

HISTORY OF FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH

The history of this congregation begins on May 7, 1900, when a small group of Lutherans desiring services in the English language, voted to organize. On June 17, 1900, a constitution was adopted-application was made for membership in the Synod of the Northwest-and a call was extended to Rev. M.E. Boulton to become Pastor of the flock - at a salary of \$12.00 per month.

Enthusiasm generated talk of building a church on December 15, 1901, a committee was selected to find a building site and to solicit funds.

By April of 1904, \$1,000.00 had been raised - a lot selected, and it was voted to proceed with the building. First thoughts were to build with stone, but on June 15, 1904 the decision was that the basement should be of stone - 20 inches thick - and the upper structure would be of frame construction. Contract to build was awarded to Johnson, Ridle & Child of Northfield, for \$2,180.00. The congregation was to excavate and furnish the stone and sand.

On May 7, 1905 the new church building was dedicated - a gala occasion.

Within the next five years the debt had been paid and the basement which had been left "in the raw" had been finished. With much pride the congregation entertained the Synod Convention from June 1 to June 6 in 1910 - and the record says it was done in royal fashion.

The congregation had been sharing a Pastor with the churches at Goodhue and Zumbrota. There was an understandable desire to have the Pastor live at Cannon Falls. In August of 1914, the church became the proud owners of a parsonage by purchase of the Emberg dwelling - a block south of the church - for a price of \$2,500.00. Now more dreams could be realized and in 1916, Rev. M.H. Wickman became the first resident Pastor.

From August of 1930 to 1932, the church shared its Pastor with Farmington, but he continued to reside in Cannon Falls.

Here would be a good place to comment on the painting of Christ in the Garden that hangs on the North wall of the church auditorium. This was painted and framed in 1935 by Clarence Beck, son of Rev. Willis Beck, who was Pastor of the church on two separate occasions, and the artist was paid \$100.00 for his service.

In May of 1935, an interesting situation presented itself. A special committee gave consideration to the possibility of some joint effort with the Congregational Church and a possible merger of the two churches.

1937 produced some needed building improvements. The basement was enlarged - a new heating plant was installed - a kitchen was added, with a room above available for a Sunday School room and Sacristy.

It was in 1943 that an effort was made to change the name of the church. The First English Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cannon Falls was and still is a rather cumbersome title and the idea was toward simplification. However, the simplification process became rather complicated as the various groups espoused the cause of their favorite name - and the project was abandoned when agreement could not be reached.

The church made a rather important change in its property in 1944. Opportunity came to acquire a dwelling and lots immediately south of the church. Previously there was only a few feet of land between the church building and the property line. So - the property which had been the parsonage for thirty years was sold and the church acquired additional needed land and a better dwelling for use as a parsonage.

The church had a 50th Anniversary to celebrate on May 7, 1950. This was a memorable day - highlighted by the visit of the very first Pastor of the church - Rev. M.E. Boulton - who came from his home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for the occasion.

There had been a feeling of growing pains and realization of need for building improvement for some years. The situation in Sunday School was not unlike the tale of the woman who lived in the shoe. Plans developed to push out the South wall to enlarge the church auditorium and basement - to push out the North wall to permit a re-arrangement of entryways - and to enlarge the facilities on the West side. Final results were removal of the steeple - construction of a more adequate chancel - lowering and beaming of interior ceilings - a new altar - pulpit - organ - pews and choir seats. Christmas Eve Service, 1955, was a joyous one - the project of an approximate cost of \$40,000.00 had been completed and everyone was happy and content.

Another ten years pass without any out of ordinary happenings. There was a very temporary flurry of interest in a proposal for a merger with St. Ansgar's congregation prior to their building of a new church - but all passed by without undue excitement. Then in 1966 it is determined to purchase a different parsonage dwelling on East Main Street - at a cost of approximately \$17,000.00. The old parsonage was used for a time for Sunday School purposes, and in 1973 the building was sold and removed from the premises. This permitted the building of a two story Educational Unit on the South of the existing church building. This was completed in 1973 at the cost of approximately \$48,000.00. Off-street parking facilities were also provided in this space.

