

**From Ground-breaking to Dedication**  
**Sunday, April 27, 2003**  
**by Wayne D. Groe**

It was a hot afternoon in July of 1993, out on the golf course, when Chuck Norby turned to me and said, "Wayne, if we are ever to get a new church built, we need to have a Building Fund – a fund where people can start putting money away. Why don't you draw up a resolution for the annual meeting to start a church fund?" I did, and at the annual meeting of the congregation in January of 1994, the Immanuel Lutheran Church Building Fund was established, thus effectively starting the building process for Immanuel.

At the annual congregational meeting in January of 1995, the congregation resolved to form a building committee, and on August 23, 1995, the first meeting of the building committee took place. The original committee consisted of Wayne D. Groe, Chairman; Marilyn McNeil, Recording Secretary; Chuck Norby; Jerry Buum; Carolyn Jones; Mark Jones; Dick Fennel; Earl Schulz; Winna Mary Lanning; Richard Peasley; Rose Rosenbaum; Ralph Morse, and Ronald Lanning. Pastor Hernes and Bob Vanderlinde were ex-officio members.

The initial meetings of the building committee looked at our existing facility to see if it would be possible to do anything to preserve it. After study and evaluation, it was decided to look for property for the purpose of putting up a new structure. In October of 1996, at a special congregational meeting, it was agreed to purchase the "Hummel" property at a price of \$36,000. In April of 1997, the committee started looking for an architect, and in July of 1997, Ed Cable was hired. During the winter-spring of 1998, meetings were held to try to figure out what our new building was to be, culminating in an initial plan for a new church for Immanuel. In May 1998, the congregation passed a resolution authorizing the building of a new church at a cost not to exceed \$800,000 and that no building could be commenced until the sum of \$500,000 in cash or pledges had been raised. In June of 1998, Judy Quam became the Treasurer of the Building Fund, and in the fall of 1998, a fundraising campaign was conducted, and pledges totaling over \$325,000 were received. Due to the inability to attain the \$500,000 goal and the fact that the cost of the new church that had been planned was well over the \$800,000 limit, a "revised" plan for a new church was presented to the congregation at the annual meeting in January of 1999. Due to the controversy surrounding the "revised" plan, it was decided to require a two-thirds majority on the vote to accept the new plan. The plan was defeated by one vote.

The building committee, at that point, started looking in other directions for construction. A Morton building was looked at in Humboldt, South Dakota, and the committee met several times with a representative from Morton Builders. By this time, the building committee had heard of the Mission Builders and knew that we could only utilize them on a wood structure. Accordingly, going to a Morton metal building was dismissed.

In March of 2000, it was decided to make an offer for the "Stroschein" property which was somewhat adjacent to the "Hummel" property in order to give us some additional room for a church building, plus the parking. The building committee, with congregational approval, authorized buying the "Stroschein" property for \$30,000. Mr. Stroschein hesitated, and the building committee then took a fresh look at the property available for sale in and around Elk Point. After much negotiating, the "Donnelly" property became available at a price of \$65,000, and at a special congregational meeting held in October of 2000,

the congregation agreed to purchase the “Donnelly” property. In February of 2001, the Hummel property was sold at a profit of over \$11,000.

Ten people in our congregation made a historic trip in February of 2001. They left early on Sunday morning and drove to Platte, South Dakota, to take a look at Trinity Lutheran Church – a church that had just been built in 2000 with the help of the Mission Builders. The look resulted in others going out to Platte. All were excited and enthralled with what they saw. After reviewing cost figures, the building committee suddenly knew that we could put up a new church building for an affordable price.

In May of 2001, a new church architect, Spitznagel out of Sioux Falls, was hired. Plans started to develop as to what our church was going to look like. In the fall of the year, dirt work was done to raise up the location of the church 2-3 feet – the first “work” on our property. In January 2002, at the annual meeting, Judy Quam said, “I think we can do it!” and, based on that recommendation, the congregation gave the go-ahead to start construction.

A building permit was requested from the City of Elk Point on March 3, 2002, and shortly thereafter issued. The first Mission Builder, Construction Manager Charles Stormo, arrived in May. The first concrete was poured in May, the first wall went up in June, and the rest is history. At times, progress seemed to go at a snail’s pace and at other times so fast it made heads spin.

After hours upon hours of meetings, serving breakfasts, selling tickets, washing dishes, and hundreds of hours of volunteer labor and lots of prayers, we now come together for the dedication of this beautiful house of worship. We thank YOU for the unity which you have shown through this whole process; for all your encouragement, time and talents; for all your contributions, large and small to the building fund; for your hours of dedicated service and time towards this project; and most of all, we thank you for your prayers.

Chuck Norby died before seeing his vision come true. I think he would be proud of the building we have and the way that we came together as a congregation to make it all happen. Funny things happen on the golf course!

**Building Committee:**

Wayne D. Groe, Chairman

Judy Quam, Treasurer

Lance Penfield, Secretary

Bob Vanderlinde

Rocky Quam

Mike Berg

Dave Hilbrands

Dori Hilbrands

Lori Buum

Reid Bird

Don Truhe

**Ex-officio Members:**

Dick Fennel

Pastor Dick Wiekert  
Arlene Wiekert