

History

History of United Methodist Church at Seabold

Even before the idea of a Seabold Church was considered, a community Ladies' Aid was meeting, having been organized at the J.A. Silvens' Home in 1899. It was largely through the concern of the ladies and pioneers of the Seabold Community that in 1908 a meeting was held in the schoolhouse to plan a church. (The schoolhouse is the present Seabold Community Hall.) Both Setterland's corner (across from Carlson's Store) and Lindvog's corner were considered for a church site, the latter being accepted.

Since most of the community was Scandinavian and Lutheran in background it was decided to call the new church the Lutheran Free Church. However, it took nearly two years of fund-raising and organizing to build the church. Attached to the signed copy of the original Articles of Incorporation of the Seabold Church is a hand-written statement which reads:

"The residents of Seabold are trying to build a church so that they can have a place to promote the spread of religion and inculcate the love of God and of their neighbor, in their hearts and in those of the little children. We will be very grateful for any help extended and will not forget our friends when our object is accomplished. Give what you can. Every little bit helps."

Under this statement is a list of donors and the amount pledged or given in cash. The amounts range from 25 cents to \$9 from individuals to \$5 and \$10 donations from Bon Marche, Frederick and Nelson, and Standard Furniture. After a year of gathering materials - lumber, nails, bricks, etc., which was brought by boat and wagon from Port Madison and Seattle - plans for a 30 x 46 x 12 building were placed in the hands of Mr. Asmundson and Mr. Solibakke. This was in August 1908, at which time the by-laws were approved and the first members of the newly organized church signed their names in a record book along with their denominational background. It was also approved that each member was to give six days' work toward the construction, or \$2 a day for a six-day period. On January 18, 1909, the Articles of Incorporation were approved, with C.J. Carlson named president, and F.W. MacTaggart as secretary - a post which the latter served for many years. At this time cash receipts were \$522.40.

The benches and windows for the church were purchased from a Seattle Church which was being torn down. Mrs. Silven, Mattie Johnson, and Mrs. Bernard Thompson were appointed to go to Seattle to make arrangements for the delivery of these articles. The steamboat company delivered them free of charge to the old Seabold Dock (at the end of Hidden Cove Rd.), and horse-drawn wagons pulled them up the wagon trail to the church.

On January 10, 1910, at the board meeting, the Ladies' Aid were thanked for their gifts to the church by a standing vote of thanks. They had raised the money through solicitations and bazaars. Appreciation was also expressed to Lindvog's for the land and Mr. Asmundson for leading the construction. At this meeting it was decided that the church should be painted white.

Though the date is uncertain, it was either late in 1909 or early in 1910 that the formal dedication took place, with Rev.

Tollifson and Pastor Iverson in attendance. Several baptisms were held on this great occasion; Miss Evelyn Siverson was the first child to be baptized in the new church. Her parents were Mr. and Mrs. Peter Siverson. Frank Setterland and Ida Silven living at Seabold, were godparents. Also baptized was Loren Thorsen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Nels Thorsen.

People came in buggies from all of the Island for the dedication. Food was brought in baskets for a lunch and celebration following the dedication, in the church basement.

The Rev. Mohen was accepted as pastor of the church on January 20, 1910. He was a pastor also serving Poulsbo. Two of the early pastors were Rev. Linstad and Rev. Skartvett of Port Madison in the 20's.

Funerals held in the church were arranged by the Ladies' Aid. Fir boughs were laid at the bottom of the steps and greens placed in the church.

The first wedding to be held in the church was that of Ruth Tjosdal and Harold McBride. Ruth was the daughter of Ole and Thora Tjosdal and the granddaughter of early pioneers, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Thompson.

Music has always been an important part of the church. Ida Moench was the first organist. Mrs. Henderson led the choir around 1918. Other musicians were Mrs. Woods, Mrs. Richard Anderson, Mrs. Carl Christensen (wife of the minister) and Mrs. Joe Christiansen, organists. (Mrs. Christiansen was organist and choir director, 1943 - 57.)

