When Wisconsin Territory was granted statehood in 1848, Congress recognized that the territory had matured to the point where its population would be able to make a strong and welcome economic and social contribution to the Union. Similarly, the movement of Norway Church in the 1880s was an indication that it, too, was coming into its own. In its growing maturity, the congregation came to realize that the church of Jesus Christ is not an entity unto itself, but part of something larger, a communion of saints, the church universal.

The Waterford Post, a newly emerging local newspaper, played a significant role in connecting Norway congregation with the larger community. But it was their dispute with Pastor Rønneberg and their involvement in the election controversy that forced the congregation to finally define itself in the larger context of the church. Acting on deeply held conviction, Norway congregation found itself drawn into the process that would culminate in the formation of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America.

Pastors Huus, Rasmussen and Schmidt seized upon this formidable thirst for involvement, pouring their energies into the congregation, educating about the wider church and its missions, inspiring the organization of new groups to carry out this mission, and encouraging the congregation to grow with the community by taking advantage of improvements in transportation and communication. Norway Church was coming of age.

The Waterford Post

The advent of the Waterford Post not only brought the larger community to the attention of the Norwegian immigrants, but by reporting on the events of their lives to the larger community, it encouraged them to see themselves as full and legitimate participants in the larger society.

The weekly newspaper printed notices of church meetings and happenings. The columnist from the Town of Norway used the pen name “Small Boy.” Later columns were simply headed “Norway.” Important passages of Norway Church members were noted. For example, a golden wedding anniversary party was held in 1881 at the Peter Jacobson home. Pr. Rønneberg made remarks, dinner was served, and in the center of the table was a large cake with fifty wax candles of different colors. A wreath was placed on Mrs. Jacobson’s head. The reporter of this event hoped that many others would follow suit and celebrate such anniversaries.

Small Boy wrote of the election of A. Apple to the office of town chairman, who beat his opponent, Gaute Gunderson, by ten votes. In August, 1883 he wrote that threshing was in full swing. He described the barn-raising
at Albert Malchine’s in June, 1884: “Before the workers left that evening the skeleton of a barn 66’ by 36’ towered aloft in the air.” He reported the December wedding of Adel Friis and Jacob Bernetson, noting that after the ceremony at the “Scandinavian” church, all repaired to the home of the bride where the evening was spent enjoying food and amusements.

While the newspaper reported the lighter side of life, more sober endeavors occupied the business of the trustees. In 1882 Hans Jacobson presented articles for the organization of the cemetery. Lots were to be laid out in 210 sixteen-foot squares with four-foot wide gravel walks between them. Each family breadwinner would get one lot. German family breadwinners who paid their share for the new fence would also get one lot. All outsiders and members would be expected to maintain the fence as well as their own lots. A work day would be held in June to put the cemetery in shape.

During a heavy rain and hailstorm in August, lightning struck the steeple of the church, doing damage in the amount of $100. At the annual meeting of January, 1883, the congregation decided to repair the steeple. They also toyed with the idea of moving the pulpit, but this was tabled for a future time. Each family in the congregation was assessed $2 for church repairs. Some of the money would also be used to purchase a little land north of the cemetery in order to build stables for the horses.

Against Missouri

In 1883 a bitter controversy involving former pastor Thalberg engulfed the church. It ended finally with the painful resignation of Pr. Rønneberg from Norway congregation. Thalberg, who had left the congregation and returned to Norway to teach, came to the trustees with a claim for back pay. A congregational meeting was called to discuss the matter. Apparently, the discussion was heated but nothing was resolved. In the process, Pr. Rønneberg became dismayed at the vehemence with which certain members, especially one Hans A. Jacobson, denied Thalberg his claim. The relationship between Rønneberg and Jacobson quickly deteriorated.

Pr. Rønneberg, portraying Jacobson as a troublemaker, publicly brought another complaint against him, claiming that Jacobson had accused him of saying that Pastor Tobias Larson taught false doctrine. Jacobson in turn asked permission to bring a matter before the congregation. He angrily claimed he had been denied the Lord’s Supper two times by Pr. Rønneberg because he would not repent of his behavior at the meeting with Thalberg. Jacobson insisted that Rønneberg
did not have the right to set conditions on his participation in the sacrament. He cited Pontoppidan’s *Pastorale* and other books to support his case. Rønneberg stubbornly refused to discuss the excommunication and, after some argument, he and his supporters walked out of the meeting. After they left, Jacobson won the meeting’s support. They declared that all excommunications which are done without the sanction of the congregation are against Lutheran teachings. Rønneberg was incensed. More meetings followed. In the end, the congregation took back its decision and allowed Rønneberg to give an explanation of his position. The damage, however, had been done, and in 1884 Rønneberg resigned and accepted a call in Black River Falls, Wisconsin.

