

The following document has been recently reprinted, having been written following the dedication service for the new church building. Construction of the church was completed in 1905.

Dedication of the New Church at Komstad Sunday May 27, 1906

“But thou shalt call thy walls Salvation and thy gates Praise.” (Isaiah LX:18)

Since the beginning of time the holiest aspirations of all the human race have taken the form of worship. Even in that dim and distant past,

“The groves were God’s first temples. Ere man learned
to hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them—ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,
Amid the cool and silence, he knelt down,
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks
And supplication.

Thrice happy, if he found
Acceptance in his ear.”

True, this worship at times became degraded, primarily through selfishness, when man refused to give God the best that was in him, the gold of his being; when he strove for kingly prerogative, political emolument or sordid self, the plethoric essence of God in man was cut off and worship of the creator ceased; but worship he must, and stone, stock or devil became the object of his adoration. But we are glad that through the trailing centuries from that sunburst of Truth on Calvary the world is slowly but surely being brought back to a knowledge and worship of the true Creator.

As we said before, God requires the gold of our being. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” is as true today as the day when uttered. When man builds him a temple it must be commensurate with his ability. Mammon must not stand between him and the most beautiful structure possible. The best that art and man can construct for Him is simple enough; for the walls of His temple shall be called Salvation and its gate Praise.

Acting upon this knowledge the people of Komstad and Riverside have gone down into their purses until they (the purses) have become considerably attenuated, in order that they might build a fitting place of worship for the Lord and his Christ. This structure is one of the most modern and up-to-date and is one of the finest in South Dakota. A short history may be of interest.

About thirty-five years ago, Swedes began the settlement of the east side of the Vermillion Basin, throughout the townships of Garfield and Glenwood. Among those in Glenwood were a number of Christ's followers, some of whom are still living. The pioneer ministers who preached the work among them were Rev. John Bodine and Rev. John Peterson. These brethren worked in this part of God's vineyard to the great blessing of souls. About thirty years ago the membership concluded to build a house of worship which they did in the erection of the Komstad Mission church. It was the writer's privilege to attend many beautiful religious services in the church in an early day; beside the many conferences, one of the most interesting Sunday School conventions ever held inside the county was held in this church. Among the visitors and clergy present was Dr. Epstein, formerly president of the State University but now of Chicago, who took an active part. In the year 1886 occurred a division which caused the greater portion of the membership to withdraw and form themselves into a congregation, calling themselves The Children of God's Church, Riverside, Clay County. This title was adopted at a business meeting held at the Riverside Mills during the spring of 1887. At this meeting it was decided to build a house of worship on the southwest corner of the southwest quarter of section 19, township 95, range 51. The dimensions of the building were 26x36-14 ft. posts – with an entry 10x11. The site was deeded to the congregation by John Holmquist. Leaders and promoters of this movement were Lars Peterson, Hon. Gust Norgren, John Holmquist, John Gustaf Sjoborg, John R. Johnson and Charley Anderson. During this time they worked in conjunction with the congregations at Clay Point (Clay County) and Brooklyn (Lincoln County), engaging the same minister – a Mr. Wilson, of Chicago, who died in the harness after having faithfully done God's work. His beloved wife still survives him, being tenderly cared for and given a home according to scriptural injunction. Feeling the need of having a minister to themselves, Rev. A. P. Ljungberg, now of Omaha, was called August 1, 1890, to take charge of the work. He labored faithfully for four years when Rev. C. J. Hanson of Vermillion was called, January 13, 1896, who took charge of the work. During his pastorate some important changes took place. During the following summer the Komstad church building was offered them for sale on conditions that services were to be continued at that place. November 14, 1896, the congregation was called together to discuss the advisability of purchase. After some reluctance to give up the Riverside meetings, it was decided to purchase and at a business meeting, December 28, 1896, title to the property was effected. At this meeting it was decided to build a parsonage, which was carried into effect shortly afterwards. At the annual meeting it was decided to change the field of labor to Komstad and to move the Riverside building and annex it to the church at Komstad. This made a fairly commodious church. Since then up to the present, services have been held continuously at said place. The 13th of July the churchyard was platted into a presentable cemetery, and it was decided that lots should not be sold for less than \$10 nor more than \$25. At this time, the congregation carried a debt of \$700. December 5, 1898, Rev. N. Wickstrom of Boone, Iowa, was called to the work.