During the time since that first small group of devout men and women laid the foundations - there have been years of struggle, hardship and discouragement, as well as years of inspiration, hope and accomplishment - The years of "lean" and the years of "fat" have not been foreign to the history of this church. There were times when the "Ladies Aid" came to the rescue with financial help. They started early with \$100.00 to buy the lot for the church building and followed with about \$400.00 for church furniture. In later years these faithful women of the church determined to add a bit of beauty to the premises and provided the colored glass windows. Down through the years the record frequently shows the payment of a coal bill or contribution to help with preacher's salary. There have been occasions of some dissention, but in the main, there has been amazing cooperation between men and women of tremendous fortitude and great devotion and faith - men and women who would reflect a little, the Glory of their Creator and labor in the establishment and perpetuation of His Kingdom.

A more complete and able writing might include statistics on the growth of membership - comments on the spiritual development and appraisal of the contributions to the lives of those who have communed within these portals. Yes - perhaps such a writing as this should include something about those individuals who have had important parts in the building of this congregation and positions of leadership in the congregation. This would require appraising, comparing and judging the work of those who have given of their talents and labored in the interests of this Temple of God and the worshippers therein. Let it suffice that their work be portrayed on the screen of memory of those who have known them and for those who knew them not - let the church as we know it today be the testimony of their labors and their accomplishments.

May God's Blessing be upon us in the future years.

First English Lutheran Church: 1900-1910
January 9, 2000

The history of First English Lutheran Church began on May 7, 1900, when a small group of Lutherans desiring services in the English language, voted to organize. (Up until this time, St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church was the only Lutheran church in Cannon Falls. They worshiped there in the Swedish language as late as 1927)

When organized, First English Lutheran Church had 9 charter members and 25 communicants. The charter members were: P.S. Aslakson B. R. Johnson

L. J. Backlund Andrew Rosvold
O. L. Benson A. J. Ullevig
Nellie Opsahl(Upsahl) N. A. Winslow
Swan Edlund

A number of current members of First English Lutheran Church are descendants of these 9 charter members. Doris Landon is the grandniece P.S. Aslakson; Carl Benson, Larry Benson and Louise Robinson are grandchildren of O. L. Benson; and Jim Edlund is the grandson of Swan Edlund.

On June 17, 1900, a constitution was adopted, application was made for membership in the Northwest Synod, and a call was extended to Rev. M.E. Boulton, who became the first pastor of the congregation at a salary of \$12.00 per month!

Enthusiasm generated talk of constructing a church building. On December 15, 1901, a committee was selected to find a building site and to solicit funds.

The Ladies Aid purchased the property for the church at a cost of \$100.25. By April of 1904, \$1000 had been raised, and the congregation voted to proceed with the building. First thoughts were to build with stone, but on June 15, 1904, the decision was that the basement should be of stone, and the upper structure would be of wood frame construction. The contract to build was awarded to Johnson, Ridle and Child of Northfield, for \$2180.00. The plans for the church were taken out of a mail-order catalog.

The congregation was to excavate for the basement and furnish the stone. Carl Benson recalls that his father, Oren G. Benson, and Martin Benson's father, Lewis Benson, helped excavate the foundation with a team of horses and a "slusher". A slusher was a bucket that scraped the ground and had levers that would be released to dump the dirt after the slusher had been hauled off to the side.

On May 7, 1905, the new church building was dedicated.

Within the next 5 years the debt was paid off and the basement, which had been left 'in the raw' was finished.

With much pride the congregation entertained the synod convention from June 1 – 6 in 1910.

Firsts At First English
January 30, 2000

The first baptism in the First English Lutheran Church building was of Percy Johnson on December 4, 1904.

