

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Resub

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: Trinity Lutheran Church
Other names/site number: _____
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: 301 Douglas Avenue
City or town: Henning State: MN County: Otter Tail Zip Code: 56551
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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 X C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title: Amy Spong, Deputy SHPO **Date**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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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

7/27/2018
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/auditorium

RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Gothic Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Stone, Wood, Asphalt

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

Trinity Lutheran Church is located Henning, a town in west central Minnesota about 40 miles north of Alexandria and 35 miles east of Fergus Falls. Henning has a population of about 800. The church is located at the intersection of 4th Street and Douglas Avenue, the main street in Henning.

Trinity Lutheran Church was constructed in 1898 in the Gothic Revival style. Constructed on a rough-cut fieldstone basement, the building consists of a central entrance bay, measuring 12 feet by 14 feet, which rises to form a tower; a nave, measuring 40 feet by 40 feet; and a chancel measuring 14 feet by 20 feet. The walls are clad with yellow brick with red brick trim. Tall, Gothic-arched windows are positioned along the walls of the nave and chancel. A Dutch gable roof with bracketed eaves covers the nave while a gable roof covers the chancel. The building's most distinctive feature is a pair of narrow steeples, or spires, which rise from the tower. The exterior remains in near-original condition with only minor modifications having been made over the 119 years of its existence. (Photos 1-2)

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Trinity Lutheran Church merged with another congregation in 1967, and in 1971 the building was sold. The city of Henning assumed ownership of the building in 2015 with the expectation that a local organization would operate and maintain the property. In 2015, "Save the Trinity" formed as a non-profit organization to manage the property with the intent to restore and preserve the building and reuse the property as a community arts and event center. Although the restoration of the building is not yet complete, a number of events have already been held in the building including several concerts and a variety of community events.

Narrative Description

Trinity Lutheran Church is located on the northeast side of Douglas Avenue, at the northwest edge of town. The building is oriented toward the southwest. A set of steps leads to the central entrance and tower bay on the southwest elevation. The original steps of wood with solid wooden sidewalls have long since been removed and replaced with concrete steps of almost exactly the same width and height, but featuring painted iron or steel railings. The original entrance steps and barriers probably deteriorated over time and required replacement.

The entrance/tower bay consists of three distinct parts: an entrance base clad in yellow brick up to the eave line; a stepped-back wooden steeple base clad in lap siding; and unique twin shingle-covered steeples. (Photo 3)

The brick-veneered entrance base features three sets of doors; only one (the center entrance) is in use today. The other two doorways are now sealed shut with plywood panels, but hinges are still in place denoting that the original doors could once have been swung open. The center entrance consists of two doors, although the original doors have been replaced with modern steel doors. The flanking entrances are single doors. Round arched tracery windows top each of the three sets of doors.

In the center of the entrance/tower base, above the entrance doors, is a round window frame that once was filled with stained glass, which has been removed. A clock has been inserted in the space. Just below the former window is a rectangular panel, with the word "Trinity." The wording is still visible, but the lettering is somewhat damaged as the result of a subsequent sign panel (now removed) that had been installed over the lettering in the modern era. (Photo 4)

Three sides of the steeple base feature a louvered vent in the same Gothic, pointed-arch style as the windows in the nave. The rear side facing the roof of the church has no vent. A historic photo of the church taken a few years after its construction appears to show shutters flanking the louvered vent on the front, or southwest side of the tower, but these no longer exist.

The twin steeples, or spires, form the most distinctive feature of the church. Their style may have antecedents in Norway, but it is difficult to pinpoint the geographic area of origin or religious context(s). The steeples are uncharacteristically narrow, hexagonal in form, tapering cone-like from bottom to top. Each is surmounted by a round, decorative metal finial, possibly of tin alloy. Projecting from each finial is hooked-shaped and alludes to an abstract dragon head. There may

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have been more of these on each finial, but they have disappeared over time. The steeples are shingled in alternating patterns of fish-scale and rectangular styles. The purpose of this patterning is not clear and may have been purely decorative instead of having any religious connotations. There are six pointed-arch dormers positioned around the base of each spire. They are solid or blind, having no windows in them, and therefore are decorative in nature. The wood finials atop each dormer are fastened to the peak of the arch and are four-sided, with crowning newel-like oval heads. Again, they appear to be decorative instead of conveying any religious connotations. (Photo 5)

Basement windows are positioned in the stone foundation wall beneath each of the Gothic style windows of the nave. The windows are paired, four-light casements and each is capped with a rounded brick arch. The year "1898" is carved into one of the foundation stones on the northwest side of the entrance/tower bay. (Photo 11)

The nave of the church features narrow, Gothic style windows. One window is positioned to each side of the main entrance and three windows are positioned along the southeast and northwest facing sidewalls. The arch of each window is framed with red brick. Based on historic photographs, the original windows featured pairs of rectangular, four-over-four-light double-hung sash, holding clear glass, and with pointed-arch windows at the top. The original windows have been removed and the frames now hold frosted glass. (Photos 6-7)

The nave is covered with a Dutch gable, or gablet, roof, in which the hip roof is surmounted by a gable to enhance the appearance of the structure while facilitating snow-melt runoff and providing more attic space. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Eaves project about 18 inches from the sides of the entrance/tower base, a feature that is carried through on all four elevations of the nave. The projecting eaves are supported by Italianate style brackets of carved wood. A projecting eave also exists between the top of the stepped-back wooden tower base and the steeples. The brackets are generally arranged in pairs along the eaves of the tower and at each corner of the building. Single brackets support the intervening areas. (Photo 8)

No longer visible on the interior, the chancel features tall Gothic style windows on the southeast and northwest elevations. The northwest window is now boarded over, while the southeast window is concealed by a later addition. The chancel is covered with a gable roof with asphalt shingles, which slopes to the west to cover a rear entrance to the church along the northeast elevation. The original paired entrance doors have been replaced with modern steel doors, painted blue. The doorway features a rounded brick arch.

A small addition to the southeast side of the chancel was built in 1978. The roof of the addition was formed by extending the slope of the roof of the chancel. The addition is faced in a very similar brick to that used on the church, but is more tan than yellow in color. The northeast wall of the addition includes a pair of casement windows. (Photo 9)

A brick chimney, which appears in a historic photo of the church, still stands at the rear, engaged with the rear wall of the nave, originally serving at least two heating and/or cooking stoves, and secured to the rear roof by metal rods or cables. (Photo 10) All of the window trim and frames of

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the doorways of the building are painted white. The steeple tower base, eaves, and brackets are also painted white.

The primary interior spaces of the church consist of the narthex or vestibule, the nave, the balcony, and the chancel. There is also a rear entrance and a stairway to the basement at the northeast side of the chancel.

The narthex contains a small entry area and the access stair for the balcony, which was built along the northwest side. It appears the balcony was added sometime after the initial construction of the building because of the awkward placement of the stairway, which blocks one of the three entrances to the church. The stair is narrow and cramped due to the restricted space. The first flight ascends to a small landing; from there, the second flight makes a left-hand turn and continues to a second landing; and from there, the third flight makes a left-hand turn and rises to the floor above. There is a closet and storage space under the stairs. (Photo 19)

Unlike the more typical rectangular form, this church has a square nave, a popular form around the turn of the twentieth century. (Photo 12) The height of the nave is about 16 feet and it features a decorative metal ceiling that was installed in a 1928 renovation. (Photo 13) The nave is illuminated by the tall Gothic-arched windows now glazed with plate glass, but previously fitted with stained glass manufactured by the Art Glass Company of Minneapolis and installed in 1958. The stained glass windows were reportedly removed when the Catholic congregation that occupied the church from 1971 to 2002 moved to a new building elsewhere in town, taking the windows with them. (Photos 14-15)

The lower portion of the walls is clad in tongue-in-groove wainscoting. The wainscoting may not be original to the church, but instead installed in a later remodeling of the interior. The walls above the wainscot are painted a cream color, while the wainscot, as well as all other elements, such as the window trim, doors, columns, railings, and ceiling, are painted white.

A balcony extends the full width of the nave at the rear and consists of two levels, indicating that it could serve the dual purpose of additional seating and as a choir loft. Another indication that the balcony was added after the initial construction of the church is how it cuts awkwardly across the Gothic style windows, but this is not particularly visible from the exterior. The balcony is supported by two columns that extend from the floor of the nave to the ceiling. The columns are faced in wood and may have a steel core. The front edge of the balcony has a decorative railing with closely spaced spindles. The central section of the balcony features a concave indentation that is about 15 feet long. It is tied to the balcony's support beams, which flank it on both ends. (Photos 16-18)

The chancel extends through the rear wall of the nave by 14 feet. (Photo 20) It is framed by decorative engaged wooden columns and plain wood trim, which forms a five-sided gambrel-type opening. A raised stage and platform dominate the chancel. A door in the southeast wall leads to the 1978 addition, which was used as the sacristy. The walls of the chancel feature the same wainscot and color scheme found in the nave. In the wall to the right of the chancel area is

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a round decorative stovepipe cover. It appears that a wood or coal-burning stove once stood there, and its stovepipe ran from the appliance into the chimney behind the wall.

All of the furnishings from the nave and chancel have been removed. They once included a pulpit; altar ring; altar, altar piece, and trimmings; hymn boards; lighting fixtures; and pews. The original hardwood floor has been covered by linoleum tile of a light gray color. Contemporary heating vents in the floor were most likely installed when a modern forced-air furnace was added in the basement. Original lighting fixtures have been replaced by contemporary canister fixtures, but the placement of the original fixtures can be determined by the remaining ceiling mounts. Ceiling fans have been installed to help cool the nave.

There is a full basement under the nave. The basement walls are of local, rough-cut fieldstone and appear to be about three feet thick. They date from the construction of the church. The floor is concrete. (Photo 21)

There is also a basement under the chancel. But it is not clear whether there was a basement under the chancel originally. It might have been excavated at a later date, or the walls might have been restructured at some point as the basement walls of the chancel are constructed with poured concrete. Additionally, the stone wall separating the main basement from the chancel basement appears to have been cut through to provide access to the area under the chancel, also suggesting later changes to these spaces, or perhaps the opening was simply enlarged. In addition, the exposed exterior foundation wall of the chancel is of dark brick, rather than stone, further suggesting there were structural modifications at one time.

The basement area under the chancel was once used as a kitchen, but all the fixtures have been removed. Like in the nave at the same location, another stovepipe cover is set into the wall, which indicates there would have been a heating or cooking stove at that location.

Assessment of Integrity

Trinity Lutheran Church retains high integrity. The exterior appears much as it did historically. In about 1931 or somewhat later, an addition was added to the right side of the main entrance to the church that provided a direct entrance to the basement of the building. The addition included a small vestibule, which in turn led to a stairway to the basement. At perhaps the same time, a 5-6 step stairway was installed in the narthex that led down to the new basement entrance. The shed-roofed addition was constructed with dark red brick and was incompatible with the design of the church. In recent years, the addition had fallen into highly deteriorated condition. In 2017, the addition was removed and the walls were repaired with stone and brick nearly identical to the original. Flooring was installed over the opening for the stairway in the narthex and the space was returned to its original appearance. The removal of the addition helped restore the integrity of the Gothic Revival style building.

Another change was the addition next to the chancel, which was used as a changing room. However, this is a small addition to the rear of the church and it blends in with the existing building. The brick is very similar to the original brick used for the church, and the addition is

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sympathetically positioned within the slope of the roof that was extended from the roof of the chancel and is not visible from the primary facade.

The removal of the stained-glass windows might also be considered a loss of integrity. However, the stained-glass windows were not installed until 1958, very late during the period of significance. Moreover, the opportunity remains to restore the windows to their original 1898 appearance. The basic interior of the building also remains in original condition, although the removal of the furnishings represents a loss of integrity. Overall, Trinity Lutheran Church retains a high degree of integrity from its 1898-1967 period of significance.

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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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ETHNIC HERITAGE

RELIGION

Period of Significance

1898-1967

Significant Dates

1898

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

John Lundin

Gustaf Anderson

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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.)

Trinity Lutheran Church is historically significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of Religion and Ethnic History. The building is important for its ability to represent an important aspect of the Norwegian Lutheran immigrant experience. The construction of the church was the direct result of a rift in the congregation caused by controversies within Norwegian-American Lutheran churches. These controversies illustrate how congregations like Trinity Church, which were no longer bound by the restrictions of the state church they left behind, began to experience democracy and religious freedom in the United States. A majority of the members of Trinity Church voted to separate from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church and ultimately joined a newly formed church body, the Lutheran Free Church, whose congregations were characterized by their autonomy. Those in the congregation who voted not to separate formed their own congregation. The entire congregation was thus learning and practicing democracy while attempting to determine the proper American expression of Norwegian Lutheranism.

The specific controversy that led to the rift within Trinity Church is related to a dispute between supporters of two Minnesota Lutheran educational institutions, Augsburg Seminary and St. Olaf College. Trinity Lutheran Church is also significant for its association with this particular controversy, which had an important impact on Norwegian-American Lutheran churches. Trinity Lutheran Church also illustrates how these religious controversies impacted even small congregations in rural Minnesota, where there was every practical reason to remain united. Yet, the story came full circle when in 1967 the two congregations agreed to reunite after separating over 70 years earlier.

Trinity Lutheran Church is also architecturally significant under National Register Criterion C as a distinctive example of the Gothic Revival style. It remains Henning's best example of the Gothic Revival style from the period and an important representation of the church buildings constructed in Henning in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The well-designed building also includes a number of unique architectural features such as its distinctive and highly-articulated twin spires. No other church building has been identified in Minnesota, or the broader region, with twin spires rising from a single tower.

