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# Elk Horn in Iowa 1875-1900

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*Elk Horn i Iowa* by P. S. Vig, pastor of the congregation  
for the Danish American Archive and Library

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# The Elk Horn Settlement

*Some Pages of the large Danish settlements, as well as the history of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran congregation over the past 25 years. On the occasion of the congregation's 25th anniversary. By P. S. Vig, Pastor of the Congregation.*

1. "Elk Horn" was originally the name of a post office in Clay Township, Shelby County, Iowa. This name originates from the fact that there were many elk antlers in the area, which, when the land was in its natural state, must have had their habitat on the rich pastures in this part of western Iowa, where there was plenty of water in the streams. Elk Horn Post Office, which is now located close to Elk Horn Church, was originally located about 3 miles southwest of there, near Elk Horn Grove. It was moved to its current location in 1880.

2. But "Elk Horn" is also the name of the large Danish settlement located in Clay and Jackson Township, Shelby County, as well as in Sharon and Oakfield Township in Audubon County, Iowa, and is the center of one of the largest Danish rural settlements, not only in Iowa, but in the entire United States. Around the post office and the high school, there is a sizeable village and trading center, which in terms of activity is on a par with any of the towns in the surrounding area, which have the advantage of a railroad connection to the outside world, something that Elk Horn has not yet been able to enjoy.

3. While the Elk Horn settlement is on a par with any other Danish settlement in America in terms of size, fertility, and prosperity, it is a different matter when it comes to age. In this respect, Elk Horn must give way to the settlement in Gowen, Montcalm Co., Mich., which began in 1845, as well as the Danish settlements in Wisconsin in Racine County, in the Town of Raymond, which began before 1847, in Kenosha County, around 1850, in Hartland, Waukesha Co., which began in 1847, in Winnebago County, which began in 1848, in Waupaca County from around 1850, and in Adams Co., from around the same time. Similarly, in eastern Wisconsin, in Pierce, St. Croix, and Polk counties, there are Danish settlements that are just as old as Elk Horn.

4. In Illinois, there are also Danish settlements which, in terms of age, predate Elk Horn. We mention here a Danish settlement in Cook County, approximately 40 miles

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from Chicago, which was established around 1848. Similarly, the settlements in Rock Island, Henry, and Bureau Counties. In Iowa, the oldest Danish settlements are found in Benton County, started in 1854, Clinton Co., Black Hawk Co., Pocohantas Co., not to forget Pottawattamie Co., where the Mynster family settled in 1850 and had a farm where Council Bluffs is now located.

5. The first Dane, as far as we know, to go to the place in Shelby County now called Elk Horn, was Christian Jensen, who still owns a farm in the settlement, but otherwise lives in Texas. He came here with his family in 1868 from Moline, Illinois. Around the same time, Ole Jensen arrived, who still lives on his farm in Clay Township. Christian Jensen is from Hindsholm near Kerteminde on Fyn, while Ole Jensen is from Møn. Gradually, more of their acquaintances joined them, and the first settlers in what is now Elk Horn were therefore from Fyn and Møn. Before long, however, a number of people from Ærø arrived, and they now make up a very significant part of the settlement. The Fynboers and Mønboers settled on the southern arm of Indian Creek, while the Ærøboers settled on the northern arm. Previously, there was talk of the “Mønboers Settlement” and the “Ærøboers Settlement” on the Little and Big Indian Creek.

6. Regarding the population of Elk Horn, it should be noted that while a large part of the current population came here directly from Denmark, it can also be pointed out that, just as the oldest settlers came here from the Danish settlement in and around city of Moline in Illinois, some later came from the Danish settlements in Clinton, Chicago, Indianapolis, Sheffield, Davenport, Racine, etc., with one acquaintance and neighbor following another. But in particular, the folk high school has attracted many to the area who would otherwise never have come.

7. Regarding the size of the settlement, one can get a fairly accurate idea by looking at the 1895 Census of Iowa, which indicates that in Shelby County in that year there were 1,499 people who were born in Denmark; in Audubon County there were 1,252 people born in Denmark, and in Cass County there were 334, for a total of 3,085 people born in Denmark in the three counties. Most of them are married, but most of their children were born in America. And the children of the Danes constitute a not insignificant number. It is therefore probably not too high an estimate to multiply the 3,085 by 3, which gives 9,255 people. In fact, this figure is probably too low, as the census in the three counties mentioned above shows that in 1895 there were 3,799 people “born in Germany.” However, a large proportion of the latter are undoubtedly Schleswigers who were Danish-born and speak Danish. We take the liberty of counting one-fourth of those born in “Germany” as Danes. This gives us approximately 950, and with their children approximately 300 persons. Adding these to the 9,255 mentioned above gives us a Danish-speaking population in the three counties mentioned of somewhat over 12,000 persons, which those familiar with the circumstances will not consider too high.

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8. It should also be noted that the majority of this population lives in rural areas. The census shows that there were 153 people born in Denmark in the city of Atlantic, 64 in Audubon, and 173 in Harlan. If we add up the 50 people in the towns of Exira, Brayton, and Marne, we arrive at a Danish urban population in the three counties mentioned of approximately 440 people, with children numbering approximately 1,300, which is only a relatively small portion of the entire Danish population.

Of course, we do not mean to say that the rest of the rural population constitutes Elk Horn Settlement, for that is not the case. However, we would say that Elk Horn is the actual hub of this large Danish settlement, and in more ways than one.

9. Regarding the settlement's productivity, it may be interesting to look at the following figures, which are taken from the 1895 Iowa Census, section *Statistics of Agriculture*. Go to Audubon County and take the two townships: Sharon and Oakfield, where most Danes are found. It turns out that these two townships stand above all others in the county in terms of crop cultivation. In Oakfield Township, 120,046 bushels of corn were grown on 9,270 acres of land, and in Sharon, 79,349 bushels of corn were grown on 8,345 acres of land, while in the same county, in Melville Township, only 48,385 bushels of corn were grown on 9,336 acres of land. And as it is with corn, so it is with all other products. Let us then go to Shelby Co. and take the two townships, Clay and Jackson, where most Danes live, we find that in Clay Township, 150,920 bushels of corn were grown on 8,903 acres, while in Cass Township, only 81,548 bushels were grown on 8,645 acres. We assume that corn is the main product in these counties, and it turns out that the Danes were in the forefront in this regard.

10. Regarding the moral state of the settlement as a whole, it must be said to be good. There are relatively few cases of seduced women or marital infidelity, just as there are few Danes who have been imprisoned in either county or state prisons during the time the settlement has existed. There are relatively few Danes who are addicted to drink. Theft is rare, and as a whole, the Danes are considered to be reliable and trustworthy and have a good reputation in the county. Not many are very rich, although there are Danes who own up to 2,000 acres of land and more. Nor are there many who are very poor, and there have been only a few Danes in the county poorhouse. It must be said that there is steady and increasing prosperity throughout the settlement from year to year. On the whole, the population seems to be attached to their homes, and several who have tried their luck elsewhere have returned to their old place in Shelby County. However, it should be added that the Elk Horn settlement has contributed to the Danish settlements in Lincoln County, Minnesota, Wharton Co., Texas, Ward Co., North Dakota, and Enumclaw, Washington, as well as several other places.

11. With regard to political influence in Shelby and Audubon counties, the Danes have so far failed to assert themselves in a manner commensurate with their numerical strength. However, in recent years, there has been progress in this regard for Audubon

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County, as several Danes have held county offices, and the county's representative in the Iowa legislature at present is a Danish man, Mr. Asmus Boysen. In Shelby County, only a few Danes have held county offices of any significance. This is not because the Danes lack the ability to hold any office. Rather, it has been more a lack of the unity necessary to assert themselves as a nation. It is to be hoped that the future in this respect will be brighter than the past.

12. Outside of politics, there has not been a lack of unity among the Danes, as evidenced by several joint ventures. One example is the Danish Mutual Insurance Company for Elk Horn and Surrounding Areas, which has been in existence for many years and has found great support, especially from the Danish population. The same is true of a hail damage association, which, however, has only emerged in recent years. We can also mention a dairy association and a timber trade, which the Danes have set up and which have been very successful so far. This should have taught the Danes that when forces are united, they can achieve something.

13. Regarding the settlement's relationship to Denmark and the Danish language, there is no doubt that although most Danes here are, of course, American citizens, they remain fondly attached to their old homeland and take a lively interest in its welfare. In most homes, one or more Danish newspapers are read, and visits to the old country are not uncommon, just as it has also happened several times that elderly people from Denmark have visited their children here. Most families are in more or less constant contact with relatives and acquaintances in the old country through correspondence, and it is to be hoped that this connection will never be broken. There is also regular contact with other Danish settlements in America through letters and visits. The folk high school has contributed to this, as it has established connections between the Danes here and in other places, which have had a lasting and profound significance.

14. The settlement in these regions is still so young that it cannot point to any particularly significant "great man" that it has fostered. But we hope that when our young people, who are now studying at universities and higher education institutions around the country, enter the positions they aspire to, we will be able to speak differently. Until then, we would console ourselves with the fact that the competence and vitality of a country and a settlement should not be measured by the individual great men it has produced, but much more by the ordinary and daily diligence with which it seeks to contribute to the preservation of what has been achieved and the attainment of what has not yet been achieved. It is just as much the many skilled ordinary soldiers as the skilled leaders who determine the outcome of the battle. This is also the case in the struggle of life, in which most of us have to content ourselves with the modest position of an ordinary man, but no less important responsibilities.



