

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. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Christiania Lutheran Free Church

other names/site number Highview Christiania Lutheran Church

2. Location

street & number 26690 Highview Avenue not for publication N/A

city or town Eureka Township Farmington vicinity

state Minnesota code MN county Dakota code 037 zip code 55024

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this 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 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 local

Britta L. Bloomberg 4/6/10
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government Minnesota Historical Society

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

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:)

for Robert H. Beall 5-28-10
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Christiania Lutheran Free Church
 Name of Property

Dakota County, Minnesota
 County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only one box.)

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	3	buildings
0	0	district
1	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
2	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion: religious facility

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion: religious facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19th CENTURY: Gothic Revival

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD: weatherboard

roof: WOOD: shingles

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Christiania Lutheran Free Church and cemetery sits on a 6.33 acre parcel of land located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Highview Avenue and 267th Street West in Eureka Township of Dakota County, Minnesota. The site, which is located approximately 9 miles southwest of Farmington, Minnesota, is surrounded by a rural landscape of crop fields, pastures, small wooded areas, and softly rolling hills. The site (see Fig. 1) contains: the church cemetery with approximately 1,197 platted grave sites and 689 burial sites with tombstones dating back to 1865; the church (1877); the non-contributing classroom and office church addition (1963, 1989); the non-contributing Celebration Center (2006); and the non-contributing Parsonage and adjacent garage (1969). The remainder of the site displays a surface parking lot and driveways along Highview Avenue, and a variety of evergreens and deciduous trees with the thickest concentration of vegetation along the eastern boundary of the site.

Narrative Description

See Continuation Sheets

Christiania Lutheran Free Church
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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion

Ethnic Heritage: European

Period of Significance

1865-1964

Significant Dates

1865 (purchase of property and earliest interment)

1877 (church construction)

1964 (church joins The American Lutheran Church)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Larsen, Hans Berg: Builder

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- 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.

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance begins in 1865, when the land for the cemetery was obtained and the first interment made. It ends in 1964, when the congregation of the Christiania Lutheran Free Church joined The American Lutheran Church (TALC); this was an extremely significant transition in which the church symbolically changed from a small, ethnically based church into part of a new, nationwide American Lutheran movement.

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Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The property is and always has been used for religious purposes, and under Criteria Consideration A its main historic significance demonstrates the Religious and Ethnic History of the Norwegian settlers of the area. Under Criteria Consideration G, its period of significance begins with the acquisition of the churchyard in 1865, and continues to 1964, when the congregation joined the nationwide American Lutheran Church.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Christiania Lutheran Free Church (built by Hans Berg Larsen in 1877-78), is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, with the Areas of Significance being Religion and Ethnic History. Christiania Church meets the Register's Criteria Considerations A and G in that it is significant for the important role that it played in the ethnic and religious history associated with the Norwegian-American settlement of the area. In particular, it stands as the sole remaining historic resource representing the substantial "church wars" between the multiple Christiania Lutheran congregations of that community during the latter part of the 19th century, and is often still referred to as one of the "Twin Churches." Its period of significance is from 1878, when it was constructed, to 1964, which is the year that the Free Church joined the American Lutheran Church (TALC). The movement to form the TALC, which eventually became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), was an extremely significant event in the history of the Lutheran Church, in which smaller, usually ethnically-based congregations united to form a new American church with a national presence. The property also relates to the statewide historic context "Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940."

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

See Continuation Sheets

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

See Continuation Sheets

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

Highview Christiania Lutheran Church

Name of repository: Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DK-EUR-001

Christiania Lutheran Free Church
Name of Property

Dakota County, Minnesota
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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.33 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Castle Rock, Minn
1974

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 481093 4934423
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

2
Zone Easting Northing

4
Zone Easting Northing

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

West 522.5 feet of the south 596 feet of the northwest 1/4 of the southwest 1/4 of Section 28, Township 113, Range 20, except portions for road purposes.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the parcels of land that have historically been associated with the church, cemetery and congregation functions.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Thomas Zahn, Principal; Bethany Gladhill, Research Associate
organization Thomas R. Zahn LLC date February 5, 2010
street & number 807 Holly Avenue telephone 651-221-9765
city or town Saint Paul state Minnesota zip code 55104
e-mail tzahn@comcast.net

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

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

- **Continuation Sheets**

Christiania Lutheran Free Church
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- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Christiania Lutheran Free Church
City or Vicinity: Farmington
County: Dakota **State:** Minnesota
Photographer: Thomas R. Zahn
Date Photographed: August 8, 2009 (Photographs 1, 2, 3, 6)
February 13, 2010 (Photographs 4, 5)

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo #1 (MN_Dakota County_Christiania Lutheran Free Church_0001)
West facades of the 1877 church (right), 1963/1989 addition (middle), and 2006 Celebration Center (left), camera facing east. (August 2009)