Addressing the congregation at the 1884 congregational meeting, Chairman Gunerus Dukleth inquired if anyone knew of a pastor who might be willing to serve Norway Church now that Rønneberg had left. Three persons were named. The congregation, it became clear, didn’t care if the person called were a candidate (seminary graduate) or pastor, just so he could stand on his own two feet. And while they were indeed interested in getting someone who could preach in both Norwegian and English, what was of an even greater concern to them was where that someone stood on the issue of “election.” They would not, the congregation decided, “call anyone who stood on the Missourian’s side in the election doctrine.”

The controversy in the 1880s over the doctrine of election split the Norwegian Lutheran churches apart. Pastors were literally thrown out of their churches over the matter. At issue was how a person comes to salvation. Simply stated, the Missourians believed that election, or predestination, was based solely on God’s grace. God chooses to save people “in view of the merits of Christ,” not in view of people’s faith. The Anti-Missourians, on the other hand, with whom Norway congregation sided, believed that God foresees who will believe in Christ and God then chooses to save those people. This is election “in view of faith,” which more closely squared with what Norwegian Lutherans had been taught in their catechetical studies.

There have been few issues debated so fiercely in Norwegian Lutheran church history. The arguments on either side were intense and bitter. When the dust cleared, about one-third of the pastors and congregations of the Norwegian Synod had withdrawn, becoming known as the “Anti-Missourian Brotherhood.” These pastors and congregations were the impetus for the union movement which led to the formation of the United Church in 1890.

**The United Church**

In October, 1884 Gerhard Rasmussen of Clinton, Wisconsin consented to serve Norway and North Cape congregations every third Sunday of the month for one year, or until a resident pastor was found. The next year
Rasmussen suggested that a call be given to Alfred Huus, Rasmussen’s brother-in-law, who had just gotten his C.T. (Candidate in Theology) degree from Capital University in Columbus. Huus fit the requirements—he belonged to the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood, and he could preach in both languages.

The years of the Huus pastorate, 1886-92, were a time of many important changes at Norway Church. For the first time in their history, the church became officially affiliated with a larger church organization, the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, or simply the United Church. Formed in 1890, the United Church was a consolidation of the Anti-Missourians, the Conference and the Augustana Synod. This was the first major step toward union among Norwegian Americans in their church affairs. Hans Jacobson was elected to attend the joint meeting in Scandinavia, Wisconsin on November 15, 1888. In December 1889, Pr. P. A. Rasmussen presented to the congregation the constitution and articles of union for the United Church, and the congregation accepted them by unanimous vote. Jacobson also was the delegate to the Union convention in May, 1890 in Minneapolis. From then on, Norway Church usually sent a delegate to the annual meetings of the United Church.

A whole new world opened up to the congregation at Norway when it decided to finally affiliate with the larger church. Interest and activity in foreign and home missions skyrocketed. Norway Church, which had first been served by missionary pastors who had their hearts set on ministry in Africa, now was in a position itself to support such efforts. Mission festivals were begun in 1891 as a way to focus attention on the missions of the church. Speeches and sermons educating people about the various mission fields were given in both English and Norwegian.

The congregation early became interested in the work of the Indian mission at Wittenberg, Wisconsin. This interest was sustained for many years because the Jacobsons of Wind Lake were involved with the mission. Dorcas Jacobson Wrolstad, whose father Axel was superintendent at the Indian school, used to sing and tour in the 1920s with the choir of Indian children, which performed across the state. She reminisces:

*Because the Indian children were apt to become shy while being*
asked to sing for Mission Festival services, I was asked to stand with them and give them confidence to sing out. Years passed by before I learned that my future husband, who was sitting in the balcony at South New Hope Church had asked his mother "who the white Indian was."

New Organizations and New Ideas

It was during the Huus pastorate that the first women’s organization, Kvinnesforeningen, or The Ladies’ Aid, was organized. The energy for missions was great and the women delighted in the idea that within the context of their new organization they could concretely participate in supporting this important work of the church. They held their first meeting at the Hans A. Jacobson home on July 15, 1886. At that meeting Mrs. Christ Bensene, Mrs. Gunerius Dukleth, Mrs. Gabriel Fries, Mrs. Gilbert Fries, Mrs. Christ Hogenson, Mrs. Julius Jacobson and Mrs. Thomas Olson decided to sew and sell garments. Each woman donated $.50 for material for overalls, jackets and gingham aprons.