The first wedding at First English was that of Selma Aslakson and Edwin Olson on June 29, 1904

In 1904 there were 334 registered voters in Cannon Falls.

The first funeral conducted at First English was that of Mrs. Edwin (Selma) Olson on July 29, 1905(note it is the same person as the first wedding).

Locally in 1905 the canning factory had a very successful run of between fourteen and fifteen cases of corn. A workforce of 125 people were employed there.

The first baptismal font was given to the church in 1908 by Mrs. Emily Moorhouse (grandmother of Grayden Moorhouse and Martin Benson).

Locally in 1908, Randolph and Stanton townships both banned baseball and horse racing on Sundays.

Locally in 1920, the English Lutheran and the Congregational churches protest against plays being permitted on Sundays!

City water was first put into the church in 1925. The Ladies Aid arranged for this.

Locally in 1925, the rage of hair bobbing was giving local barbers extra work.

The first addition to the church building was in 1934.

Locally in 1934, there was a notice that drivers licenses would no longer be free. The cost would be 35 cents!

The first Christian flag was given in memory of Mrs. Wilkerson in 1942.

The first electric orgathon(organ) was purchased in 1943.

The first telephone was installed at the church in 1945.

1966 was the first year a woman served on the church council of First English Lutheran Church—Joyce Edlund and Effel Smith

Highlights from the Years 1910-1920 at First English Lutheran Church March 5, 2000

These years were years of growth and action for First English Lutheran Church. In 1910 the congregation voted to finish off the basement of the church and appointed 3 members of the Ladies Aid and 3 councilmen to oversee the project. **Locally, in 1910 the City Water Board tested the flow of the artesian well with the object of establishing a drinking fountain at the corner of Mill and 4th Street. Today we have spent thousands to try and stop the very same well from eroding the Public Safety Building.

In 1911, the Church Council voted to purchase a lot west of the church for the sum of \$150. In 1912, the Ladies Aid paid \$50 toward the purchase of that lot, and in 1913 the Ladies Aid paid off the balance. The council voted to extend 'thanks' to the Ladies Aid for paying off the lot.

A motion was made at the annual meeting of the congregation in 1913 that the trustees be authorized to purchase chains for hitching purposes, as much as needed. **Locally, just two years later in 1915, the Beacon reports "Autoitis is epidemic in town and half of the population is in danger of coming down with the price for a new auto"—also noted in the same paper "Ed Erickson and Leola Thill broke their arms while cranking automobiles.

The congregation had been sharing a Pastor with the churches at Goodhue and Zumbrota. There was a desire to have the Pastor live in Cannon Falls. In August of 1914, the church became the proud owners of a parsonage by purchase of the Emberg dwelling, a block south of the church—for a price of \$2500. In 1916 Rev. M. H. Wichman became the first resident pastor.

The February council minutes of 1917 noted that the cost of electricity for the church for the month of January was \$1.00. Today an average monthly electric bill for the church is _____. **Locally in 1917 a street light was placed over the center crossing of 4th Street.

November of 1918 prayers of thanks were offered in church and around the world for Armistice Day marking the end of WWI. In 1918 there were 120 confirmed members, 154 baptized members, 57 Sunday School students, 5 infant baptisms and 6 adult baptisms, 7 confirmation students, 1 wedding and 2 funerals. It was also noted that in 1918 Wm Pagel donated pews to the church.

**Locally it was noted that in 1919, during the fall and winter 82,735 pounds of rough fish were taken from Lake Byllesby and shipped to eastern cities. In 1920 women received the right to vote. Here at First English the first church seal was given by the confirmation class of 1920

1920-1930
April 9, 2000

In June 1920, the Church entertained the State Luther League. It was noted in the council records of the 1920, that the congregation purchased 6 bottles of communion wine for 30 cents a bottle.

Rev. Wichman resigned in March of 1921, to go to Lakeland, Florida. In June of the same year, Rev. M. D. Haferman, serving at Columbus, Montana, became our pastor.