Photo #2 (MN_Dakota County_Christiania Lutheran Free Church_0002)
West façade of the 1877 church, camera facing east. (August 2009)

Photo #3 (MN_Dakota County_Christiania Lutheran Free Church_0003)
South facade of the 1877 church, camera facing north. (August 2009)

Photo #4 (MN_Dakota County_Christiania Lutheran Free Church_0004)
South and east facades of the 1877 church, east façade of addition, south and east facades of the Celebration Center with the cemetery in the foreground, camera facing northwest. (February 2010)

Photo #5 (MN_Dakota County_Christiania Lutheran Free Church_0005)
West facade of the parsonage and adjacent garage, camera facing east. (February 2010)

Photo #6 (MN_Dakota County_Christiania Lutheran Free Church_0006)
Altar area of 1877 church from choir loft, camera facing east. (August 2009)

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Highview Christiania Lutheran Church
street & number 26690 Highview Avenue telephone 952-469-2722
city or town Farmington state MN zip code 55024

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.)

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Christiania Lutheran Free Church
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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Narrative Description

The Site

The Christiania Lutheran Free Church, educational additions, cemetery, and parsonage are located on a rectangular 6.33-acre parcel northeast of the intersection of Highview Avenue and 267th Street West in the southwest quadrant of Eureka Township, Dakota County in southern Minnesota. The complex is sited about nine miles north and west of Northfield and approximately 34 miles south of Minneapolis/Saint Paul via Interstate Highway 35.

The Christiania campus is sited on a high point of land overlooking the surrounding rural landscape, with the church and auxiliary buildings facing Highview Avenue to the west. The most southerly and most prominent building on the site is the 1877 church with front entry steeple. The church entry is approximately 39 feet east of the Highview Avenue property line.

To the east and south of the 1877 church is a cemetery that dates back to 1865, two years after the original purchase of the parcel for the church and cemetery in 1863.

Attached to the north and recessed easterly from the front façade of the church is the raised, one-story with basement, 1963 Fellowship Hall addition. Attached to the north of the earlier addition is a more prominent end-gabled 1989 addition that projects west toward Highview Avenue. The 1989 addition encapsulates the 1963 addition on the west, north and most of the east elevation.

Approximately 20 feet to the north and 116 feet east of the Highview right-of-way is the Celebration Center, constructed in 2006. This structure also has a gable end facing the avenue and is connected to the other structures with an angled, covered walkway. All three major building masses (the church, 1989 addition, and the 2009 center) have 12/12 roof pitches, projecting a unified image.

Set back to the east and north of the connected religious and educational structures are the garage and parsonage, both constructed in 1969.

The complex has an asphalt parking lot along Highview to the south of the church structure. Additional parking is provided by 90-degree slots directly off of the avenue stretching from the southerly parking lot north to a curved drive in front of the Celebration Center and parsonage garage.

The remainder of the site to the east and north is heavily wooded with a variety of evergreens and deciduous trees.

The 1865 Cemetery

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The unfenced church cemetery that dates back to 1865 is located to the east and southeast of the 1877 church and occupies nearly a third of the site. (See Fig. 1) The cemetery is platted for 1,197 gravesites and has 689 interments with tombstones. The first burial dates to July of 1865. Access to the irregularly shaped graveyard is provided by a gravel road that runs north from 267th Street West, and is adjacent to the wooded area along the eastern boundary of the site.

The 1877 Church

As noted above, the simple Christiania Lutheran Free Church is the most prominent feature on the site. Sitting on the site of the congregation's original 1865 log church, the Gothic Revival wood frame structure has a rectangular footprint 36 feet in width and 66 feet in depth with 18-foot high sidewalls. The white clapboard structure rests on a raised concrete basement (1927) and displays a cedar-shingled roof. In 2008 the deteriorating lap siding and cedar-shingled roof were replaced with new, replicating, cedar lap siding and new cedar shingles.

West (Main) Elevation

The church is sited with its main facade facing west to Highview Avenue. The entrance to the narthex and nave is defined by a broad concrete stairway and wrought iron railings (later construction) leading up to a set of double doors at the base of the square footprint of the belfry and steeple. The paneled entry doors have shallow arched lights in the upper panels. Above the doors is a gothic arched transom composed of thin arching muntins separating ten panes of glass. Over the entry and transom is a 12/12 gabled roof supported with simple triangular wall brackets. The front of the gable is finished, and somewhat enclosed with five horizontal timbers going down to a single vertical member. To the north of the entry stairs is an information signboard (2009) with a decorative gable that reflects entry roof structure.

