United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property
   Historic name: St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church
   Other names/site number: St. Olaf Lutheran Church
   Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
   (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location
   Street & number: 2901 Emerson Ave. N.
   City or town: Minneapolis State: MN County: Hennepin
   Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
   In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
   ___ national ___ statewide _X_ local
   Applicable National Register Criteria:
   _X_ A ___ B ___ C ___ D

   [Signature] 4/26/2022
   Signature of certifying official/Title: Amy Spong, Deputy SHPO, MN Dept. of Admin. Date

   ____________________________
   State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

   In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

   [Signature] ____________________________
   Signature of commenting official: Date

   Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
St. Olufs Norwegian Lutheran Church
Hennepin County, MN

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) ____________________

__________________________  __________________________
Signature of the Keeper      Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:  X

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

Building(s)  X

District

Site

Structure

Object
**Number of Resources within Property**
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _N/A_

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6. **Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: religious facility

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**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: religious facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Late Gothic Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick and stone

foundation: LIMESTONE

walls: BRICK
       STONE
       GLASS

roof: ASPHALT SHINGLES

other:

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church (St. Olaf) is located in the Jordan Neighborhood in North Minneapolis at 2901 Emerson Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 55411. The church is comprised of the historic church building constructed in 1911. The church is a rectangular, brick building, with Gothic Revival Style elements. Despite alterations and additions from 1919, 1921, and 1928, this structure has retained its essential form, massing, and floor plan since its original construction in 1911. In 1962, the congregation built a Parish Center to the rear of the 1911 church building. This building was attached to the church through a brick, glass, and metal-framed hyphen. The 1962 Parish Center and the hyphen do
St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church  
Name of Property  
Hennepin County, MN  
County and State

not detract from the historic integrity of the church building. At the time of the church’s construction, North Minneapolis was home to many Norwegian immigrants and working-class families. The Norwegian-American community helped build the church by providing labor and skilled artists and craftsmen. Even though the church no longer identifies as ethnically Norwegian, the church’s mission is to still serve those in the community of North Minneapolis. St. Olaf retains all of the seven aspects of integrity. It is significant for its association with broad patterns of Minneapolis history including Norwegian immigration, the representation of the North Minneapolis community, and effects of institutions on neighborhood development and growth.

______________________________
Narrative Description

Over time, the name of St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church (St. Olaf) has changed, both through differing translations of earlier names from Norwegian to English, and through documented changes the church has made. Early church bulletins give the name in Norwegian as “St. Olaf Menigheds Kirke” in 1907-1908, then as “St. Olafs norsk lutherske menighed” in 1911, and “St. Olaf Norsk lutherske Menighet” in 1918 (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, n.d.; Luther Seminary Archive Collections, n.d.). On January 25, 1959, “the church voted to change our constitution as follows: ‘It was moved and carried that the congregation direct the Board of Trustees to amend the articles of incorporation as follows: St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church to St. Olaf Lutheran Church’” (St. Olaf Church, 1999). For sake of consistency, the church will be referred to as the abbreviated “St. Olaf” throughout this document.

St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church (1911)
The focal point of St. Olaf is the 1911 church building, a brick veneer, Gothic Revival Style church that sits on the southeast corner of the city block at North Emerson Avenue and North 29th Avenue. The popularity of the Gothic Revival Style in Norwegian-American religious buildings in Minnesota was seen as early as the 1860s when Holden Church, a Norwegian Lutheran church established in Goodhue County was built in 1861. Holden Church was deemed the model for ethnically Norwegian church design in America. Its neo-Gothic style was influenced by a trend seen throughout Europe at this time, becoming a common design for newly constructed churches in Norway as early as the 1840s. The design was based on Eisenach rules with a central aisle emphasizing chancel, sacristy, and steeple. Alternately, other early American Gothic Revival churches were influenced by the Protestant meetinghouse with double aisles and a central lectern and table (Eldal, 2011). These two styles blend seamlessly at St. Olaf where both Norwegian traditions and American traditions are present; the American design based on the meeting house style with double aisles, and Norwegian Lutheran design which included “a permanent altar with its railing and kneeler, often placed in a defined choir, were the natural accompaniment to a pulpit enclosing the preacher on at least three sides” (Eldal, 2011, p. 14).

The Gothic Revival Style was very popular for churches in the Twin Cities beginning in the 1880s. The popularity of the style in the United States was influenced by Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942) and other east coast architects, “who favored near-reproductions of English Gothic Revival Styles, particularly the English parish church” (Zellie and Peterson, 2001, p. 16). Early Norwegian-American church styles used the Gothic Revival Style because they,
valued good acoustics and clear lines of sight with reference to the liturgical actions central to the Lutheran cultus, the administration of Holy Communion, and the preaching of the sermon. The elongated rectangle emerged as the preferred floor plan... It was customary among Norwegian Americans to find construction personnel among their own people, either within the congregation or from the same area (Eldal, 2011, p. 12-14).

The 1911 St. Olaf church building was clearly influenced by these neo-Gothic traditions as well as Norwegian-American Lutheran values. It was originally designed by Minneapolis based Norwegian-American, Harry Hendrickson. Martin. M. Lee, also a local Norwegian-American, was the building supervisor and construction was completed by members of the congregation (City of Minneapolis, 1911).

St. Olaf demonstrates classic Gothic Revival Style elements such as ornamental brick work, which creates geometric patterns along the exterior wall surfaces and frames the main building features; with quoining at each of the building’s corners creating the illusion of strong, structural members. Main feature windows have traditional Gothic styling with pointed arches and stained glass. The church’s ornamental brickwork is a dark brown color. This contrasts with the majority of the church’s light brown brick cladding, which is laid in a stretcher course pattern bonded with off-white mortar joints. The basement level is of poured concrete finished with a cream-colored stucco on the exterior and separated from the main brick façades by a concrete water table. The church rises two stories over a raised basement with a three-story bell tower and public sidewalks line the east and south ends of the building with a parking lot to the north. A brick-cased bulletin sign faces the public sidewalks at the southeast corner of the lot. The style of the building is reminiscent of the earlier church building constructed by the congregation at Sixteenth and Dupont Avenues North in the 1880s. This earlier building was a smaller, wood-framed Gothic Revival Style church with a central spire and a single arched window above the main entrance door. It featured a simple eight-sided pinnacle on top of the spire (see Attachments for an image of the Sixteenth and Dupont church).

Today the front (east facing) façade of the church on Emerson features a main double door, flanked by Tuscan-style columns supporting a Gothic pointed stone arch with a central keystone (Photograph 1). The stone arch is carved with “St. Olaf’s Luth Church,” and the keystone is carved with “1911.” A metal cross is placed above the keystone. The main door is accessed by a prominent staircase and is centered on the façade, which extends upwards into a central bell tower. The bell tower is square in shape and features four corner turrets topped with finials. These four corner turrets flank the taller, center spire, which is topped with a cross. This façade is symmetrical, with matching Gothic pointed arch windows; one smaller window over one larger window. The gables flank the central bell tower and create the illusion of flying buttresses by using contrasting brick and stonework.

The north and south façades of the church feature large, two-story stained-glass windows with Gothic pointed arches and simple tracery. These large feature windows extend into gables, capped with white metal coping, mimicking a transept and creating a cross-shaped effect through the main roofline, with the bell tower at the top of the cross. On the north façade (Photograph 2), the large feature window is flanked by three smaller Gothic pointed arch windows, one to the east and two to the west, with an additional
Gothic pointed arch window at the far western end of the façade. On the south façade (Photograph 3), the large feature window is flanked by two Gothic pointed arch windows, one on either side. On the western half of the south façade an extension projects out toward the street. The first portion of the extension features a gabled roof with contrasting brickwork quoining, highlighting the corners and mimicking structural members. The second, western-most portion of the extension has a flat roof and features a central tower-like section with a gabled roof and a quatrefoil decorative detailing in the center of the pediment (Photograph 4). The rear (west) façade of the church links to the Parish Center building via a brick, glass, and metal-framed hyphen (Photograph 5). The hyphen is a stand-alone structure that does not rely on the church wall for physical support. The brick wall of the hyphen abuts the rear wall of the historic church and contains a metal fire door (Photograph 6 and 7). While necessarily enclosed due to the Minnesota climate, the hyphen is an open-air space used as an entryway and pedway for the church and the Parish Center. It contains a metal and concrete stairwell with terrazzo floors and brick interior walls abutting the historic church. The hyphen is not visible from the more prominent façades of the historic church. The construction of the hyphen was necessitated by the addition of the Parish Center and coincidental to the period of significance. Furthermore, the Parish House and hyphen do not support the significance of the property.

Inside, St. Olaf features a large, square sanctuary on the main level of the church. Entering from the main, eastern doorway, is a small vestibule flanked with matching five-paneled wooden doors set at a forty-five-degree angle, and red carpeted stairs. This vestibule enters the back of the nave over which there is an upper loft for additional seating with a curved hardwood balcony rail. Along each of the north and south walls, the sanctuary has tall stained-glass windows. All the wooden pews in the nave face the western end of the sanctuary toward the chancel, where the carved wooden altar, pulpit, and chancel rail are located. Some of the carvings and details throughout the church blend Lutheran, Gothic Revival, and Norwegian folk art motifs (see Attachments). Above the chancel, is the choir loft that features a 1951 Moller Organ and one of the two paintings by August Klagstad, who was a Norwegian born artist based in Minneapolis. The Gothic Revival architectural features continue into this space with pointed arches in the window and door frames and the large, full-height corbeled chancel arch. The sanctuary also features a barrel-vaulted “acoustic friendly” ceiling (Photographs 8, 9, and 10).

Passing through the southern side aisle of the sanctuary to the western end of St. Olaf, a doorway enters a hallway that contains the administrative and Pastor’s offices to the south and the Sletten Chapel to the north. The Pastor’s office features east and south-facing windows and floor to ceiling carved wood built-in cabinets. The administrative offices sit along the south façade and have carpet, acoustic ceiling tile and plaster walls. The Sletten Chapel (Photograph 11) is accessed by a double door opposite the church offices. The room features hardwood flooring, a wooden chair rail, and an acoustic tiled ceiling. The chapel’s chancel sits on the north end of the room and can be closed off with a brown accordion divider. The north wall of the chancel features an arched stained-glass window. On the floor above is located the custodian’s apartment, which is still in use as a private residence for the current custodian. This part of the church can also be accessed through the western entrance contained within the brick, glass and metal-framed hyphen.