The design of the church is also unusual for a Lutheran church of the period. A typical Lutheran church built in small towns or rural areas in Minnesota at that time was a straightforward Gothic Revival style frame building with a rectangular nave and a single tower. Trinity Church features more costly brick construction, and includes ornate spires and an unusual square nave. The small congregation embarked on an ambitious building project in order to differentiate itself after the split in its congregation. The architectural expression selected for the church was a means to create and promote a new identity for the congregation. The decision to build at a prominent location on Henning's main street provided a strong visual and architectural presence for building, which continues to this day.

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The Period of Significance begins in 1898 with the construction of Trinity Lutheran Church and ends in 1967 when the congregations agreed to reunite after more than 70 years. The building is considered locally significant.

Trinity Lutheran Church also meets National Register Criteria Consideration A, which is a requirement that religious properties must meet in order to be listed on the National Register. Trinity Lutheran Church meets this requirement because it is directly associated with a broad pattern in the religious history of the Lutheran Church. The building is associated with the experience of immigrant Norwegian Lutheran congregations as they encountered democracy and religious freedom in the United States. The property also meets Criterion Consideration A for being a religious property because it derives significance from its architecture. The church is a locally distinctive example of the Gothic Revival style.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

History of Trinity Lutheran Church Congregation

March 25, 1878 marks the establishment of Trinity Lutheran Church. On that date, eight men met to discuss forming a Scandinavian Lutheran church in the vicinity of an area known as Pease Prairie, which was later incorporated as Henning. The founders of the church were largely Norwegian immigrants. Norwegians had first settled in Minnesota beginning in the 1850s in areas along the Mississippi River in the southeastern part of the state. After 1865, many Norwegians chose the Park Region of west-central Minnesota, which became the second major concentration of Norwegian immigrants in the state. As of 1875, there were 15,859 Norwegians in this region, 25% of its total population.¹

The new congregation decided to invite Reverend Iver Tharaldson of the Conference for the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to serve as temporary pastor. Tharaldson was eventually elected permanent pastor and agreed to visit the congregation at least nine times per year. He was paid \$3 per voting member of the congregation per year. It is not known where the congregation was meeting during these early years.

Reverend Torstein Moen became pastor in 1881. In 1883, a building committee was formed to construct a church in Henning. The Village of Henning donated Lot 22 of Block 1 to build the church. Construction began on June 1, 1885 and was completed the following year. The church was built by C. Martin Nelson, who was paid \$75. The frame building measured 30 feet by 30 feet and was designed in the Gothic Revival style. An attached tower featured an open belfry. In 1892, Reverend Gustav Gregusson became pastor.

¹ Carlton C. Qualey and Jon A. Gjerde, "The Norwegians," in *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*, ed. June Dressing Holmquist (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 222-227.

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In 1890, three Lutheran church bodies, including the Norwegian-Danish Conference, the Anti-Missouri Brotherhood, and the Norwegian Augustana Synod, merged to form the United Norwegian Lutheran Church (UNLC). Trinity was now part of the newly merged organization. But controversy soon engulfed the new United Church, which revolved around the roles of educational institutions associated with the church: namely, Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis and St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. In 1893, a group formed that was called "Friends of Augsburg." On July 21, 1896, a vote was held at Trinity Church and a majority voted to separate from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church and to align with the "Friends of Augsburg." In 1897, the "Friends of Augsburg" became a separate church body, the Lutheran Free Church (LFC). Trinity Church was now part of this group.²

Pastor Gregusson resigned when the split in the congregation took place, perhaps to give each group a fresh start. For reasons that are not clear, neither group remained in the existing church, which was sold to the Methodists. The group that voted to remain with the United Norwegian Lutheran Church, which consisted of eleven families, formed the United Lutheran Church of Henning on July 27, 1896. While the congregation was without their own church, they met at a church at Leaf Lake, north of Henning, and also in private homes. Then on February 27, 1897, the United Lutheran Church congregation voted to build a new church. A building committee was organized and Mathias Rosholt was selected as the carpenter.³ The site for the new church was located near the east of Douglas Avenue, Henning's main street, and the building was completed in 1897.

The Trinity Lutheran Church congregation selected Reverend Carl Amundsen as its pastor in 1896 and also began plans to build a new church. Church histories link the decision to construct a new building with the split in the congregation:

In May 1896, steps were taken to sell the old church property and to buy a new site for a new church. As some of the members by this time had withdrawn from the congregation and started the United Lutheran Church of Henning.

At a special meeting held on January 31, 1898, it was decided to buy two lots for the new church site, and at a special meeting held on March 15, 1898, the plans for the new church were decided upon and the work on the church began soon after.⁴

The *Henning Advocate* reported that, "The trustees of the Norwegian Lutheran church held an important meeting on Monday at which they decided to build a substantial church building on

² "80th Anniversary of the Trinity Lutheran Congregation," August 10, 1958, 3, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives, Henning, Minnesota.

³ "The 50th Anniversary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Congregation," June 20, 1948, 3-4, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives.

⁴ "Trinity Lutheran Church," unpublished history based on interviews conducted on March 8, 1938 with Rev. Albert Framstad, C. O. Rortvedt, and John Rude, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives. These meetings are also reference in "Trinity Lutheran Church," Churches, Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration, April 15, 1942, Minnesota Historical Society.

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the lots the society bought recently on the corner of Douglas Avenue and Fourth Street. Work of construction will begin as soon as weather permits.”⁵

On February 3, 1898, the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* reported that, “The Trinity Lutherans have decided to sell the old church building and erect a church in the spring in the western part of town.”⁶ On March 31, 1898, it was reported that, “The Trinity church society will soon begin erection of a brick church. They have sold their present edifice to the Norwegian Methodists for \$400.”⁷ By mid-April, stone had been transported to the building site for the foundation and by early May work was underway excavating the basement.⁸

An article in the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* dated June 9, 1898, provided the names of two of the workers who were constructing the basement and foundation for the building.

Work has begun on the basement to [sic] the new Lutheran church. John Lundeen and Gustaf Anderson of Eagle Lake have the contract.⁹

Wheelock’s Weekly reported that the foundation was nearly complete by late June. This announcement attributed the work to the Lundeen brothers of Eagle Lake.¹⁰ Eagle Lake is an actual lake, rather than a town, located to the southwest of Henning in Eagle Lake Township.

Cost estimates for the building varied. An article in the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* dated May 5, 1898 stated, “The new Lutheran church, which is about to be erected, is to have a chapel 40 x 40, the addition 16 x 20, and will cost not less than \$3,000.”¹¹ A feature article in September that described various building projects in Henning stated, “It will cost upward of \$5,000 and when completed will be supplied with all the modern conveniences and be finished in fine shape.”¹²

There may have been a delay in completing the upper structure of the church as it was not until September 1898 when it was announced in *Wheelock’s Weekly* that, “The carpenters have started building the new Lutheran church.”¹³ The carpenters were not identified, although it is not believed that John Lundeen was involved in the construction of the upper structure as his business appears to have focused on excavating and foundation work. The *Henning Advocate* also reported that:

⁵ “Late Locals,” *Henning Advocate*, February 3, 1898, n.p.

⁶ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, February 3, 1898, 8.

⁷ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, March 31, 1898, 8. While the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* reported that the sale price was \$400, the price was stated as \$300.00 in “80th Anniversary of the Trinity Lutheran Congregation,” August 10, 1958, 4.

⁸ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, April 14, 1898, 8; May 5, 1898, 8.

⁹ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, June 9, 1898, 8.

¹⁰ “Henning,” *Wheelock’s Weekly*, June 23, 1898, n.p. It is believed that “Lundin” is the correct spelling of the name based on census records for Eagle Lake.

¹¹ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, May 5, 1898, 8.

¹² “Improvements in 1898,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, September 22, 1898, 3.

¹³ “Henning,” *Wheelock’s Weekly*, September 15, 1898, n.p.

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The superstructure of the new Norwegian Lutheran church was commenced Monday. The edifice will be completed before real cold weather sets in.¹⁴

Various fundraising activities had also been taking place to raise money for the building. In June 1898, it was reported that, “. . . a picnic of the Trinity Lutheran Church at Battle Lake last Sunday realized \$25.”¹⁵ An announcement in the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* described a subsequent event:

The Trinity church society will give an oyster supper in the hall on Friday evening Nov. 18. The money raised will go towards finishing the new church. Supper will be served from 6 to 8 o'clock. Everyone is cordially invited to attend.¹⁶

The *Henning Advocate* also advertised the supper, noting that the cost was 15 cents and 25 cents, although the reason for two prices was not discussed.¹⁷ But work on the construction of the building was once again interrupted, perhaps because of the availability of funds or labor. On November 7, 1898, the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* reported, “Work has resumed on Trinity Lutheran Church in order to get it enclosed before cold weather.”¹⁸

The new church was largely complete by late 1898. In early December, the *Henning Advocate* reported, “The work of completing the Trinity church is rapidly going forward and the building will be in readiness by Christmas.”¹⁹ But the first event at the church was held in the basement.

The first meeting in the new Norwegian Trinity Church will be held on Christmas day. The building is not yet completed, but arrangements have been made to hold meetings in the large basement.²⁰

The first known social event at the church was held January 23, 1899 when, “The ladies of Trinity church gave a supper and sociable in the basement of their new church building Monday evening.”²¹ The event was held to benefit the Sunday school and it was reported that, “A program of music and recitations was rendered, and those present had a very enjoyable time.”²²

But work continued on the completion of the main level of the building. In May 1899, the *Henning Advocate* reported that, “Progress on the new Trinity Church is going slowly, but it will soon be finished sufficiently to hold services in the main room of the edifice.”²³

¹⁴ “Late Locals,” *Henning Advocate* September 22, 1898, n.p.

¹⁵ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, June 30, 1898, 8.

¹⁶ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, November 7, 1898, 8.

¹⁷ “Late Locals,” *Henning Advocate*, November 17, 1898, n.p.

¹⁸ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, November 7, 1898, 8.

¹⁹ “Late Locals,” *Henning Advocate*, December 8, 1898, n.p.

²⁰ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, December 15, 1898, 8.

²¹ “Late Locals,” *Henning Advocate*, January 26, 1899, n.p.

²² “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, January 26, 1899, 8.

²³ “Late Locals,” *Henning Advocate*, May 11, 1899, n.p.

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The large building project was very ambitious for a small congregation and it was not possible to install the brick facing on the building until 1901. But it had been the intent to utilize brick from the inception as noted in an article in the *Henning Advocate* dated May 12, 1898, which stated, "In the course of time it will be brick veneered. When the edifice is completed it will be one of the finest in these parts."²⁴ The installation of the brick began by August 1, 1901, but the work came to a halt when it was realized that the brick was of inferior quality.

The brick veneering which had been done on Trinity church has been torn away on account of the brick being a very poor quality. The carload of brick on the ground will be returned to Staples, and the church society will seek a better quality elsewhere.²⁵

In late August, a new load of bricks was delivered.

The second consignment of brick to be used for the brick veneering [of] Trinity church arrived Saturday from Battle Lake and has been hauled to the ground. Now that the proper kind of brick has been found the work may be expected to go forward.²⁶

On September 4, 1901, it was reported that work had begun. The names of the bricklayers were also identified.

The first carload of Perham brick to be used in veneering Trinity church arrived Monday and work on the building was commenced at once. Dave Palmer of Wisconsin will assist Geo. Hall in the work of laying brick.²⁷

The brick work was half done by mid-September and completed by mid-October.²⁸ Additional finishing work was also completed in late 1901. (Figure 1)

The plastering has been finished in Trinity church and the carpenter work is almost completed. The furnace will soon be put in.²⁹

The various improvements were completed in time for a festive Christmas celebration.

There were Christmas tree services in Trinity church on Christmas Eve. A very large tree, beautifully trimmed and lighted and loaded down with an array of Christmas gifts was the sight that met the eager eyes of the children assembled there. They expected that Santa had something good in store for them and in this

²⁴ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, May 12, 1898, n.p.

²⁵ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, August 1, 1901, n.p., and August 8, 1901, n.p.

²⁶ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, August 29, 1901, n.p.

²⁷ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, September 5, 1901, n.p.

²⁸ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, September 19, 1901, n.p., and October 17, 1901, n.p.

²⁹ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, December 12, 1901, n.p.

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they were not disappointed. Candy, nuts and apples were freely passed around among the audience.³⁰

These improvements to the building put the church in debt, which reached its high point of \$1,228.63 in 1902. However, the debt was repaid by 1911.

Various events and activities were also being held in the church. These included musical performances, talks, and dinners. For example, in October 1899, it was announced that, "Supper and ice cream will be served by the ladies of Trinity church on the evening of Oct. 25 at 6 o'clock. Everybody welcome."³¹ In November 1899, it was announced that, "The well known temperance speaker, T. K. Torvildson, will lecture in the basement of Trinity church on Thursday evening. He plays the violin splendidly, and all are cordially invited to come and hear him."³² In April 1901, "Interesting religious entertainments were held in the basement of Trinity church on Sunday and Monday. . . . Good instrumental and vocal music was rendered."³³

Over the years, the congregation made additional improvements. In 1914, a new parsonage was built near the church and funded by the Ladies Aid. From 1925-31, while Reverend Olaf Rogne was pastor, a new metal ceiling was installed in the nave, new pews were installed, and improvements were made to the church basement. A new outside entrance to the basement was also built sometime after 1931, which was later removed in 2017.³⁴ One of the last major improvements was the installation of stained glass windows in about 1958 (now removed) that were made by the Art Glass Company of Minneapolis.

