper allows families and church friends to come together and volunteer their times and talents to make the event a success. Without the congregations help, the Lutefisk supper couldn't happen. It is an event the community and area towns look forward to each year. The Brotherhood is a long standing church group with wonderful members.

**Randy Klein**

# Congregational Memories & Write-ups

Music has been a big part of my experiences at Vinje. When I was younger I would go to church after school on Wednesdays to sing in the Little Saints and Joyful Kids choir. I enjoyed singing with these choirs during worship. The Joyful Kids would put on a musical every year and they were always fun to be a part of. Another opportunity for children was to share their musical talents before Thanksgiving worship. Through the years I played the violin, trumpet, piano and I sang at this service. I now sing with the Nova and Shalom choir. I have appreciated the support from Vinje members whenever we share music in worship.

My most memorable experience at Vinje was just this past summer. I went on a mission trip with 18 other middle school youth to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We served people in need by working in a food pantry, painting a garage, serving a meal to the homeless and working in a community garden. I was surprised how easy it was to talk with the people we were serving. The staff at the work sites were inviting and happy that we were there. Being on this trip helped strengthen friendships I had before and helped make new ones. This trip has had a huge impact on my life. I hope more people will get the experience that I had in Milwaukee.

**Jaida Reiman**  
**8th Grader**

Over 44 years ago, I first walked into Vinje Lutheran Church. My family moved to Willmar in 1973 and we were immediately embraced by this church community. My faith began growing here at a young age and I was confirmed in 1980. I find my greatest joy in serving with the Vinje kids both in Sunday morning 5th grade class and on Wednesday nights with the confirmation students. It is a blessing to serve and grow here. I am especially grateful for the support Vinje gave me and my family during struggles we faced. Today, I passionately serve because I like to help provide opportunities for the kids and adults in this congregation to grow spiritually. My wife, Lauri and I find great joy, peace, and connection in this place weekly. Our adult children are still fond of Vinje today. Thank you to all the people who love and serve here!!!

**Paul Tinklenberg**

The Women of Vinje are certainly alive and well. Starting back when it was "Ladies Aid" and met every month to now when we have Circles, Bible Studies, Prayer Shawl groups, Quilters and Bake Sale groups that support Green Lake Bible Camp Scholarships and Confirmation Cross Gifts. We also have Funeral Chairwomen and workers. Vinje Women are part of the SW MN Synod ELCA Lakeland Conference and occasionally host their special meetings. The women of Vinje love to host events as it gives them the opportunity to share our wonderful sanctuary with others and explain the stained glass windows with the red thread of redemption, and the 'Spirit moved'. We are the Vital Women of Vinje.

**Bobbi Gates**

I feel blessed to have served as a secretary at Vinje for nearly 30 years. I worked for three lead pastors as well as a lot of other wonderful staff. There were many changes that occurred during those years. I started out with a manual typewriter and then came the electric typewriter (with correction tape) and finally the computer. The copy machines went from a three step process per copy to the machine that copied, folded and stapled the bulletins and newsletters. I remember having to slip sheet the bulletins (putting a piece of paper between each bulletin) so that the mimeograph ink did not smear. Oh, and yes, we also had a "ditto" machine. The Vinje congregation's love and support has not changed. They continue to care so deeply about their church and staff. I will always treasure the stained glass hanging (that is in my dining room window) that Vinje gave to me at my retirement. It reminds me of very special people and a very special time in my life.