St. Olaf on North Emerson Avenue and North 29th Avenue began as a basement, constructed by members of the congregation in which they held some of the first services beginning in 1910.
St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church

The superstructure was completed in 1911 and the church was dedicated on September 3, 1911. Today, the basement of St. Olaf still contains the original chancel and chancel rail located at the eastern end of the large, open room (Photograph 12). Two staircases give access to the basement, one at the southeast corner of the church accessed from the main entrance vestibule. The second staircase is within the hyphen on the west side of the church. The basement has a red-painted concrete floor, acoustic ceiling tiles, and concrete walls. Today, this room is used as classrooms and meeting space and has a kitchen and bathrooms.

According to the 1911 building permit on file at the City of Minneapolis (see Attachments), the church measured in feet, “Front 70, Depth 82, Height 20, Stories 2” (City of Minneapolis, 1911; Hennepin County Library, n.d.). Since the St. Olaf church building was completed in 1911, three major renovation events occurred. Each renovation event was meant to expand the building to further accommodate the needs of an ever-growing congregation (see Attachments for depictions of the church after each renovation). The first renovation took place in 1919, completed by the congregation themselves (City of Minneapolis, 1919; Hennepin County Library, n.d.). This included expansion of the bell tower to the east, creating a larger entryway inside the main doors. The front door was raised a few feet and a taller, exterior concrete staircase was added. On the front (eastern) façade, one-story angled walls were built to the north and south of the protruding bell tower, each including a wooden door and small rectangular stained-glass window above. A large, gothic arch window in the center of the bell tower on the eastern façade was removed and replaced with a small Gothic arch window, and the bell tower was extended out.

The church building was again expanded in 1921 with what is described on the building permit (see Attachments) as a brick veneer addition that measured in feet, “Front 26, Depth 72, Height 20” (City of Minneapolis, 1921). This addition again utilized local Minneapolis Norwegian-American craftsmen and was designed by Norwegian-born architect Peter Oliver Moe assisted by the Norwegian-born builder Fred Wick (City of Minneapolis, 1921; Hennepin County Library, n.d.). Additionally, renovations inside the church included an upper balcony inside the east end of the sanctuary, and the remodeling and expanding of the interior chapel and chancel. The two-story 1921 addition was built flush with the west side of the 1911 church structure, matching the original elevation. Two brick chimneys, one to the south and one to the north, rise from where the original building and addition meet. During construction of the addition, a hipped-roof section of the original church was remodeled into a gabled roof and raised slightly. The 1921 addition meets the southern wall just past the quoined pilaster corner.

In 1928 more changes were made to the church, which included enlarging the sanctuary, “the chancel was beautified; social rooms were arranged above the chapel; the organ was electrified and otherwise modernized, and the entrance to the church was modified” (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2009, p. 8). The remodel was completed by Minneapolis contractor J. M. Bertels with two local architects from the Minnesota Builders Exchange, Carl J. Bard and A.C. Barnes. This 1928 remodel included modest alterations to the brick veneer of the church, plumbing, and electrical work (City of Minneapolis, 1928).

In 1962 the Parish Center was built to the west of the church building. These two buildings are linked by a brick, glass and metal-framed hyphen, but otherwise are two separate buildings. The surrounding area was modified to accommodate the Parish Center and the hyphen, including the
removal of some homes. Additionally, the alleyway that originally ran north to south along the western side of the church building was filled in by the hyphen to link the two buildings (see Attachments for maps and aerial views of the church before and after the Parish Center was built). The 1962 Parish Center was designed by Minneapolis architects, Armstrong and Schlichting. It provided much needed space for Sunday School rooms, new church offices, the Fireside Room fellowship hall, and the Carlsen Memorial Library (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2009).

At the same time, the St. Olaf Residence, Inc. was formed to start raising funds for the construction of a nursing home facility. A building was completed in 1964 also by Armstrong and Schlichting and today is linked to the north side of the Parish Center through an additional brick, glass and metal-framed hyphen. The St. Olaf Residence (Photograph 14) is a three-story building in keeping with the style of the Parish Center. As of 2017, both buildings began the process of transferring ownership from St. Olaf to Freedom Works, Inc., a non-profit program that works to rehabilitate men who have been incarcerated (Freedom Works Inc., 2021). The Parish Center now serves as their administrative offices and the St. Olaf Residence serves as a residence for the Post-Prison and Reentry Aftercare programs. Both the Parish Center and the St. Olaf Residence were built following the period of significance for St. Olaf. These buildings are both stand-alone structures, only connected through brick, glass and metal-framed hyphens that do not rely on the adjacent buildings for support.

Integrity
Measured in seven aspects, integrity enables a property to convey its significance. St. Olaf is significant for its association with broad patterns of Minneapolis history including Norwegian immigration, the representation of the community’s demographic changes within North Minneapolis, and effects of institutions on neighborhood development and growth. St. Olaf is significant within the Norwegian-American Lutheran social history of North Minneapolis. The construction of the church building in 1911 was part of the initial development of North Minneapolis between 1880 and 1920. This development was influenced by immigration (especially Norwegian), a trend that extended beyond Minneapolis to the state of Minnesota and to the broader Upper Midwest. To demonstrate this significance, St. Olaf retains all seven aspects of integrity, which include Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association.

Location: “Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred” (Andrus and Shrimpton 1990, p. 44). St. Olaf retains integrity of Location. It has been located at 2901 Emerson Avenue North in Minneapolis since its construction in 1911. The church’s location was a deliberate choice by the congregation to serve the largest population of Norwegian-American Lutherans in North Minneapolis.

Design: “Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property” (Andrus and Shrimpton 1990, p. 44). St. Olaf retains integrity of Design. The church was constructed in 1911 to provide a larger worship and gathering space for its congregation. Subsequent alterations and expansions during the period of significance continued to provide adequate worship and gathering spaces for the growing congregation. These alterations and expansions were completed in a
manner that enhanced the original design of the church and they do not distract from the form, plans, space, structure, or style of the 1911 structure. St. Olaf’s design also includes elements of Norwegian-American heritage, utilizing local Norwegian-American craftsmen, as well as the choice of style. Following the period of significance, a brick, glass, and metal-framed hyphen was added to the rear (west) façade of the church to link to the 1962 Parish Center. Although this hyphen abuts the western façade, it is masked by the overall massing of the historic church building and does not detract from the elements that make St. Olaf significant.

Setting: “Setting is the physical environment of a historic property” (Andrus and Shrimpton 1990, p. 45). St. Olaf retains integrity of Setting. It is situated within a portion of North Minneapolis that was home to immigrant and working-class families in an area made up of some of the oldest homes in Minneapolis as a whole. The area was home to many Norwegian-American households that helped build the church and support the Lutheran community around it. Although the country of origin of the immigrant community has changed over time, the overall setting of the neighborhood remains. Immigrant and working-class families remain the main demographic served by the church today. Service and assistance to newly arrived and underserved families was, and continues to be, a significant role of the church for the community. Even though the Parish Center and the St. Olaf Residence have slightly changed the way the property around the church appears, the church itself is still a highly recognizable neighborhood church surrounded by many of the original houses.

Materials: “Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property” (Andrus and Shrimpton 1990, p. 45). St. Olaf retains integrity of Materials. The brick veneer used to build the church remains the same and the original elements of the Norwegian-American church are still present as during the period of significance. Any alterations to the materials during the period of significance have been in-kind and in-keeping with the original design and construction of the building, maintaining the Gothic Revival Style.

Workmanship: “Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture of people during any given period in history or prehistory” (Andrus and Shrimpton 1990, p. 45). St. Olaf retains integrity of Workmanship. The building was built in a Gothic Revival Style, which was a popular style for church buildings between the 1860s and 1920s in Minnesota and the Twin Cities. The church still contains many elements of Norwegian-American and Lutheran art and craftsmanship including original paintings by August Klagstad and carved wood details in the balcony and sanctuary. The original church was constructed by the congregation itself, and many of the original elements can still be seen.

Feeling: “Feeling is a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time” (Andrus and Shrimpton 1990, p. 45). St. Olaf retains integrity of Feeling. Taken together, the physical features of St. Olaf evoke a feeling of an early ethnic church structure in North Minneapolis, dating to the period of significance. Maintenance and alterations to the property have insured original materials and significant features are preserved. Similar techniques and elements were used in the alterations made to the building to ensure the ability to clearly recognize it as a Lutheran church of Norwegian-American heritage.
St. Olaf’s Norwegian Lutheran Church  Hennepin County, MN
Name of Property  County and State

**Association**: “Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property” (Andrus and Shrimpton 1990, p. 45). Still located within an ethnically diverse immigrant neighborhood, St. Olaf retains integrity of Association through its continued use as a Lutheran church and through its mission to serve the local community members. Physical features still present include worship space with original Norwegian-American Lutheran artwork and an organ; large meeting spaces and classrooms designed to serve students and organizations of the congregation; and other spaces that can be used to further the church’s mission and focus on the community.

St. Olaf is significant for its association with broad patterns of Minneapolis history including Norwegian immigration, the representation of the North Minneapolis community, and effects of institutions on neighborhood development and growth. Its identity has evolved with time, but not at the cost of the integrity of its essential features. The identification of St. Olaf building as a significant neighborhood cornerstone, is still apparent.
8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

B. Removed from its original location

C. A birthplace or grave

D. A cemetery

E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

F. A commemorative property

G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION

SOCIAL HISTORY

ETHNIC HERITAGE—OTHER (Norwegian)
St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church

Period of Significance
1911 – 1962

Significant Dates
1911 – church was constructed
1919 – alterations and additions made to the church
1921 – alterations and additions made to the church
1928 – alterations and additions made to the church
1959 – removal of Norwegian from the name of the church
1962 – the LFC voted to merge with the American Lutheran Church

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Hendrickson, Harry (1911)
Moe, Peter Oliver (1921)
Bertels, J.M. (1928)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church (St. Olaf) is locally significant under Criterion A for the role it has played in developing the Norwegian-American ethnic heritage and social history of North Minneapolis. The church is significant for its association with broad patterns of Minneapolis history including Norwegian immigration, the representation of the North Minneapolis community, and effects of institutions on neighborhood development and growth. During the period of significance, this church reflected the values and ideals of the surrounding working-class community and was representative of a strong Norwegian-American heritage. It grew to be the largest Lutheran congregation within North Minneapolis because of the ideology it modeled including a free and democratic Norwegian-American Lutheran congregation and ecumenical community-based missions. St. Olaf was supported by the
St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church

Name of Property: St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church

County and State: Hennepin County, MN

Minneapolis-based Lutheran Free Church, which shared these values that were in opposition to the strong high church model of the Church of Norway. Today St. Olaf continues to support the surrounding North Minneapolis community and serve as a central pillar within a very diverse section of Minneapolis.