In 1922 the church council voted to sell the barn on the church parsonage property.

Rev. Haferman left for Lindstrom, Minnesota, in October of 1924 and Rev. Willis Beck, still serving Zumbrota and Goodhue, also served Cannon Falls from November 1924 to January 1926. The record discloses that Rev. Beck having had two separate terms at Cannon Falls declined to preach a 'farewell' sermon in recognition of the possibility that he might return to Cannon Falls a third time.

Locally in 1924, it was noted that the most destructive hailstorm in the history of Goodhue County accompanied by wind with almost tornado force stripped thousands of acres of corn, broke 275 panes of glass in the Anderson Greenhouse, shattered many panes in residences, and killed whole flocks of chickens.

Rev. A.C.P. Hays, Professor at Northwestern Theological Seminary at Minneapolis, became pastor on a part time basis in the spring of 1926 and he continued to serve the church until July of 1930.

In 1927, the Cannon Falls Beacon noted, Capt. Charles A. Lindbergh of Little Falls, Minnesota, landed in Paris on a Saturday evening after a non-stop flight from New York, a distance of 3600 miles.

In 1928, President and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge came for the dedication and unveiling of the Colvill memorial. Thousands jammed the town on July 29. Enrolled in the Cannon Falls schools in 1928 totaled 219 in the elementary school, 120 in the high school, and 10 in the 'normal' department, a total of 379.

It was noted in 1928 that since the legislature raised the 'so called' speed limit from 35 to 45 miles per hour, some drivers around Cannon Falls and elsewhere seem to think that this gives them license to go around blind corners at 45 and higher speeds.

In August of 1930 the congregation voted to join Farmington and to call Rev. Harlon M. Miller as pastor. The union with Farmington continued until 1932. Rev. Miller continued as pastor of our church until 1942.

And that's the way it was in the world and in Cannon Falls and in First English Lutheran Church from 1920 to 1930...

The 1930's At First English
May 28, 2000

In August of 1930 First English Lutheran voted to join with a Farmington congregation and call Rev. Harlon M. Miller as pastor. The union with Farmington congregation continued until 1932. Rev. Miller served this congregation until 1941.

In 1937 an addition to the church was built that included a kitchen, sacristy, new heating system, and an enlarged basement.

In the United States in 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt declared a 'Bank Holiday' and all banks were ordered to be reorganized before they could reopen.

Locally in 1933, J.H. Carlson, who had been in the hardware business on 4th Street for 50 years, sold his store to W. F. Althoff.

In 1933, Cannon Falls was assured of a new municipal airport one mile south of town.

Records from 1934 state, that no longer will motorists follow Highway 20 from the Twin Cities to Cannon Falls, the new route number will be #52 all the way to the Iowa border...also the state has taken over the Colvill Highway and now calls it Highway 19.

The 1940s At First English July 30, 2000

According a history of First English written by Merle Olson, "In 1941 Rev. Carl M. Fagerlin came to labor among us as Pastor. Pastor Fagerlin served the congregation until 1944, when the congregation called Rev. Rodney Hanson.

Church records show that the first Christian flag was given by friends in memory of Mrs. Wilkerson in 1942. The first American flag was also given to the church in 1942 by the Ladies Aid.

In Cannon Falls, in 1941, the east end of Mill Street at Limekiln Hill was blocked to traffic on account of children sliding. The Beacon in December of 1941: "Perhaps no week in American history has been more momentous than this one with Japan, Italy and Germany all declaring war on the United States and our country reciprocating.

Locally in February of 1942 the Beacon noted that daylight savings time was scheduled to begin and it was to end not later than 6 months after the war was over. Also in 1942, the Bremer Brothers installed the first frozen food locker boxes in town, and in a short time all 250 boxes had been put to use.

In 1943 an effort was made to change the name of our church. The First English Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cannon Falls was thought to be a cumbersome title and the idea was towards simplification. However, the simplification process became complicated as the various groups espoused their favorite name—and the project was abandoned when agreement could not be reached.