In addition to providing for missions, the meetings grew into important social events. At their meetings the first Wednesday afternoon of the month, they had lunches of sandwiches, cake, doughnuts, fattigman and coffee. They paid dues of $.10 per month. During their first year they were joined by several others, Mrs. Louis Rolfson, Mrs. John Haugan, Mrs. Martin Rolfson, Mrs. Ole Hedjord, Mrs. Gaute Gunderson, Mrs. John Dale, Mrs. Peter

Hilda and Lula Nelson on their way to church
Jacobson, Mrs. Gus Garnatz, Mrs. Ole Hanson, Mrs. Halvor Johnson, Mrs. John Larson, Mrs. Andrew Halvorson and Miss Ellen Johnson. At the Mission Festivals, held out in the woods, they sold or auctioned garments. Later on, the sales were held once a year at different homes. The proceeds from these sales, plus dues, were divided—two-thirds going to Foreign and Home Missions of the United Church, one-third to the local congregation.

Women came to meetings in lumber wagons, buggies or sleighs in the winter months. The Aid historian noted that meetings were not held in January and February because of the lack of stable room for horses. Two, Mrs. Andrew Johnson and Mrs. Jake Hanson, came driving horse and buggy a distance of ten miles and seldom missed a meeting.

Under Pr. Huus the congregation also worked to shore up the functioning of the Norwegian Religious School. Huus won the congregation’s support for his plan to divide the school into two districts. One district, under the superintendency of John Larson Jr., would hold classes in the church. The other district, under the superintendency of Mary Friis, would hold classes in the Lohner schoolhouse in the western part of the settlement. In addition to parochial school, Olaus Hogenson and Hans Jacobson were in charge of the Sunday School of the congregation. Each Sunday one of these men was directed to read a sermon to the children after their classes were finished. Other congregational leaders during this time were Charles L. Jacobson, treasurer, and school commissioners Olaus Hogenson, Abraham Johnson, Halvor Johnson and Gaute Gunderson. Mrs. Huus was organist, assisted by Erik Erikson and Louise Johnson. Abraham Johnson was the custodian, with a salary of $18 for the year. As custodian he also dug the graves and rang the bell at funerals. He was to be given $2 every time anyone needed this service.

It was during this time that the church acquired a new organ. The 1886 annual meeting had authorized a committee of girls to “go around in the congregation to collect money for a new organ.” Those who volunteered were Hildah Jacobson, Maren Friis, Clara Peterson, Eli Peterson, Mary Ann Gunderson and Andrine Storlie. In April, the Post reported that Norway congregation had purchased a new reed organ, “which gives good satisfaction.” The old organ was sold to Haaken Hogenson for $10.
At the 1888 annual meeting, Pr. Huus asked the congregation’s permission to serve the Norwegians at Vernon, about twenty families, on three Sundays during that year. When Vernon decided to formally organize, Huus was instrumental in helping the congregation establish itself as the Vernon Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran congregation. By February 16, 1889, enough land had been acquired and enough money raised, including a $160 donation from Norway Church, to enable the fledgling congregation to build its own church. The number of congregations in the pastor’s charge now numbered three, with Norway continuing to be the place of the pastor’s residence.

By 1889 Norway congregation finally conceded that the question of what to do about the towering pulpit had been postponed long enough. Most now agreed that the pulpit was so high it was very unpleasant for anyone to preach from it. A committee was elected to recommend changes. At their urging the congregation decided to tear down the old pulpit as well as the balcony around it. In its place they built an eight inch high platform in the chancel area, situating the new pulpit just above the altar, and framing it with a new altarpiece. They decided at the same time to raise the two back rows in the balcony so that people could see the lowered chancel area. The Ladies’ Aid contributed the painting for the altarpiece. Created by Kurz and Allison of Chicago, it depicted Jesus on the cross with the women at his feet.

Language was always an issue in the immigrant community. It was announced at the annual meeting of 1890 that those who desired an English hymnbook to use with an English service should approach the pastor. At a special meeting, Julius Jacobson read a petition of the names of those who desired an English service and it was unanimously agreed to provide one. At the annual meeting of 1892 the pastor’s salary was raised to $400, reflecting the additional work of providing English afternoon services.