As an active Lutheran church today, it also meets National Register Criterion Consideration A for the significant role the church has played in the North Minneapolis community. The church worked throughout its period of significance (1911-1962) to support the surrounding community and represent the congregationalist ideals of the Lutheran Free Church. The vision of the St. Olaf congregation has remained constant throughout its history, and includes community ministry, Sunday School, and the Lutheran faith as it was supported by the local, and ethnically Norwegian, Lutheran Free Church. St. Olaf is significant at the local level for the role it has played in the social history and ethnic heritage of Norwegian-American Lutherans in North Minneapolis. The St. Olaf congregation remains an active community advocate and a source of stability for North Minneapolis. During the period of significance from when the church at 2901 Emerson Avenue North was built in 1911 until 1962 (when the Lutheran Free Church voted to join the American Lutheran Church), St. Olaf has represented and supported the North Minneapolis community’s social, religious, and ethnic heritage. The church retains excellent integrity of design, workmanship, materials, location, setting, feeling, and association.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Norwegian Immigration in Minnesota

Minnesota is known for its Scandinavian roots with Norwegian immigrants making up a large part of that tradition. Norwegians became the third largest ethnic group in Minnesota between 1825 and 1928, when many of the 850,000 Norwegians immigrating to the United States settled in the state. This created a center for Norwegian culture in the Upper Midwest (Qualey and Gjerde, 1981). Many of the first Norwegian settlements originated in Wisconsin in the 1830s, expanding and migrating to Minnesota by the 1850s. Those settling in the area wrote home describing the wonders of America. These letters were passed around from family to family and parish to parish creating an “America fever” in Norway (Qualey and Gjerde, 1981).

Newly arriving immigrants would initially travel to the settlements from where the letters had been sent, resulting in a three-stage chain migration of Norwegian immigration to Wisconsin and Minnesota. This is described well in Carlton C. Qualey and John A. Gjerde’s book, They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State’s Ethnic Groups:

In the first stage, families sailed from Norway to form a new settlement in, say, Wisconsin. From their new homes they wrote back to friends and relatives in their old parishes, encouraging others to join them. With high birth rates and the arrival of more and more people, the first-stage settlement area soon became too crowded. Newcomers then stayed only a short time before moving on to cheaper lands farther west – thus creating a second settlement... The third stage in the migration pattern came into being as others were drawn to the second settlement directly from...
St. Olaf’s Norwegian Lutheran Church

Norway by the need for workers on the frontier. Minnesota farmers received laborers they could trust by sending prepaid tickets to friends and relatives in Norway (Qualey and Gjerde, 1981, p. 222).

The chain migration process continued to repeat itself as more and more Norwegians came to the United States. Rural farmers and general workers made up the majority of those immigrating initially. They came to America believing their rural way of life, so loved in Norway, could be maintained in the United States without the risk of overpopulation and the major socioeconomic issues that existed at home. Many settled in rural areas, which allowed for Norwegian traditions to be maintained and provided a connection to the homeland. Within these traditions, the parish church became a central part of the community (Qualey and Gjerde, 1981). Often, settlements in Minnesota could trace their roots back to one or two villages in Norway. Lingering old world customs and use of specific dialects were some of the lasting consequences of the three-stage chain migration pattern of Norwegian immigrants. For example, Spring Grove Township, in Houston County, Minnesota was one of the earliest Norwegian settlements in the state and it clearly demonstrated the three-stage chain migration, as Qualey and Gjerde explain, “In spite of the fact that people from throughout Norway could eventually be found in Spring Grove, it retained traces of the Halling [Hallingdal, Norway] subculture into the 1930s. For three to four generations the language lingered, along with some old Norwegian agricultural customs” (1981, p. 234).

This large influx of Norwegian immigrants was supported by a central religious faith, most commonly Lutheran. As a result of the three-stage chain migration pattern, the local church served as the social and religious center of the immigrant community. Many of the early church congregations met in homes or rented spaces until enough money could be raised to purchase land and build a church building. Multiple small congregations were served by one Lutheran pastor, who traveled from settlement to settlement.

Establishment of the Lutheran Free Church Minneapolis

Norwegian Lutherans immigrating to the United States were raised under the Church of Norway (often referred to as the Norwegian State Church), an evangelical Lutheran tradition mandated by the Norwegian Constitution. In Norway, pastors were government appointees and members of the elite classes, as Rev. Clarence J. Carlsen (St. Olaf’s pastor from 1945 to 1959) explains, “The pastors were therefore government officials and as such were a part of the Norwegian official Class, which was in many respects very aristocratic and independent of the people whom the pastors were called upon to serve” (Carlsen, 1942, p. 13). Many immigrating to the United States disagreed with the strong governmental control of the Church of Norway and followed the teachings of two pietistic scholars, Hans Nielsen Hauge and Gisle Johnson. Hauge was a farmer’s son who felt “called of God to be a witness for Christ among his people” (Carlsen, 1942, p. 13). He became a Lutheran lay preacher in Norway dissenting from the government led Church of Norway and started a pietistic movement known as the Haugean movement. Similarly, Johnson, who was a theological professor at Royal University in Oslo, led what was known as the Johnsonian Spiritual Awakening. In this position, he influenced a number of new pastors toward Lutheran Pietism (Carlsen, 1942; Qualey and Gjerde, 1981; Monseth, 2004; AFLC, 2019).
These pietistic movements shaped the ideals of many immigrating Norwegians during the end of the 19th century. A “nationalistic political and cultural awakening” caused many to focus on their Norwegian heritage and cultural values and was not the reason for immigrating to the United States (Fevold, 1969). Instead, this valued heritage was maintained in the new country and is why Norwegian heritage is still a strong part of what shapes the Minnesotan cultural landscape today. As such, Norwegian-Americans in the Midwest did not turn away from the Lutheran faith, instead they molded it to fit their ideals, in a way that was not possible under the state church of Norway. This caused the establishment of dozens of new governing church bodies “distinguished by significant, if subtle, differences in their appropriation of their common religious tradition and their adaptation to American religious freedom” (Wengert, ed., 2017, p. 553). Most notably, divisions and mergers were seen between those that favored the Norwegian State Church ideals and those that favored the ideals of the Norwegian pietistic movement (Carlsen, 1942). All of this shaped the establishment and history of St. Olaf and its congregation, providing influential ideology that had a larger impact on the North Minneapolis community that still resonates today.

Trinity Church in South Minneapolis (the mother church of St. Olaf) was established under the original Scandinavian Augustana Synod, which later merged into the Conference of the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (“The Conference”). This governing church body came about via Chicago, where in 1848 Paul Anderson, a minister from the Franckean Synod of New York state, worked to form the English Synod of Northern Illinois. Originally this synod was made up of Anderson’s congregation as well as other Norwegian and Swedish ministers and their congregations (Grose, 2019). Soon, issues arose within the English Synod of Northern Illinois when the “English contingent” was not seen as practicing orthodox Lutheranism, resulting in the Norwegians and Swedes leaving to create the Scandinavian Augustana Synod (Grose, 2019). The Scandinavian Augustana Synod then created a school, Augsburg Seminary. Professor A. Weenaas came from Norway to run the school, originally located in Marshal, Wisconsin. In 1870, only a year after establishing the school, the two nationalities split to form the Norwegian Augustana Synod and the Swedish Augustana Synod, and the school remained with the Norwegians. As the Norwegian Augustana Synod grew, new disagreements arose amongst its leaders, mainly divided on issues of slavery. Due to these issues, Professor Weenaas along with other founding members left the synod and a large number of students followed them (Webber, 1991). Together they established The Conference and brought the school with them. Augsburg Seminary was then relocated to Minneapolis in 1872.

At the same time, the Norwegian Synod was established in 1853 in Madison, Wisconsin by J.W.C. Dietrichson an ordained clergyman from Norway. This synod was “most concerned with theological orthodoxy and preserving the practices of the Church of Norway” (Locating Lutheranism, n.d.). As this synod grew, they founded Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. The Norwegian Synod saw similar disagreements based on slavery as the Scandinavian Augustana Synod, causing a split in 1888 and the establishment of the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood. The Norwegian Synod merged with the United Church and Hauge’s Synod forming the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America in 1917.

As the Norwegian-American population grew in the Midwest, ideological beliefs continued to evolve. Trinity Church was heavily involved in some of these changes and began fostering daughter churches,
including St. Olaf to extend its reach and expand with the growing Norwegian-American population within greater Minneapolis. In February 1888, a meeting was held in Minneapolis to discuss the union of four of the most prominent church bodies in the Midwest: The Conference, the Norwegian Augustana Synod, the Hauge’s Synod, and the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood. This meeting resulted in a move towards unification with a goal of reducing the amount of ethnically Norwegian governing church bodies in the United States, and “faithfully adhering to the doctrines inherited from the mother-church of Norway” (Grose, 2019). A joint committee meeting was held in Eau Claire in August 1888, which drafted the articles of the union, including a constitution, and to clean up any differences between the four groups. In November 1888 in Scandinavia, Wisconsin an additional meeting was held with representatives from Norwegian Lutheran churches from Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota present. This meeting adopted the new union creating what was known as The United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (“The United Church”). The United Church adopted Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis as the theological seminary for this united governing church body. As the union was ratified by the individual governing church bodies, the Hauge Synod decided not to enter into the union. Ultimately The United Church was ratified in June 1890 as a union of the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood, The Conference, and the Norwegian Augustana Synod. The first meeting of the new governing church body took place at Trinity Church in South Minneapolis (Grose, 2019).

Decades after initial migration began, Norwegians immigrating around the turn of the century joined established Norwegian-Americans and began settling in cities; Minneapolis quickly became a hub of Norwegian migration within the United States (Qualey and Gjerde, 1981). This influx of Norwegian-American Lutherans into Minneapolis was encouraged by the relocation of Augsburg Seminary to the city. Theological scholars were called from Norway to come instruct at the new school. Sven Oftedal, who came to Minneapolis in 1873 at the age of 29, and Georg Sverdrup, who arrived in 1874 at the age of 26, were two of these immigrant scholars (Hansen, 1956; Monseth, 2004). Oftedal and Sverdrup brought with them a view of educating Christians that was based on the Haugean teachings centered around scripture and basic Christian doctrines with the church centered around evangelism (Monseth, 2004). With these men, Augsburg Seminary focused its scholarship on a democratic notion of education and, “in 1874 they proposed a three-part plan: first, train ministerial candidates; second, prepare future theological students; and third, educate the farmer, worker, and businessman” (Augsburg University, 2021). With the growing concentrations of Norwegian-Americans in Minneapolis, distinctive communities and neighborhoods developed centering around commercial districts, secular societies, and church congregations. “These institutional developments provided the framework for the Norwegian community that eased the adjustment to urban life when the major influx of immigrants occurred between 1880 and 1890” (Gjerde and Qualey, 2002, p. 26). The developing church congregations quickly became allied with the newly established governing church bodies.
Figure 1: Flow chart of Norwegian Lutheran Churches in North America developed by Kelly Wolf, MA, RPA (Carlsen, 1942; Fevold, 1969; ARDA, 2018; AFLC, 2019; Grose, 2019).
Underlying ideological disagreements within the governing church bodies revolved around what Rev. Carlsen describes as the “old tendency” (or “high church”) based in the principles of the Norwegian State Church and the “new tendency” (or “low church”) of the revival (or pietistic) movement. In Minneapolis, these disagreements came to a head soon after the establishment of the United Church and its link with Augsburg Seminary.

