

## Cross of Christ Chronicles

### *Pastor Photo Collection Completed*

Organized in 1858 with the help of Rev. Andreas A. Scheie of Newburg in Fillmore County, our little St. Peter's Congregation in the village of Houston had no less than 16 pastors in the 65 years between its inception and the inevitable merger with the Stone Church Congregation in 1923. During the same time period the Stone Church had four pastors (which makes them much easier to keep track of), three of whom also served St. Peter's.

Thanks to those who went before, we had a photographic record of almost every one of those many St. Peter's ministers. A photo montage with eleven pastors, including Rev. Scheie, was created for the church about 1911 by Houston photographer, Charles Miller. It appears on page 45 of the 1980 Cross of Christ History Book, and as you can see Rev. Marvik was added to the upper right corner at some time later. A large copy of this montage (without Rev. Marvik) is on view on the middle shelf of the section to the right in the narthex display case.

A few years ago the church was contacted by Greg Hanson of Apple Valley, Minn., a great-grandson of Rev. M.O. Hanson who served St. Peter's from 1893-1896. He was looking for a picture of his clerical ancestor, but unfortunately we had to inform him that of all the pastors who have served our three churches, the only one we didn't have a photo of was M.O. Hanson! Even the venerable O.M. Norlie's exceptional and well-known directory of Norwegian-Lutheran Pastors in America didn't have his picture, which is very unusual.

If you are to enjoy success in historical and genealogical pursuits you cannot give up easily, and we continued the search by forwarding Greg's request to the ELCA District Archives at Luther Seminary in St. Paul. Eventually a photo of the Augsburg Seminary Class of 1893 yielded a likeness of Hanson. Thanks to the diligence of his dedicated descendant we now have a picture of the surprisingly elusive Rev. Hanson, and Greg also made a donation to the Cross of Christ Archives even though we were unable to fulfill his request ourselves.

We asked Greg if he could provide more details on the discovery process, since we felt it would be interesting and historically pertinent information to put in our files along with the picture. He graciously replied with the following email:

"Kari Bostrom at Luther Seminary did email me a scan that she made from a book of the 1893 Augsburg graduation class, but she said that they did not have the original at the Luther archives. I took a chance and sent a letter to Augsburg College, and sure enough, Kristin Anderson, a professor at the college and archivist, located the original class picture which had the names listed in order on the back. The pictures were just pinned on, so she unpinned the original picture, scanned it, and emailed it to me. I had never seen a picture of Martin, so I didn't know which one he was, so it was real nice to get his picture."

We would like say "*en hjarteleg mange takk*" to Greg Hanson for sharing the photo of his great-grandfather with our congregation, and for further providing the information in the following two paragraphs:

Martin Olai Hansen, born 1 Feb 1855, Fet, Akershus, Norway. Attended Augsburg Seminary Nov 1891 to June 1893. Called to be the pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran Church of Houston, as well as the Looney Valley Lutheran Church, and the Trinity Lutheran Church in North La Crosse, Wis., in Sept 1893. Ordained on 4 Oct 1893, in St. Paul. His family (wife Johanna and six children) arrived from Norway to join him in Houston in late July 1894. He remained the pastor of St. Peter's until early Feb 1896.

Martin died on 20 April 1911, age 56 of heart failure, at Bagley, Clearwater County, MN. He is buried at the Bagley City Cemetery. He did have another church in La Crosse, from 1894 to 1896, named Our Savior's. He stopped being a pastor in late 1896, and went into the insurance business, and later into real estate. Also, for a period of about two years (1903-1905) he worked for the State Enforcement League of North Dakota helping to enforce the alcohol prohibition laws of that state. He was a true believer in prohibition. On at least two occasions he invited the well-known Temperance Lecturer, Adelsten Berge (also Norwegian) to come to St. Peter's to speak to the congregation. While living in Bagley (1909-1911), he became the eyes and ears for the Indian Agents who enforced the laws against selling liquor to Indians, as Bagley was in what was commonly called "Indian country"

at that time. (-info. from Greg Hanson.)

The photo collection of the official pastors who served all three of our churches is now complete! And it also includes, we are happy to say, our first missionary *and founding* pastor, Rev. U.V. Koren from northeast Iowa, and subsequent missionary pastor J.S. Munch from Wiotia, Wisconsin. It may also be of some interest that Rev. Christofer Ytrehus (1888-1893), who preceded M.O. Hanson at St. Peter's, was a good friend of our beloved visitation Pastor Mal Rossing's father. We never know where interesting and valuable additions to our church's history will turn up—*the search continues.*

*Shelley and Jim, Cross of Christ Archives, September 2017*

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