# The Congregation in Elk Horn

## The congregation's foundation and organization

1. Just as we must say about the settlement in Elk Horn that it lags far behind other Danish settlements in America, we must also say with regard to the Danish congregation here that it is not one of the oldest Danish congregations in this country. The oldest Danish congregations in the United States, as far as Lutheran congregations are concerned, are, to my knowledge, the congregation in Racine, Wisconsin, which this year celebrates its 50th anniversary. It should be noted here that it was founded as a "Scandinavian" congregation, but its members were mainly, if not exclusively, Norwegian at the time of its founding. Now, however, the congregation is known as the Emaus Congregation, which is almost exclusively Danish. It is certainly the oldest congregation that now belongs to a Danish Lutheran church synod in America.

2. The next Danish congregations in America, as I asked to mention, are the Lutheran congregation in Hartland, Wisconsin, which was founded in 1867 by Pastor D. J. Hotlestad, who was a Norwegian Lutheran pastor in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The following year, in 1868, the Danish congregation in Perth Amboy, N.J., was founded by Pastor D. Juul, who was a Lutheran pastor in New York, and in Indianapolis, Indiana, by M. Fr. Wiese, a Danish man who was studying theology in St. Louis, Mo. In 1870, the Danish congregation in Cedar Falls, Iowa, was founded by Pastor C. L. Clausen, probably the oldest Danish Lutheran congregation in Iowa. In 1872, as far as I know, the Danish congregations in Waupaca were founded, although probably already in 1871. In 1873, the congregation in Chicago, Ill., Trinitatis, was founded. And then there are a number of other congregations that were founded in 1873-74.

3. The Danish Evangelical Lutheran congregation in Elk Horn was founded on April 25, 1875, with the assistance of Pastor A. S. Nielsen, a Danish Lutheran pastor from Cedar Falls. (Congregation Protocol). The congregation was thus founded seven years after the first Danish settlers arrived in the area. The first preachers who came to the Danish settlers in these areas were Baptist and Adventist preachers. Among the former, we can mention P. Sørensen, who apparently visited some Danes in Cuppey's

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Grove, Shelby County, who had previously lived in New Denmark, Wisconsin, and were Baptists before they came to Iowa. Only a few of the settlers in the Elk Horn Settlement became Baptists.

On the other hand, another preacher, Johan Gottlieb Mathiasen from New Denmark, Wisconsin, who was a member of the Baptist congregation there, founded by Lars Jørgensen in 1857-58, but later became an Adventist and a very zealous advocate of that doctrine, had more success when he came to the Danish settlers in Shelby County in 1873-74, as most of the older settlers became Adventists. There are still small Adventist congregations in the settlement, one at the school section in Jackson Township, one in Elk Horn, and one about 5 miles east of Elk Horn, which is essentially a result of Mathiasen's work.

4. However, not all of the settlers in Elk Horn became Adventists, especially those who arrived after the initial fervor surrounding the Adventists had subsided somewhat. Ole Terkelsen and several of the settlers wanted to hear a Danish Lutheran pastor, so Ole placed an advertisement in the Chicago Tribune inviting Danish pastors to visit Elk Horn. This call was answered by Pastor A. S. Nielsen, now a Knight of Dannebrog, and pastor in Withee, Wis., but at that time pastor in Cedar Falls, Iowa. He was the first Danish Lutheran pastor to preach and administer the sacraments in these parts, which was not without opposition from the Adventists; for those who were then new to the faith were naturally eager to defend their opinions, often using means of a very dubious nature. Nielsen's first visit must have taken place in 1874. And it was probably during his second visit that the congregation was founded. The minutes do not mention where the meeting at which the congregation was founded was held. Instead, it states: "At the same meeting, a board was elected: Chairman, Ole Terkelsen; Secretary, Ole Olsen; Treasurer, Andreas A. Notvig." After Pastor Nielsen had been here, several Norwegian pastors came to warn the people against him, saying that he was a Grundtvigian. Among others, Pastor P. T. Hilmen, of the Norwegian Synod, then a pastor in Omaha, held meetings in Elk Horn several times, including at Rasmus Hansen's house. A pastor from The Conference<sup>1</sup>, Olsen, was also in Elk Horn. But Pastor A. S. Nielsen had gained a foothold among the people, and the parish records report: "With the help of the aforementioned Pastor Nielsen, the congregation succeeded in early 1876 in obtaining a commitment from the Danish Lutheran pastor in Indianapolis, D. L. Kirkeberg, to take over the ministry of our parish." From the founding year of 1875, it is further reported: "At a congregation meeting, three men were elected as trustees: Rasmus Hansen, Jens Nielsen, and Jens Johansen" (November 28, 1875).

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<sup>1</sup> Conference for the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church (1870-1890). The Danish pastors withdrew from this group in 1884 to form their own Danish Lutheran church body based at Blair, Nebraska.

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5. Meanwhile Pastor A. S. Nielsen was the first Danish pastor to visit Elk Horn, and Norwegian D. L. Kirkeberg became the Elk Horn congregation's first pastor. The minutes record his arrival as follows: "Pastor Kirkeberg arrived here on April 6, 1876, as promised, and delivered his inaugural sermon on Palm Sunday, April 9." The first baptism recorded in the Elk Horn parish register is for May 7, 1876, when Jens Christian Johansen, born October 22, 1875, son of Lars Johansen and his wife Ane Kirstine, was baptized in the "red schoolhouse" located on the south side of the settlement, not far from Elk Horn Grove. (The baptized child is a farmer in Elk Horn.)

The next baptism record is from May 14, 1876, when Bodil Kirstine Elisabeth Jensen, born January 24, 1876, daughter of Jørgen Jensen and his wife Ane Margrete, was baptized in Allen's Schoolhouse, located to the north and west of the settlement. The godparents on this occasion were Lars Olsen, Lars Jensen, and Lars Jensen. (The baptized child is now Mrs. S. C. Pedersen in Elk Horn). The "Red Schoolhouse" and "Allen's Schoolhouse" appear again and again in the church records; they were the congregation's first church, or premises where it held its services. In 1876, a total of 10 baptisms were performed by Pastor D. L. Kirkeberg. I am aware that Pastor A. S. Nielsen baptized children, probably in Allen's Schoolhouse, but I cannot provide their names.

The first communion in the congregation, as recorded in the church register, was held in Allen's Schoolhouse on the 9th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, August 13, 1876, with the following communicants: Kresten Madsen and wife, Jens Larsen and wife, Rasmus Hansen and wife, Rasmus Pedersen and wife, Jens Larsen and wife, Jens Johansen and wife, Lars Johansen and wife, Peder Jakobsen and wife, Thomas Pedersen, Gertrud.

In 1876, a total of three altar services were held, with 59 communicants. The first burial recorded in the church register is from May 14, 1876, when Ole Hansen Midtlien, who was born in Hedemarken, Norway, and died in Elk Horn on May 12, 1876, was buried.

In 1876, there were a total of four funerals conducted by Pastor Kirkeberg.

The first wedding performed by Pastor Kirkeberg took place on June 9, 1876, when Mads Rasmussen Taber and Delia Rasmussen were married in their home. The witnesses were Lars Jensen and Jens Chr. Johansen. A total of three couples were married in 1876.

6. Now that we have seen the reports on the first sermon, the first baptisms and communions, and other church activities in the young congregation, let us see what it did to provide a house and home for its pastor. The minutes of the negotiations state: "At several congregational meetings held shortly after (Pastor Kirkeberg's arrival), it was decided that 40 acres of land should be purchased, on which a parsonage should be built and a cemetery established, which action should be commenced immediately so that the residence would be ready for use at the end of July." Forty acres of land were purchased, on which a small house was built for Pastor Kirkeberg. It still stands here in

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Elk Horn and is part of the congregation's parsonage. The aforementioned 40 acres now contain a cemetery with a church, a folk high school, the parsonage, and 7-8 houses that have purchased building plots and gardens from the church. Regarding the cemetery, it was decided at a congregational meeting on October 1, 1876: "It was decided that it should be consecrated on Sunday, October 15, and that it should be made quite large so that every family in the parish who so desired could have their own burial place. It was also noted that no one within the congregation should pay anything for such a burial plot." According to what a now deceased old woman has told me, there was a very large gathering present at the consecration of the cemetery. The cemetery was "quite large," but has since had to be expanded considerably.

7. Before leaving the year 1876, we should also mention that at the congregational meeting on October 1, Pastor Kirkeberg read aloud the six paragraphs written by Pastor Nielsen, which were proposed to the congregation as the most important principles in its constitution. As they had been read aloud before the congregational meeting and their content was thus known, they were unanimously adopted without further discussion, with the only change being that a new paragraph was also unanimously adopted to be placed as Paragraph 1, and thus the basic rules came to consist of seven paragraphs. The bylaws were then read aloud, and each paragraph was considered separately. After discussion, and in some paragraphs the addition of one or two amendments or additions, each paragraph was also unanimously adopted. The Bylaws, which consist of 13 paragraphs, together with the 7 paragraphs of the Basic Rules, thus constitute the Constitution of the Congregation.