The “new tendency” followed in the footsteps of the Haugean spiritual awakening where lay preachers were called by God to serve their people and were members of the working class. Hauge himself was “a farmer’s son and comparatively uneducated” (Carlsen, 1942, p. 13). Many of the leaders of Augsburg Seminary at that time believed the United Church would place too much control over the school in line with the “old tendency” ideals. Augsburg Seminary leaders felt this transfer to the United Church was in breach of the articles of union and refused to complete the merge.

To support itself and break away from The United Church, an organization developed called Friends of Augsburg, which formally organized into the Lutheran Free Church (LFC) in 1897. Congregations under this new governing church body were meant to be, “entirely free and independent of each other and of the general organization” (Sverdrup, 1907). The leaders of the LFC felt the United Church was too much like the Church of Norway they had immigrated to the United States to get away from. This new governing church body would support a pietistic program of Norwegian-American Lutheranism with a focus on supporting the local congregation and promoting a “living” Christianity of evangelism. The “Fundamental Principles” set forth by the LFC were (1) the independence of the local congregations (congregationalism) and (2) a “vital Christian experience” evoking religious freedom, unique in the United States (Fevold, 1969, p. 138). The LFC’s commitment to congregationalism was what set it apart from other Norwegian Lutheran church bodies. An Augsburg professor in 1918 described the LFC’s mission as, “Our task is to work untiringly for living and free congregations. Awakening, spirit and life are of chief importance” (Fevold, 1969, p. 140). This was a very democratic ideal and representative of the traditional “low church” view.

Following the period of strife between Augsburg and the United Church, a more peaceful period followed as the LFC established itself as a leading church body amongst Norwegian-American Lutherans. Rev. Carlsen describes this,

_Incongruous as it may seem, the period was one of widespread spiritual awakening. Elderly folk still speak of the revival which took place in the [18]90’s. At the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of Augsburg, Professor Sverdrup said: ‘We have already seen beautiful harvest. The new springtime which has now come does not promise anything less, by the mercy of the Lord.’ The revival could not be traced to the work of any particular person or persons... There was something remarkably spontaneous about it all. The movement bore none of the marks of modern professional evangelism. There was no application of pressure to secure ‘results.’ Individuals would speak to other individuals about being reconciled to God... It is perhaps not too much to say that most Lutheran congregations founded by Norwegians in America enjoy greater liberty and autonomy today than would have been theirs had it not been for the struggle in the [18]90’s and the impact which it made upon subsequent developments. Evangelism and witnessing_
Changes to the LFC began following World War I, particularly regarding the issue of language. Up until this point, the primary language for the church body was Norwegian. Maintaining the Norwegian language was of particular importance to the church leaders; however, they were feeling pressured from the “powerful Americanizing influence of the public schools” (Fevold, 1969, p. 151). The existing population of church members included first generation Norwegian immigrants who spoke mainly Norwegian, as well as second-generation Norwegian-Americans who were bi-lingual, speaking English with each other and Norwegian with their families. In an effort to maintain both populations and stay true to the Norwegian Lutheran heritage, the LFC began supporting Sunday Schools taught in both languages and adding an English language section to its Sunday School newspaper, Barnets Ven (The Child’s Friend). Many of the initial English language efforts were influenced by the youth of the church. An effort was made to maintain the native Norwegian language as well as bring the church’s teachings to a more Americanized audience. By 1926, the annual meeting of the LFC was given in both Norwegian and English.

In 1927, a model congregational constitution for the LFC was drafted. Two years later, the drafted handbook was brought to the local congregations for adoption. Prior to this, the governing church body operated more as a movement favoring independent congregations and had not officially adopted a constitution that could be seen as too restricting. The model constitution that was ultimately developed contained three sections that directed each congregation including:

(1) confessed that the Holy Scriptures ‘are the Word of God, revealed for the salvation of man, and hence the only source and rule of faith, doctrine and life’; (2) accepted and adhered to the three ecumenical creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, and Luther’s Small Catechism; and (3) subscribed to the LFC’s ‘Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work’ (Fevold, 1969, p. 148).

The model constitution was again revised in 1947, changing only slightly from the version adopted in 1929.

Attempts had been made by the United Church to merge with the LFC. In 1910, a meeting of committees to discuss the merger was proposed. The LFC created the Committee on Cooperation to meet with the United Church committee. A merger was not achieved at this time, however, and the LFC continued to work toward “brotherly understanding and cooperation in practical church work” (Fevold, 1969, p. 176). Soon after, in 1917, the United Church merged with the Norwegian Synod and the Hauge Synod to form the United Norwegian Lutheran Church (changing its name to the Evangelical Lutheran Church or the ELC in 1946). The LFC joined a cooperative organization called the National Lutheran Council as a way to support Norwegian-American Lutherans who were headed off to war during World War I. This furthered the ecumenical mission of “brotherly understanding and cooperation” while still maintaining the
independent LFC governing church body. A movement was started in 1928 by a young Augsburg professor, Dr. Lars Qualben, in favor of merging the LFC with the ELC. The LFC stood firm in its interest in cooperation, not a merger, and the movement did not go far; but it represented the changing feelings of the young people within the congregations.

In 1942 Augsburg separated into a College and a Seminary. In the following decade, three congregational referendums were passed by the LFC in 1955, 1957, and 1961 that paved the way for a merger into a national governing church body. The final referendum allowed the LFC to approve the terms of a merger with The American Lutheran Church at the annual conference of 1962. At that conference, the LFC adopted Articles of Agreement, which provided for the transfer of all the congregations, clergy, theological professors, foreign missionaries, institutions, assets, liabilities, programs, and commitments of the LFC to The American Lutheran Church. During the merger Augsburg Seminary became part of the unified theological seminary of The American Lutheran Church (ALC), merging with Luther Seminary in St. Paul. The official merger between the LFC and the ALC took place on February 1, 1963. By May 1, 1963, 277 of the 328 local congregations that made up the LFC took part in the merger; St. Olaf was one of them (Fevold, 1969). Those local churches that resisted the merger formed the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC), which was founded in 1962 by Rev. John P. Strand. In 1988, The ALC merged again to become the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) (ARDA, 2018).

North Minneapolis Historic Context

Initial settlement in North Minneapolis consisted of German and Scandinavian immigrants, followed by Eastern European Jews in the 19th and early 20th century and then Black Americans in the middle of the 20th century. “Black Americans are not only a racial but also an ethnically distinct group within American society, having well defined cultural characteristics that reflect a synthesis of African and European heritages” (Taylor, 1981, p. 73). This part of the city was never home to the wealthiest residents; however, it has proven to be an important urban community with some of the oldest housing stock. Following the initial settlement, solid, middle-class neighborhoods began to develop that consisted of second-generation immigrants and American-born residents. Entire neighborhoods retained their ethnic identity into the middle of the 20th century (Pratt, 1925; Peterson and Zellie, 1998). As evidenced through demographic studies, Norwegian-Americans tended to stick within a homogenous Scandinavian bubble (Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish), associating very little with members of other ethnic groups outside of school or work until the second half of the 20th century (Gjerde and Qualey, 2002).

North Minneapolis developed rapidly following the Civil War. In the 1880s an economic boom brought a frenzy of railroad construction and settlement to the upper Midwest. Dozens of prairie towns were established, and immigrants flooded the area. The Twin Cities followed suit as populations rose and neighborhoods developed (Peterson and Zellie, 1998). In North Minneapolis, the boom brought rapid subdivision of land and the construction of residential neighborhoods. Most of North Minneapolis was built between 1880 and 1920.

The first Germans and Scandinavians in North Minneapolis arrived in the 1870s and established businesses around Plymouth and Washington Avenues. Homes were built between West Broadway and
36\textsuperscript{th} Avenues North, close to the river industries. As industries began to change and spread up and down the river, the neighborhood changed from working class to solidly middle class. As the working-class Scandinavians improved economically, they moved to a section of North Minneapolis between Plymouth and Broadway Avenues North and then to a section from 26\textsuperscript{th} Avenue North to 44\textsuperscript{th} Avenue North. By the 1920 census there were 2,326 people identified as born in Norway living in North Minneapolis and 16,389 Norwegian-Americans in the city as a whole. In \textit{A Study of Community Conditions: North District}, produced by the Women’s Co-operative Alliance, Inc. in 1925, North Minneapolis was still predominantly Scandinavian, a population that was more economically prosperous compared to the newly arriving Slavic and Jewish populations. At this time, everything north of 44\textsuperscript{th} Avenue North was still considered rural (Pratt, 1925).

Just like in the small rural villages where many of the first Norwegians settled, churches in North Minneapolis became the center of the developing neighborhoods helping to maintain ethnic heritage and uphold cultural values. As the population of North Minneapolis grew and prospered, ethnically identified churches grew and continued to support and serve their communities. By 1925 the \textit{Study of Community Conditions} noted there were sixty-two churches in the North District and, “Many of [the churches] are still national churches, Swedish, Norwegian, and German, where one or all services are conducted in the foreign tongue” (Pratt, 1925). Of the sixty-two churches present in the North District, four churches identified as ethnically Norwegian in 1925; as detailed in the following table (Pratt, 1925; Peterson and Zellie, 1998).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church Name</th>
<th>Date Established</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Mother Church</th>
<th>Original Synod</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Membership in 1925</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gethsemane Lutheran</td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>47\textsuperscript{th} and Colfax Avenues North</td>
<td>Our Savior’s Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Norwegian Synod</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran</td>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Emerson and 29\textsuperscript{th} Avenues North</td>
<td>Trinity Church</td>
<td>The Conference</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zion Lutheran</td>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Lyndale and 26\textsuperscript{th} Avenues North</td>
<td>Our Savior’s Lutheran Church</td>
<td>Norwegian Synod</td>
<td></td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethlehem Norwegian Danish Methodist</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Emerson and 30\textsuperscript{th} Avenues North</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the churches listed in Table 1 were located within North Minneapolis and served the growing and migrating Norwegian-American population, however, there were ideological differences. St. Olaf was established under The Conference governing church body, representing the ideology of a free and living congregation that would become the basis of the LFC. Gethsemane and Zion, along with their mother church, were members of the Norwegian Synod, which followed more closely with the teachings of the Church of Norway, representing a strong governing church body ideal. The difference in ideologies between these governing church bodies may have also represented economic differences in the North Minneapolis neighborhood just as they would have in Norway. Zion, for example, maintained a reputation.