Another notable change for Trinity Lutheran Church was the transition from the Norwegian language to English. Prior to 1925, Norwegian had been the primary language. Beginning in 1925, the majority of services were held in English. Interestingly, it was not until the annual meeting of Trinity Church in 1931 that a motion was passed that stated the Pastor's annual report to the congregation should be in English.³⁵

The merger of a number of Lutheran church groups in 1963 set the stage for the reunification of the Trinity and United congregations. The majority of the congregations associated with the Lutheran Free Church joined the American Lutheran Church in 1963, where the United Lutheran Church had already become a member. In 1966, Trinity and United formed a consolidation committee to pave the way for the reunification. In a meeting on October 27, 1966, Trinity's Board of Trustees unanimously approved the agreement. The meeting minutes noted:

Be it resolved that we, the Board of Trustees of Trinity Lutheran Church, meeting this 27th day of Oct. 1966, do hereby accept and approve said consolidation

³⁰ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, December 26, 1901, n.p.

³¹ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, October 26, 1899, n.p.

³² "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, November 16, 1899, n.p.

³³ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, April 4, 1901, n.p.

³⁴ "80th Anniversary of the Trinity Lutheran Congregation," 4.

³⁵ "Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church," January 1, 1931, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives.

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agreement and direct that it be submitted to a vote of the Trinity Lutheran
Congregation.³⁶

A special meeting of the congregation was held on December 10, 1966 to vote on the consolidation agreement. Pastor Elverum read the agreement to the congregation and after a brief discussion a vote was held. The consolidation was approved by a vote of 37 to 4 and the agreement was signed that same month.³⁷

United Lutheran Church signed the agreement in January 1967. On March 3, 1967, after a separation of 71 years, the reunited congregation met and took on a new name, the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, later renamed Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in 1972.

For a time, both church buildings were used by the congregation. But in 1971, Trinity Church was sold to St. Edward's Catholic Church. St. Edward's built the addition to the chancel in 1978. When St. Edward's built a new church, they sold Trinity Church to a private individual in 2002. Ownership of the building was later held by Otter Tail County as a result of a tax foreclosure proceeding. In 2015, Otter Tail County transferred ownership of the building to the city of Henning. The city agreed to own the building as long as a local organization accepted responsibility to operate and maintain the property. In 2015, "Save the Trinity" formed as a non-profit organization to manage Trinity Church with the intent to preserve the building and operate it as a community arts and event center.

Norwegian Lutheranism in the United States

The history of Norwegian Lutheranism in the United States is a complex story involving dissension, rifts, mergers, and realignments that extended into the modern era. Historian Odd S. Lovoll refers to Norwegian Lutheranism in American as a "tradition of disharmony." There were disputes over doctrine, personal clashes, conflicts between high-church and low-church views, and many factions. Time after time there were splits and new formations. Norwegian immigrants participated in the founding of no less than fourteen synods between 1846 and 1900. In contrast, there was only one Lutheran synod among Swedes, the Swedish Augustana.³⁸

However, these trends had their roots in 19th century Norway. While the country experienced a number of democratic reforms in the early to mid-nineteenth century, such reforms made little headway in the state Church of Norway, in which Lutheranism had been declared the official religion of the state. As the century proceeded, an increasing number of voices advocated for greater lay participation in the life and government of the church. Norwegian immigrants, regardless of their loyalty to their religious heritage, did not wish to duplicate the undemocratic organizational structure of the Church of Norway. Deep-seated dissatisfaction with certain

³⁶ "Meeting Minutes of the Trinity Lutheran Church Board of Trustees," October 27, 1966, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives.

³⁷ "Meeting Minutes of the Trinity Lutheran Church Congregation," December 10, 1966, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives.

³⁸ Odd S. Lovoll, *The Promise of America: A History of the Norwegian-American People* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 99, 112.

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features of the state-church system they had known in Norway frequently found expression in the controversies and disagreements in which Norwegian immigrants were involved on the American frontier.³⁹

In addition, there were other broad historical themes underlying the dissension among Norwegian Lutherans. In America, Lutheran church leaders of every persuasion were faced with the task of how “to transform and adapt a state-church tradition to a viable free church based on voluntary organization and direct financial support from the members.”⁴⁰ Mark Granquist, Associate Professor of Church History at Luther Seminary, commented that once Norwegian immigrants arrived in the United States where there was no state church, old theological tensions might manifest themselves and new ones could arise. But religious freedom provided congregations with choices and opportunities that had not been previously possible. Granquist stated that congregations like Trinity Lutheran Church were essentially learning and practicing democracy. They could work out theological and organizational issues, decide to join or leave a synod, or vote against the wishes of their pastor. Congregations were striving to define the proper American expression of Norwegian Lutheranism.⁴¹

The Augsburg-St. Olaf Controversy

One particular controversy among Norwegian Lutherans involved two educational institutions in Minnesota, and ultimately resulted in the split in the Trinity Lutheran Church congregation and the construction of the 1898 church.

Norwegian Lutherans in the Midwest became involved in a dispute between the supporters of Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis and St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. The controversy resulted in the birth of an entirely new Lutheran church body and the respective supporters divided into two different organizations.

In the late nineteenth century, there were a number of distinct Norwegian-American Lutheran church groups in the United States, as many as five at one time. At the end of the century, great efforts were made to merge these organizations. The task was made difficult not only because of thirty years of theological disputes, but also because of the issue of schools. In the late 1880s, several groups of Norwegian American Lutherans were engaged in a merger process that eventually led to the formation of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in 1890. Mergers had been difficult to arrange and this one was complicated by the question of “schools,” in this case Augsburg and St. Olaf. The new organization had to decide the “school” issue. This was problematic because it was felt they could only support one such institution.

³⁹ Eugene L. Fevold, *The Lutheran Free Church: A Fellowship of American Lutheran Congregations, 1897-1963* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), 3-6.

⁴⁰ Lovoll, 57.

⁴¹ Interview with Mark Granquist by Rolf Anderson, Marilyn Chiat, and Alan Lathrop on April 5, 2016. Refer to the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Christiana Lutheran Free Church, State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, which discusses the history of a split in the congregation.

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Augsburg and St. Olaf were among the dozens of the church-related schools that Lutherans founded in the Midwest, and most of the Lutheran colleges that exist today grew out of these roots. Many of these schools began as academies, which were actually private high schools as public education often ended at eighth grade. As public education expanded, some of these academies grew into undergraduate colleges. Some of the schools were seminaries for training Lutheran pastors. It was a point of pride for Lutheran congregations that they had “their school” and they supported them with great enthusiasm, which sometimes led to controversy. On the surface, the problem seemed manageable. Augsburg was primarily an institution for training Lutheran pastors. St. Olaf was a liberal-arts academy and college that trained students for a wide variety of careers. At first it seemed that St. Olaf would be the “school” for the new church body and Augsburg would be its seminary. But instead a fierce controversy erupted.

Augsburg Seminary was founded in 1869 as an institution for training Lutheran pastors for Norwegian-American congregations. Powered by the educational vision of its two primary leaders, Georg Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal, Augsburg grew into a coordinated, nine-year course of education for young men through its academy, college, and seminary. St. Olaf was founded in 1874 by B. J. Muus and others, first as an academy, then as a college, which was co-educational from the beginning and which sought to prepare young Norwegian Americans for a variety of positions in the world, including the ministry.

When the United Norwegian Lutheran Church was founded in 1890, many saw the academy and college portions of Augsburg as superfluous, and long-term support for them was at best ambiguous. Supporters of Augsburg saw church support for St. Olaf as a threat to their vision of a coordinated theological education and thus the battle began. It involved spirited letters and articles in the press, fights at church conventions, secret meetings, and even disputes in the Minnesota legislature and the state courts. In 1893, the supporters of Augsburg formed a group of congregations called the “Friends of Augsburg,” with which Trinity Lutheran Church aligned in 1896. The “Friends of Augsburg” formed a new church body in 1897, the Lutheran Free Church. Thus, Trinity Lutheran Church became part of the Lutheran Free Church. Congregations of the Lutheran Free Church were characterized by their autonomy, versus a hierarchical church organization.⁴²

The Design and Builders of Trinity Lutheran Church

Once the congregation decided to divide, it is notable that neither group remained in the existing building, which clearly would have been a practical cost-savings measure. Each group apparently wanted to create a new image for their congregation. Yet, the United Lutheran Church congregation chose to construct a building that was very similar to the one they had just left. Their new church that was built in 1897 was a straightforward example of the Gothic Revival style that featured frame construction, a rectangular nave, and a single tower. But it was located at a more visible location on the main street of Henning. The Trinity congregation also built their

⁴² Mark Granquist, *A New History: Lutherans in America* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 229-230. Richard W. Solberg, *Lutheran Higher Education in North America* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1985), 232, quoted in Granquist, 230.

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new church on a prominent corner on the main street, but at the opposite end of town. However, they chose a more costly and unusual design for their 1898 building that departed considerably from the typical design for a small town Lutheran church.

It is not known if an architect was involved in the design of Trinity Church, but most likely there was no architect. The design might have been determined by Pastor Amundsen and members of the congregation, as was often the case, based on buildings with which they were familiar, and the contractor or carpenter may have made suggestions as well. Certain features of the building, such as the Italianate style brackets that support the eaves and portions of the spires could have been purchased through architectural catalogues. Regardless of its design origins, Trinity Church is a very well-designed building. The elevations are carefully composed and articulated, and exhibit considerable detailing. The interior is distinctive for its square nave, which was a departure from the more typical rectangular plan. Moreover, no other church has been identified in Minnesota, or the broader region, that features twin spires rising from a single tower.

In terms of the intent of the Trinity congregation to promote their identity through the architecture of their new church, Jeanne Kilde, Director of the Religious Studies Program at the University of Minnesota, commented that it was not uncommon for congregations like Trinity to attempt to create a new image through the design of their church building.⁴³ While discussing Trinity Church, Associate Professor Mark Granquist stated a building could be very important psychologically to a congregation. It could be an expression of their aspirations and represent who they are.⁴⁴

In terms of those involved in the construction, it is known that John Lundeen, or the Lundeen brothers, and Gustav Anderson from nearby Eagle Lake, roughly 15 miles southwest of Henning, excavated the basement for the church and constructed the foundation. However, as noted previously, it is not believed that these individuals were involved in the construction of the upper structure of the building. The obituary for John P. Lundin of Eagle Lake (note the difference in the spelling of the name) identifies him as a farmer and a stone mason. "Besides farming, he was a stone mason and laid the basement walls of the Northwestern College of this city (Fergus Falls)."⁴⁵ A second obituary stated he lived on the south shore of Eagle Lake.⁴⁶ In addition, the Eagle Lake census for both 1895 and 1900 only list a John Lundin.⁴⁷ Thus, it seems likely that Lundin is the correct spelling of the name.

In terms of identifying those who might have been involved in constructing the upper structure of Trinity Lutheran Church, the Henning Village Census from 1900 includes the following individuals who listed their occupation as carpenters: Chris Nelson (Martin Christian Nelson), Mathias Rosholt, Torkel Oppegard, Ludvig Bogen, Charley Palmer, Christ Christenson, and

⁴³ Interview with Jeanne Kilde by Marilyn Chiat in April 2016.

⁴⁴ Granquist interview on April 5, 2016.

⁴⁵ "John P. Lundin: Man Who Laid Foundation for N. W. College in This City, Passes Away in Eagle Lake," *Fergus Falls Daily Journal*, February 24, 1915, 4.

⁴⁶ "Death of John Lundin," *Battle Lake Review*, February 25, 1915, 5.

⁴⁷ "Eagle Lake Census, 1895 and 1900," Otter Tail County Historical Society, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

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Syver Johnson.⁴⁸ Obituaries have been located for several of these individuals, including Martin Nelson and Ludvig Bogen. Funeral services for both Nelson and Bogen were held at Trinity Church and as members of the congregation it is certainly likely that one or both may have had a hand in constructing the building. Nelson's obituary states, "Besides farming he followed the carpenter's trade, and many are the buildings he built or helped to build here that stand as a monument to his handiwork."⁴⁹ Bogen's obituary stated, "Mr. Bogen was a carpenter by trade, and he shortly got busy building dwellings and business places in Henning, an occupation that he kept at until up to a few years ago."⁵⁰ Rasmus Oppegard was another local carpenter and his descendants state he had a role in constructing the church. He also operated a farm at Leaf Lake north of Henning.⁵¹ He may have been a brother of Torkel Oppegard noted above.

Another carpenter identified in the 1900 census who could have been involved in constructing the church was Mathias Rosholt. After the split in the Trinity congregation, those who formed the United Lutheran Church selected Rosholt as the carpenter for their new building, which was completed in 1897.⁵² Most likely he was chosen to direct the construction of the church. The reason it is believed he may have had a role in constructing Trinity Church is because of the notable similarities in the design of the steeples, or spires, of both buildings. The tapered spires of both buildings are ringed with blind-arch dormers and feature bands of polychromatic shingles that are clearly visible in historic black and white photos. The spires are also surmounted by round finials. However, while it is certainly possible that Rosholt was involved in constructing Trinity Church, the general design of the spires appears on a large number of country and small-town frame Protestant churches in the region. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to conclude that a combination of the individuals identified above were involved in the construction of Trinity Lutheran Church. Additional research may result in more precise information about the building's design and construction.⁵³

Trinity Church also stands out among the other churches built in Henning during the era. The majority of Henning's early churches were frame, Gothic Revival style buildings. However, some of the buildings have been demolished, while others have been significantly altered. Trinity's original 1886 church is still used by the United Methodist Church congregation, although the church is somewhat obscured by a large addition at the front. (Figure 2) The open belfry has also been enclosed. United Lutheran Church (now Good Shepherd) from 1897, had been significantly altered with several additions and modifications, but was razed in 2016 in order to construct a new building. (Figure 3) A fellowship hall from the modern era was

⁴⁸ Census information compiled by Kathy Evavold, Collections Curator, Otter Tail County Historical Society, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

⁴⁹ "Martin Nelson: For Thirty-five Years a Resident of Henning Passes Sunday Night," *Henning Advocate*, June 24, 1915, n.p.

⁵⁰ Ludvig Bogen Falls Dead," *Henning Advocate*, June 18, 1925, 1.

