The death of Pastor Paulson in the prime of his life threw the congrega-
tion into shock and disbelief. The loss was akin to the feelings evoked later in 
1963 when President Kennedy was assassinated—a charismatic leader cut 
down in the prime of life, before his work was done. And like Kennedy’s 
death affected the nation, the traumatic loss of Pr. Paulson imprinted itself on 
the soul of the congregation. Many feelings—guilt, fear, sadness—needed to 
be dealt with and healed. But there was also work to do. Difficult meetings 
ensued as the congregation struggled to get on with both its building program 
and calling another pastor. It seems that the congregation chose to resolve its 
grief by going forward with the dream, completing the work Paulson had 
begun.

So the church was built and dedicated. Pastor Amundson came, and with 
a steady and caring style of leadership, he facilitated healing and the building 
of a new community. The congregation started to be more comfortable in its 
role as a center of the community, spreading out its wings to be a home to 
many diverse people and needs.

Under the banner “Blessed to Be a Blessing,” the 125th anniversary was 
an opportunity to look around and assess where things stood. What a contrast 
to 1943! The congregation now had a huge new facility and the membership 
was 1,200 strong. Norway Church was blessed with a rich heritage, a proud 
tradition, and people of vision who reached out into the community. The 
sense of having been blessed by God in order to be a blessing was strong 
indeed.

Life Goes On

Bids for the building of the new church were to have been opened the 
day Paulson died. For the next two Sundays the congregation tried to 
regroup. On January 20, the regular annual meeting date, Allan Jones pre-
sided over elections and discussion about the building. Miles Anderson 
reported for the deacons, stressing the problems created by the loss of “our 
Pr. Paulson.” Discussions were continued January 27, with new president 
Richard Johnson in charge. It was a volatile meeting. Strong opinions were 
put forward regarding the building of the new church. Many couldn’t imagi-
ne going forward without Paulson’s leadership. Instead of letting out bids, 
the plan was sent back to the architect for further revision and cost reduction. 
Finally, on March 31 the plan was amended to include a full basement and 
was let out for bids. It was understood that nothing over $200,000 would be 
considered.

Pr. Joseph Hestenes officiated at the groundbreaking, turning the first
shovel of sod (Jordahl was in Europe) on Sunday, July 21 at 3:00 p.m. Mrs. Irene Paulson, who lived the rest of her life in the community, turned the second bit of sod, followed by congregational leaders. The completion date was set for May, 1964.

The congregation celebrated its 120th anniversary on September 15, 1963 with a program at 2:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. State Senator Lynn Stalbaum was the guest speaker. The state historical society had been petitioned by Pr. Jordahl and the congregation to designate Norway Church as an official historical site. The society had agreed and a marker indicating this distinction was erected and dedicated on this occasion.

The building committee published a pamphlet called “Fulfilling God’s Need at Norway.” In the pamphlet, William Larson, chairman of the building committee, detailed the process so far. The congregation, he wrote, had instructed the committee to follow the architect’s plans with two exceptions, the capacity for seating was to be increased and the floor of the church was to be made level with the ground floor of the present building. These changes were made in the final plans and they were submitted for bids. The committee, in consultation with the architect, decided on painted plaster walls for the interior. The floor treatment in the narthex would be Terrazzo, and in the sanctuary a heavy cork-type solid-color linoleum. The windows would be clear glass stormes on the outside and amber glass on the inside. It was anticipated that the amber glass would be replaced with stained glass as finances permitted. The window on the west end above the altar would be stained glass. Contracts had been let out to Magill and Welkos of Elkorn, general contractor, for $141,000; to Bakke Electric of Waterford, for $13,450; and to Steinke of Waterford for plumbing and heating, for $16,338. The total contracted expense was $170,758. Additional expenses included architect’s fees of $8,428 to Steubnorach of Sheboygan, and approximately $7-10,000 for fixtures.

The pamphlet’s projected growth of the congregation turned out to be somewhat optimistic. Sunday School enrollment, which was 205 in 1952 and 344 in 1960, was projected to be 500 in 1969. Similarly, baptized membership, 623 in 1952 and 943 in 1960, was projected to be 1,500 in 1969. President Richard Johnson challenged the congregation:
This is our generation—and if history has any useful purpose, it should be more than just the recording of events. It should kindle the Spirit of self-sacrifice and motivate us to overcome the problems of our age. It is my hope and prayer that each member of Norway will find the common effort of building a church reason for increased Christian joy.