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of wealth into the mid-20th century, while St. Olaf was more representative of the larger working-class population of North Minneapolis (Sue Quist, personal communication, March 19, 2020).

In the case of all three of these Lutheran churches, each began as a mission out of a mother church in South Minneapolis to serve a less developed part of the city and follow the expanding and migrating Norwegian-American population. As St. Olaf’s congregation grew, it became an integral part of the Norwegian-American Lutheran fabric that defined North Minneapolis and what it meant to be separate from the Church of Norway. This is clear through the much larger population of St. Olaf as compared to the other ethnically Norwegian churches in 1925.

**Minnesotan-Norwegian Ethnic Identity**

Because of the large Scandinavian population in Minnesota, the state developed a strong Lutheran presence by the end of the twentieth century; with over one-third of Minnesotans identifying as Lutheran in 1990 (Chapman, 2000). It was the local ethnic Lutheran church that provided the means for success within a community, serving as the central pillar that anchored all other social endeavors. Lutheran churches “frequently formed the conduit of ethnic life and group identity and mediated participation in the wider spheres of business, government, and education” (Chapman, 2000, p. 165). Many of the early debates within the various governing church bodies are directly tied to ethnic identity. The individual ethnic church created a space to foster ethnic identity through two main ways: language and tradition (Thaler, 1997).

As the Scandinavian populations grew into first, second, and third generation populations, they slowly began to assimilate into the American melting pot. Ethnically Norwegian populations were slow to assimilate due to the strong bond with their neighborhood church, which continued to use the Norwegian language well into the 20th century. As seen in Minneapolis, it was one of the prerogatives of the LFC to meet their members where they were most comfortable, i.e., through the Norwegian language. In the book, *The Lutheran Free Church: A Fellowship of American Lutheran Congregations 1897-1963* by Eugene L. Fevold, Augsburg Professor J.L. Nydahl was quoted from an article (translated from Norwegian) in 1911:

> ‘Obviously English will gradually come into use, and one ought not to resist that development. However, one of our major responsibilities is to reach out to our countrymen and gather them around God’s Word in their own language. And as has been said, Norwegian is the language of the heart for most of them. It is the language in which they have learned the catechism, and by means of it they can best express their innermost and deepest feelings and thoughts. This is still the case with many who have grown up in this country’ (Fevold, 1969, p. 150).

The focus at this time, was on the younger generation, born in the United States. The public school system was very influential in the Americanization process, so English quickly became the primary language. LFC congregations, including St. Olaf, wanted to maintain this population of churchgoers and not lose them to other English-speaking churches or denominations. To accomplish this, opportunities were provided to both use English in Sunday Schools and youth church meetings, but also to provide opportunities to learn Norwegian through the continued use of it during worship and through classes. As
the public schools influenced use of the English language in church, so to did the use of the Norwegian language in church influence public schools. Up until the 1970s, Minneapolis public schools taught the Norwegian language. In an interview with Sue Quist, St. Olaf member and wife of the current pastor Rev. Dale Hulme, she described three generations of women in her family, all members of St. Olaf. Norwegian heritage was strong in her family but began to dissipate as the generations became more Americanized; for example, her grandmother spoke Norwegian, while her mother was bilingual, however spoke mainly English. Sue herself can use a few phrases of Norwegian and remembers it being taught at North High School (Fevold, 1969; Sue Quist, personal communication, March 19, 2020).

Norwegian heritage can also be seen through a tradition of art and music, much of which revolved around the church. These churches feature elaborately carved wooden altars and folk-art details, as well as formal altar paintings, such as the paintings seen in the St. Olaf sanctuary painted by August Klagstad, a well-known Norwegian-American religious artist. In the book *Norwegians in Minnesota*, Jon Gjerde and Carlton C. Qualey describe, “Even more than in the fine arts, Norwegian Americans have placed a great cultural imprint on Minnesota by the transplantation of folk art and folk music traditions…Norwegian roots were usually apparent, whether they lay in the artistic depiction of religious forms or in the revival of Norwegian Lutheran music” (Gjerde and Qualey, 2002, p. 54-57). The local community church really facilitated and fostered Norwegian heritage, and it was a priority of Lutheran ministers that served a predominantly Norwegian-American congregation to maintain that ancestral heritage well into the 20th century.

The retention of traditions carried from Norway for a time became more pronounced as immigration continued, and the community grew in wealth and influence, and founded institutions to facilitate the development of a Norwegian American culture. It was in the early 20th rather than the mid-19th century that Norwegian ethnic consciousness seemed most pronounced (Gjerde and Qualey, 2002, p. 58).

By the 1890s, “Norwegians were the second largest group of foreign-born residents in Minneapolis; Swedes were first and Germans third” (Locating Lutheranism, n.d.). This strong Scandinavian heritage developed into a prevailing ethnic identity in Minneapolis that continues into today, even though the cultural fabric of the city has drastically expanded. Sentiments such as one from Sue Quist describes Norwegian and Lutheran heritage in Minneapolis as being “one and the same,” come out of this long Scandinavian tradition. Quist also remarked that some of the elder and most conservative Norwegian-American members of the St. Olaf congregation have been the first to open their arms to underrepresented communities over the years; continuing the tradition of a free and ecumenical faith.

The prevailing Norwegian-American heritage continued to dominate the cultural landscape of St. Olaf congregation until the 1960s, when major community unrest and upheaval took place resulting in a more inclusive congregation. In the early part of the 20th century, European Jews began leaving North Minneapolis and migrating out of the city. “By 1910 Blacks were beginning to move from Seven Corners area into North Side neighborhoods being vacated by Jews” (Taylor, 1981, p. 78). The Black American population boomed during World War I as people moved north to meet the demands of war-time labor.
shortages. This was repeated following World War II. Due to this influx of people, restrictive housing covenants were put into place by 1920 containing Black Americans to the near North Side and Seven Corners neighborhoods of Minneapolis. “Urban renewal, Model Cities planning, and freeway construction displaced many residents of these Twin Cities’ restricted areas in the late 1950s and early 1960s… Between 1950 and 1970 the Black population in Minnesota increased from 13,775 to 34,868, a gain of 153%. Minneapolis experienced a record 436% increase in its Black population” (Taylor, 1981, p. 84). The extreme growth in population combined with national events that “underscored the disparity in opportunity accorded Black Minnesotans” came to a head in the Twin Cities on Labor Day weekend in 1968 (Taylor, 1981, p. 85). Minneapolis saw thousands of dollars in property damage and personal injury, although not to the extreme as in cities like Detroit, Los Angeles, or New York.

Ultimately, the strong ethnically Scandinavian pockets in Minneapolis were influenced by a combination of civil unrest and a pressure to assimilate into an American national identity that spoke English. This fostered an openness to invite an increasingly diverse community to worship, not just those who were of Scandinavian heritage.

Even after the transition into the English language was fully realized at St. Olaf by the end of the 1920s; the ethnic traditions still thrived through celebrations of food, sharing of stories, music, and other traditions. Sue Quist described that now there is much more sharing of culture within the community and the current congregation includes members that are new to Minneapolis that do not necessarily understand the “Norwegian thing,” but they still embrace it (Sue Quist, personal communication, March 19, 2020). The pressure to assimilate was solidified at St. Olaf when the congregation voted to remove Norwegian from its name in 1959. It was further expanded to the greater Minneapolis Lutheran population when the LFC voted to joined into a new national governing church body at their 1962 annual conference. The merger with the American Lutheran Church created a new mission of bringing together small ethnic churches to create a strong American Lutheranism, producing a view of one people rather than multiple ethnic groups.

**Early History of St. Olaf’s Norwegian Lutheran Congregation**

In 1868, Trinity Lutheran Congregation was established in South Minneapolis as part of the original Scandinavian Augustana Synod which later aligned with The Conference governing church body. As The Conference joined The United Church, Trinity Lutheran broke away to follow Augsburg Seminary and the Lutheran Free Church. A church building was built for the Trinity Lutheran Congregation in 1869 at Tenth Avenue South and Fourth Street. In 1875 Professor Oftedal from Augsburg Seminary was called to serve as the assistant pastor of Trinity Lutheran, becoming the main pastor after a few months. As many Norwegian families became more established, they began to migrate outwards and those that moved to North Minneapolis could no longer get to Trinity. The need for an independent church congregation that could provide regular services in North Minneapolis was so great that the St. Olaf’s Norwegian Lutheran congregation was organized as a mission church on February 10, 1874. Professor Oftedal facilitated the organization of St. Olaf and many histories of the congregation regard him as the “father of St. Olaf” (Helland and Carlsen, 1949). St. Olaf was the first congregation to serve Norwegian Lutherans in North Minneapolis.
The beginning of St. Olaf's was not completely smooth. Very few records exist from the first decades of the congregation’s life. In 1877 discussions were started to establish a Sunday School to serve the fledgling congregation’s young people. For the next thirty years services were held in homes and other places of worship with a series of pastors serving the congregation.

The first church building owned by the St. Olaf’s congregation was built at Fourteenth Avenue North and Bryant Avenue in 1886. It was a small wood-framed building, thirty feet by forty-eight feet, with a chancel measuring ten feet by sixteen feet designed in a simple Gothic Revival Style with a gable roof, a central steeple, and gothic arched windows. This early church building quickly became too small for the growing congregation, therefore, a lot was purchased at Sixteenth Avenue North and Dupont Avenue in 1889 where a parsonage was built (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2009). The congregation at this time consisted of first-generation Norwegian-Americans and newly arriving Norwegian immigrants settling in a very rural North Minneapolis. These families found work within the early industry in that area. A new church building was constructed at Sixteenth and Dupont in a similar wood-framed Gothic Revival Style. It featured a central steeple and a simple spire topped with an 8-sided pediment and a gothic arched window over the main entrance (see Attachments for an image of this church).