8. The last congregation meeting in 1876 was held on December 24. At that meeting, the congregation decided to give Pastor D. L. Kirkeberg \$400.00 per year as salary as the congregation's pastor, to be paid in advance at \$100 per quarter. At the same meeting, a new board was elected: Chairman, Rasmus Hansen; Secretary, Jørgen Jørgensen; Treasurer, Peder Nielsen. Trustees: Jens C. Johansen, Lars M. Jensen, and Niels Andersen.

Regarding the congregation's first members, the church register states that during Pastor Kirkeberg's time there was a total of 42 members in the congregation, mostly consisting of fathers of families. However, it is not clear how many of these were there from the beginning. I therefore consider it best to list the names of all of them:

1. Kristen Pedersen Madsen and his wife Kirsten Albertsen and six children from Ærø.
2. Hans Christensen Pedersen Rasmussen and his wife Kathrine Maria Rasmussen and four children from Ærø.
3. Ole Larsen Olsen and his wife Maria Kathrine Pedersen and two children from Ærø.
4. Rasmus Hansen and his wife Karen Hansen Midtlien and two children from Møn and Norway.

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5. Jørgen Jensen and his wife Ane Margrethe Johansen and four children from Møn.
6. Jens Christian Johansen and his wife Dorteia Maria Kathrine Jensen and five children from Møn.
7. Peder Christensen Rasmussen and his wife Mette Kirstine Rasmussen and three children from Jylland.
8. Jens Nielsen and his wife Sophia Nielsen and three children from Møn.
9. Simon Christian Iversen and his wife Karen Kirstine Ingversen and five children from Jylland (since left).
- 10-11. Hans Frederik Schack and son Karl Johan Schack from Jylland.
12. Jørgen Jørgensen and his wife Charlotte Erickson. He from Fyn, she from Sweden.
13. Lars Jensen and his wife Bodil Kirstine Rasmussen and one child from Møn.
14. Lars Johansen and wife Ane Kirstine Jensen Bille and two children from Møn.
15. Lars Jensen and his wife Bodil Kristine Jensen and two children – from Møn.
16. Hans Pedersen and his wife Maren Margrethe Knudsdatter and one child – from Møn (later excluded from the congregation).
17. Niels Peder Pedersen and his wife Marthea Maria Johansen and two children. He was from Lolland, she was from Norway.
18. Rasmus Pedersen and his wife Maria Nielsen from Fyn.  
NB. Her full name was Mariane. She was later known as “old grandmother.”
19. Niels Peder Esbeck and wife Inger Jensine Bertha Nicoline Peterson and one child – from Jylland.
20. Niels Peterson and his wife Maren Kirstine Markussen. He was from Sweden, she was from Sjælland.
21. Peder Nielsen Clausen and his wife Magdalene Pauline Petersen – from Ærø.
22. Niels Andersen and his wife Karen Marie Hansen and two children – from Sjælland.
23. Hans Nielsen and wife Christiane Larsen – from Lolland.
24. Andreas Andreassen Nætvig and wife Sigrid Thomasdatter Lægreb and 1 child – from Norway.
25. Jørgen Andreassen Notvig and his wife Sella Eriksdatter and two children – from Norway (further away).
26. Andreas Mosland Jørgensen Notvig and wife Anna Olsdatter Notvig and three children – from Norway (moved away).

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27. Herman Johan Andreassen Notvig and wife Synnøva Johnsdatter Notvig and two children – from Norway.
28. Peder Nielsen and wife Maria Pedersen and three children – from Sjælland.
29. Niels Jakob Steffensen and wife Ane Margrethe Johansen and 2 children – from Møn.
30. Klaus Jens Madsen and his wife Maren Nielsen – she from Fyn, he from Møn.
31. Niels Christan Nielsen and his wife Ane Marie Hansen – from Sjælland.
32. Mads Hansen Søgaard and wife Elfrida Josefine Vilhelmine Johansen and two children – from Denmark. (Moved to Minnesota during D. L. Kirkeberg's time).
33. Peder Hansen Kroman and wife Berthe Kathrine Andersen - from Ærø.
34. Widow Gertrud Jakobsen – from Ærø.
35. Jørgen Hansen - from Als.
36. Karl Drejer and his wife Vilhelmine Jensen – from Fyn.
37. Maid Karen Jørgensen - from Ærø.
38. Hans Peder Hansen and wife Karen Hansen and 4 children - place of birth not specified.
39. Hans Jørgen Rasmussen and his wife Anna Rasmussen and one child. She is from Falster, he is from Lolland.
40. Johannes Andersen and his wife Maren Andersen and one child. She is from Lolland, he is from Jylland.
41. Jens Pedersen and wife Maria Pedersen and two children – from Lolland.
42. Ole Larsen Terkelsen and his wife Margrethe Kirstine Larsen and six children. She is from Møn, he is from Ærø.

This list shows that the Elk Horn congregation was, from the outset, a Scandinavian congregation in terms of its members' places of birth, as it included Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes, with the latter naturally in the majority.

## The congregation from 1877-1880

### 1877

1. The congregation's minutes report under December 24, 1876: "Since the last congregation meeting, the chairman (Ole Terkelsen) has reached an agreement with the

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Danes living in the school district that, from January 1, 1877, they will pay \$100.00 per year to the Danish Evangelical Lutheran congregation for the services of Pastor D. L. Kirkeberg every fourth Sunday, so that they pay \$25.00 in advance each quarter, thus establishing their own congregation. The Chairman only made this agreement after consulting the congregation in the various districts and obtaining permission from each location.” This is the beginning of the Danish Lutheran congregation in Jackson Township, which has had its own pastor and church since the fall of 1885.<sup>2</sup> It is now served by Pastor A. C. Weismann. At the congregation meeting on December 10, 1877, the following were elected to the congregation board: Rasmus Hansen, Chairman, Jørgen Jørgensen, Secretary, Lars Johansen, Treasurer. Trustees: Jens C. Johansen, Lars Jensen, and Jørgen Jensen.

### 1878

1. April 21: “At today’s congregational meeting, it was unanimously decided that the congregation would cede to Pastor D. L. Kirkeberg the piece of land located south of the cemetery, down to the trees north of the parsonage. — The plot is approximately 3 acres in size —; it is given to him to build a Danish folk high school on. Parish trustees: Jens C. Johansen, Lars Jensen, Jørgen Jensen.” It should be added that during the summer, a folk high school building and a teacher’s residence were erected on the aforementioned land, and the folk high school “Leif Eriksens Minde” began its activities on November 1, 1878, with nine students. D. L. Kirkeberg, Chr. P. Østergaard, and Mr. Crouse served as teachers.

2. In 1878, the parsonage was painted and renovated. The cemetery was divided into lots, each of which was assigned to a member of the congregation, whose numbers are listed in the minutes of the meeting on page 6.<sup>3</sup> At a congregational meeting on December 13, it was decided that anyone who joined the congregation in the future would have to pay \$5 to get an equal share with the others in the cemetery and the rest of the church’s property. At the meeting on December 22, the following board was elected: Kristen Madsen, Chairman, Jørgen Jørgensen, Secretary, Lars Johansen, Treasurer, Jens Johansen, Jens Larsen, and Jens Madsen, Trustees.

### 1879

1. At a meeting on March 23, it was decided that in the event of termination by the congregation or the pastor, three months’ notice should be given, which should be paragraph 15 in the congregation’s bylaws. Pastor Kirkeberg leased the church’s land in exchange for paying one-third of the harvest.

2. At the meeting on December 21, it was decided that the church’s by-laws should be printed and that the cemetery should be fenced in. At the same meeting, the board

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<sup>2</sup> Bethlehem Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church

<sup>3</sup> Page references cited in this document refer to the original church record books.

## **The congregation during Pastor H. J. Petersen's time (1881-82)**

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was elected: Jørgen Jørgensen, Chairman, Rasmus Hansen, Secretary, Lars Johansen, Treasurer. Jens Johansen, Jens Madsen, and Jens T. Larsen, Trustees. "It was also decided to build an altar, and it was left to the congregation's trustees and Pastor Kirkeberg to do as they saw fit." December 31, 1879. Jørgen Jørgensen, Secretary.

### **1880**

1. On January 6, 1880, an extra congregational meeting was held, which adopted Rules for the Cemetery, as "several people outside the congregation, even from other Nations, had sought Permission to be buried there."

Three paragraphs were adopted, which can be found on page 9 of the parish minutes. Niels Steffensen was elected as supervisor of the cemetery, and his duties were determined accordingly (*ibid.*).

2. On February 29, an extraordinary congregational meeting was held to elect a chairman to replace Jørgen Jørgensen, who had died on February 9. Niels Steffensen was elected with 12 votes.

3. On May 25, an extraordinary congregation meeting was held to try to call a pastor to replace Pastor D. L. Kirkeberg, who had resigned. The synod president, Pastor Nielsen, had been consulted and recommended Pastor Holm in Dwight, Illinois. A trial election was held, but the vote was not in his favor. (Minutes, page 10). "Instead, it was unanimously decided to send a letter to Pastor H. J. Pedersen, Gowen, Mich., along with an invitation to visit here to familiarize himself with the circumstances, with the congregation offering to cover his travel expenses. A reply was sent to Nielsen stating that the mood here was not in favor of Holm, and a letter was sent to H. J. Pedersen. The meeting was adjourned. R. Hansen." (Page 10 of the minutes).