⁵¹ "Rasmus O. Oppegard," *Henning Advocate*, November 5, 1914, n.p., Email from Daniel Broten to Rolf Anderson dated December 4, 2017.

⁵² "The 50th Anniversary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Congregation," 4. Rosholt is also mentioned in "United Lutheran Church of Henning," Churches, Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration, April 15, 1942, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁵³ There is a gap in the meeting minutes for Trinity Lutheran Church for the time period that the building was being planned and constructed. If the minutes are located, it is possible they could yield additional information.

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incorporated in the new construction. Grace Lutheran Church, built in 1899, is also obscured by an addition to the front. (Figure 4) Built for a Swedish congregation, the building also experienced some rebuilding as a result of a 1934 fire. None of these buildings, however, were particularly distinguished architecturally, but they were representative of the straightforward, frame Gothic Revival style churches built by countless Lutheran congregations across Minnesota.

The Swedish Baptist Church, built in 1893, was perhaps the most picturesque of the early churches. (Figure 5) The L-shaped Gothic Revival style building was covered with a steeply-pitched gable roof that featured decorative woodwork in the gable ends. A tower was positioned at the intersection of the two wings of the building and incorporated the entrance. The tower was tapered above the first story and rose up to an open belfry. A tall spire surmounted by a cross completed the tower. This building has also been demolished.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, which served a German congregation, constructed a frame building in 1911, which was demolished to make way for the current church, a finely-crafted stone building completed in 1947. While St. Paul's is certainly a notable building, its construction represents a later era in the history of religious architecture in Henning. Thus, Trinity Church, with its yellow-brick construction, distinctive design, and high integrity, remains the best surviving example of the Gothic Revival style in Henning and an excellent representation of the churches constructed in Henning during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Rev. Carl Amundsen

Rev. Carl Amundsen was the new pastor of Trinity Church at the time the congregation embarked on their project to build a new church. He may have played an important role in encouraging the construction of the building as well as its design. Amundsen was born in Litchfield, Minnesota, on September 3, 1871. He attended Augsburg for his college and seminary education (1890-96) and then served Lutheran Free Church congregations for his entire career. His first call was to Trinity, and he also served parishes in nearby Vining and Perham. After he left Trinity Church in 1903, he served several churches in Wadena County and later served a number of congregations in Cass and Beltrami Counties in northern Minnesota. Amundsen later served numerous congregations in Wisconsin. He then moved to California and served congregations there until 1930 when he returned to Minnesota and headed a congregation in Bemidji. In 1934, he moved to Minneapolis. Amundsen died in Sebeka, Minnesota, on January 29, 1935.⁵⁴

Conclusion

Trinity Lutheran Church is a distinctive example of the Gothic Revival style in Henning. The building retains a strong architectural presence with the high integrity of its exterior and rare

⁵⁴ Norlie, O. M., *Norsk Lutherske Menigheter i Amerika* (Norwegian Lutheran Congregations in America) 1843-1916 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1918), 284, 285, 264, 265, 267, 605, 610, 616, 758, 759, 786, 787, 788, 816, 817, 823, 826.

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twin spires rising from a single tower. It is also the best representative of Henning's church architecture from the period. Trinity Lutheran Church also recalls the immigrant experience of Norwegian Lutherans as congregations struggled to come to terms with the opportunities offered by religious freedom in the United States. The building also meets Criteria Consideration A for religious properties because the property is directly associated with a broad pattern in the religious history of the Lutheran Church, the experience of immigrant Norwegian Lutheran congregations as they encountered democracy and religious freedom in the United States. The property also meets Criterion Consideration A for being a religious property because it derives significance from its architecture. The church is a locally distinctive example of the Gothic Revival style. The story of Trinity Lutheran Church reached a remarkable conclusion when the congregation reunited in 1967 after separating in 1896.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Qualey Carlton C. and Jon A Gjerde. “The Norwegians.” In *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State’s Ethnic Groups*, edited by June Dressing Holmquist. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981.

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Archives. Otter Tail County Historical Society. Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

Archives. Trinity Lutheran Church and the United Lutheran Church Records. Church of the Good Shepherd. Henning, Minnesota.

Interviews

Granquist, Mark. Associate Professor, Church History, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. Interview with Rolf Anderson, Marilyn Chiat, and Alan Lathrop, April 5, 2016.

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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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): OT-HNC-010

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

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 NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 311570 | Northing: 5132680 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

Lots 15 and 16, Block 8, Original plat of Henning

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with Trinity Lutheran Church.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Rolf Anderson, Marilyn Chiat, and Alan Lathrop
organization: _____
street & number: 212 West 36th Street
city or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55408
e-mail roanders6@aol.com
telephone: 1-612-824-7807
date: December 31, 2017

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.)

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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, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Trinity Lutheran Church

City or Vicinity: Henning

County: Otter Tail

State: Minnesota

Photographer: Rolf T. Anderson

Date Photographed: October 12-13 2017

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

- 1 of 21. Southwest and southeast elevations, facing northwest
- 2 of 21. Southwest and northwest elevations, facing northeast
- 3 of 21. Southwest elevation, facing northeast
- 4 of 21. Southwest elevation detail with tracery windows, sign, and clock, facing northeast
- 5 of 21. Southwest elevation detail with tower and twin steeples, facing northeast
- 6 of 21. Southeast elevation, facing north
- 7 of 21. Northwest elevation, facing south
- 8 of 21. Detail of brackets supporting the eaves, facing northeast
- 9 of 21. Northeast elevation, facing southwest
- 10 of 21. Southeast elevation, facing southwest
- 11 of 21. Cornerstone, facing southeast
- 12 of 21. Nave, facing northeast
- 13 of 21. Tin ceiling, facing southwest
- 14 of 21. Nave, facing southeast
- 15 of 21. Nave, facing southwest
- 16 of 21. Balcony, facing southwest
- 17 of 21. Balcony, facing southwest
- 18 of 21. Balcony, facing northwest
- 19 of 21. Stairway to balcony, facing southwest
- 20 of 21. Chancel, facing northeast
- 21 of 21. Basement, facing southwest

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.

Trinity Lutheran Church
Name of Property

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County and State



Figure 1. Trinity Lutheran Church, ca. 1901. Photo courtesy "Save the Trinity"

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Figure 2. United Methodist Church (the first church building constructed by the Trinity Lutheran Church congregation in 1886 and later sold to the Methodists), 2017. Photo Rolf Anderson

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Figure 3. United Lutheran Church, 1913 (no longer extant). Photo courtesy Henning Landmark Center

Trinity Lutheran Church
Name of Property

Otter Tail County, MN
County and State



Figure 4. Grace Lutheran Church, 2017. Photo Rolf Anderson

Trinity Lutheran Church
Name of Property

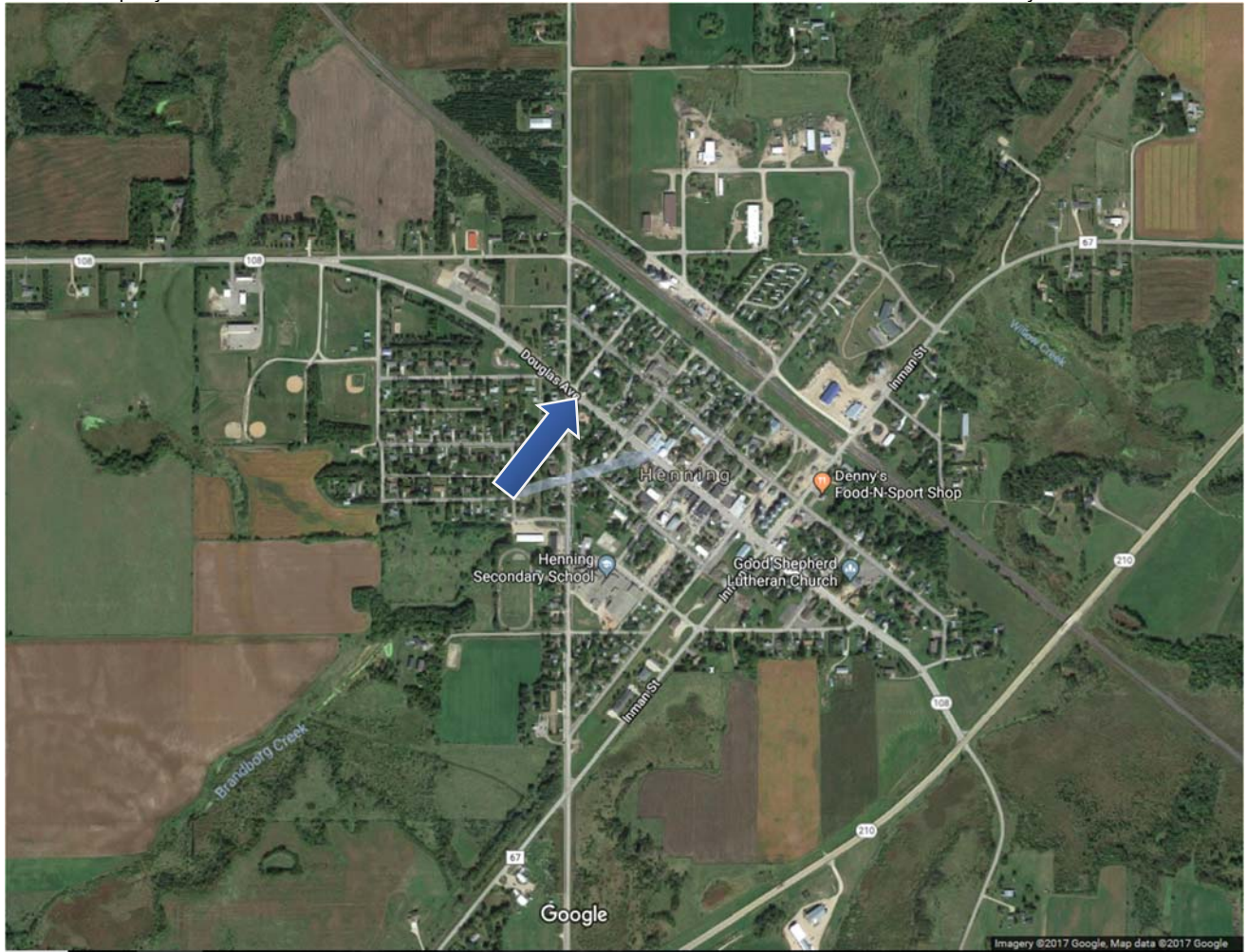
Otter Tail County, MN
County and State



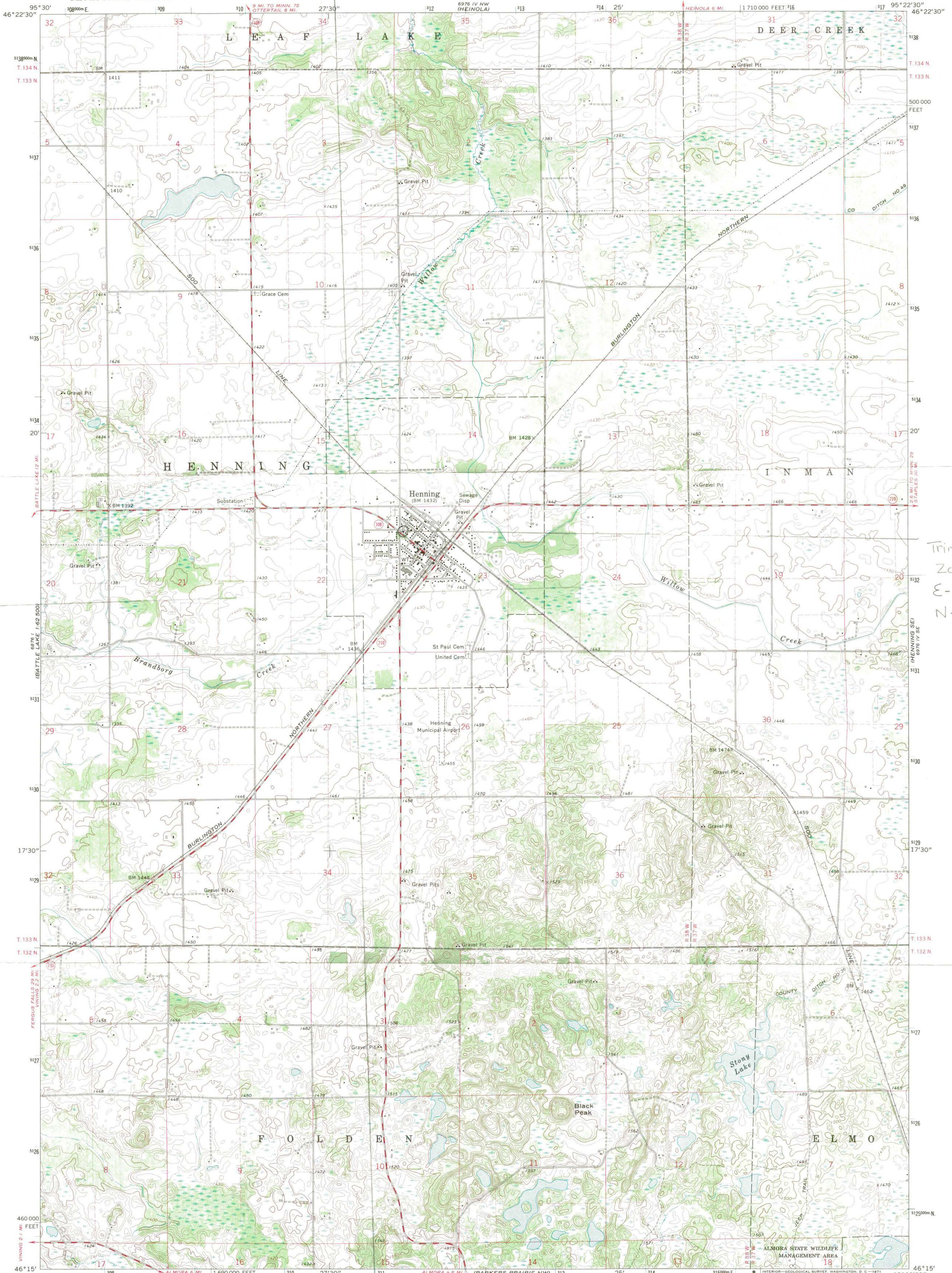
Figure 5. Swedish Baptist Church, ca. 1900 (no longer extant). Photo courtesy Henning Landmark Center