Even in times when church services were not held, the Sunday school was maintained by faithful workers. Some of the early teachers were: Carl J. Carlson, Mr. F. Jorgenson, Evelyn Komedal, Nettie Hanson, Diducka Anderson.

Gifts and memorials to the church through the years have enriched the memories and beauty of our building. The bell was given in 1929 by Mr. S.V.B. Miller, who was a secretary of the church. A new altar was built in 1931 by Mr. Olaf Faller and Mrs. Skoor. The altar cloth was made by Mrs. Tom Swensen; Candelabras were given by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Komedal in memory of their two sons, Jimmy and George, killed during World War II. The baptism font was given by Mr. and Mrs. W. Digerness in 1949. Mr. Digerness was secretary of the board.

The communion service was given by Mrs. Richard Anderson in memory of Capt. Richard Anderson - also pioneers. A silver baptismal font was given by Mrs. Mattie Johnson who was for twenty years president of the Ladies' Aid, and for forty years the Seabold Postmaster.

The altar cross was bought in memory of Mrs. Thora Tjosdal, president of the Ladies' Aid, and also in memory of the vice-president, Mrs. Ingeborg Jacobson, who both died in 1952. Collection plates were given in memory of Bennett Tjosdal, son of Thora. Later gifts included an altar Bible, given by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Smith (1958) and the organ, which is in use at present in the newly-rebuilt sanctuary, by Mr. and Mrs. Ed Brown of Suquamish in memory of their mothers. Altar candles were given by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lundgren in memory of Mrs. Lundgren's mother.

The church activities included "Dock meetings" held once a month in the basement to consider the upkeep and repair of the 700-foot dock at the foot of the church road. This dock went down in a strong wind in 1929. Cemetery meetings were held annually and each member of the board had a vote.

At Christmas time, a tree was decorated in the church, and the Sunday School program held a week before Christmas. In the early days and during the depression years, gifts were bought for all children, and passed out at the program. The whole community helped to pay for these gifts.

The Ladies' Aid earned money for their support of the church mainly through their bazaars. Mrs. Sig Gunderson always made candy for the bazaars, and Mr. John Ralston and Mr. William Speers served as auctioneers for many years. Money was contributed to the Martha Mary Orphan Home in Poulsbo as well as to Mr. and Mrs. Arenson, the missionaries.

Besides pastors previously mentioned the following have also served Seabold Church: Mr. Heinmiller (1929-33), Rev. Start from Winslow Christian Alliance Church (1933). The ministers were paid by offerings and the Ladies' Aid. From 1940-45 Rev. Carl Christiansen, a Lutheran from Seattle served, and from 1948 to 1951, Rev. O.A. Aasen served all three Lutheran churches on the Island. He was followed by Rev. Dwight Boe, who was in Bremerton as late as 1960. The three Lutheran churches paid the salary of the men by dividing expenses according to the size of the church body.

The Rev. Edward Ohrenstein, Congregational minister from Winslow served from 1953-56. He, too, served three churches; Winslow, Seabold and Suquamish. It was at his advice that Seabold undertook to become affiliated with a major church body. Along with him, Mr. Lewis Staab and Mrs. Joe Christiansen went to the Seattle Council of Churches to discuss the matter.

After much consideration it was decided to affiliate with the Methodist Church. The Rev. Clark Wood held a meeting at the church to discuss the possibility. It was decided by the congregation to become a Methodist Church on July 30, 1956.

The Rev. William Pflaum, a retired Methodist minister living at Wesley Gardens in Des Moines served out the year of 1956. Then a student pastor, Don Cramer, from the College of Puget Sound, served for nearly one year (1956-57). He was followed by another student, Harold Perry, who served for about the same length of time (1957-58).