**Dianne Peterson**

# Congregational Memories & Write-ups

My warmest memories of Vinje include going to the annual Vinje bazaar in the basement of the old fellowship hall when Vinje was located in downtown Willmar with my mother and grandmother. It was always a gala fundraiser where I saw all my current and future Sunday school teachers as well as many other women of the church. As I got older I always felt very comfortable around the women of Vinje as a direct result of my interaction at the bazaar, everyone was so friendly! When I was a very small boy I remember being so proud of my father when he was an usher greeting Vinje parishioners on Sunday morning and escorting them into Sunday service. Folks say that the apple never falls far from the tree, now I very much enjoy the privilege of ushering Vinje parishioners into our present narthex. My father's friend Bill Gulbrandsen created divine thunder from above on the kettle drums as part of Vinje's Easter celebration, I will never forget the impression that left on me. Following World War II Vinje had large confirmation classes because of the "baby boom" and during graduation ceremonies Pastor Paul Hanson could barely find room to gather the class around our circular altar, what a wonderful problem to experience. I was a boy scout in Vinje troop 229 as were many of my Vinje class mates. Stan Dale was my first scout leader and the Vinje men would take us on many special camporees, these camping experiences burned indelibly into my brain and helped me navigate successfully through the jungles of Viet Nam. Most of these men have past now but not from my memory and I am eternally grateful for the role that they played in my life. My wife Debbie and I were fortunate to have the opportunity to raise our three sons as members of Vinje and they also were nurtured by many of the same experiences that I was blessed with as a young man. Debbie and I were married at Vinje and two of my sons have chosen to also say their vows in front of Vinje pastors. This has been a humbling and wonderful experience as parents. I concluded my responsibilities as a council member and church leader this previous spring and although it was challenging at times, (I am obviously not a great public speaker), it was a great learning experience working closely with such a knowledgeable congregation and staff. We look forward to Vinje's anniversary celebration. Vinje has occupied several buildings over the years and we continue to work hard to meet the needs of our congregation and the community in a constantly changing culture and environment. My family and I feel proud and fortunate to call Vinje our home.

Regards to the Vinje community

**Daniel Kleven**

56 years ago, I was introduced to "Music at Vinje". I had recently moved to Willmar when my roommate insisted that I "go along" to choir practice at this Lutheran church located at 5th St. & Becker Ave. In today's language, you could say "the rest is his-tory". She said "you'll love the director, Orion Lee. He selects music that is meaningful in worship, musically challenging and contemporary to the singers and congregation." "Looby" had come from NW Iowa where he directed a choir at a Reformed church. That alone alleviated any misgivings this Dutch Reformed newcomer had about singing in a Lutheran church choir. I received a warm welcome from Thelma Ellefson, Joan Hinderaker, Joyce Lee, and Char Mellom-my 1st alto section. I'm still there. It was my new family, and soon became a part of my life. Vinje's dedicated organist/accompanist, Hazel Hedlund, always was a gracious supporter to all of us. We at Vinje have been blessed with talented organists, directors, and ministers of music who have been creative in faithfully witnessing and teaching all of us in the varied musical groups plus the congregation and the community. Our Reuter organ, the King of instruments has always been and hopefully will continue to lead us in our liturgy and hymn singing. It is a gift to use and preserve for future generations. Many gifts/talents have been developed, nurtured at Vinje, and shared with others. Along with the variety of musical groups, we have been fortunate to host guest musicians, choral groups, organ recitals and celebratory festivals. "Music, the only art of heaven given to earth; the only art of earth we take to heaven."

**Myra Quale**

# Congregational Memories & Write-ups

Having been a member of Vinje for the past 80 plus years, I have many fond memories of my life at this church. I was confirmed at Vinje in the uptown location when Arnt Vaaler was Pastor. Then my husband Don and I were one of the first couples married by Pastor Harold Kildahl Jr. Later when the church moved to its present location my daughter Sarah was the first child baptized here by Pastor Paul Hanson. My husband and daughter Karen witnessed the large wooden cross nailed to the old church door and walked with the congregation to the new location. Both of my daughters were married at Vinje, in addition to my oldest grandson Robert was baptized here. In the early 70's I was honored to become one of the first two women to be on the church council. It was during this time when Pastor Lowell Larson came to Vinje. In more recent years, both my mother and my husbands funerals have been at Vinje. I plan to continue being an active member of Vinje. I am deeply rooted in the church which I am richly blessed and happy about.