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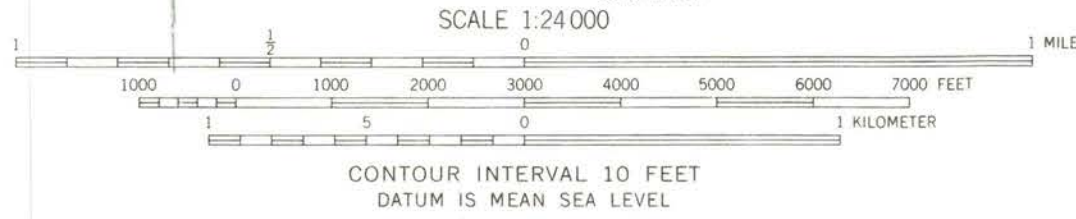


Location of Trinity Lutheran Church, Henning, Minnesota. 2017 Google Map



Trinity Lutheran Church
Zone 15
E- 311570
N- 5132680

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1969
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Minnesota coordinate system, central zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs
This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Secondary highway, all weather, Light-duty road, all weather,
improved surface
Unimproved road, fair or dry
weather
State Route



HENNING, MINN.
N4615—W9522.5/7.5

1969

AMS 6976 IV SW—SERIES V872

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST





TRINITY





TRINITY





TRINITY





































National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Roger Reed Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2278 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

Minnesota Historical Society
State Historic Preservation Office
50 Sherburne Avenue, Suite 203, St. Paul, MN 55155
651-201-3293



TO: Paul Loether, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Ginny Way

DATE: April 10, 2018

NAME OF PROPERTY: Trinity Lutheran Church

COUNTY AND STATE: Otter Tail County, Minnesota

- SUBJECT:** National Register:
- Nomination
 - Multiple Property Documentation Form
 - Request for determination of eligibility
 - Request for removal (Reference No.)
 - Nomination resubmission
 - Boundary increase/decrease (Reference No.)
 - Additional documentation (Reference No.)

DOCUMENTATION:

- Original National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
 - Multiple Property Documentation Form
 - Continuation Sheets
 - Removal Documentation
 - Photographs
 - CD w/ image files
 - Digital Map *USGS*
 - Sketch map(s)
 - Correspondence
 - Owner Objection
- The enclosed owner objections
Do Do not constitute a majority of property owners

STAFF COMMENTS:

56-2504

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: Trinity Lutheran Church

Other names/site number: _____

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: 301 Douglas Avenue

City or town: Henning State: MN County: Otter Tail Zip Code: 56551

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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 local 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 X C D

	<u>4.10.18</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title: Amy Spong, Deputy SHPO	
Date	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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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:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Returned

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/religious facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/auditorium

RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater

Returned

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Gothic Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick, Stone, Wood, Asphalt

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

Trinity Lutheran Church is located Henning, a town in west central Minnesota about 40 miles north of Alexandria and 35 miles east of Fergus Falls. Henning has a population of about 800. The church is located at the intersection of 4th Street and Douglas Avenue, the main street in Henning.

Trinity Lutheran Church was constructed in 1898 in the Gothic Revival style. Constructed on a rough-cut fieldstone basement, the building consists of a central entrance bay, measuring 12 feet by 14 feet, which rises to form a tower; a nave, measuring 40 feet by 40 feet; and a chancel measuring 14 feet by 20 feet. The walls are clad with yellow brick with red brick trim. Tall, Gothic-arched windows are positioned along the walls of the nave and chancel. A Dutch gable roof with bracketed eaves covers the nave while a gable roof covers the chancel. The building's most distinctive feature is a pair of narrow steeples, or spires, which rise from the tower. The exterior remains in near-original condition with only minor modifications having been made over the 119 years of its existence. (Photos 1-2)

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Trinity Lutheran Church merged with another congregation in 1967, and in 1971 the building was sold. The city of Henning assumed ownership of the building in 2015 with the expectation that a local organization would operate and maintain the property. In 2015, "Save the Trinity" formed as a non-profit organization to manage the property with the intent to restore and preserve the building and reuse the property as a community arts and event center. Although the restoration of the building is not yet complete, a number of events have already been held in the building including several concerts and a variety of community events.

Narrative Description

Trinity Lutheran Church is located on the northeast side of Douglas Avenue, at the northwest edge of town. The building is oriented toward the southwest. A set of steps leads to the central entrance and tower bay on the southwest elevation. The original steps of wood with solid wooden sidewalls have long since been removed and replaced with concrete steps of almost exactly the same width and height, but featuring painted iron or steel railings. The original entrance steps and barriers probably deteriorated over time and required replacement.

The entrance/tower bay consists of three distinct parts: an entrance base clad in yellow brick up to the eave line; a stepped-back wooden steeple base clad in lap siding; and unique twin shingle-covered steeples. (Photo 3)

The brick-veneered entrance base features three sets of doors; only one (the center entrance) is in use today. The other two doorways are now sealed shut with plywood panels, but hinges are still in place denoting that the original doors could once have been swung open. The center entrance consists of two doors, although the original doors have been replaced with modern steel doors. The flanking entrances are single doors. Round arched tracery windows top each of the three sets of doors.

In the center of the entrance/tower base, above the entrance doors, is a round window frame that once was filled with stained glass, which has been removed. A clock has been inserted in the space. Just below the former window is a rectangular panel, with the word "Trinity." The wording is still visible, but the lettering is somewhat damaged as the result of a subsequent sign panel (now removed) that had been installed over the lettering in the modern era. (Photo 4)

Three sides of the steeple base feature a louvered vent in the same Gothic, pointed-arch style as the windows in the nave. The rear side facing the roof of the church has no vent. A historic photo of the church taken a few years after its construction appears to show shutters flanking the louvered vent on the front, or southwest side of the tower, but these no longer exist.

The twin steeples, or spires, form the most distinctive feature of the church. Their style may have antecedents in Norway, but it is difficult to pinpoint the geographic area of origin or religious context(s). The steeples are uncharacteristically narrow, hexagonal in form, tapering cone-like from bottom to top. Each is surmounted by a round, decorative metal finial, possibly of tin alloy. Projecting from each finial is hooked-shaped and alludes to an abstract dragon head. There may

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have been more of these on each finial, but they have disappeared over time. The steeples are shingled in alternating patterns of fish-scale and rectangular styles. The purpose of this patterning is not clear and may have been purely decorative instead of having any religious connotations. There are six pointed-arch dormers positioned around the base of each spire. They are solid or blind, having no windows in them, and therefore are decorative in nature. The wood finials atop each dormer are fastened to the peak of the arch and are four-sided, with crowning newel-like oval heads. Again, they appear to be decorative instead of conveying any religious connotations. (Photo 5)

Basement windows are positioned in the stone foundation wall beneath each of the Gothic style windows of the nave. The windows are paired, four-light casements and each is capped with a rounded brick arch. The year "1898" is carved into one of the foundation stones on the northwest side of the entrance/tower bay. (Photo 11)

The nave of the church features narrow, Gothic style windows. One window is positioned to each side of the main entrance and three windows are positioned along the southeast and northwest facing sidewalls. The arch of each window is framed with red brick. Based on historic photographs, the original windows featured pairs of rectangular, four-over-four-light double-hung sash, holding clear glass, and with pointed-arch windows at the top. The original windows have been removed and the frames now hold frosted glass. (Photos 6-7)

The nave is covered with a Dutch gable, or gable roof, in which the hip roof is surmounted by a gable to enhance the appearance of the structure while facilitating snow-melt runoff and providing more attic space. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Eaves project about 18 inches from the sides of the entrance/tower base, a feature that is carried through on all four elevations of the nave. The projecting eaves are supported by Italianate style brackets of carved wood. A projecting eave also exists between the top of the stepped-back wooden tower base and the steeples. The brackets are generally arranged in pairs along the eaves of the tower and at each corner of the building. Single brackets support the intervening areas. (Photo 8)

No longer visible on the interior, the chancel features tall Gothic style windows on the southeast and northwest elevations. The northwest window is now boarded over, while the southeast window is concealed by a later addition. The chancel is covered with a gable roof with asphalt shingles, which slopes to the west to cover a rear entrance to the church along the northeast elevation. The original paired entrance doors have been replaced with modern steel doors, painted blue. The doorway features a rounded brick arch.

A small addition to the southeast side of the chancel was built in 1978. The roof of the addition was formed by extending the slope of the roof of the chancel. The addition is faced in a very similar brick to that used on the church, but is more tan than yellow in color. The northeast wall of the addition includes a pair of casement windows. (Photo 9)

A brick chimney, which appears in a historic photo of the church, still stands at the rear, engaged with the rear wall of the nave, originally serving at least two heating and/or cooking stoves, and secured to the rear roof by metal rods or cables. (Photo 10) All of the window trim and frames of

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the doorways of the building are painted white. The steeple tower base, eaves, and brackets are also painted white.

The primary interior spaces of the church consist of the narthex or vestibule, the nave, the balcony, and the chancel. There is also a rear entrance and a stairway to the basement at the northeast side of the chancel.

The narthex contains a small entry area and the access stair for the balcony, which was built along the northwest side. It appears the balcony was added sometime after the initial construction of the building because of the awkward placement of the stairway, which blocks one of the three entrances to the church. The stair is narrow and cramped due to the restricted space. The first flight ascends to a small landing; from there, the second flight makes a left-hand turn and continues to a second landing; and from there, the third flight makes a left-hand turn and rises to the floor above. There is a closet and storage space under the stairs. (Photo 19)

Unlike the more typical rectangular form, this church has a square nave, a popular form around the turn of the twentieth century. (Photo 12) The height of the nave is about 16 feet and it features a decorative metal ceiling that was installed in a 1928 renovation. (Photo 13) The nave is illuminated by the tall Gothic-arched windows now glazed with plate glass, but previously fitted with stained glass manufactured by the Art Glass Company of Minneapolis and installed in 1958. The stained glass windows were reportedly removed when the Catholic congregation that occupied the church from 1971 to 2002 moved to a new building elsewhere in town, taking the windows with them. (Photos 14-15)

The lower portion of the walls is clad in tongue-in-groove wainscoting. The wainscoting may not be original to the church, but instead installed in a later remodeling of the interior. The walls above the wainscot are painted a cream color, while the wainscot, as well as all other elements, such as the window trim, doors, columns, railings, and ceiling, are painted white.

A balcony extends the full width of the nave at the rear and consists of two levels, indicating that it could serve the dual purpose of additional seating and as a choir loft. Another indication that the balcony was added after the initial construction of the church is how it cuts awkwardly across the Gothic style windows, but this is not particularly visible from the exterior. The balcony is supported by two columns that extend from the floor of the nave to the ceiling. The columns are faced in wood and may have a steel core. The front edge of the balcony has a decorative railing with closely spaced spindles. The central section of the balcony features a concave indentation that is about 15 feet long. It is tied to the balcony's support beams, which flank it on both ends. (Photos 16-18)

The chancel extends through the rear wall of the nave by 14 feet. (Photo 20) It is framed by decorative engaged wooden columns and plain wood trim, which forms a five-sided gambrel-type opening. A raised stage and platform dominate the chancel. A door in the southeast wall leads to the 1978 addition, which was used as the sacristy. The walls of the chancel feature the same wainscot and color scheme found in the nave. In the wall to the right of the chancel area is

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a round decorative stovepipe cover. It appears that a wood or coal-burning stove once stood there, and its stovepipe ran from the appliance into the chimney behind the wall.

All of the furnishings from the nave and chancel have been removed. They once included a pulpit; altar ring; altar, altar piece, and trimmings; hymn boards; lighting fixtures; and pews. The original hardwood floor has been covered by linoleum tile of a light gray color. Contemporary heating vents in the floor were most likely installed when a modern forced-air furnace was added in the basement. Original lighting fixtures have been replaced by contemporary canister fixtures, but the placement of the original fixtures can be determined by the remaining ceiling mounts. Ceiling fans have been installed to help cool the nave.

There is a full basement under the nave. The basement walls are of local, rough-cut fieldstone and appear to be about three feet thick. They date from the construction of the church. The floor is concrete. (Photo 21)

There is also a basement under the chancel. But it is not clear whether there was a basement under the chancel originally. It might have been excavated at a later date, or the walls might have been restructured at some point as the basement walls of the chancel are constructed with poured concrete. Additionally, the stone wall separating the main basement from the chancel basement appears to have been cut through to provide access to the area under the chancel, also suggesting later changes to these spaces, or perhaps the opening was simply enlarged. In addition, the exposed exterior foundation wall of the chancel is of dark brick, rather than stone, further suggesting there were structural modifications at one time.

The basement area under the chancel was once used as a kitchen, but all the fixtures have been removed. Like in the nave at the same location, another stovepipe cover is set into the wall, which indicates there would have been a heating or cooking stove at that location.

Assessment of Integrity

Trinity Lutheran Church retains high integrity. The exterior appears much as it did historically. In about 1931 or somewhat later, an addition was added to the right side of the main entrance to the church that provided a direct entrance to the basement of the building. The addition included a small vestibule, which in turn led to a stairway to the basement. At perhaps the same time, a 5-6 step stairway was installed in the narthex that led down to the new basement entrance. The shed-roofed addition was constructed with dark red brick and was incompatible with the design of the church. In recent years, the addition had fallen into highly deteriorated condition. In 2017, the addition was removed and the walls were repaired with stone and brick nearly identical to the original. Flooring was installed over the opening for the stairway in the narthex and the space was returned to its original appearance. The removal of the addition helped restore the integrity of the Gothic Revival style building.