Pastor James Amundson was installed as Senior Pastor at both services December 15, 1963 by Dr. Austinson. He was a U. S. Navy Chaplain during WWII. (It was impressive to see Pr. Amundson in his Navy uniform participating in the Memorial Day service up on Norway Hill.)

Pr. Amundson recalls that he was drawn to the congregation for many reasons, one being that his great-grandfather, Amund Amundson, had moved here from Norway in 1848. He had purchased a farm near Wind Lake and lived there for five years, until he moved with his family to Winneshiek County, Iowa, and homesteaded on a farm northeast of Decorah. His grandfather did not, however, become a member of the congregation. He was a loyal supporter of Elling Eielsen, and went to Eielsen's services whenever he was around.

One aspect of church life which Pr. Amundson and his family dearly loved and nurtured was music. It was thrilling to hear Pastor and his three sons harmonize together in a quartet. Mrs. Amundson directed some of the choirs, fostering a great appreciation of music among aspiring church musicians as well. In 1971, a son, Dick, came back to Wind Lake after spending a semester at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma. He had participated in a Christian musical while there, called "Tell It Like It Is." His dream was to share that musical with the community around Wind Lake. To that end he met with youth groups from various churches, who came together before school once a week to read and discuss portions of the Bible. With the help of some teachers at Waterford High School, "Tell It" was rehearsed and presented at the high school shortly before Christmas, 1971. It involved almost one hundred high school students and was a great success, touching many lives. Dick continued his singing ministry, forming an international Lutheran Youth Encounter team called "New Vision." This group also included a college classmate of Dick's with a Norway Church connection, Dave Walle. Steve Amundson is remembered as a very gifted musician. He often sang or played in a brass ensemble for worship services. Steve is the current conductor of the St. Olaf College orchestra.
Pastor Jordahl stayed on as Amundson's assistant. "The work here presents a real challenge," Amundson told the gathered congregation, "and it will with your cooperation and prayers, be a genuine joy to work with you in the greatest task on earth, our Father's Business."

An article in the ALC's Lutheran Standard in 1963 acknowledged the flurry of activity at Norway Church. The article mentioned the two sons of the congregation who had graduated from Luther Seminary that May, Chuck Paulson and David Jacobson. Then it talked about their home church.

Once it was an open country church serving farmers. Today it is an open country church only so far as its location is concerned, for its membership is 75% or more urban so far as either the occupation or the residence of the people are concerned. Many work in Milwaukee, Racine, Waukesha, and even Kenosha, commuting to work each day. Some who once lived in the city have moved...summer homes near the lake have been made into year 'round homes. Farms have been subdivided and modern homes built upon them.

The writer congratulated Norway Church for not only embracing the mission opportunity by inviting new families to join with them, but also for responding to the challenge of growth with vigor and foresight, building a new church to accommodate the fruits of their missionary labor.

In 1963 the T. T. Mission Workers were getting on in years, but they gave Erling Hestenes the usual gift of $75. They had decided the previous year that "hereafter only sandwiches and one sweet would be served" at their meetings. The historian noted that over the forty years of T. T. Mission Workers, they had contributed $9,350 both to missions and to the continuing work of the congregation.

One of the new organizations that blossomed at this time was the Young Adult group. Steve Cook became its first president. Pastor Amundson, of course, also introduced new ideas to the congregation. He initiated the Bethel Bible Series and recommended the formation of additional choirs. He also instituted a unified budget, with current expenses and mission funds to be considered as one item. Copies of the Service Book and Hymnal (the red book) were ordered so they might arrive in time for the dedication of the new church.

An acolyte group was formed under the direction of Pearl Bruce of the Altar Guild. Teenage boys were recruited and trained in the duties of the office which included lighting the candles at the beginning of the service ("the object is to light them, not call attention to the action by any gymnastics").
and extinguishing them during the last hymn. The young man chosen for the honor of acolyting on a particular Sunday was expected to suitably prepare himself. "Prayer, bodily cleanliness, clean hands and fingernails, clean shoes (preferably black, perhaps brown, but never white bucks)," were all expected. Herb Weltzien, Richard Anderson, Ray Rossmann and Norman Bruce were in the first group of acolytes. The group started out with one acolyte per service, then two. Later, girls were allowed to acolyte, too. Over the years, Mrs. Bruce reports that 186 young people have been involved in acolyting.

