Lutheran Congregations in the Red River and Goose River Valley.

The Sand Hill Congregation was organized August 12, 1872, at the Tollef Tolleson home. According to the records of the first secretary, Peder O. Satermo, the organizers, who also became charter members were: Peder O. Satermo, A. O. Tronnes, Gulbrand Amundson, Peder O. Estenson, Salve Olson, Gullik Salveson, Johan Bramseth, Elling T. Dokken, H. Heia, Tollef Tolleson, Nils Olson, Ole Estenson, Ole O. Estenson, Ole O. Tronnes, Ole Estenson, O. Johnson Jevning, Knut Olson Ose, Thore Erickson, and Jorgen Knutson.

Reverend B. Hagebo, working in the interest of the home mission of the Northern Danish Conference, helped organize this congregation and became its first pastor.

From 1872-1883, services were held in the homes and school houses. There was a strong desire among the people to have a house of worship, dedicated to God. At a meeting held the 27th of December, 1873, at the Iver Mjoen home, the subject of a church building was brought up for decision. It may be of interest and value to those of younger generations to know that the ground work for this church was in preparation over a period of 10 years.

If we but let our imagination turn back to those years, we can see that more costly materials than wood and stone, though they were not cheap, have gone into the building of this house of God. Prayers and hopes and tears are a part of the ground work. Thought and discussion and arguments were interjected into the framework. Sacrifices and labor were indelibly inscribed into the very architecture of the building.

The first parsonage was a log house located on the west side of the coulee. (West of the church)

The church building was constructed in 1883, and served its members until the erection of a new edifice in 1959 and 1960. The old church built by the pioneers, which had been a landmark, was torn down.

Various auxiliary organizations have helped build this congregation into a fellowship of believers in the Christian faith. The Ladies Aid had its inception on October 27, 1876 at the Ole Estenson home. Sixteen ladies were present.

The church choirs. Sunday School and the Luther League have all played an important part in the Christian education and inspiration of its members.

Pastors who have served this congregation in the order of their services are: Pastors B. Hagebo, O. Bostad, Chr. Saugstad, H. J. Villevik, Chr. Ytrehus, Lonne, J. Brono, O. N. Bergh, H. A. Winther, Ludvig Pederson, N. Halvorson, C. J. Christianson, Louis Olson, C. J. Carlson, N. C. Anderson, Ralph L. Okland.

HISTORY OF DISTRICT NO. 6 SCHOOL

District No. 6 School is located in the western part of Vine-land Township on Highway 220, 4½ miles northwest of the city of Climax, Minnesota.

The first school the pioneer children attended in this Norwegian community was a neat one-room school built of logs in the year of 1873. As the population increased and more funds were available, a larger one-room frame school was built in 1888. There were many of these in the county, but District No. 6 residents dreamed of an even larger and more modern school. Ole O. Estenson for room structure was built. There was one teacher for the first four grades, and one for the upper grades, who served as Principal. With basement, rest rooms, the old “out houses” were not needed but stood for many years. This school and the church were centers of the community.

Teachers wages ranged all the way from $16, $26, $56, $62, $95 to $100 a month down through the years. In the earlier years, families would take turns boarding the teacher for which the School District paid from seven to eighteen dollars a month. The teachers walked to school in all kinds of weather carrying many books and her pail or sack of lunch in the morning. There were no hot lunches until District 6 two-room school was built. As late as 1925, families would take turns bringing one large hot dish to add to the sandwich and apple, or what have you?

In the late years of 1800, wood was hauled in and burned for heat, for which people were paid around $2.50 a cord. New stove pipes were often purchased and cost 50¢ each and 3 for $5. One thousand shingles cost $26.25. Ten “two by fours” were $2.12. A broom was purchased each school year for 30¢ or 35¢ and much used. In 1880, Ida C. Sautgaard taught school. In 1881, Peter O. Satermo was paid $4.75 for 1¼ cords of wood.

In 1886, the total teacher’s wages were $225 per year. The Clerk’s fee was $6. A large box of chalk cost 25¢, and the blackboards and slates were always used a great deal. The schoolhouse floor became dirty very fast from children’s shoes walking on muddy or dusty roads and paths. Someone was often hired to scrub it for two dollars, using scrub brush and soap.

From 1880 through 1897, prices differed greatly from 1976. One fire shovel cost twenty-five cents. Fifteen coat-hooks cost seventy-five cents; painting the school floor, three dollars; one gallon kerosene cost fifteen cents; P. Vladeland for sand, one dol-$1; Ole T. Fisher for fire insurance, $3.12; money order and stamps, 10 cents; money order at Neby post office 14¢; Ole Jevning for five day work, $8.25; P.H. Toonquist fixing school house, ten dollars; Hans H. Berg, was paid twenty dollars for building school foundation; the Bank of Fisher for a draft, 25 cents. Teachers wages were around forty dollars a month in 1882 and all grades were taught by one teacher.

The Norwegian language was used almost entirely in the homes, so at school recess, this is how the pupils conversed. Often a pupil would come in and tattle that “so and so” was swearing in Norwegian. The teachers were too busy to be out policing the play ground and some teachers knew no Norwegian. It was difficult to have kindergarten and first grade children who had to be taught English as well.

The Christmas program was a highlight of the school year and the school was filled to capacity. Weeks were spent rehearsing, making decorations, and finally chopping down a choice tree in the woods and trimming it. Many gifts were brought and each pupil had a gift for the teacher. The District No. 6 school always was a community center and the present two-room school is used and kept up. A Farmers Union Local still meets there, and the township owns it. The desire to preserve it is there, which is good.

John Saugstad of Crookston once taught in the old frame