Another change was the addition next to the chancel, which was used as a changing room. However, this is a small addition to the rear of the church and it blends in with the existing building. The brick is very similar to the original brick used for the church, and the addition is

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sympathetically positioned within the slope of the roof that was extended from the roof of the chancel and is not visible from the primary facade.

The removal of the stained-glass windows might also be considered a loss of integrity. However, the stained-glass windows were not installed until 1958, very late during the period of significance. Moreover, the opportunity remains to restore the windows to their original 1898 appearance. The basic interior of the building also remains in original condition, although the removal of the furnishings represents a loss of integrity. Overall, Trinity Lutheran Church retains a high degree of integrity from its 1898-1967 period of significance.

Returned

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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.

Returned

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

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

ETHNIC HERITAGE

RELIGION

Period of Significance

1898-1967

Significant Dates

1898

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

John Lundin

Gustaf Anderson

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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.)

Trinity Lutheran Church is historically significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of Religion and Ethnic History. The building is important for its ability to represent an important aspect of the Norwegian Lutheran immigrant experience. The construction of the church was the direct result of a rift in the congregation caused by controversies within Norwegian-American Lutheran churches. These controversies illustrate how congregations like Trinity Church, which were no longer bound by the restrictions of the state church they left behind, began to experience democracy and religious freedom in the United States. A majority of the members of Trinity Church voted to separate from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church and ultimately joined a newly formed church body, the Lutheran Free Church, whose congregations were characterized by their autonomy. Those in the congregation who voted not to separate formed their own congregation. The entire congregation was thus learning and practicing democracy while attempting to determine the proper American expression of Norwegian Lutheranism.

The specific controversy that led to the rift within Trinity Church is related to a dispute between supporters of two Minnesota Lutheran educational institutions, Augsburg Seminary and St. Olaf College. Trinity Lutheran Church is also significant for its association with this particular controversy, which had an important impact on Norwegian-American Lutheran churches. Trinity Lutheran Church also illustrates how these religious controversies impacted even small congregations in rural Minnesota, where there was every practical reason to remain united. Yet, the story came full circle when in 1967 the two congregations agreed to reunite after separating over 70 years earlier.

Trinity Lutheran Church is also architecturally significant under National Register Criterion C as a distinctive example of the Gothic Revival style. It remains Henning's best example of the Gothic Revival style from the period and an important representation of the church buildings constructed in Henning in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The well-designed building also includes a number of unique architectural features such as its distinctive and highly-articulated twin spires. No other church building has been identified in Minnesota, or the broader region, with twin spires rising from a single tower.

The design of the church is also unusual for a Lutheran church of the period. A typical Lutheran church built in small towns or rural areas in Minnesota at that time was a straightforward Gothic Revival style frame building with a rectangular nave and a single tower. Trinity Church features more costly brick construction, and includes ornate spires and an unusual square nave. The small congregation embarked on an ambitious building project in order to differentiate itself after the split in its congregation. The architectural expression selected for the church was a means to create and promote a new identity for the congregation. The decision to build at a prominent location on Henning's main street provided a strong visual and architectural presence for building, which continues to this day.

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The Period of Significance begins in 1898 with the construction of Trinity Lutheran Church and ends in 1967 when the congregations agreed to reunite after more than 70 years. The building is considered locally significant.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

History of Trinity Lutheran Church Congregation

March 25, 1878 marks the establishment of Trinity Lutheran Church. On that date, eight men met to discuss forming a Scandinavian Lutheran church in the vicinity of an area known as Pease Prairie, which was later incorporated as Henning. The founders of the church were largely Norwegian immigrants. Norwegians had first settled in Minnesota beginning in the 1850s in areas along the Mississippi River in the southeastern part of the state. After 1865, many Norwegians chose the Park Region of west-central Minnesota, which became the second major concentration of Norwegian immigrants in the state. As of 1875, there were 15,859 Norwegians in this region, 25% of its total population¹.

The new congregation decided to invite Reverend Iver Tharaldson of the Conference for the Norwegian-Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to serve as temporary pastor. Tharaldson was eventually elected permanent pastor and agreed to visit the congregation at least nine times per year. He was paid \$3 per voting member of the congregation per year. It is not known where the congregation was meeting during these early years.

Reverend Torstein Moen became pastor in 1881. In 1883, a building committee was formed to construct a church in Henning. The Village of Henning donated Lot 22 of Block 1 to build the church. Construction began on June 1, 1885 and was completed the following year. The church was built by C. Martin Nelson, who was paid \$75. The frame building measured 30 feet by 30 feet and was designed in the Gothic Revival style. An attached tower featured an open belfry. In 1892, Reverend Gustav Gregusson became pastor.

In 1890, three Lutheran church bodies, including the Norwegian-Danish Conference, the Anti-Missouri Brotherhood, and the Norwegian Augustana Synod, merged to form the United Norwegian Lutheran Church (UNLC). Trinity was now part of the newly merged organization. But controversy soon engulfed the new United Church, which revolved around the roles of educational institutions associated with the church: namely, Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis and St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. In 1893, a group formed that was called "Friends of Augsburg." On July 21, 1896, a vote was held at Trinity Church and a majority voted to separate from the United Norwegian Lutheran Church and to align with the "Friends of

¹ Carlton C. Qualey and Jon A. Gjerde, "The Norwegians," in *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State's Ethnic Groups*, ed. June Dressing Holmquist (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981), 222-227.

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Augsburg." In 1897, the "Friends of Augsburg" became a separate church body, the Lutheran Free Church (LFC). Trinity Church was now part of this group.²

Pastor Gregusson resigned when the split in the congregation took place, perhaps to give each group a fresh start. For reasons that are not clear, neither group remained in the existing church, which was sold to the Methodists. The group that voted to remain with the United Norwegian Lutheran Church, which consisted of eleven families, formed the United Lutheran Church of Henning on July 27, 1896. While the congregation was without their own church, they met at a church at Leaf Lake, north of Henning, and also in private homes. Then on February 27, 1897, the United Lutheran Church congregation voted to build a new church. A building committee was organized and Mathias Rosholt was selected as the carpenter.³ The site for the new church was located near the east of Douglas Avenue, Henning's main street, and the building was completed in 1897.

The Trinity Lutheran Church congregation selected Reverend Carl Amundsen as its pastor in 1896 and also began plans to build a new church. Church histories link the decision to construct a new building with the split in the congregation:

In May 1896, steps were taken to sell the old church property and to buy a new site for a new church. As some of the members by this time had withdrawn from the congregation and started the United Lutheran Church of Henning.

At a special meeting held on January 31, 1898, it was decided to buy two lots for the new church site, and at a special meeting held on March 15, 1898, the plans for the new church were decided upon and the work on the church began soon after.⁴

The *Henning Advocate* reported that, "The trustees of the Norwegian Lutheran church held an important meeting on Monday at which they decided to build a substantial church building on the lots the society bought recently on the corner of Douglas Avenue and Fourth Street. Work of construction will begin as soon as weather permits."⁵

On February 3, 1898, the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* reported that, "The Trinity Lutherans have decided to sell the old church building and erect a church in the spring in the western part of town."⁶ On March 31, 1898, it was reported that, "The Trinity church society will soon begin erection of a brick church. They have sold their present edifice to the Norwegian Methodists for

² "80th Anniversary of the Trinity Lutheran Congregation," August 10, 1958, 3, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives, Henning, Minnesota.

³ "The 50th Anniversary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Congregation," June 20, 1948, 3-4, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives.

⁴ "Trinity Lutheran Church," unpublished history based on interviews conducted on March 8, 1938 with Rev. Albert Framstad, C. O. Rortvedt, and John Rude, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives. These meetings are also reference in "Trinity Lutheran Church," Churches, Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration, April 15, 1942, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁵ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, February 3, 1898, n.p.

⁶ "Henning," *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, February 3, 1898, 8.

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\$400.”⁷ By mid-April, stone had been transported to the building site for the foundation and by early May work was underway excavating the basement.⁸

An article in the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* dated June 9, 1898, provided the names of two of the workers who were constructing the basement and foundation for the building.

Work has begun on the basement to [sic] the new Lutheran church. John Lundeen and Gustaf Anderson of Eagle Lake have the contract.⁹

Wheelock's Weekly reported that the foundation was nearly complete by late June. This announcement attributed the work to the Lundeen brothers of Eagle Lake.¹⁰ Eagle Lake is an actual lake, rather than a town, located to the southwest of Henning in Eagle Lake Township.

Cost estimates for the building varied. An article in the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* dated May 5, 1898 stated, “The new Lutheran church, which is about to be erected, is to have a chapel 40 x 40, the addition 16 x 20, and will cost not less than \$3,000.”¹¹ A feature article in September that described various building projects in Henning stated, “It will cost upward of \$5,000 and when completed will be supplied with all the modern conveniences and be finished in fine shape.”¹²

There may have been a delay in completing the upper structure of the church as it was not until September 1898 when it was announced in *Wheelock's Weekly* that, “The carpenters have started building the new Lutheran church.”¹³ The carpenters were not identified, although it is not believed that John Lundeen was involved in the construction of the upper structure as his business appears to have focused on excavating and foundation work. The *Henning Advocate* also reported that:

The superstructure of the new Norwegian Lutheran church was commenced Monday. The edifice will be completed before real cold weather sets in.¹⁴

Various fundraising activities had also been taking place to raise money for the building. In June 1898, it was reported that, “. . . a picnic of the Trinity Lutheran Church at Battle Lake last Sunday realized \$25.”¹⁵ An announcement in the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* described a subsequent event:

⁷ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, March 31, 1898, 8. While the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* reported that the sale price was \$400, the price was stated as \$300.00 in “80th Anniversary of the Trinity Lutheran Congregation,” August 10, 1958, 4.

⁸ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, April 14, 1898, 8; May 5, 1898, 8.

⁹ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, June 9, 1898, 8.

¹⁰ “Henning,” *Wheelock's Weekly*, June 23, 1898, n.p. It is believed that “Lundin” is the correct spelling of the name based on census records for Eagle Lake.

¹¹ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, May 5, 1898, 8.

¹² “Improvements in 1898,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, September 22, 1898, 3.

¹³ “Henning,” *Wheelock's Weekly*, September 15, 1898, n.p.

¹⁴ “Late Locals,” *Henning Advocate* September 22, 1898, n.p.

¹⁵ “Henning,” *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, June 30, 1898, 8.

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The Trinity church society will give an oyster supper in the hall on Friday evening Nov. 18. The money raised will go towards finishing the new church. Supper will be served from 6 to 8 o'clock. Everyone is cordially invited to attend.¹⁶

The *Henning Advocate* also advertised the supper, noting that the cost was 15 cents and 25 cents, although the reason for two prices was not discussed.¹⁷ But work on the construction of the building was once again interrupted, perhaps because of the availability of funds or labor. On November 7, 1898, the *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal* reported, "Work has resumed on Trinity Lutheran Church in order to get it enclosed before cold weather."¹⁸

The new church was largely complete by late 1898. In early December, the *Henning Advocate* reported, "The work of completing the Trinity church is rapidly going forward and the building will be in readiness by Christmas."¹⁹ But the first event at the church was held in the basement.

The first meeting in the new Norwegian Trinity Church will be held on Christmas day. The building is not yet completed, but arrangements have been made to hold meetings in the large basement.²⁰

The first known social event at the church was held January 23, 1899 when, "The ladies of Trinity church gave a supper and sociable in the basement of their new church building Monday evening."²¹ The event was held to benefit the Sunday school and it was reported that, "A program of music and recitations was rendered, and those present had a very enjoyable time."²²

But work continued on the completion of the main level of the building. In May 1899, the *Henning Advocate* reported that, "Progress on the new Trinity Church is going slowly, but it will soon be finished sufficiently to hold services in the main room of the edifice."²³

The large building project was very ambitious for a small congregation and it was not possible to install the brick facing on the building until 1901. But it had been the intent to utilize brick from the inception as noted in an article in the *Henning Advocate* dated May 12, 1898, which stated, "In the course of time it will be brick veneered. When the edifice is completed it will be one of the finest in these parts."²⁴ The installation of the brick began by August 1, 1901, but the work came to a halt when it was realized that the brick was of inferior quality.

The brick veneering which had been done on Trinity church has been torn away on account of the brick being a very poor quality. The carload of brick on the

¹⁶ "Henning," *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, November 7, 1898, 8.

¹⁷ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, November 17, 1898, n.p.

¹⁸ "Henning," *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, November 7, 1898, 8.

¹⁹ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, December 8, 1898, n.p.

²⁰ "Henning," *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, December 15, 1898, 8.

²¹ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, January 26, 1899, n.p.

²² "Henning," *Fergus Falls Weekly Journal*, January 26, 1899, 8.

²³ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, May 11, 1899, n.p.

²⁴ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, May 12, 1898, n.p.

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ground will be returned to Staples, and the church society will seek a better quality elsewhere.²⁵

In late August, a new load of bricks was delivered.

The second consignment of brick to be used for the brick veneering [of] Trinity church arrived Saturday from Battle Lake and has been hauled to the ground. Now that the proper kind of brick has been found the work may be expected to go forward.²⁶

On September 4, 1901, it was reported that work had begun. The names of the bricklayers were also identified.

The first carload of Perham brick to be used in veneering Trinity church arrived Monday and work on the building was commenced at once. Dave Palmer of Wisconsin will assist Geo. Hall in the work of laying brick.²⁷

The brick work was half done by mid-September and completed by mid-October.²⁸ Additional finishing work was also completed in late 1901. (Figure 1)

The plastering has been finished in Trinity church and the carpenter work is almost completed. The furnace will soon be put in.²⁹

The various improvements were completed in time for a festive Christmas celebration.