Centered above the doors is a round, spoked window with 8 panes with 4 slightly raised keys on the two sides and at the top and bottom of the surround. Above the window is a skirted roof belt with cedar shingles that wraps the top of the entrance tower. Above the roof belt is a belfry with a smaller footprint that displays on all four sides louvered openings, with a shallow arched top crowned with shallow gabled surround.

Above the belfry is the compound steeple, composed of a four-sided shallow pitched roof that supports an eight-sided steeple – both covered in cedar shingles. The steeple is capped with a simple metal cross.

The entrance tower is joined to the east with the 12/12 gabled end of main body of the church. There is no fenestration on the gabled portion of the west wall.

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

South Elevation

The entrance tower displays a single 2-over-2 double hung window providing southern light into the church entry. The main body of the church displays two side entrances with gabled roofs. The westerly entry has a single door providing access to both the main rooms above and the basement below. The bracketed gabled roof above reflects the design of the main entrance roof. The westerly double door entry displays paneled doors with glass lights above. The door set is crowned with a 12/12 gabled roof. This entry provides access to the fellowship hall and kitchen in the church basement.

The main sidewall of the church displays five tall, gothic-arched windows. Each window is made up of eight rectangular colored-glass panes crowned with three arched colored-glass panes. The lower four-panel sash is cord-hung and operable. Below each of the main arched windows, at the lower level, is a one-over-one double hung basement window.

The roof ridge supports four lightning rods.

East Elevation

The main features of the east facade are the gabled end of the main body of the church; the projecting bay of the chancel with its two stained glass arched windows, and a raised entry door with a small landing and railed stairs. To either side of the bay roof on the gabled end wall are small rectangular louvered air vents. Below the stained glass windows are one-over-one double hung basement windows.

North Elevation

The north-facing facade is a reflection of the south façade, however, there are only three arched colored-glass panel windows. The easterly portion on the main massing is now connected to the fellowship hall (1963, 1989) additions.

Interior

The interior walls throughout the church are covered in plaster. The surrounds and baseboards throughout are of a simple varnished pine. The pine floors of the nave and altar area are covered with wall-to-wall industrial gray carpeting.

The main double doors open to an entry vestibule. The small room has side windows, ropes coming through holes in the ceiling for operation of the bell, and a turn-of-the-century production transom stained and cut glass panel above the opening between the entrance vestibule and narthex.

Looking east from the entrance vestibule is the narthex (See Figure 2), flanked by a "quiet room" with

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windows to the main room on the north. There is a similar room to the south, which also provides stair access to the balcony choir loft above, and the side entrance to the south and the basement below.

To the east of the narthex is the nave with side stained glass arched windows. The floor of the nave has a rake of 13 inches from the narthex to the chancel on the east. The nave supports a central aisle with nine rows of pews on either side. Side aisles flank the pew sets along the outer walls. Access from the nave to the fellowship hall addition (1963) is provided along the north wall of the main room by a triple wide door opening.

The five-sided chancel, crowned with a shallow arched vaulted ceiling, contains the original 19th century furnishings: altar, altarpiece, communion rail, baptismal font, lectern, and pulpit (although it has been lowered). There is a small storage room to the south and a sacristy to the north of the chancel. The storage room provides egress to the exterior door facing east. The sacristy provides egress to the fellowship hall to the north.

The focus of the chancel is the large oil painted altar piece that depicts Jesus revealing himself to Mary Magdalene on Easter morning. The descriptor of the large canvas reads in Norwegian, "Jesus aabenbarer sig for Maria Magdalena." On either side of the altar and altar piece are stained glass figurative windows depicting the Christ figure.

The choir loft west of the nave displays an arched decorative rail with turned spindles, the pipe organ, and some of the original 19th century pews. Access to the choir loft is provided via a stair from the southwest corner of the nave.

The arched ceiling of the church is clad in acoustical tile and supports an original decorative chandelier over the chancel, and ceiling fans and hanging globed light fixtures over the nave. Spanning the width of the church are three iron tension rods with turnbuckles.

Below the main church is a full basement (1927) with a kitchen facility.

The 1963 Fellowship Hall Addition and encapsulating 1989 Addition (non-contributing)

The 1963 Fellowship Hall is a rectangular two level office and classroom building constructed to the north of the original 1877 church. The structure had a north-south orientation with north and south gabled ends.

Very little of the original 1963 exterior is visible given that the large massing of the 1989 addition encapsulates most of the first additions west and all of its north facade. However, the concrete block foundation of the 1963 addition is still visible along the east elevation. With the 1989 construction the east-facing elevation of the first addition was updated with a seamless blend into the new addition.

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The blended additions display a variety of complimentary casement window treatments on both levels of the fellowship hall. The south end of the addition connects to the original church at the northeasterly corner of the nave. The west elevation displays tall, multiple-light casement window sets.

