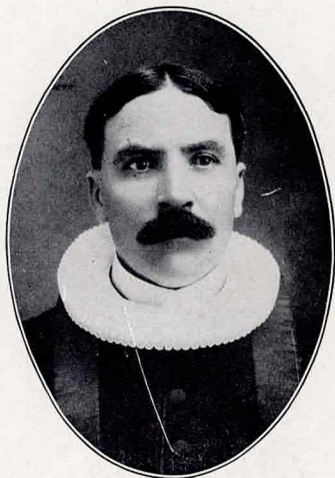


Reverend Peter Toft was called to serve the parish. Pastor Toft resigned in 1908, giving as his reason for resignation his inability to preach in the English language. Following his resignation the parish was without a permanent pastor for over six months. The Reverend O. K. Romberg, then pastor of the Lutheran Church in Whitehall, provided pastoral care until in June 1909. The Reverend Sigurd Folkestad, who at the time was a seaman's pastor in New York City, accepted the call to serve as pastor of the parish of which Bruce Valley Congregation was a part.



Rev. Peter Toft
1889 - 1908



Rev. Sigurd Folkestad
1909 - 1920

On December 2, 1909, a meeting of the congregation was held at the Alfred Franson home. It was decided at this meeting that the time to build a church had arrived. Once the final decision was made work progressed rapidly. A building committee was appointed which consisted of Mr. Eric Hagen, Mr. Andrew Kensmoe and Mr. Otto Bergerson. Land was purchased from Otto Bergerson for a sum of \$100, and in the spring of 1911 construction began. Much of the labor was donated by members of the congregation. Men brought teams and scrapers for excavating the dirt and wagons for hauling rock to build the basement walls. On June 23, 1912, the church, which is located about six miles southeast of Strum, Wisconsin, was dedicated and still stands as evidence of the determination of those first members and their children to have a church in which to worship almighty God.

The records of the congregation reveal a few interesting facts about the church. For example the bell, which through the years has marked the beginning and end of worship services, was cast in Cincinnati, Ohio, and weighs 800 pounds. It was purchased by the Luther League for a sum of \$200. The alter painting of "Christ the Good Shepherd" was purchased at the cost of \$52. The chalice and paten which decorate the altar were purchased for \$20. The first organ which now has been moved to the basement and still serves the Sunday School was purchased by the Luther League for the sum of \$98. At first the church was equipped with gas lights. For a time later on, electric power was provided by a home electric plant.

Under the leadership of Pastor Folkestad, a sewing circle was organized March 29, 1913, which continued until 1937. The circle was made up of young women of the congregation who sold their handiwork locally, the proceeds of which went to the China mission.



Digging of church basement in the year 1911