There were Christmas tree services in Trinity church on Christmas Eve. A very large tree, beautifully trimmed and lighted and loaded down with an array of Christmas gifts was the sight that met the eager eyes of the children assembled there. They expected that Santa had something good in store for them and in this they were not disappointed. Candy, nuts and apples were freely passed around among the audience.³⁰

These improvements to the building put the church in debt, which reached its high point of \$1,228.63 in 1902. However, the debt was repaid by 1911.

Various events and activities were also being held in the church. These included musical performances, talks, and dinners. For example, in October 1899, it was announced that, "Supper and ice cream will be served by the ladies of Trinity church on the evening of Oct. 25 at 6

²⁵ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, August 1, 1901, n.p., and August 8, 1901, n.p.

²⁶ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, August 29, 1901, n.p.

²⁷ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, September 5, 1901, n.p.

²⁸ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, September 19, 1901, n.p., and October 17, 1901, n.p.

²⁹ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, December 12, 1901, n.p.

³⁰ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, December 26, 1901, n.p.

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o'clock. Everybody welcome."³¹ In November 1899, it was announced that, "The well known temperance speaker, T. K. Torvildson, will lecture in the basement of Trinity church on Thursday evening. He plays the violin splendidly, and all are cordially invited to come and hear him."³² In April 1901, "Interesting religious entertainments were held in the basement of Trinity church on Sunday and Monday. . . . Good instrumental and vocal music was rendered."³³

Over the years, the congregation made additional improvements. In 1914, a new parsonage was built near the church and funded by the Ladies Aid. From 1925-31, while Reverend Olaf Rogne was pastor, a new metal ceiling was installed in the nave, new pews were installed, and improvements were made to the church basement. A new outside entrance to the basement was also built sometime after 1931, which was later removed in 2017.³⁴ One of the last major improvements was the installation of stained glass windows in about 1958 (now removed) that were made by the Art Glass Company of Minneapolis.

Another notable change for Trinity Lutheran Church was the transition from the Norwegian language to English. Prior to 1925, Norwegian had been the primary language. Beginning in 1925, the majority of services were held in English. Interestingly, it was not until the annual meeting of Trinity Church in 1931 that a motion was passed that stated the Pastor's annual report to the congregation should be in English.³⁵

The merger of a number of Lutheran church groups in 1963 set the stage for the reunification of the Trinity and United congregations. The majority of the congregations associated with the Lutheran Free Church joined the American Lutheran Church in 1963, where the United Lutheran Church had already become a member. In 1966, Trinity and United formed a consolidation committee to pave the way for the reunification. In a meeting on October 27, 1966, Trinity's Board of Trustees unanimously approved the agreement. The meeting minutes noted:

Be it resolved that we, the Board of Trustees of Trinity Lutheran Church, meeting this 27th day of Oct. 1966, do hereby accept and approve said consolidation agreement and direct that it be submitted to a vote of the Trinity Lutheran Congregation.³⁶

A special meeting of the congregation was held on December 10, 1966 to vote on the consolidation agreement. Pastor Elverum read the agreement to the congregation and after a brief discussion a vote was held. The consolidation was approved by a vote of 37 to 4 and the agreement was signed that same month.³⁷

³¹ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, October 26, 1899, n.p.

³² "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, November 16, 1899, n.p.

³³ "Late Locals," *Henning Advocate*, April 4, 1901, n.p.

³⁴ "80th Anniversary of the Trinity Lutheran Congregation," 4.

³⁵ "Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Trinity Lutheran Church," January 1, 1931, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives.

³⁶ "Meeting Minutes of the Trinity Lutheran Church Board of Trustees," October 27, 1966, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives.

³⁷ "Meeting Minutes of the Trinity Lutheran Church Congregation," December 10, 1966, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Archives.

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United Lutheran Church signed the agreement in January 1967. On March 3, 1967, after a separation of 71 years, the reunited congregation met and took on a new name, the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, later renamed Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in 1972.

For a time, both church buildings were used by the congregation. But in 1971, Trinity Church was sold to St. Edward's Catholic Church. St. Edward's built the addition to the chancel in 1978. When St. Edward's built a new church, they sold Trinity Church to a private individual in 2002. Ownership of the building was later held by Otter Tail County as a result of a tax foreclosure proceeding. In 2015, Otter Tail County transferred ownership of the building to the city of Henning. The city agreed to own the building as long as a local organization accepted responsibility to operate and maintain the property. In 2015, "Save the Trinity" formed as a non-profit organization to manage Trinity Church with the intent to preserve the building and operate it as a community arts and event center.

Norwegian Lutheranism in the United States

The history of Norwegian Lutheranism in the United States is a complex story involving dissension, rifts, mergers, and realignments that extended into the modern era. Historian Odd S. Lovoll refers to Norwegian Lutheranism in America as a "tradition of disharmony." There were disputes over doctrine, personal clashes, conflicts between high-church and low-church views, and many factions. Time after time there were splits and new formations. Norwegian immigrants participated in the founding of no less than fourteen synods between 1846 and 1900. In contrast, there was only one Lutheran synod among Swedes, the Swedish Augustana.³⁸

However, these trends had their roots in 19th century Norway. While the country experienced a number of democratic reforms in the early to mid-nineteenth century, such reforms made little headway in the state Church of Norway, in which Lutheranism had been declared the official religion of the state. As the century proceeded, an increasing number of voices advocated for greater lay participation in the life and government of the church. Norwegian immigrants, regardless of their loyalty to their religious heritage, did not wish to duplicate the undemocratic organizational structure of the Church of Norway. Deep-seated dissatisfaction with certain features of the state-church system they had known in Norway frequently found expression in the controversies and disagreements in which Norwegian immigrants were involved on the American frontier.³⁹

In addition, there were other broad historical themes underlying the dissension among Norwegian Lutherans. In America, Lutheran church leaders of every persuasion were faced with the task of how "to transform and adapt a state-church tradition to a viable free church based on voluntary organization and direct financial support from the members."⁴⁰ Mark Granquist,

³⁸ Odd S. Lovoll, *The Promise of America: A History of the Norwegian-American People* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 99, 112.

³⁹ Eugene L. Fevold, *The Lutheran Free Church: A Fellowship of American Lutheran Congregations, 1897-1963* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), 3-6.

⁴⁰ Lovoll, 57.

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Associate Professor of Church History at Luther Seminary, commented that once Norwegian immigrants arrived in the United States where there was no state church, old theological tensions might manifest themselves and new ones could arise. But religious freedom provided congregations with choices and opportunities that had not been previously possible. Granquist stated that congregations like Trinity Lutheran Church were essentially learning and practicing democracy. They could work out theological and organizational issues, decide to join or leave a synod, or vote against the wishes of their pastor. Congregations were striving to define the proper American expression of Norwegian Lutheranism.⁴¹

The Augsburg-St. Olaf Controversy

One particular controversy among Norwegian Lutherans involved two educational institutions in Minnesota, and ultimately resulted in the split in the Trinity Lutheran Church congregation and the construction of the 1898 church.

Norwegian Lutherans in the Midwest became involved in a dispute between the supporters of Augsburg Seminary in Minneapolis and St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. The controversy resulted in the birth of an entirely new Lutheran church body and the respective supporters divided into two different organizations.

In the late nineteenth century, there were a number of distinct Norwegian-American Lutheran church groups in the United States, as many as five at one time. At the end of the century, great efforts were made to merge these organizations. The task was made difficult not only because of thirty years of theological disputes, but also because of the issue of schools. In the late 1880s, several groups of Norwegian American Lutherans were engaged in a merger process that eventually led to the formation of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in 1890. Mergers had been difficult to arrange and this one was complicated by the question of "schools," in this case Augsburg and St. Olaf. The new organization had to decide the "school" issue. This was problematic because it was felt they could only support one such institution.

Augsburg and St. Olaf were among the dozens of the church-related schools that Lutherans founded in the Midwest, and most of the Lutheran colleges that exist today grew out of these roots. Many of these schools began as academies, which were actually private high schools as public education often ended at eighth grade. As public education expanded, some of these academies grew into undergraduate colleges. Some of the schools were seminaries for training Lutheran pastors. It was a point of pride for Lutheran congregations that they had "their school" and they supported them with great enthusiasm, which sometimes led to controversy. On the surface, the problem seemed manageable. Augsburg was primarily an institution for training Lutheran pastors. St. Olaf was a liberal-arts academy and college that trained students for a wide variety of careers. At first it seemed that St. Olaf would be the "school" for the new church body and Augsburg would be its seminary. But instead a fierce controversy erupted.

⁴¹ Interview with Mark Granquist by Rolf Anderson, Marilyn Chiat, and Alan Lathrop on April 5, 2016. Refer to the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Christiana Lutheran Free Church, State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, which discusses the history of a split in the congregation.

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Augsburg Seminary was founded in 1869 as an institution for training Lutheran pastors for Norwegian-American congregations. Powered by the educational vision of its two primary leaders, Georg Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal, Augsburg grew into a coordinated, nine-year course of education for young men through its academy, college, and seminary. St. Olaf was founded in 1874 by B. J. Muus and others, first as an academy, then as a college, which was co-educational from the beginning and which sought to prepare young Norwegian Americans for a variety of positions in the world, including the ministry.

When the United Norwegian Lutheran Church was founded in 1890, many saw the academy and college portions of Augsburg as superfluous, and long-term support for them was at best ambiguous. Supporters of Augsburg saw church support for St. Olaf as a threat to their vision of a coordinated theological education and thus the battle began. It involved spirited letters and articles in the press, fights at church conventions, secret meetings, and even disputes in the Minnesota legislature and the state courts. In 1893, the supporters of Augsburg formed a group of congregations called the "Friends of Augsburg," with which Trinity Lutheran Church aligned in 1896. The "Friends of Augsburg" formed a new church body in 1897, the Lutheran Free Church. Thus, Trinity Lutheran Church became part of the Lutheran Free Church. Congregations of the Lutheran Free Church were characterized by their autonomy, versus a hierarchical church organization.⁴²

The Design and Builders of Trinity Lutheran Church

Once the congregation decided to divide, it is notable that neither group remained in the existing building, which clearly would have been a practical cost-savings measure. Each group apparently wanted to create a new image for their congregation. Yet, the United Lutheran Church congregation chose to construct a building that was very similar to the one they had just left. Their new church that was built in 1897 was a straightforward example of the Gothic Revival style that featured frame construction, a rectangular nave, and a single tower. But it was located at a more visible location on the main street of Henning. The Trinity congregation also built their new church on a prominent corner on the main street, but at the opposite end of town. However, they chose a more costly and unusual design for their 1898 building that departed considerably from the typical design for a small town Lutheran church.

It is not known if an architect was involved in the design of Trinity Church, but most likely there was no architect. The design might have been determined by Pastor Amundsen and members of the congregation, as was often the case, based on buildings with which they were familiar, and the contractor or carpenter may have made suggestions as well. Certain features of the building, such as the Italianate style brackets that support the eaves and portions of the spires could have been purchased through architectural catalogues. Regardless of its design origins, Trinity Church is a very well-designed building. The elevations are carefully composed and articulated, and

⁴² Mark Granquist, *A New History: Lutherans in America* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 229-230. Richard W. Solberg, *Lutheran Higher Education in North America* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1985), 232, quoted in Granquist, 230.

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exhibit considerable detailing. The interior is distinctive for its square nave, which was a departure from the more typical rectangular plan. Moreover, no other church has been identified in Minnesota, or the broader region, that features twin spires rising from a single tower.

In terms of the intent of the Trinity congregation to promote their identity through the architecture of their new church, Jeanne Kilde, Director of the Religious Studies Program at the University of Minnesota, commented that it was not uncommon for congregations like Trinity to attempt to create a new image through the design of their church building.⁴³ While discussing Trinity Church, Associate Professor Mark Granquist stated a building could be very important psychologically to a congregation. It could be an expression of their aspirations and represent who they are.⁴⁴

In terms of those involved in the construction, it is known that John Lundeen, or the Lundeen brothers, and Gustav Anderson from nearby Eagle Lake, roughly 15 miles southwest of Henning, excavated the basement for the church and constructed the foundation. However, as noted previously, it is not believed that these individuals were involved in the construction of the upper structure of the building. The obituary for John P. Lundin of Eagle Lake (note the difference in the spelling of the name) identifies him as a farmer and a stone mason. "Besides farming, he was a stone mason and laid the basement walls of the Northwestern College of this city (Fergus Falls)."⁴⁵ A second obituary stated he lived on the south shore of Eagle Lake.⁴⁶ In addition, the Eagle Lake census for both 1895 and 1900 only list a John Lundin.⁴⁷ Thus, it seems likely that Lundin is the correct spelling of the name.

In terms of identifying those who might have been involved in constructing the upper structure of Trinity Lutheran Church, the Henning Village Census from 1900 includes the following individuals who listed their occupation as carpenters: Chris Nelson (Martin Christian Nelson), Mathias Rosholt, Torkel Oppegard, Ludvig Bogen, Charley Palmer, Christ Christenson, and Syver Johnson.⁴⁸ Obituaries have been located for several of these individuals, including Martin Nelson and Ludvig Bogen. Funeral services for both Nelson and Bogen were held at Trinity Church and as members of the congregation it is certainly likely that one or both may have had a hand in constructing the building. Nelson's obituary states, "Besides farming he followed the carpenter's trade, and many are the buildings he built or helped to build here that stand as a monument to his handiwork."⁴⁹ Bogen's obituary stated, "Mr. Bogen was a carpenter by trade, and he shortly got busy building dwellings and business places in Henning, an occupation that he kept at until up to a few years ago."⁵⁰ Rasmus Oppegard was another local carpenter and his

⁴³ Interview with Jeanne Kilde by Marilyn Chiat in April 2016.

