

## ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH, BUFFALO

PETERSON, CLIFFORD &amp; REVEREND JOHN PAUL FOLKERDS

This tape covers the personal backgrounds of Clifford Peterson and Rev. John Paul Folkerds. It also covers the Swedish heritage of the church and tells in great detail about the growth of the church. It also discusses the Lutheran church doctrine.

INTERVIEWERS: John Le Doux and Al Nielsen

DATE: July 10, 1979

SUBJECT COVERED: Tape 1 Side 1

008 PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF REVEREND FOLKERDS:

- 013 Rev. Folkerds was born in Delano, MN. His father was a school superintendent at that time.
- 016 His family then moved to Cokato, MN.
- 017 He was born on September 10, 1945.
- 020 Both of his parents were born in America.
- 021 His father is of German heritage, and his father's grandparents came to America during the turn of the century.
- 022 His mother is of Norwegian heritage.
- 024 His mother's maiden name was Bragstad.
- 027 He spent his first two years of his life in Delano, and then moved to Cokato for ten years and went through the sixth grade there.
- 030 He then moved to Le Sueur, MN, for five years.
- 031 He completed his senior year at Red Wing when his father was a school superintendent there.
- 033 He went to Gustavus Adolphus College in 1967.
- 034 He went to Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul and graduated in 1971.
- 038 When he was growing up in Le Sueur, a pastor took an interest in him and this inspired him to go into the seminary.
- 049 Through the seminary he worked in a Bloomington church, transfiguring <sup>turn</sup> with his <sup>going to</sup> school, teaching confirmation and preaching once in awhile.
- 052 He interned in Bismark, ND, for a year.
- 054 His first ordained call was in Anoka.
- 055 He spent three years in Anoka as an assistant pastor from 1971-1974.
- 056 In 1974 he went to Buffalo to the Zion Lutheran Church and became the co-pastor with Pastor Edward Blair.

061 PERSONAL BACKGROUND OF CLIFFORD PETERSON:

- 063 Clifford Peterson's parents came from Sweden.
- 065 On November 3, 1865, his father came to America, and seventeen years later his mother came over.
- 074 His father landed at Big Lake and walked the rest of the way to Buffalo.
- 079 Both of his parents are from Värmlandkrä, Sweden.
- 091 Before the Civil War, there was a small trickling of Swedes who came to this area in 1857.
- 094 The Civil War cut off the coming in of immigrants.
- 095 A large amount of immigrants came over to the U.S. in 1866-1867.

- 100 His mother's maiden name was Dickson.  
102 Mr. Peterson was born in Buffalo, MN.  
103 He was born on June 17, 1904.  
105 He went to District #118, Buffalo High School, then he moved to Minneapolis.  
107 He graduated from the Minnesota College, which was then owned by the Minnesota Conference.  
110 It is close to the University of Minnesota, and it closed in the 1930's.  
111 It was an academy and a business college.  
116 He joined the First National Bank and took evening courses at the University; he graduated fourteen years later.  
122 He lived in the Cities for 40 years where he was in the banking business.  
126 His first two years were at the Northwestern National Bank and then 38 years at St. Anthony Falls office with the First National Bank.  
130 He is currently retired.

140 CHURCH HISTORY:

- 140 The first organization was in October 1866 when six families joined together in a farm house and made plans to organize a church.  
146 Two women volunteered to go to Watertown to secure the help of Pastor Nelson.  
150 Pastor John S. Nelson came on November 7, 1866 to help organize the church.  
153 There were 27 members, which consisted of 12 husbands and wives, 1 bachelor, 2 young women from Watertown, and 31 children.  
166 In 1866 Swedish people started to come to the ~~church area~~.  
177 They came because of economic problems.  
180 Southern Sweden is farming country, but beyond that there wasn't much hope; they knew that wherever they went things could not get much worse.  
189 Americans offered them things if they would come over; they were mostly "schemers."  
203 There were not too many from Buffalo who had not corresponded with the Swedish.  
213 His father's youngest brother died at sea at the age of two on the way over here.  
216 They had to carry all their own food and water on the boat.  
229 Pastor Nelson started the Carlslund Evangelical Lutheran Church in Watertown, which is 14 miles from Buffalo.  
242 Pastor Nelson was one of the early pastors who organized churches in Swedesburg, Buffalo, and Watertown.  
246 Pastor Nelson was ordained in Sweden.  
249 Pastor Nelson had a residence at Marysville.  
253 The Marysville church was organized in 1873 and consisted of Swedish members.  
267 The Carlslund church was organized in 1866.  
268 The Buffalo church was organized in 1866.  
268 The Swedesburg church was organized in 1873.