**The New Church is Dedicated**

A thousand people were present for the dedication of the new church which was held Sunday, May 24, 1964, at 2:30 p.m. Pr. Amundson gave the greetings, "God has blessed this congregation with men and women of vision, faith and obedience to His Word to rise up and build this new church edifice, which we today dedicate to His glory. Here is further evidence of God's work, the result of His abundant blessing upon the teaching and preaching ministry of His Word in the lives of His faithful people through these 120 years." The official act of dedication was performed by President Austinson. The senior, youth, junior and cherub choirs also took part. The council president, Martin Bakke, accepted the key, opening the door for all to enter. The Bible, hymnal and sacramental vessels were received at the altar and they, along with the altar, pulpit and font were blessed.

The program for the celebration introduced the the new church to the congregation in this way:

> It sits on a gentle slope north of the church on the hill, on donated land located directly across from Heg Park. When the original Parish Unit was planned, a general design was prepared at the same time for a church extension. Several contemporary designs attempted to adapt to the Gothic of the unit. The congregation decided to retain the very fine simplified, Gothic type of architecture. The tower was extended 24 feet to a total of 52 feet in order to provide room for various bells. Limestone was obtained from the same quarry as the educational unit. The church seats 408 in the nave, the balcony seats 68, with room for the organ left. The basement is unfinished. The stained glass chancel window is genuine handblown antique glass imported from Germany, France and England. It was designed and created especially for our church by T. C. Esser Glass Studios in Milwaukee, under the direction of master craftsman, Erhard Stoettner.

Dr. John Kildahl of Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn gave the youth dedication service address that same evening. The Luther League and Young
Adults of the church participated in the evening suffrages service which was attended by over 400 people. "God," Dr. Kildahl told the gathered people, "has great things in store for youth, far beyond their expectations. Look toward the future with confidence." The women of the congregation served a buffet supper between the two services to all in attendance (1,000 people).

The calendar of dedication festivities continued throughout the summer. Congressman Schadeberg presented an address at the "Dedication To Service To the Community" program on June 7. An open house with a guided tour, refreshments and coffee were offered to the visitors. The class of 25 confirmands had their public catechization the evening of June 18. Confirmation followed on June 21 at the 10:45 service. ALC President Schiotz brought the message at the July Mission Festival, which was followed by a noon picnic dinner at Heg Park. With the dedication of the new church, the challenge articulated and led by "our Pastor Paulson" had come to fruition. Norway Church was poised for a new era of worship, learning and service in the community and the wider world.

Blessed to Be a Blessing

In 1965 Pastor Dennis Raymond was called to serve as assistant pastor. (His seminary classmates, David and Howard Jacobson and Chuck Paulson, sons of the congregation, also were ordained during that time. Another, John Dukleth, was ordained in another Lutheran denomination.) Dennis and his wife Naomi took up residence in the second parsonage. He was installed September 12, 1965 for a term of three years. He received a salary of $5,000 that first year. Pr. Raymond remembers that it was his first call, there were no interviews and not much deliberation. "You just didn't turn down your first call in those days, you went, and I wasn't sorry!" His specialty was youth ministry and, with Naomi as partner, the Luther League flourished under his direction. The Young Adult group as well as a Jr. High fellowship group was
also active during this time. Naomi started a high school choir of about 25 youth. The Raymonds also did much to nurture the music life of the congregation.

Women were now being elected to leadership positions in the church in larger numbers. Irene Noll became the financial secretary of the congregation, a position she held for nearly thirty years. Norma Fries was elected to the nominating committee. Ethel Astwood was the recording secretary at the annual meeting.

There were new challenges. The benevolence budget for the ALC was raised by one-third in 1964 and it was reported at the 1965 annual meeting that the congregation almost made it. Teacher training began for the Bethel Bible Series. The new Bible study was eagerly anticipated as the tool that would provide a new generation with a compelling introduction to God’s Word. Forty young people were confirmed that year, and 28 were baptized. Baptized membership was 1,269; confirmed, 828. Also that year, the congregation borrowed $20,000 to blacktop the parking lot, and they sold $800 worth of land to the state of Wisconsin for the new Highway 36.

