



A history of the construction of our new church home at 2808 South Avenue West.

On January 7, 1990 First Lutheran formed a Facility Planning committee to investigate a different facility (i.e. remodeling, reconstruction, relocating). The property at 2808 South Avenue West was located in May, 1992 and purchased on July 12, 1992 for \$150,000. A building committee was formed in September, 1996 and preparations started at the new church site in the summer of 1997. First the site was mapped and a certificate of survey was completed for the property boundaries. This work was all completed by volunteers from the church with technical assistance, surveying and drafting service donated by DJ&A engineering. The boundaries, site and utility maps were needed to allow the building committee to engage the design services necessary for the planning of our new facility.

In conjunction with the design development of our new church the “First In Christ Leadership” Committee was formed to plan our funding and building efforts. To assist and lead us in the funding efforts the services of Pathway Ministries was secured on February 22, 1998. Design work was awarded to the architectural firm of CTA of Missoula with civil work being completed by DJ&A. With design activities proceeding work was finally started on the ground in the winter of 1998. The Miller Boys, with the help of numerous other church members, completed the demolition of a large barn and removal

of fences that existed on the site. Most of the framing lumber was salvaged, later to be used in the construction of the garage building located at the west side of the property. Also during this winter a contractor was found to move the existing two bedroom house and a mobile home from the property. This moving of buildings was completed by Able Movers at no cost to the congregation. Previous estimates for moving or demolishing the buildings on site were 7 - 10 thousand dollars.

Construction work was ready to proceed in the spring of 1999. Bob Lehmann and Terry Druyvestein were authorized by the congregation to act as co-chairmen for construction activities and it was also decided that the congregation would act as their own general contractor for the work. It was also decided that much of the work would be completed by First Lutheran Volunteers and Laborers for Christ which is a Lutheran based traveling group of volunteers who are paid minimum wages to work on various projects throughout the country.

On February 28, 1999 the Groundbreaking Service was held at our new church site. On March 4, 1999 building permit was finally obtained . The cost of the permit was \$3,953.00. A construction loan was being arranged for interim financing, however at this point we had been blessed with a good cash reserve from the building pledges of our congregation.

On March 10th actual ground work was started. The first contract was awarded to JTL of Missoula for civil work at the site. The contract was for \$283,465.00 and included building foundation and tree demolition, top soil removal and replacement, basement and roadway excavation, basement construction, drainage sumps, parking lot grading and paving, curbs, sidewalks, water lines and two



March 17, 1999 - beginning of ground work at our new church site.



A view of the construction as seen from the roof of Community Hospital - April, 1999.

sewer systems. Two sewer systems were planned for: a septic tank, pump station and drain field was installed for immediate use and a 6 inch line was dry laid to South Avenue for future hookup to the city.

With site work proceeding, the Miller Boys began the preparations for the volunteer construction effort. They proceeded with the construction of the garage to be used as a headquarters for

construction and also the construction of an 8-space RV park to be used by the Laborers for Christ who would assist us in the actual construction. Water and sewer service lines were laid and final hookup was made when JTL completed these systems for the basement of our new building. Timing was critical to make the RV park serviceable when the Laborers for Christ were to arrive in May. Electrical service lines were dug in by the Miller Boys and hooked up by the second contractor we brought on board (Alpine Electric).



Raising of the first wall of our new church.



A view of the construction from the roof of Community Hospital on July 23, 1999

By March 31st the basic grading and excavation work had been completed for the new building. Concrete footing and foundation work was begun by Morgan Construction - the concrete subcontractor to JTL for this work. The concrete work now had to be completed before actual carpentry volunteers could begin. Over 400 cubic yards or one and one half million pounds of concrete with tons of steel bars would be placed before the carpentry work started. In addition to the concrete work there were electrical conduits, heating ducts, water lines and sewer lines to be placed beneath the concrete floors. This utility work inside the building was completed by 4 G Plumbing, Alpine Electric and Missoula Sheet metal. Work in the fellowship hall and basement was completed by May 25th to allow carpentry work to proceed. The Laborers for Christ had been arriving throughout the previous weekend and were ready to get to work. Their work Foreman was not yet on the job, however the 6 Laborers that had arrived started work on framing the 8 inch thick fellowship wall. At this time a volunteer crew from First Lutheran set all of the support posts and glue laminated beams in preparation for the floor in the fellowship wing. With these activities as a start the volunteer project was underway. The Laborers for Christ foreman would soon arrive and a crew of 7 would help the First Lutheran Crew for the next four months. First Lutheran volunteers would range from a fairly steady weekday crew of 8-12 with



A crane with a 100 foot boom is shown lifting into place one of the two interior 6-ton beams.