Many new members joined Norway church in 1890, a large share of them coming from the “White Church.” Having met separately in the community over the past 40 years, the little church had now become reconciled with Norway Church. Although it did not officially close its doors until 1892, many of its members did not wait that long before becoming a part of Norway congregation. This new influx of members was the likely cause of some of the discussions about worship.
practices that the trustees dealt with at the time. At issue was how to reconcile some of the traditions that had developed separately in each congregation. Pr. Huus wondered how the congregation stood regarding pastor's attire. A vote was taken with the majority leaving it to the pastor, while eight voted he should not wear "pastor's clothes," and two voted for full vestments. The congregation also decided they again wanted to have a klokker, especially for the three great holidays of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. Ludwig Johnson was unanimously elected and he served in this capacity for the next quarter-century.

There was considerable discussion within the United Church about the issue of whether the church should run its own college. A vote was taken at Norway Church on this issue November 30, 1892, with the congregation voting for Augsburg Seminary as their first choice. If, however, Augsburg was not turned over to the United Church within the next year, the congregation decided, St. Olaf should be the Church's college. The secretary was charged to publish this resolution in several Norwegian-language newspapers in the region, which he did.

The Rasmussens

When Pr. Huus resigned his call to take a call in Decorah, Iowa, Chairman Høyeme of the United Church recommended Pastor Wilhelm Rasmussen of Elgin, Illinois for the job. Pr. Rasmussen came from a strong church family. His father, P. A. Rasmussen, had been a pastor for 48 years at Lisbon, Illinois, and had been intimately involved in the major theological discussions and the church union movement. When P. A. died in 1898 he was mourned throughout the Church. His work had had a strong impact on his children; four of his sons had become pastors. His daughter had married one. When Wilhelm consented to serve the three congregations, he was certainly familiar with them. His brother, Gerhard Rasmussen, had served Norway congregation on an interim basis. His sister Matte was married to Alfred Huus whom Wilhelm would be replacing at Norway congregation.

Pr. Wilhelm Rasmussen served the three congregations from 1892-1901, a period of relative peacefulness and stability, despite a depression in the national economy. The main organizations within the church at that time consisted of the Ladies' Aid, the Choir, and the Young People's Society. Young people's meetings were held at the parsonage. One particularly enjoyable evening included vocal and instrumental music, a lecture by the pastor, and plenty of good food and conversation. The congregation always enjoyed coming together and found many other occasions for celebration as well. A popular event was the pastor's birthday celebration at which he would typically be gifted with a purse of money and everyone would spend
the day in conversation, picnicking, music-making and speeches. The choir was considered a necessity at all gatherings of whatever nature. Mrs. Hogenson worked many years to build up and promote the work of the choir. In 1898 a list of choir members included Mrs. Christ Hogenson, Mrs. G. Gregerson, Miss Sarah Hogenson, Miss Helen Hanson, Edwin and Elmer Jacobson.

The language question arose again in 1894 when it was resolved to replace the English afternoon service with a Norwegian one. This decision met with community-wide consternation. The Post ran an editorial decrying the change, “This decision bars the seven to nine families in this congregation who intermarried with other nationalities, and in consequence are English-speaking people, from hearing the Gospel preached during the present year. This, the newspaper sarcastically continues, “is certainly a fine specimen of home mission work that is truly commendable!” A postscript in the minutes of the trustees noted that the decision to discontinue English services was subsequently revoked. The services continued to be held every fourth Sunday of the month.

The congregation’s concern for integrating new members and disciplining its own is reflected in the minutes of the trustees. In 1896 the congregation took up the application of James Young for membership, but decided that since he was not confirmed he could not become a member. Many thought the constitution should be changed to allow it.

Then in 1897 Pr. Rasmussen presented a request from Mrs. Johannes Haugen and her daughters, as well as Lars Rolfson and his family, that they be released from membership at Norway. They had decided to “break with Lutheran teachings and go over to the Christian Scientists.” The congregation sent a letter encouraging them to reconsider their decision, and action on their request was postponed for one year. “Norway congregation asks you to seriously reconsider this, not to reject your childhood faith and turn yourself over to new teachings.” The parties involved renewed their request, and they were released.