279 CARLSLUND'S CHURCH HISTORY:

- 279 The Carlslund church was given a quarter of an acre from Christian Ilstrup, one of the early settlers, in 1870.
- 284 In 1871 Abraham Ilstrup, Christian's brother, gave them a half of an acre for a cemetery plot.
- 288 Each of the families donated a days' work to help pay for this plot.
- 292 In 1871 the first log church was built on this plot.
- 295 In 1887 the second church was built on this same plot; it was a white, wooden church with a large steeple, which served for 40 years.
- 304 By 1873 there were two churches, one at Carlslund and one at Marysville; they were both log structures.
- 310 They were approximately 10 miles apart.
- 312 They were both Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Wright County.
- 315 The Marysville church is called the Swedesburg Evangelical Lutheran Church at Marysville.
- 319 All the services were in Swedish.
- 330 There were two churches because of the transportation problem.
- 333 Pastor Nelson would come once a month.
- 339 He set a specific time for confirmation.
- 345 When Pastor Nelson came, he gave the members a list of things to learn.
- 355 In 1883 the Carlslund congregation had trouble obtaining pastors.
- 360 The Swedesburg and Carlslund congregations united to become one parish in 1883.
- 364 When Clifford Peterson was young, he had services at Buffalo, the country church at Carlslund, and Swedesburg.
- 375 In 1883 the two country churches retained their separate buildings sites, but they had one pastor.
- 379 They were two congregations but were one parish.
- 383 They both had their own church boards, funds, etc.

400 ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH'S HISTORY:

- 400 In 1900 Pastor Rehner was in the Buffalo Zion Lutheran Church for five years.
- 404 Previously, Pastor Wenner had bought the structure in Buffalo for \$25 and donated it to the congregation.
- 419 The three sites were served by one pastor.
- 421 All three sites each conducted Sunday school and summer school sessions for two weeks.
- 446 Buffalo and Carlslund congregations were always the same.
- 453 In 1950 Zion and Marysville congregations merged with Buffalo and became one.
- 464 The Carlslund church was closed down in 1918 because transportation was getting better with the invention of the Model-T Ford car.
- 545 Clifford Peterson was confirmed in Swedish.
- 553 Pastor Nystrom came in 1916 until 1925; by the time he left, the services were in English.

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 1 Side 2

003 THE SWEDISH HERITAGE:

- 003 Pastor C.A. Callerstrom and Pastor Arthur L. Chell could not read Swedish.
- 008 Pastor K. Alvar Oersson was educated in Sweden, but he never preached in Swedish.
- 014 Pastor Nystrom leaned toward phasing out the Swedish.
- 021 Clifford Peterson taught Sunday school in Minneapolis for 32 years. It took him a long time to change over from Swedish religion to English religion.
- 034 His father had an aunt that lived here that never learned to speak English.
- 045 The congregation at Marysville took longer to learn the Swedish language.
- 048 His father spoke German, English, and Swedish; he never went to school. He learned through his ancestors.
- 056 The Germans came in the 1880's.
- 058 The Germans formed their own churches.
- 073 The ethnic character started to change when Pastor Nystrom started having English services once in awhile.
- 078 Pastor Callerstrom had English services.
- 088 They had services from 9 p.m.-midnight on New Year's Eve because of the Swedish background.
- 092 In mid-summer they always had a church picnic.
- 098 A Christmas service was conducted every year at 5 a.m.
- 110 The membership has gone up through the years.
- 115 There was not a significant growth until it changed over to English.
- 118 There are 1100 confirmed members and 1700 baptised members.
- 136 There are three members this year that are being confirmed that are direct descendants of chartered members. This is what keeps the church going.
- 172 There will be a greater turnover of people in the congregation over the years.
- 185 There are about 500 people from Buffalo that commute to the Cities.
- 213 The Lutheran League is the young people's organization; they conduct the New Year's wake.
- 218 95% of the people in the church are farmers; their biggest work was welfare.
- 242 Direct aid by the congregation was given to each member.
- 254 The early church started the hospitals and schools before the State joined in.
- 258 The Minnesota Conference has a school on Harvard and Delaware Sts. in the Cities; Mr. Peterson and his wife both graduated from there.
- 271 The Zion Lutheran Church has the complete Sunday, confirmation, youth, and adult educations programs.
- 303 A youth director was added to the staff as a full-time position in order to help out young adults.