There had for some time been dissent within the congregation over the practice of listing individuals, along with the yearly amount they had contributed to the congregation, in the annual report. In 1967 the congregation reached a compromise. They agreed to abandon the practice of listing individual names, deciding instead to try using envelope numbers. This proved to be an unsatisfactory solution, however, and in 1968, they dropped all the individual listings and printed only total congregational giving in the
The ALCW reported that they had raised $731 from the thankoffering boxes gathered. One box came with this prayer enclosed: “Treasure Chest be on your way, make my gift a blessing to someone today. I wish it were a hundred fold, much more than you could ever hold. With this gift, I send a prayer, that all people everywhere may learn of God’s goodness and love. For truly my cup runneth over with blessings from above.”

This sense of being blessed was the focus of the major project for 1968, the congregation’s 125th anniversary celebration. Its theme was “Blessed to Be a Blessing.” Pastor Raymond considers working with the anniversary committee a highlight of his years at Norway. He particularly remembers the arts weekend of June 14, 1968. It included an art exhibit, a play (“The Summons of Sariel”), a film discussion, a hymn festival, and a recital of music. Dennis reminisces: “I don’t think I’ll ever forget Naomi coming out of the hospital after having Marc and accompanying me the next day on the piano for five solos from “The Messiah!”

The women outdid themselves on the anniversary lutefisk dinner. Held on February 15, 1968, they managed to net $1,800. Tickets sold for $2.50 for adults and $1.25 for kids. In return, ticketholders were able to stuff themselves with all the butter-drenched lutefisk they could hold, washing it down with lefsa, lingonberries, meatballs, potatoes, and cup after cup of steaming black coffee.

The next anniversary event was a fellowship banquet held on September 13, Foundation Day. Dr. O. Malmin, former editor of the Lutheran Standard, was the featured speaker. A representative of Lutheran Brotherhood insurance was also on hand to present a Landmark Church award to the congregation. President Austinson preached at the morning worship on September 15, and Dr. Schiotz preached at the afternoon service of rededication. In connection with the event, the congregation collected a thankoffering of $2,109. They sent it, along with their prayers, to Dr. Erling
Hestenes to help with the training of doctors in South Africa.

In 1969 the Raymonds accepted a call to Springfield, Minnesota and in August, Lloyd and Carolyn Tobiassen came to Norway. Tobiassen’s major responsibility was to be in youth work. That same year, the Eielsen House and the softball field adjoining the park were sold to the Racine County Park Commission. The agreement stated that the Commission would now retain responsibility for upkeep of the house.

Pastor Tobiassen’s report in 1971 showed some new directions for the congregation. He was interested in small group possibilities, Bible study groups, prayer groups and the like. He pushed for allowing AA and Al-Anon groups to meet at church. He recruited more adults to help guide the Jr. High fellowship group as well as the Luther League. There were a record 41 youth confirmed that year, and 35 baptized.

More and more, lay people were being involved in the worship services of the church. Laymen’s Sunday provided the opportunity for lay people to bring their vision of God’s word to the congregation. Those who brought messages during the year 1971 included Paul Baumann, Art Showers, Dick Johnson and Norm Schultz. Dick Amundson and Richard Fretty organized folk services for the congregation. Young college students David Johnson and Norman Bruce preached on student Sunday. 1971 was also the year of “Tell It Like It Is,” in which many Norway youth participated.

In the wider church, the LCA and ALC were working closer together. Plans were being solidified to merge the LCA’s Northwestern seminary with the ALC’s Luther seminary in St. Paul. And, in a landmark decision in 1970, after long discussions and debate, women were given the opportunity to be ordained. When the few women who were then studying at Luther Seminary graduated, they were allowed to accept a call, if a congregation would have them.

In 1972 Pr. Amundson and Clara left for Green Bay, and on Sunday, August 27, Pr. Tobiassen was installed as senior pastor. He and Carolyn moved into the first parsonage in September.

The new Möller organ was dedicated September 24, 1972, at a 3:00 p.m. recital given by Leonard Rose, who was the choir director at Norway in 1953, and was currently the organist at Ascension Lutheran in Milwaukee. The dedication was the culmination.
of several years work by the organ committee which had been led by Don Jacobson. Pr. Amundson came back to give the message at the dedication. Current organists were Naomi Anderson, Norma Fries and Jo Jacobson, who also accompanied the senior choir. Debbie Dolezal and Sue Johnson substituted. Many gave memorials and gifts to the organ fund. The Clarence Halverson estate was a major contributor to the cause. Chester Alaxson and Ray Knurr did the cabinetry for the two-manual, 15-stop organ. With the purchase of the organ, the congregation incurred an addition debt of $13,752. They still owed $76,000 on the building.

