

## HISTORY OF MILLARTON LUTHERAN CHURCH; MILLARTON, NORTH DAKOTA

In the early twenties in the Millarton community found a half dozen families longing for the Word of God and Song in their own Lutheran Church. How happy they were when a young pastor, ambitious and full of zeal for the spreading of God's Kingdom, offered to come and preach to them.

Mr. & Mrs. Carl Maas, Mr. & Mrs. Herman Reick, Mr. & Mrs. George Gatz, Mr. & Mrs. John Schmidt and their families gathered together in the Gatz's home in Millarton, in the summer of 1923 to hear and learn the Word of God. Julia Bensch, Christ Fleutsch and Mrs. Michel came along and sang for us. We seemed to be ashamed of our very small group, but Pastor W. W. A. Keller, full of hope said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there I am in the midst of them".

It wasn't long before we asked the school board for permission to hold services in the schoolhouse. Our small group of worshippers grew to about thirty parishioners. The Links, Barnicks, Browns, Pottratzs, and Bierleys also joined our Church.

This church was supported by missions and our very small collections. Many is the time we wondered if our faithful Pastor received enough for his gas. Services in the spring and summer were held in the evenings and in the winter months on Sunday afternoon. There were times when we had substitute pastors. Pastor Bunge preached to us for a short time. The Reverend Alvin and Amos Keller while attending seminary would relieve Pastor W. W. A. Keller. Sometimes the pastor brought someone along from Jamestown to play and sing for us. Otherwise our organist was anyone who could play. There being about fifteen children of Sunday School age. We saw a definite need for a Sunday School Teacher. Frances Schmidt taught the class of youngsters and the confirmation class went each Saturday in the spring of the year to Jamestown. We put on Christmas programs to which we had a packed house, but seldom gleaned from the crowd anyone to become members.

So from a poor small beginning the Word of God was planted in a community which for many years had no church, save for a few who gathered together to study the Bible and to sing.

There also was a Lutheran Church in Eldridge. The larger Congregational Church discontinued services out there. This being a larger church, the Eldridge Lutheran Church purchased it. In the summer of 1937 farmers with their tractors moved the little Eldridge Church to Millarton. How happy the congregation was to be able to worship in their own church. It was located on a hill to show to the Millarton Community that the Word of God had firmly been planted in Millarton.

Jamestown always looked after the Millarton Church although for a few years there were other pastors. Rev. Orville Boettcher from Litchville preached there for about two years, Rev. Schoenbaum from the Crippled Children's School, Rev. J. Keuth, and Rev. Reinke. In 1953 Rev. James W. L. Keller was installed as their pastor. In 1955 they purchased an electric organ. A Woman's Missionary Society was started. There are about 72 baptized and 54 confirmed members. This church is made up of entirely rural parishioners.

WRITTEN BY: FRANCES SCHMIDT

# Millarton Church Re-Dedicated

Rededication services were held at the Millarton Lutheran Church which has been remodeled.

Rev. James Keller, pastor, was the liturgist and Rev. W. W. A. Keller, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Jamestown, preached the rededicatory sermon. The present church was purchased in 1937 from the Lutheran congregation in Eldridge. Members of the Millarton Parish moved the church from Eldridge to Millarton. Before the church was purchased, the congregation worshipped in their homes and in the school house. Through the years, supply pastors have served the congregation.

The interior of the church has been completely remodeled. New door and window frames were installed. The walls were covered with light wall plank down to four feet from the floor. This area was covered with dark brown, embossed masonite. The floor was sanded and refinished. The chancel platform was enlarged and covered with a light brown rug. The gothic altar was cut down, leaving only the mensa and retable. Above the altar a dark violet dorsal curtain was hung.

Much of the labor was supplied through the co-operative efforts of the congregation. The church seats approximately 125 people.

*On Nov 23, 1953 the newly remodeled church was rededicated. Rev James Keller, Pastor, was liturgist. Rev W.W.A. Keller preached the sermon. In the morning the new Fasten were celebrated & a noon dinner was served in the community hall.*