4. On June 20, 1880, Pastor H. J. Pedersen was present and said, upon request, that he would accept the call to serve as the congregation's pastor. He was offered an annual salary of \$400.00 and use of the congregation's property. Pastor H. J. Pedersen's letter of appointment is included (page 11 in the minutes).

5. At the congregational meeting in December, it was decided to divide the church's property into lots from the pastor's garden to the north to the line between Rasmus Hansen's and the congregation's land. It was left to the trustees to determine the size of the lots. Election of the Board: Niels Steffensen, Chairman, Rasmus Hansen, Secretary, Lars M. Jensen, Treasurer, as Lars Johansen asked to be exempted from reelection. Trustees. Jens Madsen, Jens Johansen, and Jens Larsen, Trustees



## The congregation during Pastor H. J. Petersen's time (1881-82)

### 1881

1. At a meeting in April, it was decided to pay off the remaining debt on the congregation's land, \$352.00, with each member paying \$5.00.

2. At the meeting on September 7, it was decided "to send a delegate to our church's annual meeting in Muskegon, Mich., which is expected to be held on September 21, 1881." D. Olsen was elected as delegate. "The congregation's trustees are authorized to have a fence erected" where people can tie their horses, as the fence around the cemetery had been destroyed (Minutes, page 13). A proposal to hold congregation meetings on Sundays was adopted. The meeting was adjourned. Rasm. Hansen."

### 1882

1. At the meeting on January 2, the following board members were elected: Niels Steffensen, Chairman, Rasmus Hansen, Secretary, Fred. Pedersen, Treasurer. Jens Johansen, Jens T. Larsen, and Hans Jensen, Trustees. A proposal to increase the pastor's salary by \$100.00 was unanimously approved.

2. On February 15, an extra congregational meeting was held because Pastor H. J. Petersen had resigned from his position. Pastor A. S. Nielsen, who was visiting Elk Horn at the time, was unanimously called to be the congregation's pastor, but was unable to give an answer until eight days later. At the same meeting, the construction of a church was discussed. The church council presented a subscription list on which the members of the congregation had signed up for over \$1,600.00, and hoped that even more could be collected. It was decided to begin construction immediately, and a building committee was elected with Frederik Pedersen as chairman, Rasmus Hansen as secretary, Ole Olsen as treasurer, Thor Madsen and C. L. Jensen as trustees.

This Board promised to present a plan for the building at the next meeting.

3. The meeting on February 26 was adjourned again, as Pastor Nielsen had not sent a reply as he had promised. At the meeting on March 12, a reply was received from A. S. Nielsen stating that he could not accept the congregation's call. A trial election was then held, in which D. L. Kirkeberg, Racine, received 21 votes, Pastor Anker, Chicago, 27, Jens Jensen, Cedar Falls, 5, Kjølhede, Muskegon, 1, and Student Bodholdt 3. In the final election, Pastor Kr. Anker received 31 votes, Pastor Kirkeberg 18, and Anker was thus elected, and it was decided to send him the call letter.

Next, a plan for the size of the church was presented. The church itself was 32 feet wide, 64 feet long with 14-foot pillars, the tower, which was to serve as a vestibule, was

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## The congregation during Pastor Kr. Anker's time (1882-97)

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12 feet square, and the choir building was 14-16 feet with 10-foot pillars (Minutes, page 17).

## The congregation during Pastor Kr. Anker's time (1882-97)

### 1882

1. Regarding the size of the congregation when Pastor Kr. Anker became its pastor, it can be noted that in the annual report for 1878, Pastor D. L. Kirkeberg stated that it had 42 members and 142 souls. The previous year (1877), there were 51 members and 170 souls. However, it should be noted that Bowmans Grove had in the meantime become an independent congregation with 20 members and 100 souls. Similarly, Fairview, Pottawattamie Co. was an independent congregation with 19 members and 60 souls. In 1879, there were 48 members and 190 souls. In 1880, there were 77 members and 270 souls. In 1881, there were 85 members and 300 souls. In 1881-1882, there was a very large influx of immigrants to the settlement, which has continued for many years and is still ongoing.

2. Through its delegate, Ole Olsen, the congregation in Elk Horn had invited the Danish Church (1881) to hold its annual meeting (1882) in Elk Horn, and this invitation was accepted.<sup>4</sup> At an extraordinary congregation meeting on August 15, it was decided that the new church should be furnished with chairs by September 20, when the annual meeting was to begin. Rasmus Hansen was elected delegate at the meeting. A committee was elected to take care of the guests at the annual meeting.

3. At the meeting on December 24, the following board was elected: Niels Steffensen, Chairman, Rasmus Hansen, Secretary, Jens Madsen, Treasurer, Jens Johansen, Hans Jensen, Chr. P. Madsen, Trustee. It was decided that those who wished to join the congregation should apply at the first quarterly meeting — or, if they wished to be admitted earlier, admission would take place on the first Sunday after notification.

### 1883

1. At the meeting on April 3, the Trustees were authorized to cultivate a piece of the congregation's land so that, as previously decided, it could be used for a park.

2. At a meeting in May, it was decided that a congregation meeting would have a quorum even if two-thirds of the voting members were not present, provided that the meeting had been announced two Sundays in advance and the agenda for the meeting had been announced.

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<sup>4</sup>The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church (DELC)

## ELK HORN IN IOWA

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3. At the meeting in July, it was decided to build a spire on the church. R. Hansen, Ole Olsen, Fred. Pedersen, and Niels Olsen were elected to collect money for this purpose.

4. At the meeting on September 8, Rasmus Hansen was elected as the congregation's delegate to the annual meeting, with the authority to offer \$50 annually to the synod's college and to vote in favor of making *Kirkelig Samler* a weekly magazine. It was decided to take out a loan of \$400.00 to build an extension to the parsonage and that this work should be carried out as soon as possible.

5. At the meeting in December: 1) At the request of the president of the Danish American Mission<sup>5</sup>, Pastor Helveg, to know whether the congregation would remain part of the church synod in America, the answer was yes. 2) How many contributing members were there in the congregation? The new board was to answer this question. The following board was elected: A. L. Boysen, Chairman; Niels Olesen, Secretary; J. Kjær, Treasurer; Fred. Pedersen, D. Olsen, and I. Johansen. Trustees.

### 1884

1. At the Extra Meeting on February 19, the congregation's debt of approximately \$300 was discussed. It was decided to pay it off with contributions from the members.

2. At the meeting on September 1, Ras. Hansen and A. L. Bohsen were elected as delegates to the annual meeting in Clinton. They were to receive \$20.00 from the congregation's treasury as travel expenses. It was decided that in future all the congregation's income should go into one treasury.

3. At the meeting on December 27, the following board was elected: Ras. Hansen, Chairman; Hans Pedersen, Secretary; Jens Kjær, Treasurer; Jens Johansen, Ole Olsen, Jens P. Larsen, Trustees.

### 1885

1. At the meeting on March 28, it was decided to install lightning conductors on the church and to have something planted in the cemetery. There was uncertainty as to whether the congregation was informed. The trustees were instructed to find out and report back at the next meeting.

2. Extra meeting on August 22. It was decided to repay the \$400 that had been borrowed for the expansion of the parsonage. Niels Mølgaard was elected as delegate to the annual meeting in Neenah, Wisconsin. It was decided to keep the high school as a high school and not as a seminary.

3. Meeting on September 26. Pastor Anker and Niels Mølgaard reported on the annual meeting in Neenah, which they were both very pleased with. It was agreed to support the children's school as a congregational matter.

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<sup>5</sup> The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church [DELIC]

## **The congregation during Pastor Kr. Anker's time (1882-97)**

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4. Meeting on December 26. It was agreed that the congregation should take over the debt that had arisen because several people who had previously given notes for the church to be built had moved away without paying their notes. The following board was elected: Ras. Hansen, Chairman; Hans Pedersen, Secretary; Georg Bruhn, Treasurer; Jens Johansen, Ole Olsen, and Fred. Pedersen, Trustees.

### **1886**

1. Meeting on March 27. It was agreed to pay the congregation's debt and, in the event that the high school, which was planned, would become a seminary, to sell the synod 2 acres of land east of the high school's grounds. The trustees were to set the price.

2. Meeting on June 27. It was reported that Jens Madsen had paid his note of \$113.00 to the congregation, and Hans Pedersen had paid his note of \$40.00. It was agreed to send them a letter of thanks and invite them to come here on July 4 and 5.

3. Extra meeting on August 28. Election of delegates to the annual meeting in Cedar Falls. It was agreed to send three and give them \$24.00 for travel expenses. The following were elected: Ras. Hansen, Georg Bruhn, and Hans Pedersen. They are tasked with ensuring that the children's home in Chicago is not transferred to the congregation there and with inviting them to the next annual meeting.

4. Meeting on October 23. Niels Mølgaard was elected secretary in place of Hans Pedersen, who was traveling to Denmark. During discussions about the seminary, it was agreed to support it, but only if it remained in Cedar Falls. It was agreed to collect offerings in the church for those in need and to make the proceeds available to the board.

5. Meeting on December 29. It was agreed to elect three more members to the Board. The following were elected: Ras. Hansen, Chairman; Georg Bruhn, Treasurer, Niels Mølgaard, Secretary; Fred. Pedersen, Knud Pedersen, and Thomas Smith, Trustees. Ole Olsen, Søren Faaborg, and Lars Johansen. The congregation unanimously agreed to do what it could to get the saloon in Kimballton closed down, and to that end elected a committee of three men: Knud Pedersen, Georg Bruhn, and Fred. Pedersen.