He labored with the people of Komstad and Riverside arduously for six years. During his pastorate the church was greatly strengthened and many important plans were carried into effect, among which was the preparation for the present magnificent structure. January 31, 1905, the congregation met in extra session to determine upon the building of a new church. Rev. Mr. Wickstrom reported that Hon. Gus Norgren and himself had been about the community and had been promised in subscriptions for church building \$4,757.50. This report instilled new life and courage, and it was then and there decided to build. Mr. Wickstrom had architectural plans at

hand which were adopted. A building committee was chosen, consisting of John N. Johnson, chairman; Gust Norgren, secretary; Karl J. Kron, treasurer; and with the instruction to act according to their best judgment. The old church building, which had seen thirty years of service, was moved out near the section line and used for services until the new one could be completed. The 28th of July it was sold to Hon. Gust Norgren for the sum of \$300. There was previously in the treasury \$500. One hundred and twenty-five persons subscribed and paid \$6,291.65, which made a total of \$7,001.65. The church, completed, costs as follows:

Lumber, brick and plastering	\$3,329.60
Stone	18.00
Paint material	242.62
Moving of old building	80.00
Hardware	345.16
Mason work	610.90
Carpenter work	1,742.24
Painting	202.20
Gust Norgren, work	150.00
Gas plant	345.30
Heating apparatus	340.90
Benches	636.07
Bell	152.00
Carpets	74.91
Board	16.00
Zinc	2.75
Miscellaneous	19.90
Inside fixtures	147.61
Total	\$8,456.16

The balance has been provided for. Besides the above cost, it gives us pleasure to mention the princely gift made by Anderson and Holmquist of Centerville, in the form of a beautiful and costly piano; Karl J. Kron, a beautiful and high-grade church organ; and, last but not least, a beautiful pulpit Bible, by David L. Anderson.

The dedication services began with a conference at which were present the following ministers: Rev. G. A. Young, of Chicago, superintendent of missions for the Free Mission Church in the United States, who preached forcefully Sunday forenoon from Ezra vi-16-18; Rev. A. P.

Ljungberg of Omaha, former pastor, preaching from Jeremiah LXXIV:24; Rev. Victor Carlson of Clay Point, who spoke on the coming Jerusalem Saturday afternoon; Rev. Irving Halleen of Brooklyn, Lincoln county, preaching from Joshua XXIV:15 also Saturday afternoon; Rev. N. Wickstrom, former pastor, who preached Saturday forenoon from John XIV, as did also Rev. Mr. Thorell from Psalms CXXXVI:6. All are forceful speakers, and spoke much to the edification of their hearers.

Sunday, May 27, 1906, at 1 o'clock p.m. the simple but impressive dedicatory services began. In front of the platform stood the trustees of the church, while upon the platform back of the pulpit stood the officiating clergy, while back of them again on the spacious platform sat the choir consisting of some twenty-five or thirty voices, who had been trained for the occasion under the able leadership of Miss Anna Norgren, assisted by Mr. Karl Kron. Prof. Geranson of Chicago presided at the organ and also sang a couple of songs during the service. It is said Prof. Geranson is an accomplished pipe-organist. Miss Amanda Lindblad presided at the piano. In spite of the cold, disagreeable day, the church was packed from centre to circumference. Dinner and supper were served in the church, to which all were invited. Services were continued also on Monday.

It may properly be said here that Rev. Mr. Thorell has begun a good work. Last spring about sixty young people were converted and joined the church. May the good work continue.

And now may the people of Komstad, as they look upon their noble structure, sing with Holmes—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free—
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

Charles S. Moore