One days work crew taking time out to pose for a photo. Pictured are: bottom row (l-r) - Roger Lienau, Don Rose, Leo Gaub, Ron Derry. From the left - Phil Homp, Bob Lehman, Jeff Anderson(in back), Sy Syverson (front), Herb Baumhoefner, Jim Hanson, Basil Trollope (in back), Wendell Runge, Ron Carey, Herm Bauer, Glenn Kautz, Lee Baisch, Bob King, Terry Druyvestein.

Saturday crews ranging to over twenty. This size of crew was present on June 5th when over 2/3 of the floor joists were placed in the education wing. The following Saturday an even larger crew was available to place all of the plywood flooring in the education wing. With this floor completed and with all of the concrete work now complete many options were now open for framing all of the walls for the building.

Prior to this time contracts for materials and other subcontractors had been proceeding. Subcontractors for plumbing and heating had been arranged for. An agreement for building materials had been made with Intermountain Lumber Company and trusses were to be supplied by Clawson Manufacturing. The large glue laminated trusses in the sanctuary would be supplied by Western Archrib and the windows and doors would be supplied by City Glass. George Torp was a big help in this area has tresses with steel hurricane clips and steel straps woven through the trusses. The front of the sanctuary actually is steel columns enclosed in sheet rock and oak trim. Four large steel columns support the exposed glue laminated wood trusses in the front making the shape of the sanctuary possible. The front wall or south end of the sanctuary was actually constructed on the sanctuary floor by First Lutheran crews and lifted into place as a single



unit with a large truck crane. This wall had to be prefabricated with large interior beams containing 64 predrilled holes which fit into the steel studs already fabricated on the steel beams. The weight of this wall was about 8,000 pounds and was about all the crane could place at the distance it had to reach to set the wall. It was a happy day when everything fit in place. The large exposed wood trusses were set in place with this crane and were stabilized with a cable network using turn buckles to adjust their alignment and hold them in place. This work and the side ceiling trusses were completed with First Lutheran crews in preparation for a subcontractor who actually placed the center work ceiling scissor trusses and the prefabricated roof panels. All other trusses for the roof in the education wing and fellowship hall were placed using Laborers for Christ and First Lutheran crews.

Many people were involved extensively in this project and it is hard to mention anyone without the fear of leaving others out. In particular however it is necessary to mention the Miller Boys who were a group of mostly retired men in the congregation who worked full time on the project. They brought many talents to the project which were invaluable to the completion of the work within the time frame we were working under. Key talents included equipment operators, welders, framing carpentry, finish carpentry, cabinet making, sheet rock, concrete, retaining wall construction, steel work, electrical work and general construction.

In addition to the Miller Boys there were professional people who took time from their trades to assist in construction. These people provided expertise in contracting, civil engineering, construction management, financing, administration, landscaping, alarm systems, sound systems, fencing and photography.



A view of the progress on the new church and some of the volunteer workers - November 11, 1999.



There was also a Cleanup crew who faithfully cleaned up numerous piles of construction waste every day of the week. These people, mostly ladies of the congregation, were instrumental in providing and keeping a safe work site. In addition to cleanup activities, there were numerous ladies involved in the feeding of the work force. Snacks at coffee break were provided every day and were very important in keeping morale up and waistlines out. A potluck lunch was also provided for a large work force on Saturdays.

There were also many volunteer workers who are not listed. Some worked for weeks and some for the days they were able to. These volunteers accounted for a major lift in production and morale to the full time workers. The number involved was around 125 from our congregation plus a few from other churches. Most notably Martin Vanmil worked numerous hours in a variety of skilled tasks and was fondly referred as our 'token Catholic'.



Norm Balko in his garage welding the rail for the choir loft area.

By December, long after our Laborers for Christ crew had left we were well weathered in but still had a long way to go to finish work so services could be held. We were now focused on a date of March 1st. This date was set as much by necessity as by reality. We had sold our facility on South Higgins and were to be out by this date. We were able to meet the schedule and set the cornerstone on the 5th of March, 2000. Our first service was held on the 8th of March - Ash Wednesday. Work continued daily until our Dedication Service on May 21, 2000. Landscaping activities continued into the summer.

The total cost of the project was \$1,340,000. The project was funded by building funds and pledges and a construction loan of \$863,891. Upon completion, the congregation obtained a \$430,000 loan from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund with a 20 year amortization period. The balance of the \$1,340,000 was made possible by the building funds and pledges and receipt of \$407,343.94 from the sale of our South Higgins church and office property.

As God is the Provider of all things He was present throughout the building effort. His presence was continual providing, guiding, and protecting our faithful workers and blessing us with wonderful working conditions every step of the way. First Thessalonians 1:3 is indeed an appropriate Bible passage fitting for all those involved in the building of this Lord's House.

“We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by Faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” I Thes. 1:3