### **1887**

1. Board meeting on January 2. It was agreed to do everything possible to settle the debt. The work was divided among the board members.

2. Board meeting on March 26. It was agreed to propose to the congregation that they make offerings on the three major holidays, as well as on Thanksgiving Day. The offerings were to go partly to the Mission and partly to the poor. A bell ringer was hired to ring the bell every day at sunset and twice on Sundays before the service.

## ELK HORN IN IOWA

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3. Congregation meeting on April 2. The proposals from the board were adopted. The committee for closing the saloon reported that the saloon had been closed and the man arrested. The committee was dissolved and thanked for its work.

4. Congregation meeting on June 25. At the suggestion of the Board, a committee of five members (Ole Olsen, Th. Smith, Fred. Pedersen, Thor Madsen, and Jens Kjær) was elected to conduct an assessment so that the congregation's debts could be paid and to present its work at the next congregation meeting.

5. Extra congregational meeting on September 3. Election of delegates to the annual meeting. A. L. Bohsen and Ras. Hansen were elected. Thirty dollars were allocated for travel expenses. The work of the Equalization Committee was presented and approved. The delegates were instructed to propose to the Synod that its next annual meeting be held in Elk Horn.

6. Meeting on October 15. It was agreed to allocate space for those who wanted to build a school in the northeast corner of the parsonage pasture.

7. Meeting on December 31. Hans Pedersen was elected to lead the opening and closing prayers at the church service. The fundraising committee reported that \$800.00 had been received and that another \$50.00 was expected, so that only \$50.00 would be needed, of which \$46.25 was received during the meeting. The following were elected to the board: Niels Mølgaard, Chairman; Hans Pedersen, Secretary; Georg Bruhn, Treasurer; Jens Johansen, Ole Olsen, and Frederik Pedersen, Trustees. Anders Esbeck, Thomas Smith, Jens Jensen. It was agreed to provide Peder Arnkiel with clothing.

### 1888

1. Meeting on March 31. It was decided to repair and paint the church. P. Rasmussen was elected supervisor of the cemetery in Niels Steffensen's place. Money received from the sale of grave sites shall go toward the maintenance and beautification of the cemetery. The congregation sent a protest to the president of the synod, J. Pedersen, against the vote on the relocation of the seminary.

2. April 7, extra congregation meeting concerning church repairs and the construction of a gallery, the size of which was determined. The congregation voted that the seminary should remain in West Denmark for the time being.

3. July 30th Congregation meeting regarding the painting of the choir and the church.

4. August 25, extra meeting. Discussion of proposed constitution for the synod. Niels Mølgaard, A. L. Bonsen, and R. Hansen were elected as delegates to the annual meeting, with instructions to vote for Atlantic as the location for the synod's seminary, as it was a focal point of our mission. It was decided that, as far as possible, pastors and delegates should stay at the high school during the annual meeting. The provision regarding meals, etc. was approved.

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5. Congregation meeting on October 6. It was agreed to cover the costs of constructing the gallery through voluntary contributions from the members of the congregation.

6. Meeting on December 29. The question of whether the church doors should remain unlocked was left to the new board to decide. The congregation's debt was to be paid by apportionment among the members. The board was: A. L. Bohsen, Chairman; Hans Pedersen, Secretary; Jørgen Jensen, Treasurer. L. Johansen, D. Madsen, Paul Pedersen, Jens P. Larsen, Jens Jensen, and Hans P. Rasmussen, Trustees. Assessment Committee: Thor Madsen, Jens Kjær, and Knub Pedersen.

### **1889**

1. Meeting on January 19. The Taxation Committee presented its proposal. It was agreed to waive taxation and borrow \$200.00.

2. Meeting on February 29. Discussion of the congregation's contribution to the operation of the seminary. It was agreed to contribute for one year. A gift of \$25.00 was given to Mrs. Mølgaard, who had been in charge of the cooking during the annual meeting, as she was to travel to Denmark, where her husband was undergoing medical treatment. Pastor Anker was given permission to travel to Denmark.

3. Meeting on August 31. Election of two delegates to the annual meeting in Chicago: Jens Johansen and Hans Pedersen. Discussion on the establishment of a children's home in Elk Horn, initiated by Ras. Hansen, did not lead to any result.

4. Meeting on December 28. It was decided that the sale of burial plots can only take place through the congregation's trustees. Board elected: A. L. Boysen, Chairman; Hans Pedersen, Secretary; Jørgen Jensen, Treasurer; Thor Madsen, Lars Johansen, Niels Brøns, Jens Rasmussen, Jens T. Larsen, Hans P. Rasmussen, Trustees.

### **1890**

1. Meeting on March 29. Decided to send \$40.00 to fellow countrymen in need in Dakota. The congregation agreed to take over the children's home until a final arrangement is made.

2. Meeting on June 28. A. L. Boysen, who was to take over the orphanage, resigned his position as chairman of the congregation. Johan Johansen was elected in his place. The congregation agreed to lend \$600 to the orphanage.

3. Meeting on August 30. Election of three delegates to the annual meeting in Manistee: A. L. Boysen, Geo. Bruhn, and Rasmus Hansen.

4. Meeting on December 20: 1) The congregation agreed to receive a visit from Provost I. A. Heiberg and, at the same time, to hold a larger meeting, which it wished to be held in Elk Horn. 2) All business on behalf of the congregation is decided by its chairman and secretary. 3) Election of the board: Johan Johansen, chairman; Hans

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Pedersen, secretary; Jørgen Jensen, treasurer; Thor Madsen, Niels Brøns, Niels Olsen, Jens Rasmussen, and P. Kroman, trustees.

### 1891

1. Meeting on March 9. The chairman announced that he would soon be traveling to Washington, which meant he had to resign from his position. Rasmus Hansen was elected to replace him. Vilh. Boysen was elected to replace Niels Olsen, who was also traveling to Washington. The congregation agreed to install an organ in the church, with the expenses to be covered by voluntary contributions.

2. August 15, congregation meeting. Election of delegates to the annual meeting in Clinton: Thor Madsen, Jens Jensen, and Hans Pedersen. The congregation stated that it was firmly opposed to the division of the synod and that it would adhere to the old voting method for the election of synod officials: a two-thirds majority.<sup>6</sup> Hans Pedersen received \$42 as compensation for having been the cantor in the church. The children's school was entrusted to Pastor Anker for confirmation classes twice a week.

3. Meeting on October 13. Election of a committee to collect contributions for the children's home. Jens Kjær, Chairman.

4. Meeting on December 18. Since a church had now been built 3-4 miles north of Elk Horn, the congregation had lost some of its members and income, so the pastor's salary could not be paid unless the members' annual contributions were increased.<sup>7</sup> Efforts should be made to encourage those who wished to enjoy the benefits of the congregation to join it. The board was elected: Ras. Hansen, Chairman, elected for two years; Jørgen Jensen, Treasurer, elected for one year. The following were elected as trustees: Thor Madsen, Hans Carstensen, Vilh. Bohsen, Jens Kjær, and Hans Pedersen.

### 1892

1. Meeting on April 2. The congregation agreed to guarantee a loan to the children's home in the amount of \$1,000.00.

2. Meeting on August 8. Discussion regarding the transfer of the children's home to the synod, but not at this time. The meeting voted in favor of continuing the seminary (in West Denmark). Rasmus Hansen and Jørgen Jensen were elected as delegates to the annual meeting in Waupaca.

3. Meeting on December 29. Election of board: Ras. Hansen, chairman; Jørgen Jensen, treasurer, Hans Pedersen, secretary. Trustees: Jens Kjær, Hans Pedersen, Thor Madsen, Hans Carstensen, and Drace Sørensen.

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<sup>6</sup> The DELC was plagued by theological controversies that threatened to divide or dissolve the church.

<sup>7</sup> Bethany Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church near Kimballton, Iowa

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### 1893

1. Meeting on February 4. Election of delegates to the Extra Annual Meeting in Chicago: A. L. Boysen, Rasmus Hansen, and Jørgen Jensen. They were instructed to vote against the dissolution of the Synod. (see footnote 2)

2. Meeting on April 29. Adopted: "The board was authorized to have various repairs and improvements carried out on the congregation's property in the near future and at its discretion.

3. Meeting on September 2. Elected as delegates to the annual meeting in Racine: J. M. Gregersen and Hans Peberfen. The congregation approved the decision of the Chicago meeting.

4. Meeting on December 23. Election of Board of Directors: Rasmus Hansen, Chairman – re-elected with 39 votes out of 54. Jens Johansen, John Petersen, Ole Olsen, Jes Lange, and Søren Faaborg were elected as trustees. "The latter resigned later during the meeting due to the congregation's position on the signing of the synod's constitution, and Jens Carlsen was elected in his place" (page 73). Contributions were made in corn to the dancers in Tyler, Minn. "Next, the signing of the synod's constitution was discussed, and finally put to a written vote. The result was that the congregation refused to sign. The vote was as follows: 46 no, 17 yes.<sup>8</sup> This concluded the meeting. Hans Pedersen." (Page 74).