- 310 People don't sense the need to use the church as a social event anymore; in the past, church was the only social life that people had.
- 330 It is getting harder to find volunteers to work.
- 335 Zion Lutheran has had a special relationship with the two country churches.
- 343 In the old days there was no difference between rural and a larger church because the area was all farmers; it was a matter of distance.
- 366 The Deacons looked at the spiritual needs, and the Trustees were concerned with the buildings and the financial matters.
- 380 Mr. Peterson was on the Church Council.
- 391 He was a member of the St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Minneapolis.
- 410 Pastor Folkerds' father was a Deacon; the pastor of the church worked for the Deacons according to their rulings.
- 445 The change from Deacons to the Church Council was undertaken because of the merging of several other church bodies.
- 481 There are 12 members plus 2 pastors on the Church Council.
- 488 In 1962 the Augustana Synod joined together with Suomi Synod and the American Evangelical Lutheran Church to become members of the Lutheran Church of America; this merger had no effect on the church's doctrine.
- 526 Communion changed to any child after the age of 5th grade with instruction could receive communion.

SUBJECTS COVERED: Tape 2 Side 1

007 CHURCH HISTORY:

- 007 Smaller children are now allowed to come up to the altar with their parents to be blessed; it has been well accepted.
- 029 The Buffalo Zion Lutheran Church is part of the Minnesota Senate of the Lutheran Church of America, in such that they meet in convention groups in June.
- 032 They have two lay delegates in the legislative body which practices in the faith of the church.
- 041 Pastor Folderds' day to day duties are in a changing position because he shares the duties with the other pastor.
- 043 Each of them preach half of the Sundays in the year.
- 046 Pastor Folkerds deals with the finance committee, stewardship committee, social ministry, and various committee meetings about the church's growth.
- 050 Hospital calling is divided; counseling, dealing with shut ins and new members is also divided.
- 054 He has been working with the youth of the congregation while Pastor Blair has been working with the administrative duties.
- 059 With the coming of the new youth director, his duties will be minimized.
- 071 In 1976 the church was remodeled.
- 080 The services are contemporary, but it isn't a folk service; contemporary folk services are incorporated into other services with a youth choir that uses it once or twice a month.
- 094 In the summertime there is a children's sermon that invites the children to come up; Sunday school is in session with an objective lesson and followed with a special sermon with children's hymns.

- 122 The respect for the Zion Lutheran Church is high; the attendance is high.
- 134 People turn toward the church in times of a crisis.
- 162 Until 1925 the men sat on one side of the church while the women sat on the other side.
- 190 Pastor Nystrom confirmed people in three languages: English, Swedish, and Norwegian.
- 222 Ladies' Aid started when Mr. Cleveland was President in 1879.
- 230 The Women Workers made things for a supper and met once a month.
- 236 The Ladies' Aid was the main source of money for the church.
- 273 The Lutheran Church Women (LCW) meet once a month as a general meeting and have five or six circles that meet on a monthly basis for Bible study and various duties, such as, cleaning, visiting shut ins, etc.
- 287 The LCW provides scholarships for children going to camp; they take care of equipment in the kitchen.
- 295 The LCW is broken down into serving groups to provide luncheons for weddings, funerals, and banquets.
- 303 The LCW feels that women should become pastors.
- 324 In 1972 churches over in Sweden have both men and women pastors.
- 345 Mr. Peterson doesn't want the Zion Lutheran Church to have a woman pastor.
- 354 Pastor Folkerds is currently a member of the Board for United Funds.
- 361 Pastor Folkerds has not become involved in politics, but he has spoken his mind to politicians.
- 380 The church should be involved in community affairs.
- 389 Pastor Folkerds wife's name is Judy Osland; they have two children.
- 393 Mr. Peterson's wife's name is Lorraine Turner; they have one son who is a member of the Zion Lutheran Church.