Pastor Joel Olsen came to Norway from Yale Divinity School in 1974 to become the congregation’s new associate pastor. He focused on education and youth programming. Pr. Olsen was also interested in worship and in 1976 he guided the worship committee in their decision to move the altar away from the chancel wall to make it free-standing.

Author Edna Hong was present for the congregation’s November presentation of the play Muskego Boy, produced and directed by Jean Frost and Donna Hanson. Those in attendance that evening have probably not forgotten Irene Paulson’s stellar performance as “Bestemor” (especially her farewell scene). The evening’s offering was designated for mission support.

Luther League was reorganized into Norway Youth Fellowship. One of the goals for the new organization was to work toward participation in the New Orleans national convention. The group was also an active participant in conference events. Canoe trips were all the rage during Pr. Olsen’s time. The destination of choice was the Wolf River at Clintonville, Wisconsin. Summer camp still drew large crowds, and Norway youth became involved at Imago Dei Bible Camp as well as Lutherdale near Elkom.

In 1975 there were enjoyable changes in both parsonages. Pr. Olsen married Louann Jacobson of Norway congregation, a daughter of Pr. Lowell and Carolyn Jacobson. And Matthew Lloyd Tobiassen, age 3, came to Wind Lake from Korea as the newest member of the Tobiassen family.

Other new arrivals to the community and the congregation in 1975 were two Vietnamese men, Quot and Mao. They came as part of the congregation’s refugee resettlement effort. Eldon Ricke chaired the committee that was responsible for integrating the men into the community. The Bill Loos family volunteered to take the men into their home until suitable living arrangements could be made. Soon afterward, the congregation was able to rent a basement apartment in Waterford. Lorris Roed gave the two men work in his construction busi-
ness. The winter was hard on them. Mao ended up in the hospital with pneumonia. The next summer they decided to move to Milwaukee and live among their resettled compatriots there. The committee also resettled another Vietnamese family, Mr. and Mrs. Lie and their five little children. The committee found and refurbished a house in Milwaukee. Mr. Lie got work at Marquette University and the family was able to get its feet on the ground.

The congregation continued to support Dr. Hestenes in his work in South Africa, but after learning that he now would be fully funded by the South African government, they decided to direct some mission money to Dick Amundson and Dave Walle and their colleagues in the LYE music team, “New Vision,” who were planning a trip to New Guinea. At that time also, the congregation was introduced to the ministry of Pr. and Mrs. Arthur Wyse in Columbia, South America. Norway congregation was pleased to have a new ministry to support.

In 1976 the Luther Leaguers were actively preparing a special Christmas Eve service that would become a tradition at Norway church. They planned to hold “Christmas in the Barn,” Malchine’s barn, that is. Located just a mile south of Norway Hill, the setting was perfect. Dressed as shepherds and wise men, the young people sang and told the Christmas story. Dr. George Buchal provided special music and Kevin Malchine’s cow, the Polachowski’s sheep, and a real, live baby Jesus lent their special sounds to the production. The simple setting, and the singing and hearing of the old, old story was memorable. Due to popular demand, the one service became two, at 6:30 and at 9:30 p.m. They have been a part of Christmas at Norway ever since.

In the fall of 1976, an unfortunate accident became the occasion for celebration. The old bell in the church on the hill came crashing off it’s moorings onto the floor of the steeple. An article in the Burlington Standard Press noted that for the first time in more than one hundred years,
parishioners at Norway would not hear the peal of the bell beckoning them to the Christmas Eve worship at the old church. Jean Jacobson of the Old Church Committee headed up the search for a new bell. It was a difficult task, as only a couple places in the world made the large bronze-cast bells. The committee contracted with the Verdin Co. in Holland to do the job. It took six months. After the bronze was poured and hardened, a bell master tuned it with a lathe. The new bell was dedicated in a special service in November, 1977. Prs. Joseph Hestenes and David Jacobson participated in the dedication, as did Allisann Apple, whose great-grandmother, Mrs. Miranda Halvorson, helped collect funds for the first bell installed in 1874. The old bell was mounted on the south side of the old church. At that same dedication, thanks to the efforts of the Norway Historical Society, the old church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.