### 1894

1. Extraordinary meeting on February 9. New discussion on endorsing the synod's constitution – same outcome as before. The discussion took a long time but did not result in any agreement, and on a proposal, it was decided to adjourn the meeting, which the chairman did. (Page 75).

2. Extraordinary meeting on February 26. As Hans Pedersen had resigned from his position as secretary, a new secretary was elected.

A. L. Boysen in his place. It was agreed that Hans Pedersen would be required to resign from the congregation and rejoin the old one if he wished to retain his position as deacon, etc. in the church. Hans P. did not believe he could do this. He then handed over the key to the church to the chairman. (Page 76).

3. Meeting on March 31. A letter to the chairman from the board of the new congregation was presented, and teacher Gregersen submitted a question to the congregation, which he wanted answered during the meeting. On a motion, both were rejected. Hans Pedersen was elected church warden.

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<sup>8</sup> This refusal to sign the new constitution of the DELC indicated that a congregation was withdrawing from that synod.



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4. Meeting on July 7. The foundation on which the children's chair stands was donated to the congregation for \$50.00.

5. Congregation meeting on September 22. The Missionary Society was invited to hold its annual meeting in Elk Horn.<sup>9</sup> Niels Olsen, Jens Johansen, and Jes Lange were elected as the committee to welcome guests during the meeting.

6. Meeting on December 29. Election of the Board: Rasmus Hansen, Chairman; Paul Pedersen, Secretary, Jens Jensen, Treasurer. Trustees: Christen Pedersen, Peder Rasmussen, Hans P. Rasmussen, Jes Lange, and Jens Johansen.

### 1895

1. Meeting on March 25. Bohsen and his wife are prepared to continue managing the children's home. Pastor Anker was given permission to travel to Denmark, as P. Vig would serve the congregation in his absence.

2. Meeting on June 29—regarding arrangements for the 4th Christmas celebration.

3. Meeting on December 23. Election of the Board: Ras. Hansen, Chairman; Jens Rasmussen, Secretary; Jørgen Jensen, Treasurer. Trustees: Hans Rasmussen, Peder Rasmussen, Jes Lange, Jens Johansen, and Christen Pedersen.

### 1896

1. Meeting on September 28. Discussion on whether the congregation, with its current constitution, could join the United Church<sup>10</sup> without changing Paragraph 1. It was decided that no one other than members of the congregation could be buried in the congregation's cemetery. Jens Kær was elected to supervise the cemetery.

2. Meeting on December 30. It was noted that this was the 21st annual meeting held by the congregation and that much could have been different in the past. It was decided to transfer the children's home to the synod.

### 1897

1. Meeting on April 24. The congregation approved the church's constitution, even though it cannot be a member of any church synod due to its constitution. A. 2. Bohsen was elected as delegate to the annual meeting in Blair.

2. Meeting on June 19. \$30.00 was collected to help a poor widow.

3. Meeting on August 30—due to Pastor Anker's resignation from his position. — Pastor Anker was asked to withdraw his resignation in exchange for a period of rest.

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<sup>9</sup>This Society was the beginning of a new denomination (synod), The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America, also known as "The North Church."

<sup>10</sup>The United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church [UDELC] resulted from the union of the "Blair Church" and the "North Church" in 1896.

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Anker stood by his resignation. In the election for pastor, P. C. Hansen received 44 votes and was elected pastor of the congregation.

4. Meeting on December 27. Election of new Board of Directors: Rasmus Hansen, Chairman; Jens Rasmussen, Secretary; Jørgen Jensen, Treasurer. Trustees: Jes Lange, Hans Rasmussen, Christen Iversen, Jacob Hansen, and L. Peitersen.

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### 1898

1. Meeting on July 2. The congregation expresses its opinion on Sunday trading in the city.
2. Meeting on September 24. Decision to pay the debt by assessment—approved. A. L. Boysen elected to say the opening and closing prayers. Committee elected to have the salon started in Elk Horn shut down.
3. Meeting on December 30. Election of board: Niels Olsen, chairman; Jens Rasmussen, secretary; Jørgen Jensen, treasurer. The old trustee was re-elected.

### 1899

1. Meeting on April 1. Pastor Hansen, who had resigned from his position, was urged by 62 votes to withdraw his resignation. 11 voted against, 6 abstained.
2. Meeting on April 10. Pastor Hansen did not wish to withdraw his resignation, as he had been called by the synod to be a missionary on the Pacific coast. Pastor P. S. Vig was elected as the congregation's pastor with 62 votes. 26 votes were scattered.
3. Meeting on May 1. Decision to raise the pastor's salary to \$600. Proposal to the Synod<sup>11</sup> to move its Seminary to Elk Horn.
4. Meeting on July 1. Permission was granted for Vig to be the head of the folk high school, which the congregation will continue to support by providing transportation.

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<sup>11</sup>The UDELIC



# Daughter congregations of Elk Horn

As the oldest Danish Lutheran congregation in this part of western Iowa, the congregation in Elk Horn has played a significant role among the Danes. Initially, the pastors in Elk Horn served a number of mission and preaching stations in the surrounding area. These gradually grew into independent congregations, several of them with their own churches and pastors. We mention these congregations here.

1. Fairview, Shelby Co., Ia. Here, on December 6, 1876, a small congregation was founded by Pastor Kirkeberg with 17 members. This congregation has been served by the pastors in Elk Horn, Bowman's Grove, and is now served by Oak-Hill. It is now quite small.

2. Bowmans Grove, Jackson Township, Ia., Bethlehem's congregation, was also founded by Pastor Kirkeberg in 1877. It was then served by the pastors in Elk Horn, until it got its own pastor in Pastor P. S. Vig. It has its own church (since 1886) and a parsonage (since 1887). In 1900, it had 34 contributing members with 189 souls. It is now served by Pastor A. C. Weismann.

3. Atlantic, Cass Co., Iowa. Served by Pastor Kirkeberg as a mission station, it later became an independent congregation and now has its own church (since 1883), with Pastor Dr. A. S. Hansen as its minister. The congregation was then served by the pastors in Bowmans Grove and Oak-Hill, Iowa, to which Atlantic is now annexed. The current size of the congregation is unknown.

4. Oak Hill, Audubon, Co., Iowa, or the Sjøælland Settlement. From the beginning, the settlers here were members of the congregation in Elk Horn. They later formed an independent congregation and built a church (1886) and got their own pastor (1886) in Pastor Chr. Falk. After his transfer, the congregation was served by C. J. Skovgaard, N. C. Gravengaard — and its current pastor is Pastor N. P. Hald.

5. Avoca, Pottawattamie Co., Iowa, was very early on a mission station under Elk Horn. During Pastor A. S. Hansen's time (1884-85), a congregation was established here, but it later dissolved. Since then, Avoca has

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been a mission station under Bowmans Grove and now under the Oak-Hill Congregation.

6. Harlan, Shelby County, Iowa. Here, too, a congregation was founded by A. S. Hansen. Since then, Harlan has been a mission station under Bowmans Grove.

7. Bethania Congregation near Kimballton, Audubon County, Iowa. The settlers in this part of Audubon County were initially members of the congregation in Elk Horn. However, since 1890, there has been an independent congregation with its own church, which acquired its own pastor in 1894 in the form of Pastor P. S. Vig. After him, the congregation was served by Pastor N. P. Simonsen. The parsonage was built in 1899. The congregation has 39 contributing members and 152 souls.

8. The congregation in Kimballton, Audubon Co., Iowa, was formed when the Elk Horn congregation split in 1894 due to the signing of the new constitution of the Danish church. It is now served by Pastor C. C. Sørensen and has its own meeting house in Kimballton, as well as a parsonage. Its size is unknown.

9. Marne, Cass Co., Iowa. A congregation was founded here by Pastor P. L. C. Hansen. It is now served from Elk Horn, Ia.

10. The Ebenezer Congregation at Audubon, Ia., is a grandchild of the Elk Horn Congregation, as its members belonged to the congregation in Bowmans Grove. This congregation was founded and is served by Pastor A. C. Wiesmann. It has its own church (since 1896), has 20 members and 98 souls.

11. Des Moines, Iowa, was first visited as a mission station from Elk Horn. Since then, a congregation has been established here, which now has its own church and parsonage and is served by Pastor N. J. Bing. 23 members and 50 souls.

*[Editor's note: There is no #12 in the original.]*

13. Scranton, Greene County, Iowa, became a mission station under Elk Horn during Pastor Anker's time. Since then, a congregation has been established here, now served by Pastor S. Johnsen. It has 17 members and 64 souls.

14. Cuppy's Grove, Shelby Co., Iowa, was a mission station under Elk Horn during Pastor Kirkeberg's time. The station was later visited by the pastor in Bowmans Grove, which is no longer the case.

15. Living Springs, Pottawattamie County, Iowa, was visited as a mission station by Pastor Anker, then by A. S. Hansen, but has since been abandoned, as the distance from Elk Horn is so great and most of the Danes have moved

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away from the place. Quite a few of them have come to Elk Horn, where they are now members of the congregation.

16. Oakfield Township, Audubon County, is visited as a mission station by Pastor P. S. Vig once a month. It can be seen from the above that the pastor and congregation in Elk Horn have attempted to reach out to Danes near and far in various places, and it is to be hoped that this will continue to be the case; for it is a shame that so many of our compatriots live without the Word and the Sacraments, which are the arms of the Triune God in this world of death, without which no one can be captured for life and become alive.





