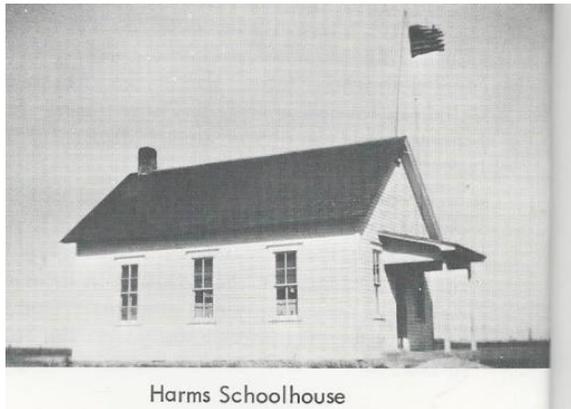


Throughout the coming year, as Bethel prepares to celebrate its 125th anniversary, we will be sharing bits and pieces of history and memories. Please help out by sharing your memories and pictures.  
Wendell & Millie DeBeer and LeRoy & Geraldine Hassebroek

In the very early years of the 1890s, a group of people came to settle in Lyon County, Iowa, in that part of Midland Township surrounding the present site of the Bethel Reformed Church. Each of these pioneer families had in their possession a copy of the Scriptures in the High German language. Due to their habits of faithful devotion to Christ, the seeds were sown for the organization of a congregation. Since there were no minutes kept of the proceedings of the Bethel congregation until 1900, it is hard to know the exact year in which the congregation was organized. Still, it is known that for several years before 1895, services were held in the Harms schoolhouse, which was located one mile south of the present church, and during the vacation period of the summer months, Bible school was held there.



From the Book of Land Deeds, Book X page 507 on file at the office of the Lyon County Recorder, there has been filed a record that on October 19, 1894, Heik Hoting and Gretje Hoting, his wife gave the German Reformed Bethel Church one acre of land to be used for a cemetery ten rods by 16 rods, located in the southwest quarter of section 24, township 100, range 44 west of the 5th Prime Meridan. This acre of land was the site on which the first church building at Bethel was erected.

The History of North Central Classis 1915-1965 states that the families of the congregation made known their desire to be accepted into Pleasant Prairie Classis, Chicago Synod, of the Reformed Church in America. Rev. W. T. Janssen, assisted by Rev. George Veenker, organized the church in 1895 with Mr. Claus Walterman serving as the elder and Mr. Berend L. Brommer serving as the deacon. The charter members of the congregation were: Mr. and Mrs. Berend L. Brommer, Mr. and Mrs. Claus Walterman, Mr. and Mrs. Harm W. Harms, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Solma, Mr. and Mrs. Heik Hoting, Mr. E. J. Brouwen, Mr. and Mrs. George Walterman, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Walterman, and Mr. Harm Solma, Sr.

Soon after the congregation was organized, it was placed in the care of the Hope Reformed Church (George), and Rev. Bollenbacher of Hope Church served both congregations. From 1899 to 1902, Rev. George Schnucker served both the Hope and Bethel congregations, and in 1903 Rev. Lorenz Ziegler served both congregations.

(Over)