

## The Life of Reverend O. O. Wold

written in 1904

The picture of Rev. O. O. Wold shows you that he is a man of purpose. Rev. Wold is a minister of the Gospel. He is also interested in agriculture, owning a fine farm a few miles west of Fertile.

He has a pleasant village home just south of the school house where he and his good wife live happily with their three sons and three daughters. Rev. and Mrs. Wold are among those who can claim our worthy president's commendation on their fine family.

Rev. O. O. Wold was born the eleventh day of February 1861 in La Salle Co., Illinois. Five years later he with his parents moved to Polk County where young Wold spent his childhood days on a farm. At the age of 18 he was converted to God and at once began to take part in active church work.

At the age of 21 he felt a Divine call to study for the ministry and a year later entered the Augsburg Seminary at Minneapolis where he studied seven years in preparation for his life work. In 1891 he was graduated from the theological department of said institution.

July 7, 1891 Rev. Wold was united in marriage to Augusta Simerson of Belmond, Iowa. She has proved herself to be a most capable and competent help to her good husband.

Soon after graduation he received a call from the village of Fertile congregation, but owing to the pressure from the United Church, he was sent to Chicago where during a stay of one year he worked with a society which was very religious and consecrated to their Master. But owing to poor health, Rev. Wold felt a change of climate would be advisable, though leaving his first charge was a hard thing to do. The relation of this first church and its pastor can be summed up in the words of one of the members who said, "We will never get a pastor that will take Rev. Wold's place and he will never get a church where he will take as well with the people."

About this time Rev. Wold received a second call from the Fertile and Clear Lake churches which he accepted and took charge of in 1892. He served the congregation for several years and won the esteem of not only his church members but the community as well.

Late in the nineties a division arose in the village church and as a result a Free Lutheran Church was organized and a neat commodious house of worship was built in 1899 about two miles west of Fertile with Rev. Wold as their faithful and beloved pastor.

Rev. Wold believes that the church work of Jesus Christ is broader than denominations or creed, in fact the Divine truth subject to personal approval and made known through the life.

Those who know the reverend gentleman, even though they may differ with him on theological points, admire the man and hope he may live long to exert his strong influence for good in our midst.

#### Obituary for Reverend O. O. Wold, Fertile, Iowa

Rev. O. O. Wold passed away at 9 p.m., January 18, 1908, aged 46 years, 11 months, and 7 days.

In the death of Rev. O. O. Wold the community loses an honored citizen, the wife a devoted husband and the children a loving father.

Mourning is not confined to relatives alone but the community is in sorrow, for a friend has gone. For several years he has been in failing health. About two weeks ago he was stricken with his last fatal sickness, heart trouble and lingered between life and death until Saturday at 9 p.m. he passed on to his reward.

The deceased was a man of decided opinions. He spoke plainly, was quick of discernment and when his mind was fixed he never wavered in doing his duty. He stood for high ideals in life. He had a deep abiding conviction and a faith that clung with wonderful tenacity on the life's beautiful beyond. He not only lived it himself, but all with whom he came in contact could continually see in him the finger pointing to the higher life, the life lost in self but found in the man of Galilee.

Brother Wold came to Fertile and took charge of the struggling congregation here something like 15 years ago, then without a church edifice, and it was through his tireless efforts that the church in this village and the one where the funeral was held, three miles west of town, was built.

Beside his work here, he for many years preached to his people at Clear Lake, Mason City and other points. The roads were never too bad. However inclement the weather, he never neglected his work for the Master whom he so faithfully served.

The subject of this sketch was born in La Salle Co., Illinois, on February 11, 1861 and died at his home in this village at 9 o'clock p.m., January 18, 1908. He moved to Story Co., Iowa with his parents in the spring of 1865 where he grew to manhood.

He was educated at Augsburg Seminary, Minneapolis. He was ordained as minister of the gospel by the clergy of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America at Kenyon, Minnesota on June 22, 1891 and has continued in the ministry since. One year was spent in missionary work in the city of Chicago.

He was united in marriage July 7, 1891, with Miss Augusta Simerson. He is survived by a heartbroken wife and seven children, 3 girls and 4 boys besides his aged father, 3 brothers and 4 sisters, all of whom were present at the funeral.

The funeral services were held Wednesday forenoon at the church west of town and interment made at his old home at Slater, Iowa. Owing to the high esteem in which Brother Wold was held by all the people, Americans as well as Norwegians, a point service was held. Rev. Hampton of Mason City speaking in English and Prof. Nydahl of Augsburg Seminary, a classmate and life long friend of the deceased, spoke in the Norwegian language. The large concourse of people of all nationalities who gathered at the funeral to pay their last sad tribute of respect to the deceased, speaks more eloquently of the respect in which he was held than any words that we can say.

#### Obituary for Reverend O. O. Wold, Slater, Iowa

Word reached Slater last Friday telling of the serious illness of Rev. O. O. Wold at Fertile, Iowa, and that he could not possibly survive very long. His brother, Attorney Wald, departed immediately for Fertile, reaching the bedside of his sick brother on Saturday and before life had become extinct. He passed away in the evening.

Funeral services were held from the pastor's church at Fertile on Tuesday and the remains brought to Slater last night to be buried in the family lot in the local cemetery, the services to take place at the Norwegian church this Thursday afternoon at two o'clock.