# A little more about the work of the congregation

1. The folk high school. This has been discussed in the previous section. It was started in the fall of 1878 by Pastor D. L. Kirkeberg and has since always had the congregation's pastor as its director. But without the spiritual and material support of the congregation, this important youth school would not have been able to exist. It should also be mentioned here that a significant number of the congregation's current members have sent their children to the school, and that for many years the school building has provided space for the congregation's church services and has been used to this day for children's school, youth meetings, and congregation meetings, as well as other free gatherings and celebrations in the congregation.

2. The magazine *Dannevirke*, now in its 21st year—and printed and published in Cedar Falls, Iowa, for many years—began its existence in the congregation, with Pastor D. L. Kirkeberg as editor and members of the congregation as some of its first subscribers. “The North Pole,” which was the location of Dannevirke's first printing press, is still standing and is now used as the folk high school's storage room.

3. The children's school. From 1883 to 1894, the congregation had its own everyday school with Hans Pedersen as teacher. In 1883, a building for a children's school was erected - paid for by voluntary contributions from the congregation members and the folk high school teachers. The school was attended by an average of 50-60 children per year, most of them during the holiday season, of course. On Saturdays, Hans Pedersen held school at various locations in the settlement. After Hans Pedersen, the everyday school was continued in 1894-95 by L. A. Laursen, now in Racine, Wisconsin. In 1888, three small school buildings were erected at various locations in the congregation for holiday schools. They are still standing, but now the holiday school is held in the common schools around the settlement and at the folk high school. Last summer, holiday schools were held at three different locations in the congregation for two months by three teachers for approximately 100 children. However, this branch of the congregation's work needs considerable improvement in many areas.

## A little more about the work of the congregation

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4. Sunday school. This branch of the congregation's work began in 1890 and has been very well received. Sunday school is now held at four locations in the congregation by 12 teachers, and the schools are attended by around 200 children.

5. The children's home began in 1890 with its own farm and with A. L. Bohsen and his wife as board members. It was initially supported by Elk Horn and the surrounding congregations, but is now the property of the United Danish Church. It has 24 children and is now managed by N. P. Christensen and his wife. It is now supported by the United Church as a whole and is in good condition.

6. The women's association began its work as an independent part of the congregation's work in 1894. It has also found good support, holds its monthly meetings in homes, supports the mission, children's homes, and poor children in and outside the parish.

7. Youth meetings were initially held at the folk high school, which was natural, as it coincided with the school's work. Special meetings for the youth of the congregation were initiated by Pastor Anker and continued by his successors. They have been well received by the youth. At one time, attempts were made to establish special youth and girls' associations, but this has since been abandoned, as it is not feasible in rural areas. Some of the young people have formed a choir, which sings at church services and other gatherings.

8. Missionary societies. All congregations among Danes in America should also be missionary societies, and most are, to a greater or lesser extent. In Elk Horn, there is a small voluntary association that supports the Santhal Mission by paying the salary of one of its elders.

# Outline of the lives of the congregation's pastors

1. Ole Larsen Kirkeberg was born in Søndre Aurdal, Valdres, Norway, on October 11, 1849, and is the son of Lars Kirkeberg and Anna, née Olenhus. After attending college in Norway, he came to Denmark, where he was trained as a pastor in Askov, Denmark, for work in America. Before leaving Denmark, he married Julie Christmas, who was born on St. Croix, in the Danish West Indies, but raised in Denmark, where she was the foster daughter of the well-known pastor, H. J. M. Svendsen in Jelling. Kirkeberg came to America in 1874 and became a pastor in Indianapolis, Indiana, where he remained until 1876, when he moved to Elk Horn. In 1880, he was called to be pastor of the Emaus Congregation in Racine, Wisconsin, where he remained until 1882, when, due to poor health, he moved to Denmark with his family. He remained in Denmark and Norway until 1888, when he became pastor at Chicago Southside and later also for St. Ansgar's Congregation on the Northwest Side. He remained there until this year, when he accepted an invitation from a Norwegian congregation in Wisconsin, which belongs to the United Norwegian Church. Kirkeberg's work in Elk Horn has been discussed previously in these pages. He has published several books and pamphlets, the first of which was printed at the Elk Horn High School Printing House. Of his nine children, the second oldest was born in Elk Horn.

2. Hans Jørgen Pedersen was born in Fyn and trained as a pastor in Ryslinge under Pastor Joh. Clausen. He came to America in 1875 with his fiancée. He was ordained as pastor for some of the Danish congregations in Gowen, Montcalm Co., Mich., which he served until he was called to Elk Horn in 1880 as Pastor Kirkeberg's successor. In 1882, he moved from Elk Horn to Ashland, Mich., where he owned a high school and also served as pastor for the congregation there. From Ashland, he moved to the Danish settlement in Lincoln County, Minn., where he still serves as pastor for the congregation, while a Danish high school, "Danebod," which he built and presided over for several years, is now run by someone else.

3. Kristian Pedersen Anker was born on October 28, 1848, in Krogsbølle near Bogen, descended from a Swedish family, which has flourished and continues to flourish in

## Outline of the lives of the congregation's pastors

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Norway, where it has produced many notable men. In his youth, Anker was a student at several folk high schools in Denmark and Norway, was himself a teacher for a time at the folk high school on Mors, and later a teacher at a free school in his home region of Fyn, where he had a small country estate. As a married man, he trained for the ministry in America at the school in Askov. He came to America in 1880 and succeeded Pastor Holm as pastor of St. Stephen's Congregation on the south side of Chicago until he came to Elk Horn in 1882, where he has had his life's work as a pastor, missionary, and folk high school principal in a unique sense. After running the folk high school for the synod until 1890, he bought it from the synod and expanded it until 1894, when he sold it to "The Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America." In 1899, Anker was appointed by the United Danish Church as president of the college in Blair, Nebraska. He married Karen Nielsen in 1875. They had eight children, five of whom are deceased and three of whom live in Elk Horn.

4. Peder Laurits Christian Hansen was born on April 29, 1854, in Borløse Parish on Fyn. In his youth, he attended several folk high schools in Denmark and worked as a teacher for children for some time. He received his training as a pastor in Askov. He came to America in 1882 and succeeded Pastor Anker as pastor of St. Stephen's Congregation in Chicago, where he remained until 1884, when he became pastor in Danville, Turner Co., South Dakota, until 1887, when he moved to Lincoln, Nebraska. In 1892, he became pastor in Cedar Falls, Iowa, and in 1897, he succeeded Anker as pastor and school principal in Elk Horn. In 1893, Hansen was elected president of the Missionary Society and in 1894 of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America. In 1899, Hansen succeeded Kalb as missionary pastor of the United Church on the Pacific Coast. As such, he resides in Portland, Oregon. Hansen married in 1882 in Chicago Petrine Pedersen, with whom he had three children. She died and is buried in Elk Horn. His second wife is Marie Johnsen.

5. Peder Sørensen Vig was born on November 7, 1854, in Egtved Parish near Kolding, the son of farmer Søren Pedersen Vig and his wife Ellen Maria Christensdatter. After attending Askov Folk High School for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, working as a children's teacher, completing his military service, and preparing for his high school diploma, he came to America in 1879, where he worked for about three years in Chicago, again as a children's teacher. From 1882 to 1884, he stayed in Denmark and prepared to become a Danish pastor in America. Upon his return, he married his fiancée, Karen Maria Madsine Christensen, in Chicago on June 10, 1884, with whom he traveled to Elk Horn, Iowa, where he was a teacher at the high school until 1885. From 1884 to 1888, he served the congregation in Bowmans Grove, Iowa. From 1888 to 1892, he was a teacher at the seminary in West Denmark, Wisconsin, and served St. Peter's congregation in Luck until he was appointed pastor at the school in Elk Horn in 1894. In 1896, he was called to be president of the United Church's seminary. In 1899, he resigned from this position and accepted a call

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from the congregation in Elk Horn. He and his wife, who died in Elk Horn on May 11, 1900, had seven children, three of whom are deceased.

It should also be added that:

1. Pastor O. L. Kirkeberger was ordained in Trinity Church in Chicago in 1874 by Pastor L. I Søholm.
2. Pastor H. J. Pedersen was ordained on October 20, 1875, in Greenville, Michigan, by Pastor A. Dan, assisted by Pastors Rosenstand and Lillesøe.
3. Pastor Anker was ordained on September 25, 1881, in Muskegon, Mich., by Pastor A. S. Nielsen.
4. Pastor P. L. C. Hansen was ordained on September 24, 1882, in Elk Horn, Iowa, by Pastor A. S. Nielsen.
5. Pastor P. S. Vig was ordained on September 24, 1885, in Neenah, Wis., by Pastor A. S. Nielsen.

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The founder of the congregation, **Andreas Sixtus Nielsen**, was born on April 6, 1832, in Aalborg, Denmark. In his youth, he spent an extended period of time in Norway. He purchased a small country house, where he lived with his family in Vendsyssel. In 1866, he began working as a lay preacher around Vendsyssel. Nielsen became acquainted with the Committee for the Promotion of the Gospel among Danes in North America, which was founded at a meeting in Odense in 1869. From there, he was sent to America in 1871 along with Pastor A. C. L. Grove-Rasmussen and missionary student R. Andersen. They landed in New York on June 13, 1871. Nielsen was called to be pastor of the congregation in Cedar Falls, Iowa, which was founded by Pastor C. L. Clausen. After bringing his family from Denmark, Nielsen was ordained by Pastor C. L. Clausen in St. Ansgar, Iowa, on November 17, 1871.

