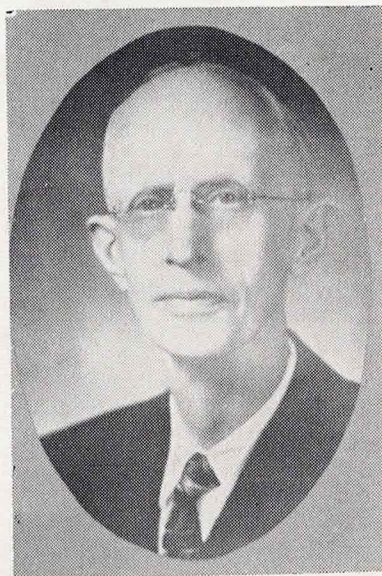


Pastor Folkestad served the Bruce Valley Congregation until 1920 when he resigned to become secretary of the Normans-forbundet. In 1915 he returned for a visit to Norway. During his absence the Reverend J. H. Preus, at the time studying at the Seminary, was called to serve the parish and was ordained at the West Beef River church in Strum, on June 6, 1920. He served the congregation until February 5, 1930, when he resigned to accept a call to Jersey City, New Jersey. On May 25, 1922, Ascension Day, the Luther League celebrated its 25th anniversary. It was at this time that the first brief history of the congregation was compiled and printed. The Reverend Olaf Hjemboe of Strum served the parish briefly as interim pastor until the Reverend Nels Halvorson accepted the call of the parish to become its pastor.

In 1933 the first of several realignments occurred which involved Bruce Valley Congregation. West Beef River Congregation felt at this time that it must call a pastor of its own and therefore withdrew from the original parish alignment leaving Elk Creek, Price and Bruce Valley Congregations as a parish served by Pastor Halvorson. Also about this time the members of Bruce Valley were beginning to realize that they could not much longer conduct their worship services in the Norwegian language. The young people were no longer as fluent in the language as their parents had been. Therefore at the annual meeting in December 1933 the motion was made and carried that some of the worship services be held in the English language. It was shortly after this time that a Sunday School was started. Prior to this, a month of parochial school was held each summer, with a special teacher hired.



Rev. J. H. Preus  
1920 - 1930



Rev. Nels E. Halvorson  
1930 - 1946



Rev. Arthur H. Grimstad  
1946 - 1948



Rev. Arthur M. Olson  
1948 - 1951

In 1946 the Reverend Arthur Grimstad was called to serve as pastor. At this same time the congregation was involved in another realignment. Bruce Valley aligned itself once again with West Beef River of Strum. In 1948 Pastor Grimstad resigned and the Reverend Arthur M. Olson was called and served until 1951, at which time Bruce Valley was involved in a third parish realignment. During these years Bruce Valley Church was the scene of much circuit activity. On June 5, 6, 7, 1942, and April 30 and May 1, 2, 1948, circuit conventions were held at Bruce Valley. Also on October 14, 1947, the W. M. F. Mondovi Circuit Convention was held at the church.

The Reverend Axel Blom was called in 1951 to serve the parish which consisted of West Beef River and St. Paul's Lutheran churches of Strum, also Grace of Pleasantville and Bruce Valley. Assisting Pastor Blom at various times were student pastors James Brooks and Harvey Johnson and intern Stephen Engelstad all from Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul. In December 1953, the congregation purchased a new two-manual Hammond organ to replace the one that had served the congregation for so many years.

In 1956 the present parish alignment was made. Bruce Valley and Grace of Pleasantville, congregations which from their beginnings had been closely tied to churches in the Strum area, now joined Independence Lutheran Church, which for many years was served from Whitehall, to form the Independence Lutheran Parish. A parsonage was purchased next to the church in Independence and the Reverend Robert Arneson was called as pastor.