The church made a rather important change in its property in 1944. Opportunity came to acquire a dwelling and lots immediately south of the church. Previously there was only a few feet of land between the church building and the property line. So—the property which had been the parsonage for 30 years was sold and the church acquired additional needed land and a better dwelling for use as a parsonage.

Locally it was noted in 1944 that boys and girls were directed to collect milkweed pods to provide floss for navy life jackets. The Beacon announced that on September 2, of 1945 that Japan had surrendered and the war was over.

In 1946 because of an outbreak of polio the Minnesota State Fair was cancelled and the local VFW abandoned its planned celebration on the first anniversary of VJ Day, and the schools opened 2 weeks late.

The first telephone was installed at church in 1945.

During 1946 our baptized membership grew from 483 to 575.

In 1947 Pastor Hanson resigned and Rev. George Moeller who had been a Chaplain in the Army in WWII came to be our pastor.

Locally in 1946 the Hi-Quality Bakery was closed because of the lack of sugar. It reopened in 1948.

In 1947 for the first time, Cannon Falls schools provided free text books to all students in accordance with a new state law.

In these years many choir concerts were presented under the direction of Marion Theel. On April 18, 1948 the choir wore new vestments, black with white collars. There were 27 choir members. In 1948 the young women organized the Mary-Martha Society.

The 1950s at First English—Darrell & June Ista
August 27, 2000

According to a history of the church written by Merle Olson, in the fall of 1953 the Church Council determined that it was appropriate to renew activity on a building project. So in February of 1954 a special congregational meeting was held, the result of which authorized the Church Council to select a building committee. Plans were drawn up and that September and another special meeting was held. With a vote of 53 to 3, the congregation voted to proceed with a building project as soon as \$20,000.00 had been given to the building fund. By May of 1955, the funds had been received, a contractor was hired and the building project was underway. During that time of construction, the congregation held services in the school during the summer. When school started again in September, services were held in the basement of the church amid the dust and dirt of the construction project. Completion of the remodeling project was celebrated on Christmas Eve of 1955, when the congregation held its first service in the remodeled worship area. Olson noted that the project, which also included a new organ, cost \$40,000.00.

Darrell: I was a member of the church council at this time. A note here contrast the times: This project was done without an architect or a contract. We told Al Flom (who was a local builder) what we wanted. He said 'I can do that'. That was the total of negotiations. I can remember that the Synod and Paster Meyers were very unhappy with so loose an arrangement. The council's philosophy was—He lives here—we know him—we trust him. There was a lot of volunteer labor in the area of cleanup and site preparation. One that comes to mind is flooring the upper room. We put in used flooring. I don't recall where it came from, but I'm sure it was free. Also at the time it was installed, it must have been 100 degrees up there and the windows wouldn't open. Maybe it wasn't quite that hot, but there probably isn't anyone here today to dispute it. One more incident to reflect simpler times. It was decided in a council meeting that a septic tank was needed o the west side of the church. I think it was for the kitchen. We discussed how to do it and who to get. Here is where 'foot-in-the-mouth' disease kicked in: Quote from me (Mr Ista)... 'Its not at all difficult, I just put one in at my house. You go to Coates and get the proper size and dig it in. Build the blocks up as the tank settles.' Quote from Jake Hagen... 'When can you go get one and put it in?' I think you can guess how it was handled and who did it. Pastor Meyers and Herb Barsness helped with it. See I told you it was simple!

In September of 1956, Pastor Donovan Meyers resigned and accepted a call to Billings, Montana. Rev. Kenneth Althoff served the congregation from this time until the congregation extended a call to Pastor Boyd Nelson in June of 1957.