In 1958, the church decided, under Clark Wood's guidance, to get a full-time pastor. John Haygood, a new minister just out of seminary, was appointed. Before he came, the church purchased the Egaas property for a parsonage and future building site. John and his family served two years (1958-60).

In June, 1960, Justin Morrill came with his family. At that time the membership was approximately 75 with a Sunday School enrollment of 90. With only the sanctuary and half-basement and small annex (formerly the post office), it was necessary to hold classes in private homes nearby and in Seabold Hall, and dinners and social gatherings were held in Seabold Hall, as the church had no room for such (nor any plumbing).

The pastor called a meeting of the Building Committee in January 1961, to consider possibilities of building. The following were appointed to the Building Committee: Mr. Dale Knapp, Mr. Herbert Armstrong, Mrs. Allen Komedal, Mr. Leonard Strong, Mr. Terry Schick, Mr. Don Reha, Mr. Louis Staab, Mr. Warren Greenway, Mrs. Silven Moench, and Mrs. Wilbur Graves.

In November 1962, the congregation voted to accept architectural plans by Paul Kirk for a 4500 sq. ft. addition and the moving and remodeling of the sanctuary at the new church site adjoining the parsonage. On February 21, 1963, they voted a \$30,000 loan for the project and the next day began in earnest to clear the land. At this time of approval of the

loan, the congregation also voted to take on the building themselves, elected Mr. Lyman Graves as building contractor, and pledging their time and tools and other resources at the same meeting.

Final services in the old church were held March 4, 1963, and ground-breaking services were held that same morning at the new site. Participants in the Ground-breaking were:

Member of long standing: Mrs. Teckla Nelson

Chairman of building committee: Warren Greenway

Chairman of official board: Larry Holm, Jr.

President of Woman's Society: Mrs. Silven Moench

Chairman of trustees: Stig Stranne

Lay Leader: Charles Hattrick

President of Methodist Youth: Susan Wegg

Representatives of New Members: Olav Mathisen

Words of dedication: Louis Staab

Prayer of dedication: Mrs. Terry Schick

Breaking ground for all: Russell Trask

Flag bearers: Jay Lund and Dana Strom

Coffee Hour: Wicki Strom

Coffee and cookies were served under the trees on a bright and brisk day. Worship services for the next five months were held at the Seabold Community Hall.

Professional movers were called to begin work on the moving of the old sanctuary. All furnishings were removed from inside the building and stored about the community with the majority of items being put in the John Nelson barn; the pews were transferred to the Christiansen's chicken house (previously vacated by the chickens).

On the morning of March 21, 1963, at 9:00 a.m., and in a heavy rain, power crews stood by to break and replace lines that stood in the path of the moving trucks which were ready with the building and the steeple on separate trucks. The actual moving began at 10:00 a.m. and by noon the building stood in its rightful place. The steeple was replaced by power crane and the guidance of Lyman Graves the next day.

The first project was to remodel the old church. This was completed August 18, and the first wedding, that of Carol Komedal and Stone Parker, was held August 24. Work continued on the new addition, with more than 70 persons contributing time and effort. The framing of walls, sheet rock installation and shingling of the roof was hired, but the major part of the work was done by the men and women of the church.

Since then the United Methodist Church at Seabold has been served by pastors: Rev. John Qualley, 1966-67; Rev. Donald Snyder, 1967-78; Rev. Lowell F. Murphree, 1978-83; Rev. W. Scott Huff, 1983-94, Rev. Norm Lawson 1994-96, and Rev. Dr. Dennis Magnuson 1996 to the present.

This is the church's 43rd year as a United Methodist Church. Several improvements have been made to our facilities including a new steeple cross; PA System with hearing aids in the pews; new roof on the office and education wing; a resurfaced parking lot; and new carpet, roof and paint for the parsonage.

Membership over the years has risen and fallen for various reasons from as few as 15 to as many as 170. At present we have 196 members and are increasing every year. We renew our commitment to Christ's ministry of loving presence begun by those far-sighted pioneers whose work we are carrying to completion.