Pr. Wilhelm and Inger Rasmussen in front of the new parsonage on Waubese Lake
According to the minutes of the trustees during this time, the work of the congregation continued apace. A proposal that the congregation withdraw from the United Church was made in 1898, but was not discussed. An invitation was sent to their old pastor, H. A. Stub, to return for a celebration of his 50th anniversary of ordination. The pastor’s salary at this time was $550—Norway paid $300, North Cape $200 and Vemern $50. Congregational leaders were Edwin Jacobson, treasurer; John Elmer Jacobson, Sunday School superintendent; Miss Carrie Bensene, organist; P. Petersen, custodian. The School Commission included Andrew Halvorson, G. A. Friis, Ole Johnson, Haaken Hogenson and George Thompson. The Ole Hedjord and Halvor Peterson families gave a memorial gift of iron gates which were erected at the entrance to the Norway Hill Cemetery. The trustees voted to build a new fence around the cemetery. They also voted to change the pastor’s salary payments to April 1 and October 1, instead of January 1 and July 1. The treasurer was instructed to pay the pastor first and then the other expenses.

In 1899 the congregation decided to make an even exchange of the parsonage at Waubesee for the land (ten acres with buildings) just west of the cemetery belonging to John Larson. The Rasmussen family moved into the new parsonage in October, 1899. Pr. Rasmussen asked to meet with both Norway and North Cape in order to talk about putting a “picket fence” in front of the new parsonage. The fence was a gift from North Cape, but the pastor wanted to be sure that all would be pleased with it. The congregations entrusted the pastor with erecting the fence according to his wishes.

Church and Community

In July, 1900 Rasmussen received a call from the United Church congregation in Adams, Minnesota. He accepted the call, but remained at Norway for a few months until they could secure a new pastor. Chairman Høyme of the UNLC and Professor Kildahl of St. Olaf were written asking for recommendations. Both replied that it would not be easy to find someone because of the demand that they be able to preach in both languages. Pr. Rasmussen was asked to stay, and his salary was raised by $50 in each congregation, but he declined. Pastor Lockrem of Norway, Illinois was called and he even came to Wind Lake to meet with the congregations but he, too, declined, saying that his congregation would not let him go. Lockrem recommended a Pastor Sletten, so Lockrem’s name was scratched out on the letter of call and replaced with Sletten’s, and Lockrem was asked to see to it!

Finally, in 1901 Otto Schmidt accepted the call. He and his family moved to Wind Lake in 1901 and stayed until 1907. Pastor Schmidt invested much of his energy in community as well as church affairs. He was instrumental in the startup of the Wind Lake Telephone Company in 1902. Not
only did he participate in the business end of the company, including the decision to sell telephone stock at five dollars per share, but he also shared in the physical labor, stringing many of the telephone lines himself. He was a true community leader and his efforts were well recognized. A 1904 obituary of young Oliver Peterson praises Schmidt for his efforts in organizing a search party to recover the boy's body in Tichigan Lake.

Another improvement in the area was a new electric railway line, which ran out from Milwaukee. When the new railroad grade from Norway Hill to Waterford was completed, making a cut through Norway Hill that the Post reported was over fifty feet deep in some places, the newspaper was less than impressed: Thus, "centuries of nature had been disturbed by John Beggs, the railway magnate." The new line would make Wind Lake accessible to folks from the city, which in the Post's opinion would be a disgrace to the peaceable community.

In 1908 a new drainage district was organized. In 1861 the state of Wisconsin, which had owned the wetlands making up the large central portion of the Town of Norway, ceded this land to the town with the expectation that the town would sell the land and use the proceeds to drain it. The land was sold for $1.25 per acre and the first dredging of a canal occurred in 1887. In 1908, in a meeting at the town hall at Blackhawk Corners (Hwys. K and S), the farmers gathered to investigate what it would take to drain all the land in the swamp as well as the land that abutted it. They hired engineers to survey the area and make recommendations for the location of canals and ditches. The system of canals which cleared the wetlands was completed
between 1913 and 1915.

In the midst of the fast-paced improvement of the community, the work of the church continued. Congregational leaders included Thomas Thronson, secretary; Edwin Jacobson, treasurer; Carrie Bensene, organist; Elmer Jacobson, superintendent and custodian; Haaken Hogenson, Hans Bendickson and Frank Johnson, trustees. The School Comission continued to oversee the operation of the Norwegian Religious School.

A matter of church discipline was handled in special meetings in 1906. Pr. Schmidt brought a recommendation to the congregation for the excommunication of a member. After explaining the grounds for his recommendation, the congregation decided to uphold it. As it turned out, the guilty party repented and excommunication was not necessary. The care with which this matter of discipline was handled stands in stark contrast to the situation twenty years earlier which culminated in Pr. Rønneberg's resignation.