In 1901 Pastor Elias P. Harbo was called as pastor of the growing congregation. He started at the church in May 1902. Pastor Harbo was considered a founding father of the LFC. Prior to joining the St. Olaf congregation, he had served as the first president of the LFC and in 1902 he was in the middle of his second term as president (first from 1897 to 1899, then again from 1901 to 1903, and 1907 to 1909). He had served for the last twelve years at churches in La Crosse, Wisconsin and Duluth, Minnesota (Helland and Carlsen, 1949). Harbo was born in Norway in 1856, immigrating to the United States in 1880. Under his tutelage, the St. Olaf congregation grew in numbers, however, the population became increasingly divided geographically. Many of the first-generation Norwegian immigrants were now expanding their families and moving further north, creating a need for a new church location. Since the church had become a central pillar of the existing Norwegian Lutheran population of North Minneapolis, St. Olaf needed to find out how best to serve them. The problem developed into a discussion of whether the congregation should build a new church or enlarge the current one. In 1907, a building fund and committee had been started as a joint effort between the Ladies’ Aid Society and the congregation. More space was particularly desired for auxiliary societies and Sunday School.

In April [1909] one of these committees submitted the following report: ‘After mature and conscientious deliberation, putting aside all personal considerations and thinking only of the future welfare of the congregation, the committee is agreed to recommend to the congregation that it suggest to the Ladies’ Aid and the Young People’s Societies that they buy a lot between Twentieth (West Broadway) and Twenty-First Avenues and Emerson and Fremont Avenues North’ (Helland and Carlsen, 1949, p. 37).

A new lot was purchased on September 7, 1909, on what is now the 2900 block of North Emerson Avenue. After supporting the congregation through this first step of moving, Pastor Harbo submitted his resignation to accept a position at Augsburg Seminary as a professor of theology. After serving many years as an
influential member of the Norwegian Lutheran community, Pastor Harbo died in Minneapolis in 1927 (Minnesota Historical Society, n.d.). Pastor O.H. Sletten was called by the St. Olaf congregation to replace him. Pastor Sletten had previously worked at the Blanchardville Parish in Blanchardville, Wisconsin (Helland and Carlsen, 1949). He was born in Kenyon, Minnesota to Norwegian-born parents. His father was a farmer. In 1902, Reverend Sletten married his wife Inga in her hometown of Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Inga was also born to Norwegian parents (Wisconsin Historical Society, n.d.). Sletten started at St. Olaf on the first Sunday of Advent, 1909. Concurrently, work on the excavation of a basement for the new church had begun, with much of the work being completed free of charge by members of the congregation. The basement was fifty-six by eighty feet and housed an assembly room, a dining room and kitchen, and a few smaller rooms (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2009). Following the move to the new church building on Emerson and 29th Avenues North, the old church was sold. In 1911, the church on Sixteenth and Dupont Avenues North was moved to Irving and fifteenth Avenues North by Pratt House Moving and Wrecking then altered for use as a store and dwelling. It was ultimately demolished in 1969 (Hennepin County Library, n.d.). This is where North High School is located today.

The 1911 Church Building – Emerson and 29th Avenues North
By 1910 a resolution had been passed within the congregation to formally become part of the LFC. Since 1898 St. Olaf had been associated with the LFC. It was not until 1926 that the majority of associated congregations formally adopted the “Fundamental Principles and Rules for Work” of the LFC (Fevold, 1969). The ideology the LFC represented was at the core of what the St. Olaf congregation valued and practiced.

Other major changes for St. Olaf took place between 1909 and 1911, including holding worship services in the English language. Up until 1910, the main language spoken amongst the congregation was Norwegian. The adoption of the English language was heavily influenced by the younger Norwegian-American families within the congregation and was slowly introduced at weddings, funerals, and other special occasions (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2009; Pastor Emeritus Tom Moen and Ruth Moen, daughter of the late Pastor Clarence J. Carlsen, personal communication, December 15, 2020). After a slow introduction, the Board of Deacons formally decided to begin having Sunday evening services in English.

By Easter Sunday, 1910, the basement of the new church was nearly finished. On the first Sunday after Easter an opening service was held. Church services then alternated between the old church at Sixteenth and Dupont and the new church basement at 29th and Emerson with services at the old church ending on November 1, 1910. A church building fund was started in January 1911 and construction of the superstructure of the church on Emerson started in February. Despite the new church representing a younger community that spoke English with their children and Norwegian with their parents, many of the Norwegian traditions still prevailed. These community-oriented traditions can be seen, for example, in the congregation’s choice of architect. Born in Norway in 1852, Harry Hendrickson immigrated to the United States around 1881. Once in Minnesota, he developed a strong career as a carpenter and tradesman, working for Pike and Cook, a well-known contracting company in the city of Minneapolis at the turn of the century (Hennepin County Library, 1897). By 1897, Hendrickson had been elected as a delegate to the Trades and Labor Council for the Carpenter’s Local Union No.7 (Minneapolis Star Tribune, 1897).
He died on June 19, 1918 in Minneapolis (Minnesota Historical Society, n.d.). Martin M. Lee was the building supervisor and construction was completed by members of the congregation (City of Minneapolis, 1911). Martin Lee was also a carpenter and laborer in Minneapolis, as well as a member of the St. Olaf congregation. He was born in Norway in 1853 and immigrated to the United States in 1890. Lee died on October 26, 1939 in Minneapolis (Federal Census Records, n.d.; Star Tribune, 1939, p. 7). The new church featured original artwork created by August Klagstad, a well-known Norwegian-American religious artist. Klagstad was born in Norway in 1866, immigrating to the United States with his family as a child. He studied art at the Northern Indiana Normal School (now Valparaiso University) and worked at art studios in Chicago, New York, and Boston. His first altar painting was completed in Manistique, Michigan, where he grew up. Eventually, Klagstad settled with his wife and children in Minneapolis where he devoted his career to painting altars and other church furnishings with his two sons. August Klagstad died in 1949 (SCHS, 2016).

Hendrickson’s choice for design likely came from the old church on Sixteenth and Dupont, as it was built in a similar style. That church was a simple Gothic Revival, rectangular shaped building with a central front bell tower. The new church had many upgraded features in addition to being a much larger building. The exterior was constructed of brick instead of wood and there were many more decorative elements common to the Gothic Revival Style, and popular in church design at that time. Ultimately, the finishing details put inside the church and the utilization of the local Norwegian-American network in Minneapolis for craftsmen allowed the church to be “physically symbolic of its role as the keeper of culture and of continuity with the past” (Ostergren, 1981, p. 229-230).

St. Olaf’s 135th Anniversary book notes that on Sunday, September 3, 1911, the new church was finally dedicated. At the time, the St. Olaf congregation had 600 members and the new church had a capacity of 900 people. The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune from September 3, 1911, reported,

At the dedication services today at 3 p.m. the Rev. P. Winter, president of the Lutheran Free Church will preach the dedication sermon. Addresses will also be delivered by Prof. E. P. Harboe [sic] of Augsburg seminary and Prof. S. Odland, D. D., Christiania [Oslo], Norway. The services at 7:45 p.m. will be conducted in the English language (Minneapolis Sunday Tribune, 1911, p. 18).

By the time the church had been built, the St. Olaf congregation had established itself as a major influence within North Minneapolis and the Norwegian-American Lutheran community. In 1913, the annual conference of the LFC was held at the new St. Olaf church. Synod representatives and leaders from all over the world came to the conference. As the Minneapolis Morning Tribune reported on May 31, 1913,

One of the more important topics which the conference will consider is whether a more extensive mission policy shall be adopted and missions established in China... The delegates will be provided lodgings in homes of members of St. Olaf’s church. Women of the congregation will conduct a cafeteria in the church basement for their convenience. The church, which has a membership of about 500, is one of the largest of the denomination. Its pastor, Rev. O. H. Sletten, is treasurer of the national home mission board.
Services for the LFC conference had been previously held at the St. Olaf church in 1904, when it was still located on Dupont Avenue (The Minneapolis Tribune, 1904). St. Olaf was by this time established as a central pillar for the North Minneapolis Norwegian-American community, providing for both spiritual and social needs when no other opportunities existed. Its representation of the LFC ideology only strengthened its position within the community, providing for a free and independent Lutheran church and an ecumenical drive within the community at large. The following years were very prosperous for the St. Olaf congregation, and it is clear that the community shared these values. Its membership grew from 600 to 900 by 1920 then to 1,400 just five years later.

Pastor Sletten was elected president of the LFC during the governing church body’s annual conference held in 1920, while continuing to work with St. Olaf (Minneapolis Morning Tribune, 1920). That December, a request had been submitted by the Young People’s Society and the Sunday School teachers at St. Olaf for more space to better facilitate a growing population (Helland and Carlsen, 1949). Building alterations were completed in 1919, 1921, and again in 1928 to meet the needs of a continually growing congregation and included the expansion of the sanctuary and a sizable addition to the rear of the church (see Attachments). Alterations and additions completed in 1921 were designed by architect Peter Oliver Moe assisted by builder Fred Wick, a choice which continued to represent and support a strong connection to the Norwegian-American community in Minneapolis (Hennepin County Library, n.d.; City of Minneapolis, 1921). Architect Peter Oliver Moe was born in 1879 in Norway, immigrating to the United States in 1902. He ran his own architecture firm in Minneapolis through the 1920s, then moved to Washington D.C. where he worked for the Treasury Department. He died in Virginia in 1960. Fred Wick was also born in Norway in 1882, immigrating to the United States in 1903. He was a carpenter and building contractor in Minneapolis, where he lived until his death in 1953 (Minnesota Historical Society, n.d.; Federal Census, 1940).

Alterations and additions completed in 1928 continued to favor local Minneapolis craftsmen, but expanded to include a larger network. These “interior alterations” were overseen by local Minneapolis contractor J. M. Bertels who worked with two local architects from the Minnesota Builders Exchange, Carl J. Bard and A.C. Barnes (Hennepin County Library, n.d.; City of Minneapolis, 1928). The Minnesota Builders Exchange is a non-profit organization that was first established in 1888 and is still serving the community today.

In the following years, St. Olaf continued to grow. Associate pastors were called to assist Pastor Sletten in his work of serving the congregation. In 1945 Pastor Sletten resigned after serving the congregation for thirty-five years. Soon after, he became ill and passed away on January 4, 1946 (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2009). He was 67 years old, survived by his wife, Inga, and his children and grandchildren (Minneapolis Star Journal, 1946). Pastor Clarence J. Carlsen was then called, with his first service on September 16, 1945. Pastor Carlsen had twenty-seven years of experience, nineteen of which were at his previous parish, Zion Lutheran Church in Minot, North Dakota (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2009). Carlsen was born in Wisconsin to Norwegian-born parents, moving to Minneapolis to attend Augsburg College. He married his wife, Agnes, at St. Olaf mother church Trinity Lutheran in South Minneapolis and taught at Augsburg Academy, a school for boys, before becoming a pastor. Throughout his career, Pastor Carlsen continued...
St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church
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to have a strong connection with Minneapolis and the LFC, maintaining a position on the board of Trustees at Augsburg College and Seminary, although he was reluctant to leave his congregation in Minot. He was strongly encouraged by the LFC to come back to Minneapolis, however, to serve St. Olaf, its largest congregation by that time (Pastor Emeritus Tom Moen and Ruth Moen, daughter of the late Pastor Clarence J. Carlsen, personal communication, December 15, 2020).