June: About a year before Pastor Meyers left, we were asked to come to the parsonage to help with a Luther League skit. They were studying Ephesians 6: 10-20 (which happens to be the 2nd Lesson for today). Our job was to make, out of tagboard, a 'belt of Truth', a 'breastplate of Righteousness', a 'shield of Faith', etc. That begun for us, 6 years of working with teenagers. Work isn't the right word—it was also fun. Regular meetings were devotions, lesson, lunch, games. Then there were ice skating & roller skating parties, exchanges with other churches, hay rides, scavenger hunts, and swimming parties (where a coupld of girls tried to drown Darrell). Between Pastors Meyers and Nelson, we had the League by ourselves, which certainly prepared us for when our own kids reached that age!

The church newsletter of May 1958, which at the time was called "Ray of Light", noted the following: "Pastor Nelson and Betty wish to invite all of you to their wedding on June 21st. It will be at 2 p.m. in Clarissa, Minnesota. We would be very happy to see as many of you as could possibly come. After the honeymoon and vacation trip we plan to have an Open House at the parsonage for the congregation. A date for this has not been set but it will be announced."

June: Several from the congregation took them up on their invitation to attend their wedding. My brother and sister-in-law, Dick and Verlaine Duncan, and Darrell and I went together. Now at this time very few, if any cars, had airconditioning, so you either opened the windows and it blew, or you closed the windows and melted. We did both. It was also when men always wore suits to church and women wore full skirts with several petticoats. It was a warm day and we were a mess by the time we got to Clarissa. The bride however, looked cool, calm and beautiful.

Grace Robinson, who served as Sunday School Superintendent in those years, noted in the same newsletter: "We had a dandy Sunday School Teachers Meeting April 25th, good discussion and even a cup of coffee". She went on to note: "The new Sunday School attendance register was given in memory of Roger Husaby by his parents, Marland and Cindy Husaby. Sunday school enrollment in 1958 was 185.

The Ray of Light for June of 1958 notes: "The entire congregation and other friends of Pastor Nelson are invited to attend an Open House Coin Shower honoring him and his bride on Sunday, July 13th at the church. Hours will be from 2 to 5 in the afternoon. Let us have a good crowd out to welcome them home from their honeymoon."

**The 1960's At First English
September 3, 2000**

Pastor Boyd Nelson carried the ministry of the church forward through the 1960s.

Council minutes indicate on November 12, 1963 that a discussion was held on the possibility of a merger with St. Ansgar's Lutheran Church. Minutes reflect that this discussion continued until at least 1966.

According to the council minutes 1964 a new schedule was adopted for church services which included two services. Worship service times 8 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. with Sunday School at 9:15 a.m.

Locally in the early 60s the Cannon Falls Beacon noted: Unimpressed by Premier Khrushchev latest overtures for peace, Adrian Gibson has built himself a fall out shelter capable of withstanding almost anything but a direct hit. John Goudy won the contest for naming the park just below the Little Cannon dam, his suggestion was Minnieska, the Indian word means 'land of many running waters'.

June 10, 1961 house to house mail delivery began in Cannon Falls. In 1963 the postal department also initiated the zipcode to speed up mail delivery.

Here at First English January 8, 1963 a motion was made and seconded to add to our constitution that our annual meeting would be held on the fourth Sunday in January.

The church sign outside was given in memory of David Lockrem(brother of Neva Scott) who died in the military service in 1964.

November 9, 1965 a motion was made and seconded by the church council to purchase the Lutheran Service Book and Hymnal (the Red Book) out of the hymnal fund.

In 1966, our Church voted to purchase a different parsonage dwelling on East Main Street at a cost of approximately \$17,000.00 and the old parsonage was used for Sunday School purposes.

In 1966 an article in the Beacon was printed with the title: "First Woman on Church Board at Cannon Falls". The article goes on to state: "Arnold Dabelow Jr., Blaine Baird, J. T. Torkelson, J. O. Hagen and Mrs. Clifton Smith(DuWayne Smith's mother) were elected to serve on the First English Lutheran Church council. This is the first time a woman has been asked to serve on the church council of this church." The same article notes that at this annual meeting Muriel Stedman resigned as Sunday School treasurer after serving 14 years and was replaced by Irene Erickson.

