

HISTORY OF PARTNERS IN WORSHIP (2000-2010)

Separately the congregations of Shell Lake Lutheran and Grace United Churches had been struggling for years with part time ministry in a larger pastoral charge. Folks who waded to their neighbors on their way to their individual church on Sunday mornings began to look inside their own friendly community for a solution. In March 1998 the two congregations with a combined total attendance of 20 to 25 formally began sharing services with pastors, guest ministers from many religions, and lay persons from **Lutheran, United, and Anglican** denominations.

This arrangement led to a **community and area meeting** of all persons from all denominations interested in a **shared ministry**. Senior officials from various denominations were present to offer input. From this meeting the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the United Church of Canada** agreed to pursue a shared ministry arrangement and a planning committee of four members from each of the Lutheran and United Church was elected to draft a **covenant agreement**. Tamarack Presbytery and Saskatchewan Synod were invited to attend all meetings and so were always aware of decisions and requests needing approval. After months of meetings a covenant agreement was concluded.

The new congregation had a contest to choose a name. Maxine Johnson submitted the successful entry which is **Partners in Worship**. A covenanting service was held January 6, 2000, with the installation of interim minister, Rev. Orville Kaminski. He oversaw the transition into one unified congregation. We credit Rev. Kaminski with his preaching style and his ability to accept everyone where they were in their spiritual life. We came to understand that it is not the minister we come to church to worship but our belief in God. Worship services were held every Sunday from November to May in Grace United and moved to the Shell Lake Lutheran for the summer months.

A mission statement took several meetings before it adequately described our new congregation. **Partners in Worship Mission Statement: We believe in one God Creator of all people, revealed in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, Who calls us to be a sharing, caring community based on Christian ministry.** The congregation was always involved and informed of all steps. An every family visitation was made in the area to explain and encourage participation in this shared ministry adventure. A job description was prepared. By now, we were referring to our situation as "Shared Ecumenical Ministry" rather than Lutheran/United.

A summary of planning meetings was forwarded to Lutheran and Anglican Bishops and United Presbytery with an invitation to meet with committee for direction. Rev. Merle Snustead, acting Bishop, was a wealth of support and advice. He (Lutheran) and a member of Presbytery attended committee and occasional congregational meetings. No problems arose determining salary, baptisms, preaching style, mission grants, charitable numbers, treasurer, funerals, marriages, minister call, sacraments, and board structure.

In 2001 in a bold step the two church buildings were joined into one. The Lutheran Church was moved to the site of Grace United which had more land available and had the fellowship hall on ground level. The pitch of each roof matched which made for a perfect fit. Partners in Worship re-dedicated the newly joined building in a special ceremony in October 2002.

The women of Partners in Worship formed **Partners in Worship Women's Auxiliary**. They fully support the work of church council and are the main fund raising arm of the congregation. They meet regularly and have their own officers, objectives, and a representative on council. They also support special projects of their choosing and of the two denominations.

The **Ministerial Plan** for the congregation included various options. The options ranged from a Half Time Pastor to Full Time Pastor. In either case the congregation preferred that the pastor be a resident of the village. In support of this plan initially a house was rented and a Half Time pastor was hired. Later a manse was purchased for to provide for full time residency. According to the covenant if possible Ministry personal from the Lutheran and United Churches should alternate.

Following Orville Kaminski's interim ministry Gary Schenk was called as a half time pastor leaving in early 2005. Pastor David Jensen has been pastor since 2005. Pastor David and his wife, Sylvia, have become a vital part of our whole community as well as our church.

Obstacles: Rather than being helpful, sometimes the denominational leaders became very real stumbling blocks. They were not easy to convince, that the members of Grace United and Shell Lake Lutheran, knew what they wanted or what they were doing. In their zeal to do the right thing for their respective churches sometimes they stalled and created obstacles.

Wise Words: Don't recall who suggested these but after encountering a few obstacles with one denomination, someone said, "If we could keep denominational leaders out of the way, we would be fine." Something else we may wish to remember when dealing with an obstacle, "Sprinkle with holy water rather than go around with a fire extinguisher".

Ten Years of Partners in Worship

2000 (January - June)	- Interim Pastor Orville Kaminski
2000 (July to September)	- Student pastor Steve Boros
2000 (September -)	- Nyla Dean, wife of Pastor Chris Dean, hired as Pastoral Care worker until a regular minister called.
Year 2001- 2005	- Pastor Gary Schenk shared with Spiritwood part time
Year 2005 (January- Mach)	- Interim pulpit supply, Pastor Tyler Gingrich
Year 2005	- Beginning July and Continuing - Full time Pastor David Jensen