



Wilfred Hanson
May 20, 2012
Given by Harvey Melstad

Wilfred Hanson and his identical twin brother William were born on October 4, 1924 at Uncle Herman Hanson's house on "Grandpa" Hanson's homestead near Cobb, Wisconsin. The twins were six weeks premature. The doctor who attended their birth filled out the paperwork for their birth certificates and unbeknown to their parents wrote "deceased" on their records.

When a letter came from the state, their mother thought "their birth certificates" and tossed the letter into a box where they kept their important papers and didn't look at it.

A cousin and a neighbor girl set about to take care of these two very small boys. They put them into a canning jar box (3 jars wide and 4 jars long) both of them fit in the same box. They fed them milk with an eye dropper until they were strong enough to suckle. They kept them warm with hot-water bottles. They worked 24/7 for six weeks taking care of them.

Later when Wilfred and William were in high school they had an assignment to bring their birth certificates to school. They were surprised to see the word "deceased" on their records. They had to go to court to prove that they were indeed the same boys. Their baptism sponsors testified on their behalf.

Wilfred attended Augustana College, Sioux Falls, and Luther Seminary in St. Paul. On February 28, 1954 he was ordained at West Bethlehem Lutheran in Edmund, Wisconsin, as a Lutheran pastor. As such he served 15 congregations in North Dakota and has been a pastor for 58 years. He served as a part-time chaplain at Bethel Home in Stanley and Lake Region Lutheran Home in Devils Lake. He has lived in McClusky, Velva, Ross, Doyon and Esmond, North Dakota. He drove school bus both full and part time for 22 years.

With the help of family and friends he built their house which is 6 miles north of Bismarck off Highway 83.

Wilfred joined sons of Norway in July 1992, he was recommended for membership by Rev. Magnus Lutness. Wilfred also presented several messages during these memorial and dedication programs through the years.

In 2010 he had a bout with esophageal cancer and learned what it means to be able to say with confidence "Yeah though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil..." Wilfred spent several weeks in the hospital and then went for a time to MSLCC for about 3 months. In order to be discharged from there he had to show the staff that he could cook, so he showed the young nurses how to poach an egg. They were all fascinated as they had never seen that done before. We are very happy that he has made a good recovery and is still here with us.

Mary Jean Hanson Given by Wilma Melstad

Mary Jean was born in Lake Ander, South Dakota a small town near Sioux Falls.

Mary Jean graduated from high school in 1948 and Augustana College in 1952. While at Augustana she took voice lessons and studied Norwegian.

We at S of N benefit from this because she sings with our chorus, a mixed quartet and leads the singing during our socials. She helps us pronounce and understand the Norwegian in the songs we sing.

Mary Jean is in our Knitting Group as well as the Hardanger Group and she does both crafts beautifully and helps the rest of learn how to do them as well.

Mary Jean met Wilfred at Augustana and has been a faithful pastor's wife for 59+ years. They have five children and eight grandchildren.

Harvey and I are very honored to recognize Wilfred and Mary Jean Hanson as we dedicate a tree in their honor in our Sons of Norway Park