Locally in 1966 it was reported that the Torkelson's egg factory was turning out 5000 eggs per day. Also that year, Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Qualle bought the KOA campground 2 miles east of town from Gordon Lindahl. In 1967, Mayor Clarence Theel cut the ribbon officially opening Highway 52 on October 10 at a spot in the new four-lane highway near Windy Acres. Many people were asking what the new bypass would do to Cannon Falls businesses and the town. In 1969 the Point of Sales building and the Collins Produce building on east Main Street were razed to make way for the new First National Bank building.

**1970s at First English/Cannon Falls
November 19, 2000**

Through the 1970s the ministry of First English Lutheran Church was led by Pastor Boyd Nelson. In 1972 the LCW honored Pastor Nelson for 15 years as the congregation's pastor.

Locally in 1970 the Beacon reports that Cannon Falls has a new 12 unit condominium the third one in the entire state completed and ready for occupancy.

In 1972 the Cannon Falls Teen Center located in the Masonic Building(Cannon Realty) was opened by the young people for use by people of all ages. Its use as a rest stop while shopping, or a social center for cards, pool, bingo or just visiting is encouraged.

The Cannon Falls High School was evacuated because of a bomb scare in 1972. The school authorities made a ruling that any future time lost because of a similar incident would be made up.

Here at First English, in 1973, the old parsonage that had been used for a time for Sunday School purposes was sold and removed from church property. This permitted the building of a 2 story educational unit on the south of the existing church building. This was completed at a cost of approximately \$48,000.00. Off-street parking was also created by the removal of this home.

In 1973 the country faced an energy crisis. The city of Cannon Falls turned off 62 street lights and they did not hang up any Christmas lights.

May 25, 1975 our 75th Anniversary was observed at 2 worship services, special Sunday School event and a festive worship at 4 pm with the synod president Melvin Hammarberg as a guest speaker followed by a supper.

In the same year the new park across from the swimming pool at the bend in the river was named Hannah's Bend for Happy Hannah Nelson who lived in the little house on the hill on the road to the fairgrounds.

In 1976 the Cannon Mall had its grand opening.

During the summer of 1978, due to the generous gift of the family from the George & Adella Johnson estate the whole church kitchen was remodeled and more than doubled in size. The annual report stated, "What a really wonderful and cheerful place it is to work in. With the abundance of sinks you can do more dishes at one time than a dishwasher. Any size dinner or reception can be handled effectively and efficiently."

The new Lutheran Book of Worship (our current green hymnal) arrived here in August of 1978. The senior choir spent many hours practicing the new liturgy. The red hymnals were given out to members who desired to have one.

The 1980s
December 17, 2000

The 1980 Census reported that the Cannon Falls population had risen by 600 to 2653.

In 1981 the Community Food shelf was started at First English Lutheran Church.

April 22, 1981 First English hosted the Goodhue District LCW Assembly. The president of the LCW then was Marcene Lundell.

In May of 1981 Point of Sales was sold and became the Cannon Equipment Company.

September 18, 1981 ground breaking for the new Cannon Falls public safety building.

In 1981 Joan Kodadek was hired as the first director of Cannon Falls Community Ed.

Spring of 1982 First English Lutheran Church inherited the estate of Rose Helmbrecht. Initial funding of the First English Lutheran Foundation came from this estate gift. The foundation's purpose is to provide on-going fund to carry out special programs of the church and to respond to the mission needs around us.

February 6, 1982, Jennifer Nelson, daughter of Boyd and Betty Nelson, was crowned Miss Cannon Falls. She was also named Miss Congeniality by the 15 contestants.

Pastor Boyd Nelson died August 28, 1983 en-route home from taking son Steven to college in Texas. He was stricken with a heart attack in El Dorado, Kansas and died there.