⁴⁴ Granquist interview on April 5, 2016.

⁴⁵ "John P. Lundin: Man Who Laid Foundation for N. W. College in This City, Passes Away in Eagle Lake," *Fergus Falls Daily Journal*, February 24, 1915, 4.

⁴⁶ "Death of John Lundin," *Battle Lake Review*, February 25, 1915, 5.

⁴⁷ "Eagle Lake Census, 1895 and 1900," Otter Tail County Historical Society, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

⁴⁸ Census information compiled by Kathy Evavold, Collections Curator, Otter Tail County Historical Society, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

⁴⁹ "Martin Nelson: For Thirty-five Years a Resident of Henning Passes Sunday Night," *Henning Advocate*, June 24, 1915, n.p.

⁵⁰ "Ludvig Bogen Falls Dead," *Henning Advocate*, June 18, 1925, 1.

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descendants state he had a role in constructing the church. He also operated a farm at Leaf Lake north of Henning.⁵¹ He may have been a brother of Torkel Oppegard noted above.

Another carpenter identified in the 1900 census who could have been involved in constructing the church was Mathias Rosholt. After the split in the Trinity congregation, those who formed the United Lutheran Church selected Rosholt as the carpenter for their new building, which was completed in 1897.⁵² Most likely he was chosen to direct the construction of the church. The reason it is believed he may have had a role in constructing Trinity Church is because of the notable similarities in the design of the steeples, or spires, of both buildings. The tapered spires of both buildings are ringed with blind-arch dormers and feature bands of polychromatic shingles that are clearly visible in historic black and white photos. The spires are also surmounted by round finials. However, while it is certainly possible that Rosholt was involved in constructing Trinity Church, the general design of the spires appears on a large number of country and small-town frame Protestant churches in the region. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to conclude that a combination of the individuals identified above were involved in the construction of Trinity Lutheran Church. Additional research may result in more precise information about the building's design and construction.⁵³

Trinity Church also stands out among the other churches built in Henning during the era. The majority of Henning's early churches were frame, Gothic Revival style buildings. However, some of the buildings have been demolished while others have been significantly altered. Trinity's original 1886 church is still used by the United Methodist Church congregation, although the church is somewhat obscured by a large addition at the front. (Figure 2) The open belfry has also been enclosed. United Lutheran Church (now Good Shepherd) from 1897, had been significantly altered with several additions and modifications, but was razed in 2016 in order to construct a new building. (Figure 3) A fellowship hall from the modern era was incorporated in the new construction. Grace Lutheran Church, built in 1899, is also obscured by an addition to the front. (Figure 4) Built for a Swedish congregation, the building also experienced some rebuilding as a result of a 1934 fire. None of these buildings, however, were particularly distinguished architecturally, but they were representative of the straightforward, frame Gothic Revival style churches built by countless Lutheran congregations across Minnesota.

The Swedish Baptist Church, built in 1893, was perhaps the most picturesque of the early churches. (Figure 5) The L-shaped Gothic Revival style building was covered with a steeply-pitched gable roof that featured decorative woodwork in the gable ends. A tower was positioned at the intersection of the two wings of the building and incorporated the entrance. The tower was

⁵¹ "Rasmus O. Oppegard," *Henning Advocate*, November 5, 1914, n.p., Email from Daniel Broten to Rolf Anderson dated December 4, 2017.

⁵² "The 50th Anniversary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Congregation," 4. Rosholt is also mentioned in "United Lutheran Church of Henning," Churches, Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration, April 15, 1942, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁵³ There is a gap in the meeting minutes for Trinity Lutheran Church for the time period that the building was being planned and constructed. If the minutes are located, it is possible they could yield additional information.

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tapered above the first story and rose up to an open belfry. A tall spire surmounted by a cross completed the tower. This building has also been demolished.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, which served a German congregation, constructed a frame building in 1911, which was demolished to make way for the current church, a finely-crafted stone building completed in 1947. While St. Paul's is certainly a notable building, its construction represents a later era in the history of religious architecture in Henning. Thus, Trinity Church, with its yellow-brick construction, distinctive design, and high integrity, remains the best surviving example of the Gothic Revival style in Henning and an excellent representation of the churches constructed in Henning during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Rev. Carl Amundsen

Rev. Carl Amundsen was the new pastor of Trinity Church at the time the congregation embarked on their project to build a new church. He may have played an important role in encouraging the construction of the building as well as its design. Amundsen was born in Litchfield, Minnesota, on September 3, 1871. He attended Augsburg for his college and seminary education (1890-96) and then served Lutheran Free Church congregations for his entire career. His first call was to Trinity, and he also served parishes in nearby Vining and Perham. After he left Trinity Church in 1903, he served several churches in Wadena County and later served a number of congregations in Cass and Beltrami Counties in northern Minnesota. Amundsen later served numerous congregations in Wisconsin. He then moved to California and served congregations there until 1930 when he returned to Minnesota and headed a congregation in Bemidji. In 1934, he moved to Minneapolis. Amundsen died in Sebeka, Minnesota, on January 29, 1935.⁵⁴

Conclusion

Trinity Lutheran Church is a distinctive example of the Gothic Revival style in Henning. The building retains a strong architectural presence with the high integrity of its exterior and rare twin spires rising from a single tower. It is also the best representative of Henning's church architecture from the period. Trinity Lutheran Church also recalls the immigrant experience of Norwegian Lutherans as congregations struggled to come to terms with the opportunities offered by religious freedom in the United States. The story of Trinity Lutheran Church reached a remarkable conclusion when the congregation reunited in 1967 after separating in 1896.

⁵⁴ Norlie, O. M., *Norsk Lutherske Menigheter i Amerika* (Norwegian Lutheran Congregations in America) 1843-1916 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1918), 284, 285, 264, 265, 267, 605, 610, 616, 758, 759, 786, 787, 788, 816, 817, 823, 826.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Published Sources

“The 50th Anniversary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Congregation.” June 20, 1948.
Booklet in the collections of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Henning, Minnesota.

“80th Anniversary of the Trinity Lutheran Congregation: 1878-1958.” August 10, 1958.
Booklet in the collections of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Henning, Minnesota.

Fevold, Eugene L. *The Lutheran Free Church: A Fellowship of American Lutheran Congregations, 1897-1963*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969.

Granquist, Mark. *Lutherans in America: A New History*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015.

Lovoll, Odd S. *The Promise of America: A History of the Norwegian-American People*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

“One in Spirit: A History of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church: 1878-2003.” August 3, 2003.
Booklet in the collections of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Henning, Minnesota.

Qualey Carlton C. and Jon A Gjerde. “The Norwegians.” In *They Chose Minnesota: A Survey of the State’s Ethnic Groups*, edited by June Dressing Holmquist. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1981.

Archival Collections

Archives. Otter Tail County Historical Society. Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

Archives. Trinity Lutheran Church and the United Lutheran Church Records. Church of the Good Shepherd. Henning, Minnesota.

Interviews

Granquist, Mark. Associate Professor, Church History, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. Interview with Rolf Anderson, Marilyn Chiat, and Alan Lathrop, April 5, 2016.

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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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): OT-HNC-010

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

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 NAD 1983

- 1. Zone: 15 Easting: 311570 Northing: 5132680
- 2. Zone: _____ Easting: _____ Northing: _____
- 3. Zone: _____ Easting: _____ Northing: _____
- 4. Zone: _____ Easting : _____ Northing: _____

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

Lots 15 and 16, Block 8, Original plat of Henning

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with Trinity Lutheran Church.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Rolf Anderson, Marilyn Chiat, and Alan Lathrop
organization: _____
street & number: 212 West 36th Street
city or town: Minneapolis state: MN zip code: 55408
e-mail: roanders6@aol.com
telephone: 1-612-824-7807
date: December 31, 2017

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.)

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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, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Trinity Lutheran Church

City or Vicinity: Henning

County: Otter Tail

State: Minnesota

Photographer: Rolf T. Anderson

Date Photographed: October 12-13 2017

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

- 1 of 21. Southwest and southeast elevations, facing northwest
- 2 of 21. Southwest and northwest elevations, facing northeast
- 3 of 21. Southwest elevation, facing northeast
- 4 of 21. Southwest elevation detail with tripartite windows, sign, and clock, facing northeast
- 5 of 21. Southwest elevation detail with tower and twin steeples, facing northeast
- 6 of 21. Southeast elevation, facing north
- 7 of 21. Northwest elevation, facing south
- 8 of 21. Detail of brackets supporting the eaves, facing northeast
- 9 of 21. Northeast elevation, facing southwest
- 10 of 21. Southeast elevation, facing southwest
- 11 of 21. Cornerstone, facing southeast
- 12 of 21. Nave, facing northeast
- 13 of 21. Tin ceiling, facing southwest
- 14 of 21. Nave, facing southeast
- 15 of 21. Nave, facing southwest
- 16 of 21. Balcony, facing southwest
- 17 of 21. Balcony, facing southwest
- 18 of 21. Balcony, facing northwest
- 19 of 21. Stairway to balcony, facing southwest
- 20 of 21. Chancel, facing northeast
- 21 of 21. Basement, facing southwest

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.

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Figure 1. Trinity Lutheran Church, ca. 1901. Photo courtesy "Save the Trinity"

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Figure 2. United Methodist Church (the first church building constructed by the Trinity Lutheran Church congregation in 1886 and later sold to the Methodists), 2017. Photo Rolf Anderson

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Figure 3. United Lutheran Church, 1913 (no longer extant). Photo courtesy Henning Landmark Center

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Figure 4. Grace Lutheran Church, 2017. Photo Roy Anderson

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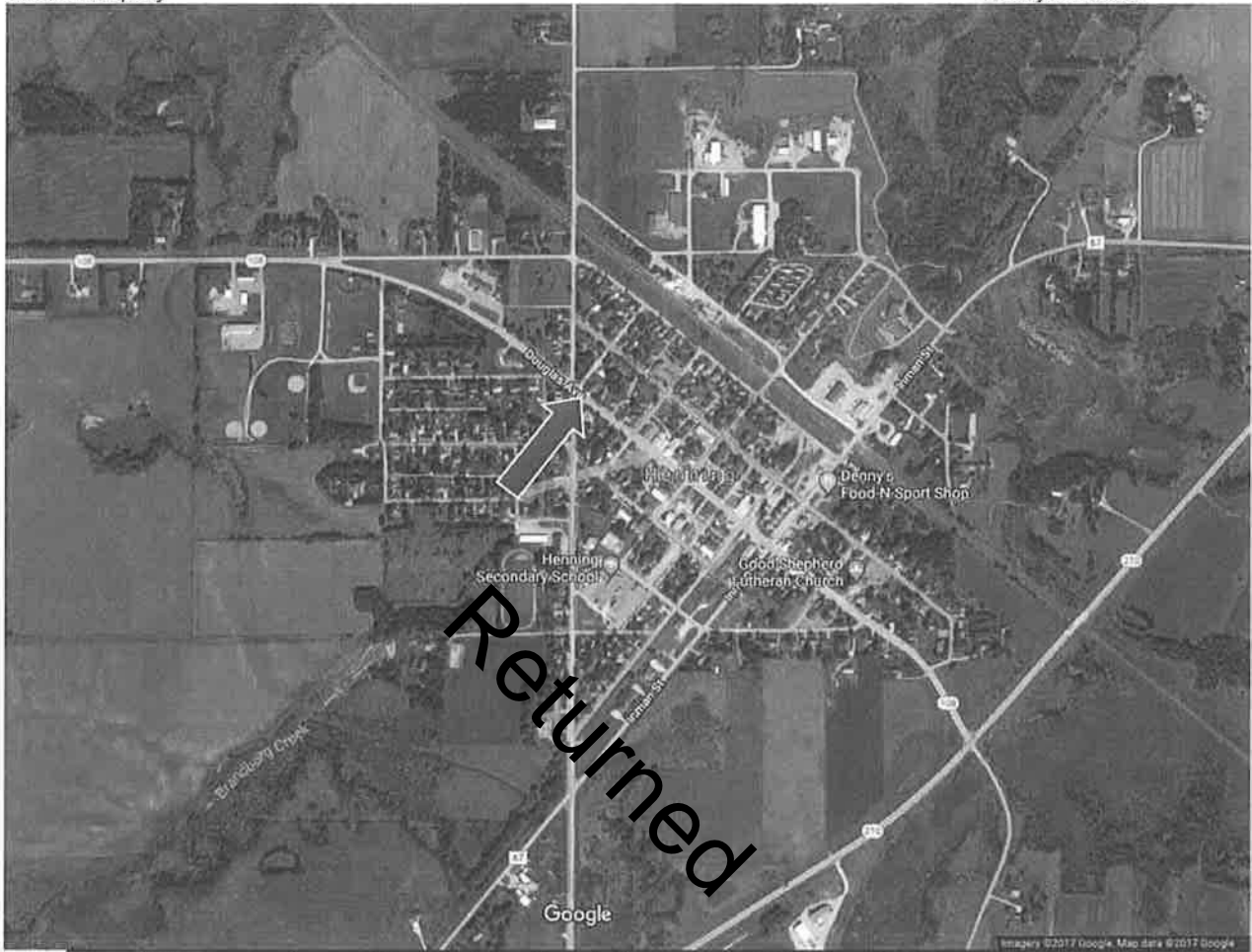
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Figure 5. Swedish Baptist Church, ca. 1900 (no longer extant). Photo courtesy Henning Landmark Center

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Location of Trinity Lutheran Church, Henning, Minnesota. 2017 Google Map

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 4/16/2018 Date of Pending List: 5/4/2018 Date of 16th Day: 5/21/2018 Date of 45th Day: 5/31/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 5/31/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Roger Reed Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2278 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.