**Helen Langager**

I began as Youth Director for Vinje in 1980. Sheri, my wife joined me and we became Co-Youth Directors in 1983 when we were married. As I reflect back on my years as a Youth director, my greatest highlight is the relationships I built with the youth and their families. I now love seeing and hearing from these youth who are now adults. Some of my greatest memories were when we went to boundary waters and felt the presence of God's love within his beautiful creation and the Bible studies and conversations we had with each other with all our questions and wonder; backpacking in Colorado and river rafting; ski trips to the mountains; church lock ins; underground worship where we attempted to experience what it was like to be a Christian in other parts of the world where they have to worship secretly. Tuesday morning "Eye Openers", Youth from Vinje and other churches would join our Tuesday morning Bible studies with breakfast and conversation. The Potato Garden at Jorgen Bredeson's farm, where Potatoes were raised and used for Fish and Loaves, served in and by Vinje Youth at area soup kitchens. I feel fortunate to have had all these experiences with the youth, but it was also a time when there were no cell phones and no Internet. Youth were looking for ways to be involved and have something to do. Families did not have as many opportunities to travel the world and so each of these experiences were welcomed and looked forward to. As we were able to plan, share and have these experiences together, we were also able to talk and share our faith in God's word with each other in discussion and worship. Our Vinje family has been a significant part of our life; to share weekly worship, weekly communion around a common altar and being blessed to have so many people support us when we have been in need. We would like to say thank you to our Vinje Family for helping us grow in our faith and in raising our children.

**Brent Pederson**



# Vinje Pastors—Past & Present

Vinje Pastors through the years have been Faithful Servants of the Word & Sacrament. We are grateful for their witness, service, and leadership.

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Thomas Johnson      | 1863—1868    |
| John C. T. Moses    | 1868—1869    |
| Lauritz Steen       | 1869—1871    |
| Olaus A. Normann    | 1871—1873    |
| Lars T. Markhus     | 1873—1877    |
| Ole O Estrem        | 1877—1902    |
| Anders Larsgaard    | 1899—1901    |
| Olaf E Heimdahl     | 1902—1904    |
| John A Anderson     | 1904—1919    |
| Arnt J Vaaler       | 1920—1946    |
| Harold B Kildahl Jr | 1947—1954    |
| Johan A Thorson     | 1955—1959    |
| Paul A Hanson       | 1955—1964    |
| Rudolph L Simonson  | 1960—1968    |
| Fred Mueller        | 1964—1973    |
| James McBride       | 1965—1969    |
| Keith Lentz         | 1969—1974    |
| Larry Lystig        | 1969—1971    |
| T. G. Wicks         | 1970—1980    |
| Bob Ostergaard      | 1972—1984    |
| Lowell Larson       | 1974—1989    |
| Steven Kruse        | 1985—1991    |
| Glenn Taibl         | 1985—1997    |
| Steve Knudson       | 1992—2011    |
| Barbara Johnson     | 1998—2009    |
| Mary Hovland        | 2010—PRESENT |
| Chad Peterson       | 2011—2016    |
| Jeffery Engholm     | 2012—2015    |
| Justin Ask          | 2016—PRESENT |
| Dane Skilbred       | 2017—PRESENT |

During the past 150 Years (from Civil War years to the present) these 30 pastors along with many hard working staff members, talented musicians, energetic youth leaders, faithful educational leaders, and committed lay volunteers have led the congregation. There have been Changes in ordained personnel and church staff, in the building and worship space, in worship practices, in lay leadership. However, the Constant has been a commitment to Jesus Christ and the Gospel and to service to the area community and other areas around the world (Tanzania, South Africa, Cameroon, South Sudan). Vinje has Followed the Faithful Footsteps of those who came before and continues to make Footsteps for those who follow after as we “..run the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith”. We pray Vinje Congregation continues to develop and adapt to changes for the next 150 years.