Following Boyd's death, Pastor Robert Harter served as Interim Pastor. He served until 1984, when Pastor Craig Ellingboe was installed as our new pastor.

In 1985, First English Lutheran Church celebrated its 85th anniversary. Cliff Edlund, son of a charter member of First English Lutheran Church, rode on the back of a vintage car with a sign acknowledging the church's 85th anniversary. The final event of the 85th anniversary celebration was held on Sunday, November 3 when Bishop Herbert Chilstrom preached at the 8:30 and 10:45 worship services.

Judith Stone-Horst served her internship here from 1985 to 1986, as part of her third year of education at Luther Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul.

In 1986 Sue Lodermeier was hired as the funeral director of the Lundberg Funeral Home. It was also announced that a new facility would be completed in 1987.

In 1986 the Cannon Valley Trail was dedicated.

Also 1986, Donnie Kraft was awarded the "11 Who Care" award , a program honoring outstanding community volunteers sponsored by KARE 11 Television

A \$320,000 building/remodeling project was voted in by members of First English during a special meeting on January 8, 1987. The project was termed 'phase 1' and included the expansion of the seating area in the sanctuary, a hydraulic chair lift, improvements to the electrical and heating units, library/meeting rooms, additional office storage space and a new organ and piano.

The newly remodeled facility was dedicated during a special service on September 20, 1987.

The new organ was dedicated on Sunday, November 1, 1987. An organ recital was held in the afternoon with Richard Duncan as the guest organist.

On Sunday, January 3, 1987 at 10:30 a.m. at the Cannon Falls High School, the 8 local churches of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America joined in a united service to celebrate the beginning of the new church. Over 600 people attended and a catered dinner was served in the school cafeteria. The participating churches were: Cannon River and Cross of Christ, First English, St. Ansgar's, Spring Garden, Urland and Wangen Prairie, and Vasa.

The 1990s
December 24, 2000

Sarah Lindor was crowned Miss Cannon Falls at the 10th annual Miss Cannon Falls Pageant on January 27, 1990. Amy Sutherland was crowned Miss Cannon Falls in 1991

In January 1991, Operation Desert Storm filled local and national news.

In 1991, Pastor Craig Ellingboe resigned to accept a call to serve as senior pastor of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Northfield, Minnesota. Pastor Charles Solberg served as Interim Pastor until Pastor Phil Ruud began his ministry here on May 1, 1992.

Following the resignation of Julie Rogness in 1992, Dave Baumbach served as Youth Director until the fall of 1994.

Pastor Dean Lundgren began serving as Associate Pastor here in 1995.

The Olympic Torch Relay came through Cannon Falls on June 1, 1996 in preparation of the Olympic Games to be held in Atlanta, Georgia. Over 2000 people lined the streets of Cannon Falls.

June 1996 the Beacon reported that Dar Qualle owner of the Piccadilly Boutique sold the building and will close the store. Reed Qualey of Scofield Drug purchased the building.

In 1996 the nursing home was sold and the name was changed to Our Lady of the Angels Care Center.

Cannon Falls residents woke to discover massive flooding in the community on Saturday, June 27, 1998. Raging waters covered and severely damaged bridges, parks, homes and the city's athletic field.

In 1998 First English retired the loan from the Foundation which was used for the remodeling completed in 1986. The entire original \$85,000 was paid back to the Foundation (the majority of which was paid back with interest).

Senior High youth activities were strong through the 90s. Youth attended the National Youth Gathering in 1994 in Atlanta, Georgia and 1997 in New Orleans, Louisiana. A number of youth also went on a mission trip to the Black Feet Indian Reservation in Montana in 1999.

At the annual meeting in January of 1999 the congregation voted to hire an architectural firm to develop a building plan, establish some potential costs, and develop a 3 dimensional model. The congregation also voted to form a building committee to oversee this project.

On December 19, 1999 the congregation voted to approve the basic master plan of the building project, to purchase adjacent property and to hire a stewardship consulting firm to help with the building fund drive.