The illness which cut the life of the pastor short while in the prime of life and in the midst of much work dated back two weeks when he contracted a cold which ultimately developed into pneumonia and resulted in his death on Saturday.

Deceased reached an age of forty six years, the greater part of which had been spent in active church work. For fifteen years he had been working at Fertile where he built up a strong congregation and was engaged in work when the last summons came. He was an energetic, enthusiastic worker, a thorough Christian and dearly loved by his congregation which is in deep sorrow over his sudden demise.

Aside from a father, three brothers and four sisters, he is mourned by a faithful wife and a family of seven children.

#### “History of the Moreland Lutheran Church in Chicago” (an excerpt)

At the congregation's meeting on April 25, 1891, it was decided to ask the United Lutheran Church's Mission committee to call a pastor to Moreland (previous to this there had been several temporary Pastors). This committee then sent a call to O. O. Wold, who had been graduated from Augsburg Seminary and was ordained at the United Church annual meeting in 1891.

With the help of Pastor N. J. Lockrem, the congregation rented an empty store on Lake Street at 51st Court. Some chairs were purchased and the first service was held on Ascension Day evening the 7th of May. It was the first time the congregation had held a service in its own place of worship. Previously services had been held in a vacant room in the public school and occasionally in private homes, and just before this the congregation had rented the Presbyterian church.

That Lockrem's work was a blessing to the congregation manifested itself Sunday, June 7; a new foundation stone was laid then, in that six families were admitted to the congregation at the meeting on June 2. On June 7 was held the first confirmation service, with the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Pastor Ellestad officiating.

Pastor Wold came to Moreland August 1, 1891 and was installed by Pastor Ellestad on Sunday, August 5. Despite his poor health, he took energetic hold of the work both spiritually and temporally. Besides Moreland, he served the Emmaus church, with great blessings for both congregations. Not a few members were added to the church during this one year.

Already at the congregational meeting of September 18 a committee was selected to find a suitable site on which to build a church, and this committee found the site on which the church now stands. At the meeting on the 22nd it was unanimously decided to elect a new committee of five with full power to close the deal for the same. Johs. Olsen, John B. Jansen, Nils Möller, Pastor Wold and John Hevly were elected.

This committee gathered on September 24 at the real estate office to negotiate the purchase of the aforementioned lots. It was then and there agreed to pay \$1,250 for the two lots, on the following terms: \$200 within two months and thereafter \$200 each year, interest to be 6%. The Ladies' Aid sponsored an auction in Fishers Hall resulting in income of better than \$200, by which the first \$200 was paid on the lots. At the meeting on January 4 an Ingathering Committee was elected. Some subscription lists were sent out and a committee to prepare plans for a church was elected.

At the congregational meeting on February 1, 1892, it was voted nearly unanimously to build the church, and a Building Committee of three was selected to begin work as soon as possible. The Ingathering Committee reported that \$475 has been pledged to date. Pastor Wold was elected as treasurer of the Building Committee. But how were building materials to be gotten to the site? It was not possible to get a load to Moreland from any lumber yard in Chicago. There was then no other way than to haul it by railroad to Moreland. But lumber was ordered and paid in good promises at the Central Lumber Company (O.B.Jacobs) for something over \$850.

On March 3rd the work on the church began; and it was completed outside, windows and doors put in, the school room finished, so that the first service was held in the church May 7, 1892.

Pastor Wold resigned at the business meeting on May 3rd. He had received a call from Fertile, Iowa, but promised to remain until August 1st, if his health permitted it. It was with regret that the congregation accepted his resignation, but he declared definitely that he could not continue in Chicago longer.

## “History of the Fertile Lutheran Congregation” (an excerpt)

In 1892 the Village of Fertile Congregation united with the Clear Lake Congregation to form one parish. The Rev. O. O. Wold was called to serve as pastor. The parsonage, which was located in Fertile, was almost completed by this time. The church edifice was built in 1895 and dedicated the following year. At this time the congregation was affiliated with the United Lutheran Church.

In 1893 the so-called Augsburg strife caused a division in the Village of Fertile Congregation. This eventually caused a division in the congregation and in 1899 about half the members together with Pastor Wold withdrew to organize the Elim Lutheran Free Church. This group chose a building site west of Fertile and gave their synodical allegiance to the Augsburg Free Church. This congregation has since been dissolved and the building dismantled. The Elim Cemetery remains and is maintained as a burial site. The Fertile Lutheran Church continued as a member of the United Church (Forende).

### Congregations Served by O. O. Wold:

The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Moreland, Chicago, Illinois.  
1890-1891 Norwegian Fertile Congregation, Fertile, Iowa. 1892 Fertile Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Fertile Iowa. 1892-1895 Twin Lakes Congregation  
1892-1895 Village of Fertile Lutheran Congregation, Fertile Iowa. 1892-1900 Trinity Lutheran Church, Mason City, Iowa. 1896-1898 United Lutheran Church, Clear Lake, Iowa. 1892-1900 Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Thompson, Iowa.  
1902-1908 Elim Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, Fertile, Iowa (3 miles west). 1898-1908 (also called the Elim Lutheran Free Church)



Ole Olsen Wold and August Simerson