Under Pastor Carlsen’s leadership, the St. Olaf congregation continued their missionary work within the local community. Carlsen was remembered by his daughter, Ruth, as an excellent preacher and teacher who really enjoyed visiting people in the community and extending an ecumenical spirit to everyone. Many new church social circles were formed during his tenure and the congregation grew steadily. As the community grew, many young families started moving out of the city, just as their grandparents had done. Pastor Carlsen noticed and assisted the St. Olaf congregation in expanding to include services at the Lincoln Elementary School located in Brooklyn Park at 62nd Avenue North and West Broadway. Starting in 1951, these services allowed Norwegian Lutherans in Crystal, New Hope, Brooklyn Park, and Brooklyn Center to be served (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2009). Pastor Carlsen conducted these new services until a permanent pastor could be secured for a new congregation, which became First Lutheran. This type of home mission was encouraged by the LFC during the post-World War II period and embraced by the St. Olaf congregation, just as Trinity had done in the 1870s.

Established congregations were to be encouraged to assume responsibility for the unchurched in various ways: by ‘mothering’ a home mission congregation, by establishing a branch Sunday school, and by supplying leadership and financial assistance whenever possible. Attention should be given to work among minority groups, and the elimination of overlapping work with other Lutheran bodies should be striven for (Fevold, 1969, p. 241).

The home missions were focused on the Midwest, where 87% of “its baptized membership lived” in the 1950s (Fevold, 1969, p. 243).

Improvements to the church continued, and by 1951, the pipe organ at St. Olaf church was badly in need of repair. The congregation chose to buy a new organ in favor of making expensive repairs. The congregation chose, “a basic two manual pipe organ with three manual stops from the Moller Organ Company. It took approximately eighteen months for the organ to be built and installed, at a cost of $17,000” (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2009, p. 9). The new organ was played for the first time on Thanksgiving Day, 1952. Other improvements were made to the church during the late 1950s, including repointing the brick exterior, painting the interior throughout, installing new lights in the sanctuary, and the contracting and installation of new pews.

By 1957 the St. Olaf congregation numbered about 1,900 people. As the Minneapolis Tribune wrote on January 1, 1957,

*The St. Olaf congregation with its 1,900 members is about as closely identified with Minneapolis and its history as any church in town, parishioners pointed out proudly... The development of St.*

Section 8 page 30
The strength of St. Olaf is tied to its leaders and the ideology of the LFC. Three of St. Olaf’s pastors are considered influential leaders within the Lutheran Free Church and were also influential within the history of the church itself. From the start of the period of significance in 1911, the congregation completed the building on Emerson and 29th Avenues N., and Rev. Elias P. Harbo had just resigned as pastor, after guiding them toward the establishment of the current church building. Harbo is considered a founding father of the LFC, serving three terms as president and one as vice-president. Rev. O.H. Sletten was the next pastor to serve the congregation and guided the St. Olaf congregation through major growth; so much so that expansions were needed within the first 10 years of it being located on Emerson. During his thirty-five-year tenure at St. Olaf, Rev. Sletten served once as president of the LFC, once as vice-president, and once as secretary. When Rev. Clarence J. Carlsen took up the call as pastor of St. Olaf Church in 1945 the congregation was strongly interwoven with the surrounding North Minneapolis community. During his tenure, Rev. Carlsen continued to foster the relationship St. Olaf had with the surrounding North Minneapolis community and the congregation continued to grow. During that time, he served once as vice-president of the LFC and was considered an influential parish pastor. He also wrote many articles about the history of the LFC and translated much of the church’s early documents and articles written by the founders from Norwegian into English. All three of these men are representative of the St. Olaf congregation and were there to guide the church in unique ways during the period of significance. Their guiding presence only served to enhance the history and significance of the church on Emerson.

The Modern Church

After fourteen years of service to the congregation of St. Olaf, Pastor Carlsen passed away suddenly on September 9, 1959. Everyone mourned his loss, and during the funeral, the church was overflowing with people both from the church and the greater North Minneapolis community. Following Carlsen’s death, a call was made to Pastor Howard J. Sortland, pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church in Seattle, Washington. Previously, Pastor Sortland had served at a parish in Mora, Minnesota. He accepted the call from St. Olaf in 1960 (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2009). Sortland was born in Litchville, North Dakota to American-born parents and Norwegian-born grandparents, where his father managed a hardware store. After serving in the Army during World War II, Sortland came to Minneapolis, Minnesota to attend college at Augsburg (Federal Census, 1930). Despite the great building activity and missionary expansions led by Pastor Carlsen in the 1950s, there was still a need for more space to conduct Sunday School and other activities as the congregation had grown to 1,900 people by the end of the decade.
As Pastor Sortland was beginning his tenure at St. Olaf, the LFC was negotiating a merger with the ALC. At the 1962 conference of the LFC, they voted in favor of merging with the American Lutheran Church. Prior to this conference, various committees working together drew up the “Articles of Agreement” that outlined the transfer.

In recommending acceptance...[President] Stensvagg characterized [the merger] as ‘fair and generous,’ stating that ‘they provide a strong setting for our missions and institutions with new and open doors, and insure for our congregations freedom to govern their own affairs and the privilege to participate in an exciting world-wide outreach for Christ’ (Fevold, 1969, p. 296).

The following year, the St. Olaf congregation voted with other congregations to become affiliated with the newly formed ALC governing church body which in turn became part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 1988. Changing demographics within North Minneapolis in the decades prior to and after the ELCA merger brought new challenges to the St. Olaf congregation.

On April 1, 1962, ground was broken for the Parish Center to the west of the church. Two spaces within this new church wing were dedicated to two long-serving pastors of the congregation. The O. H. Sletten Memorial Chapel, which was located on the second floor of the new Parish Center; and the Clarence J. Carlsen Memorial Library, which was located on the first floor near the entrance of the Parish Center (St. Olaf Lutheran Church Archives, n.d.). The dedication of these spaces was reported in the Minneapolis Star on Saturday, December 8, 1962. The article reported,

Portraits of the two men have been painted by the Rev. Howard Sortland, present pastor, and will be hung in the chapel and library. Officiating at the dedication will be the Rev. Dr. John Stensvaag, president of the Lutheran Free Church. District Judge Luther Sletten will respond when the Sletten Chapel is dedicated [for his father] and the Rev. Erling Carlsen will give the response when the library honoring his father is dedicated... Besides the chapel and library, the new center contains 32 classrooms, offices and a fireside room. Armstrong and Schlichting were architects, and Adolphson [sic] and Peterson, general contractors.

The architectural firm that designed the new Parish Center was Armstrong and Schlichting. This firm was started in 1944 by Claire Armstrong and Gordon Schlichting, graduates of the University of Minnesota. Today the firm is known as ATS&R (Armstrong, Torseth, Skold, & Rydeen) and recently celebrated their 70th anniversary in 2014 (ATS&R, 2014; personal communication with ATS&R staff, September 26, 2018). General contractors Adolfson and Peterson was started in 1946 by George Adolfson, who was born in Sweden in 1908, and Gordon Peterson, who was born in Minnesota in 1911 to Swedish parents. The firm started in residential construction working out of Adolfson’s basement, but quickly grew as a company within the commercial construction market. By 1953 Adolfson and Peterson became an incorporated company with a new office in Richfield. The company celebrated 75 years in business in 2021 and now has offices in Minnesota, Colorado, Arizona, and Texas (AP, 2019).

St. Olaf continued to be one of the leading churches within North Minneapolis and began to truly embrace and support a multi-ethnic neighborhood. Further expansions to the church campus continued in the 1960s.
St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church

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with the construction of a nursing home building, called the St. Olaf Residence (Sorlien and Walgren, 1989). The new building was dedicated on October 18, 1964 and coincided with the 90th anniversary of the St. Olaf congregation. This new St. Olaf Residence building created a home for the aging members of the congregation and North Minneapolis community. Not only were many of the residents members of St. Olaf, the staff, board of trustees, and health care volunteers were as well. Each room had a loudspeaker that could broadcast FM radio and church services from St. Olaf's to the residents so they could tune in to worship every Sunday (Sorlien and Walgren 1989).

During Rev. Sortland’s tenure the number of worshiping Lutherans began to decline which aligned with a greater push to the suburbs, and Lutheran congregations began to consolidate their ministries. The North Minneapolis Lutheran Coalition was formed in 1978 as a non-profit organization made up of all the Lutheran churches in North Minneapolis. It was not an organization associated with a governing church body, but organized to provide support for its cooperative churches and their community organizations and ministries (Minneapolis Star, 1978). North Minneapolis Churches Acting Together also formed to distribute hot meals to homebound seniors. Under the direction of Ruth Peterson (wife of then St. Olaf Pastor Luther Peterson), this ministry was first centered at St. Olaf and eventually joined other similar church organizations to form the North Minneapolis Meals on Wheels, joining the Metro Meals on Wheels in 1997. This program was supported by the St. Olaf congregation until it closed in 2016 and operations were transferred to Community Emergency Services. St. Olaf church still serves as the northern Minneapolis transfer site.

By the 1990s, the North Minneapolis neighborhood saw newly arriving Liberian immigrants (many of whom were Lutheran), who were refugees fleeing civil war. The St. Olaf Residence and other nursing home facilities in Minneapolis were places the new arrivals were able to find work. Through the church broadcasts to the residents, many Liberian workers found comfort in the familiar Lutheran hymns being sung during service and were drawn to St. Olaf. This fostered a major push towards further diversity and acceptance of an ever-changing North Minneapolis community within the congregation. “The Liberian immigration has contributed to this day to the racial integration of the church” (Pastor Dale Hulme, personal communication, March 18, 2021). The St. Olaf Residence was one more way the church was able to connect to the North Minneapolis community. As the state of Minnesota transitioned its funding to home health care and away from nursing home facilities, the St. Olaf Residence was forced to close. In 2017 the St. Olaf Residence building and the Parish Center building, were sold to Freedom Works, Inc., a non-profit program that works to rehabilitate men who have been incarcerated (Freedom Works Inc., 2021). “However, the overall impact of the nursing home for neighborhood ministry was very good despite the loss of residences and employment that occurred upon its closing. The neighborhood recognized St. Olaf Church to be a church that cares about its community” (Pastor Dale Hulme, personal communication, March 18, 2021).