Pastor Nielsen served the congregation in Cedar Falls until 1879, when he succeeded Pastor J. A. Hejberg as pastor of the Trinity congregation in Chicago. He remained there until 1893, when he became pastor of the Danish settlement in Withee, Clark County, Wisconsin, where he still serves as the oldest Danish pastor in America. On his 25th anniversary in 1896, he was appointed Knight of the Order of Dannebrog by King Christian IX. In 1858, he married Johanne Poulsen, who still lives with him. Their long marriage has been blessed with eight children, six of whom are still alive. Pastor A. S. Nielsen is one of the most significant and talented men who has worked in the Danish Mission in America.



## In memory of some of the congregation's deceased officials

1. Jørgen Jørgensen was born in Fyn on May 12, 1845, and died in Elk Horn on February 19, 1880. As far as I can see, Jørgen Jørgensen was a member of the congregation in Elk Horn from the beginning of Pastor Kirkeberg's time. On December 9, 1877, he was elected secretary of the congregation and, as such, kept its minutes until December 31, 1879, when he was replaced by Rasmus Hansen. However, at the meeting on December 21, Jørgen Jørgensen was elected chairman of the congregation, and he died in that position, with Niels Steffensen succeeding him. Jørgen Jørgensen is known among the older settlers as "Jørgen Skomager" (Jørgen the Shoemaker), because he had learned the shoemaker's craft. He was a half-brother to Jens Madsen, who was five years younger and his neighbor here in Elk Horn. Jørgensen was a solid and capable man and has left behind a good name in the congregation. He was married to a Swedish woman, Charlotte Erickson, who lived on the farm in Elk Horn for several years after his death, and her hospitable home is still remembered by many, especially those who were students at the high school in the early years. She later sold the farm and moved to Moline, Illinois, where she still lives as a widow. She has placed a marble stone on her husband's grave in Elk Horn in his memory. "Lotte," as she is usually called, has also left a good memory in the congregation here. She and Jørgen Jørgensen's marriage was childless.

2. Ole Larsen Terkelsen was born in Æro on April 8, 1835, and baptized on his farm in Shelby County on May 13, 1888. After participating in the war against Germany in 1864, he came to America in 1866 and settled in western Illinois, near Moline. His home in Illinois was where most of the early settlers in Elk Horn lived, and many of them found help there in times of need. Accompanied by several others, he made the journey from Moline to Elk Horn in a farmer's wagon. Here in Elk Horn, Ole Terkelsen was the one who worked especially hard to get a Danish pastor, and when the congregation was founded, he was elected chairman, a position he held from April 25, 1875, to January 1, 1877, when he was replaced by Rasmus Hansen, his old acquaintance from Moline. Ole Terkelsen was, in his quiet, winning way, an enthusiastic missionary, and it is thanks to him that the Danes in Bowman's Grove have a church service. He was a staunch supporter of the

## In memory of some of the congregation's deceased officials

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folk high school and, in general, a philanthropist like few others. He is also known as a master builder in the area. He built the church in Bowman's Grove and the new folk high school in Elk Horn. He has left behind a good name in the congregation, which will not soon be forgotten. He married Margrethe Kirstine Larsen from Møn in Illinois.

They had eight children during their marriage, who still live in the area. His wife survived him by a few years, but now rests beside him in the cemetery in Elk Horn.

3. Niels M. N. Mølgaard was a native of the Ringkøbing area. He found his first home here in America in Clinton, Iowa, where he was a member of the congregation from its founding and, for a time, its chairman. From Clinton, he moved with his family to Living Springs, Pottowatamie Co., Iowa, from where he came to Elk Horn, Iowa, around 1884. Here he immediately became a member and an active member of the congregation, whose delegate he was at the annual meetings in Neenah (1885) and Elk Horn (1888). From October 1886 to December 31, 1887, he was the congregation's secretary. On the latter date, he was elected chairman of the congregation, a position he held until the end of 1888. In 1889, he had to travel to Denmark for health reasons. He did not regain his health in his homeland, but died, as far as I know, in Ringkøbing in the summer of 1889. At a meeting on February 23, 1889, the congregation in Elk Horn sent a greeting to Mølgaard with thanks for his work in the congregation. Before his death, he was delighted that not only his wife but also Pastor Anker came to him. Mølgaard has left a lasting mark on the congregation in Elk Horn with his open manner and lively interest in its welfare.

4. Lars Jensen, more commonly known as Lars Mikaelson, was born on Møn on April 21, 1846, and died on his farm in Elk Horn in September 1894. He came to America in 1868 and arrived in Elk Horn in 1873. Lars Jensen was a member of the congregation when it was founded. On December 24, 1876, he was elected a member of the congregation's board of trustees, a position he held until the end of 1878. Throughout 1880, he served as the congregation's treasurer. Lars Jensen left a beautiful and good name in the congregation through his quiet and unassuming manner. In 1868 in Illinois, he married his fiancée, Bodil Kirstine Jensen, from Møn, who now lives in Elk Horn as his surviving widow. Their marriage was blessed with six children, all of whom also live here in the area.



# Congregation Statistics

## List of church services in Elk Horn 1875-1900

There are reports from 24 years regarding baptisms – a total of 1,137, or just over 47 per year. There are reports concerning confirmations for 20 years – a total of 361, or 18 per year. There are reports for 20 years concerning marriages – a total of 143 – slightly more than 7 per year.

Burials over 20 years: 211, or 10 per year.

These figures would be much higher, as noted, since reports from the last three years are missing. Regarding the number of members of the congregation, according to the reports, it was as follows for the respective years:

1876: 51 members, 170 souls.  
1877: 42 members, 142 souls.  
1878: 48 members, 190 souls.  
1879: No report.  
1880: 55 members, 180 souls.  
1881: 85 members, 300 souls.  
1882: No report.  
1883: 165 members, number of souls not specified.  
1884: 184 members.  
1885: 190 members.  
1886: 200 members.  
1887: 160 members.  
1888: 160 members.  
1889: 160 members.

## Congregation Statistics

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1890: 150 members.  
1891: No report.  
1892: No report.  
1893: No report.  
1894: 135 members.  
1895: No report.  
1896: 130 members,  
1897: 120 Members.  
1898: 120 Members, 550 souls.  
1899: 136 Members, 652 souls.

NB. "Members" refers to contributing and eligible members. Most are family men.

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Year	Baptisms	Confirmed	Married	Burials	Communicants
1876	10		3	3	61
1877	21	5	4	1	47
1878	22	3	3	7	100
1879	21	9	1	7	<sup>a</sup>
1880	31	10	4	9	
1881	38	5		10	
1882	39	12	3	5	
1883	78	12	8	11	
1884	58	16	12	7	
1885	68	10	9	9	
1886	57	17	9	8	
1887	79	13	9	11	
1888	74	21	15	19	
1889	78	22	16	29	
1890	58	35	14	20	
1891**	85	36	9	22	
1892	43				
1893	52				
1894	66	30	9	14	
1895	35				
1896	82	27	5	9	
1897	32	19	1	1	
1898	31	19	6	6	
1899	39	40	3	2	
Total	1137	361	143	211	

\*No longer recorded

\*Some membership lost to new church (Bethany) northeast of Kimballton

## Elk Horn in Iowa

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With thanks to God for His great mercy  
over the past twenty-five years,  
and praise and thanks for help and  
support in times of hardship and prosperity.  
We now gather for a celebration  
Welcoming every guest and visitor.

Twenty-five years ago,  
no bells rang here.  
We knew nothing of holidays  
in the Lord's house with prayer and song;  
only small huts on bare land,  
and miles between man and man.

Twenty-five years ago,  
there was no church here  
with the Word of the Lord as a  
candlestick on the altar to the new heavens;  
but the memory of them remained  
and spoke its profound language.

Twenty-five years ago,  
the baptismal font and altar table  
were not among us as they are today  
with the Word of Grace and Life.  
But all around was a barren desert,  
so wild and dark.

Twenty-five years ago  
in small huts by the Well of Memory,  
many quiet complaints were heard  
when friends gathered in the evening;  
for God's Word was dear in the lands,  
as we knew it here in the North.

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Then came the message with familiar tones  
of salvation for everyone who believes in him,  
our Savior and Redeemer, who was born,  
lived, suffered on earth,  
and paved the way of life for us,  
who even in death does not fail us.

Twenty-five years ago  
the foundation was laid that stands today;  
the foundation was laid with weak hands,  
but the Lord took up his cause.  
He came in grace to our aid;  
and as he was, so he is now.

We thank those who laid the foundation  
in times of hardship and fear,  
We give thanks for what we have found  
in the past twenty-five years.  
We thank God for this day,  
and we entrust our cause to him.

We gather under the church arch  
with thanks to God in Jesus's name  
for this little church,  
He built here in a foreign land,  
where he has been kind to us,  
despite our sins and foolishness.

He blesses these holidays!  
He blesses this celebration!  
May we grow in spirit and grow,  
as it is best for us  
to celebrate among the songs of joy  
of all the saints.

P.S. Vig.