

MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTIES INVENTORY FORM

HISTORIC NAME: Bethlehem Lutheran Church

COUNTY: Pine 80002/03

CURRENT NAME:

CITY/TWP.: Askov

LEGAL DESC.: Original Townsite of Partridge
Block 2
Lot 6 and the N½ of Lot 7

ADDRESS: Kirke Alle

CLASSIFICATION:	CONDITION:	SIGNIFICANCE:	THEME/S:
Building <u>X</u>	Excellent <u>X</u>	Local <u>X</u>	Primary <u>Settlement</u>
Structure _____	Good _____	State _____	Secondary <u>Religion</u>
Object _____	Fair _____	National _____	Others <u>Architecture</u>
District _____	Deteriorated _____		<u>Education</u>

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Yes X No _____ Restricted X
 VISIBLE FROM THE ROAD: Yes X No _____
 OCCUPIED: Yes X No _____

PRESENT USE:
Church

DATE CONSTRUCTED: 1914-15

ORIGINAL USE: Church

ORIGINAL OWNER: Bethlehem Lutheran Church

ARCHITECT/BUILDER:

OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS: Bethlehem Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 248
Askov, MN 55704ACREAGE: Less than one acre XLOCAL CONTACT/ORG.: Pine County Historical Society
Askov, MN 55704

UTM REFERENCE:

Sandstone Quad. 15

15 / 517150 / 5114740

FORM PREPARED BY: Mark Haidet

DATE: March 1980

DESCRIPTION:

Bethlehem Lutheran Church stands on a double corner lot in a residential district south of Askov's business district. The village park is located across the street.

The church, designed on a cruciform plan, was constructed in 1914-15 from sketches drawn by Jes Smidt of West Denmark, Wisconsin. It is a frame structure veneered in red brick sitting on an elevated concrete block foundation; a stone watertable runs the perimeter of the foundation wall. Two towering brick chimneys pierce its steep gable roof with boxed cornice and gable returns. Fenestration consists primarily of Gothic windows (a few with stained glass) with rusticated stone imposts and keystones. The structure is dominated by an extended central square tower surmounted by a open frame belfry and spire capped by a cross. An arched entrance with stained glass transom, coupled lancet windows, a circular stained glass window, and an inscription stone reading "Betlehems Dansk-Luth. Kirke 1914" adorn the tower. Two minor entrances are located in either transept section on the north (front) facade. A polygonal apse is located at the rear of the structure as is a newer enclosed porch sheltering the rear entrance.

The interior retains many of its original features. The woodcarvings, particularly the altar and the pulpit, and the altar painting of Christ protecting the lamb from the wolf are especially noteworthy; both are the work of Jes Smidt, the church's designer.

SIGNIFICANCE:

Bethlehem Lutheran Church is the structure which best represents the Danish settlement of Askov, Pine County's most notable ethnic community. The colony was established in 1905 by the Dansk Folkesamfund (Danish People's Society), a society founded in Iowa in 1887 by members of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church for the purpose of promoting Danish settlement projects in America and preserving Danish culture. The Society's Land Committee purchased 20,000 acres of land in the vicinity of Partridge Station on the Eastern Minnesota Railroad, platted the village of Askov, and promoted settlement. Most settlers were members of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, and in December 1906 a church organization of twenty members was formed. Services were held in the town hall and the local school building prior to the erection of the present structure in 1914-15. Dansk Folkesamfund contributed \$2000 (approximately one third of the structure's total cost) to the building fund. The church has been the only religious institution to serve the spiritual needs of the community's citizens throughout most of the village's existence. Services were held in Danish until the mid-1930s.

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Bibliography:

Askov American. July 1, 1976. (Special Bicentennial Supplement.)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Church Records, 1906-15.

Bethlehem Lutheran Congregation: 1906-76. Seventieth anniversary service program
in Minnesota SHPO files. 1976.

From Partridge to Askov. Askov: Danish Ladies' Aid, 1946.

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