In 1997, the church began to focus on the mission of ministry for community growth. Pastor Dale Hulme, called in 1998 to serve the St. Olaf congregation, was instrumental in furthering this mission, with the church taking on more active roles within the community. The Norwegian roots of the St. Olaf congregation were somewhat rattled when Pastor Hulme accepted the call as pastor, as he is the first non-
St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church  

Norwegian pastor the church has ever had (Sue Quist, personal communication, March 19, 2020). New social programs were started under the guidance of Pastor Hulme including After School Tutoring, New Directions Youth Ministry, community gardening, and a food shelf. With the help of Music Director Jerry Bursch, worship was adapted to more reflect the diverse makeup of worshipers. Community concerts were developed to blend traditional ethnic music with classical forms in the acoustically superb sanctuary. Today, the church is made up of several different ethnic backgrounds reflecting the changing demographics of North Minneapolis. In 2000, the congregation became a “Reconciling in Christ” church, extending an intentional welcome to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer (LGBTQ) community, showing another form of support to the current community; a movement that was spearheaded by some of the congregation’s oldest members (St. Olaf Lutheran Church, 2009; Sue Quist, personal communication, March 19, 2020). St. Olaf continues to serve and support its community. In an article from February 15, 2019, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported that Pastor Hulme continues to see parallels between the church and its community, “Like its neighbors [Pastor Hulme] said, the church will continue to forge ahead despite the challenges in front of it. ‘We exist by the grace of God,’ said Hulme, ‘and are at least able to address a few of the difficulties people in north Minneapolis encounter in their daily lives’” (Hopfensperger, 2019).

Conclusion

St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church is locally significant under Criterion A for the role it has played in fostering the Norwegian-American ethnic heritage and social history of North Minneapolis. The church is significant for its association with broad patterns of Minneapolis history including Norwegian immigration, the representation of the North Minneapolis community, and effects of institutions on neighborhood development and growth. The church retains all the seven aspects of integrity and conveys its significance through its Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association.

St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church was a pioneer church in North Minneapolis in many ways. The congregation was originally established in 1874, making it the first ethnically Norwegian Lutheran congregation in that part of Minneapolis. By the time the current church building was constructed in 1911, St. Olaf was a well-established pillar within the community. During the period of significance (1911 to 1962), St. Olaf experienced its heyday and was the largest ethnically Norwegian Lutheran congregation in North Minneapolis. This is significant for a number of reasons. First, it was the only congregation in that part of Minneapolis to follow the ideals set forth by the Lutheran Free Church governing church body, which included fostering a free and independent congregation ruled by themselves and not by a greater governing body. These ideals were in opposition to the Norwegian state church which were governed by members of the elite with high economic and social status. Secondly, the St. Olaf congregation as supported by the LFC was representative of the working man and a lay preacher movement that allowed everyone equal access to the Lutheran faith. These values and ideals echoed strongly in the surrounding working-class community and were representative of a strong Norwegian-American heritage. The North Minneapolis community was populated originally by Scandinavian working families—a population that helped to develop the neighborhood into a powerhouse of industry along the river and built up some of the earliest housing in the area. As the Scandinavian population moved out, Eastern European Jews followed by Black Americans moved in. St. Olaf continued to support the changing North Minneapolis
community and fostering an inclusive and ecumenical spirit, seeing population growth within the congregation through the 1960s.

As an active Lutheran church today, it also meets National Register Criterion Consideration A for the significant role the church has played in the North Minneapolis community. The importance of the Norwegian-American Lutheran church tradition in North Minneapolis and greater Minnesota has helped to develop the social and physical form of many early settlements; all of which included a church that served as a central religious, cultural, and social meeting place. St. Olaf provided that cultural center for North Minneapolis, promoting community-based ecumenical work. The church worked throughout its period of significance (1911-1962) to support the surrounding community and represent the congregationalist ideals of the LFC. The vision of the St. Olaf congregation has remained constant throughout its history, and includes community ministry, Sunday School, and the Lutheran faith as it was supported by the local, and ethnically Norwegian, LFC governing church body.

As the needs of the Norwegian-American community within North Minneapolis changed and grew, St. Olaf also expanded; first with the construction of the Gothic Revival Style church building in 1911 at Emerson and 29th Avenues North, then with multiple expansions and alterations in 1919, 1921, and 1928. These alterations and expansions helped to meet the needs of the congregation through better access to Sunday School and meeting spaces for missionary work and community organizations. This allowed the church to continue to be active in North Minneapolis as a pillar of religious, social, and ethnic life as guided by the Lutheran Free Church. In 1959, the St. Olaf congregation recognized the changing demographics in North Minneapolis ahead of the race riots of the 1960s. It took an early stance on acceptance within the church, removing Norwegian from its name and accepting all ethnicities in North Minneapolis to worship. By 1962, the Lutheran Free Church voted to merge with the American Lutheran Church, which later became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Today, Norwegian is just one of many ethnicities celebrated by the St. Olaf congregation.
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St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church  
Name of Property  


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___________________________________________________________________________

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  # __________
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # __________
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # __________

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St. Olaf’s Norwegian Lutheran Church  

Name of Property: ___________________________  

County and State: Hennepin County, MN  

Primary location of additional data:  

_X__ State Historic Preservation Office  

___ Other State agency  

___ Federal agency  

___ Local government  

___ University  

___ Other  

Name of repository: _____________________________________  

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): HE-MPC-8093  

10. Geographical Data  

Acreage of Property _0.23 acres  

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates  

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)  

Datum if other than WGS84: ____________  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)  

1. Latitude:   Longitude:  

2. Latitude:   Longitude:  

3. Latitude:   Longitude:  

4. Latitude:   Longitude:  

Or  

UTM References  

Datum (indicated on USGS map):  

☐ NAD 1927  or  

_X_ NAD 1983  

1. Zone: 15T   Easting: 476782.56 m E   Northing: 4984071 m N  

2. Zone:  

Easting:   Northing:  

3. Zone:  

Easting:   Northing:  

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lots 12 and 13 of Block 15 in the Silver Lake Addition to Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes the entirety of these two city blocks that contain the historic St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church. It is also the current legal description of the church building and ends just before the western alleyway right-of-way where the hyphen is located today (see Attachments for historic and modern maps of the church and surrounding area).

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: _Kelly Wolf, MA, RPA, Historic Archaeologist and Alyssa R. Auten, Architectural Historian_
organization: _Blondo Consulting, LLC._
street & number: _3939 Sand Hill Road_
city or town: _Kettle River_ state: _MN_ zip code: _55757_
e-mail: _kellywolf@blondoconsulting.com_
telephone: _651-343-6596_
date: _February 11, 2022_

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

- Maps: A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date,
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900     OMB No. 1024-0018

St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church                  Hennepin County, MN
Name of Property                    County and State
etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Number of Photographs: 14

Name of Property: St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church
City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
County: Hennepin   State: Minnesota
Photographer: Alyssa R. Auten
Date Photographed: 12/22/2017
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:
Photograph 1: Of front façade facing west

Name of Property: St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church
City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
County: Hennepin   State: Minnesota
Photographer: Alyssa R. Auten
Date Photographed: 01/21/2019
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:
Photograph 2: Of north façade

Name of Property: St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church
City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
County: Hennepin   State: Minnesota
Photographer: Kelly Wolf
Date Photographed: 01/09/2021
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:
Photograph 3: Of south façade

Name of Property: St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church
City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
County: Hennepin   State: Minnesota
Photographer: Alyssa R. Auten
Date Photographed: 01/21/2019
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:
Photograph 4: of quatrefoil decorative detailing on the south façade

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St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church

Name of Property: St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church
City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
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State: Minnesota
Photographer: Kelly Wolf
Date Photographed: 01/09/2021
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:
Photograph 5: Brick, glass, and metal-framed hyphen facing south

Name of Property: St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church
City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
County: Hennepin
State: Minnesota
Photographer: Alyssa R. Auten
Date Photographed: 01/21/2019
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:
Photograph 6: The interior of the hyphen’s exterior door facing southeast toward St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church and N 29th Avenue

Name of Property: St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church
City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
County: Hennepin
State: Minnesota
Photographer: Alyssa R. Auten
Date Photographed: 01/21/2019
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:
Photograph 7: Of the fire door pocket between St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church and the hyphen

Name of Property: St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church
City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
County: Hennepin
State: Minnesota
Photographer: Alyssa R. Auten
Date Photographed: 12/22/2017
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:
Photograph 8: The St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church chancel featuring an August Klagstad painting
St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church

City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
County: Hennepin
State: Minnesota

Photographer: Alyssa R. Auten
Date Photographed: 01/21/2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photograph 9: Of the sanctuary from the balcony

Photograph 10: Of the sanctuary from the chancel facing the front vestibule and the balcony

Photograph 11: Sletten Memorial Chapel with the accordion doors closed in front of the altar

Photograph 12: original basement chancel

Photographer: Alyssa R. Auten
Date Photographed: 10/26/2017
St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:
Photograph 13: Parish Center facing north

Name of Property: St. Olafs Norwegian Lutheran Church
City or Vicinity: Minneapolis
County: Hennepin
State: Minnesota
Photographer: Alyssa R. Auten
Date Photographed: 01/21/2019
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:
Photograph 14: St. Olaf Residence facing west

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.
The St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church at Sixteenth and Dupont, circa 1907-1908.
St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State

The originally constructed St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church on Emerson Ave., circa 1911.
ATTACHMENT 3

The 1911 building permit from the City of Minneapolis for St. Olaf's.
The remodeled front entrance of St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church and the addition extending the rear portion of the church, post 1921.
The 1921 building permit from the City of Minneapolis for St. Olafs.
The 1928 remodeled St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church. Note the addition of small Gothic arched windows above the two larger Gothic arched windows flanking the front entrance, indicating interior alterations.
The 1928 building permit from the City of Minneapolis for St. Olafs.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Additional Documentation page 8

Attachment 8

Examples of the interior craftsmanship of St. Olaf’s demonstrating the blending of Lutheran, Gothic Revival, and Norwegian folk art motifs within the church design. Photos taken by Alyssa Auten.
St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church
Name of Property

Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State
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ATTACHMENT 11

1947 Aerial photo of St. Olaf's Norwegian Lutheran Church (property boundary outlined in red).
1967 Aerial photo of St. Olaf Lutheran Church showing the Parish Center and St. Olaf Residence (church property boundary outlined in red).
St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Modern Property Boundary of St. Olaf Lutheran Church outlined in blue (Hennepin County, 2021).
St. Olaf Norwegian Lutheran Church
Name of Property
Hennepin County, Minnesota
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Attachment 14

2021 Topographic Map of St. Olaf Lutheran Church
2021 Aerial image of St. Olaf Lutheran Church.