At the 1907 annual meeting, it was reported that the church steeple was in such poor condition that it should not continue to be used. A committee of nine men examined the steeple and made suggestions for its repair. It was decided to change the steeple entirely, designing it for easier maintenance. Olaf Hogenson, who offered to do the work for $395, was awarded the contract. The trustees approached the Ladies' Aid, requesting a loan so that the work could proceed. A poem, "The Ladies' Aid," acknowledges that it was common experience for churches to operate in this fashion:

The shingles on the roof are old, the rain comes down in rills.
The brethren slowly shook their heads
and spoke of monthly bills.
The chairman of the board arose
and said, "I am afraid
that we shall have to lay the case before the Ladies’ Aid."

The Old Church is Moved

The saddest episode of Schmidt’s pastorate occurred in 1904 when the
old log church was removed to Luther, the United Church’s Seminary in St.
Paul, Minnesota. The idea to restore old Muskego church seems to have been
urged on by Sebastian Selkirk in his 1897 letter to the Skandinaven newspa-
paper, in which he claimed that he had come across the old church while
bicycling through Wisconsin. He claimed it was being used as a pigsty, and
he suggested the church do something about it. Rasmus Anderson, however,
claimed to remember a conversation with Chm. Høyme of the United Church
in 1894 in which Høyme told him of his desire to restore and move the old
church.

However it happened, by 1900 the United Church had purchased the old log
building. The deal, according to Wilhelm Rasmussen who was pastor at the time,
was done somewhat quickly because Hans Jacobson, the owner of the old
church, claimed that he had had an offer from the
Norwegian Synod for twice the amount offered by the
United Church. Upon hearing this, Rasmussen
immediately wrote out a contract which Jacobson
signed, selling the old church building to the United
Church. A few days later a check from Chm. Høyme
for $100 arrived and Rasmussen completed the deal.
The building was then dismantled and placed under
a shelter where it lay waiting to be moved.

Different ones voiced their opinions about a site
for the soon to be restored church. Pr. H. A. Stub, in
a letter to the editor of Lutheraneren, wrote that the
church should be located on Indian Hill. But a
resolution of the United Church in 1902 read: “In
connection with the restoration of the old Muskego
church, it is decided: The Church body’s pastors
shall try to gather in the necessary funds and Pr. Gerhard Rasmussen is to head
up the undertaking.” So, too, Pr. Wilhelm Rasmussen wrote:

Almost all the members who built the church are now dead or
have moved away. The same is true for those who used to
worship there. If it were replaced on Indian Hill, relatively few
would have the opportunity to see it and admire it. But many
could on the Seminary grounds. St. Anthony Park is the place
for the Muskego church.
It was Schmidt who came up with the idea of selling drawings of the church to raise the money that was needed to move it to St. Anthony Park. He arranged to have printings made of a detailed drawing of Old Muskego. Each print would sell for $2.25, with all profits going to defray the expenses of the restoration. Contributions, however, were slow in coming. Several letters in the summer and fall of 1904 pleaded for the needed money, at least $2,000. Despite the lack of funds, the project went ahead. The September 15, 1904 Waterford Post reported, “The ruins of the old church were removed from Wind Lake this week... The logs, which were cut sixty years ago in the marshes of Racine County, were taken to Muskego Center awaiting removal to Minnesota.” Needless to say, the Post thought it was a shame that the church would be taken out of the state. “It should have been rebuilt on the old Indian mound.”

By late autumn of 1904, the church arrived in St. Paul. Charles L. Jacobson went to St. Paul to do the restoration. Gerhard Rasmussen wrote, “Hurrah! Now it is in the right place.” But he went on to say that the treasury was empty and a loan would be necessary if gifts were not forthcoming. Schmidt, in a letter to Rasmussen, urged him to keep on with the fundraising, for he himself had a lot of money tied up in those little drawings he was selling. Still in 1907, Rasmussen continued to plead for funds to pay off the debt which at that time was around $1,500. It is not known if the debt was ever settled, or if it was simply absorbed into the United Church’s budget. Though the removal of the church was certainly a loss to the community, it is just as certainly a blessing that the church was restored and preserved when it was. Without such timely intervention it would have decayed beyond repair and been lost forever.

The marker on Old Muskego Church in St. Paul