The massing of the later addition, with its east/west orientation, 12/12 gable pitch, and cedar shingled roof, white lap (aluminum) siding, and the louvered opening of the same design as the openings in the belfry, echo the massing, profile and some detailing of the original church.

The upper level of the fellowship hall now contains offices, the church library, a choir room, and a restroom facility. The lower lever contains the Sunday school classrooms and two restrooms.

The 1969 Parsonage and Garage (non-contributing)

After a long history of having the parsonage located off-site, in 1969 the congregation built a one-and-a-half story mid-century ranch style house and garage adjacent and north of the church and fellowship hall. The L-shaped 12/12 roof line is gabled on the west and the south end. A window gable projects from the upper story on the southerly portion of the west elevation. Access to the front entry from the garage is provided via a walkway that is partially covered by the projecting roof along the west and southerly portion of the residence.

The parsonage has a living/dining room, kitchen, small office, two small bedrooms, laundry, and bathroom on the first level. The upper floor has two bedrooms and a bathroom. The house sits on a full basement.

Located between the parsonage to the north and the church complex to the south is a simple 2-car garage that displays west and east-facing gables, a low pitched roof, and two single car garage doors on the west facade. Pedestrian access is through a service door on the north side of the garage to the parsonage.

The 2006 Celebration Center (non-contributing)

The last addition to the site was the construction of a detached "Celebration Center" 20 feet north and east of the fellowship hall. The 48-foot by 80-foot building has a similar 12/12 end gable facing east and west, is clad in white enameled, vertical metal panels, and a black steel panel roof, and displays a information signboard similar to the church signboard (2009). However, the center varies from the adjacent church buildings in its vertical cladding, dark asphalt shingles, and horizontal fixed and casement window treatments. The center is connected to the other education and church buildings via an open cedar shingled walkway from the 1989 hall addition.

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The center's interior contains a kitchen and restrooms on the west end of the lower level, and two large Sunday school rooms on the second floor. The eastern portion of the building is dedicated to a multi-function gymnasium.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Norwegian Immigration to America and to Minnesota

Although Minnesota was first charted by French voyageurs Pierre Esprit Radisson and Médard des Groseilliers as early as 1659, it was not truly explored until after acquired as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Lieutenant Zebulon Pike led the first United States expedition through the new Minnesota territory in 1805, with Fort Snelling established in 1819. The city of Saint Paul was named the territory capital in 1848, but it was not until the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux in 1851 that much of the southern part of the state, including the Christiania settlement area, was opened up for Euro-American settlement.

Meanwhile, Norwegian emigration to the United States began in 1825. Cleng Peerson brought the sloop *Restauration* (often called the "Norwegian Mayflower") from Stavanger to New York City, where it was initially impounded for carrying too many passengers. President John Quincy Adams intervened, and almost all of the first groups of settlers arrived in New York, where they stayed briefly before moving on to Illinois and Wisconsin. In the 1850s, groups of these settlers began to move into Minnesota, especially in the rural southeastern portion of the state. They were then joined by a second, and then a third, wave of immigrants. By 1928, of the over 850,000 Norwegians that had immigrated to America, more had settled in Minnesota than in any other state (Gjerde & Qualey, p1). In 1905, 111,611 children of first generation Norwegian parents were born in Minnesota (Gjerde & Qualey, p1). Norwegians remain one of the state's dominant ethnic groups, with 878,744 Minnesotans self-identifying as being of Norwegian heritage in the last census (U.S. Census data, 2000).

Several socio-economic elements influenced this immigration movement, all of which were exacerbated by Norway's growing regionalism. Norwegian immigrants were often farmers, spurred to leave their home country by massive crop failures, mechanization, changing market demands, urbanization, and base poverty. The open, rich farmlands of the Midwest stood in stark contrast to the dark, wooded mountains and rocky shorelines of Norway, offering new opportunities to even those who had never before tilled the land.

Socially, too, the opportunities that America represented seemed diametrically opposed to Norway's strict social system of the time. This corresponded with the "Haugean" spiritual movement of the early 1800s, in which romantic nationalist Hans Nielsen Hauge elevated the virtues of rural Norwegian society, viewing the urban areas as corrupted by Danish and Swedish influences. The Haugean movement advocated for the common people, giving rise to labor unions and to the notion of a universal religion. This in turn led to a newly empowered peasant class (the *bonde*), and a folk movement in the country. The Haugeans were especially prevalent among the immigrants, preferring to try to preserve their rural ideals in a new land than to try to maintain them in a fractious, overpopulated, and increasingly urbanized home country.

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Christiania Norwegian Settlement

"In the early 1850s a small group of Norwegian settlers found their way to a beautiful heavily wooded rise of hills on the edge of the Big Woods in Eureka Township of Dakota County in Minnesota. The name these immigrants chose for their new community was Christiania, the name by which the capital city of their homeland was known at the time. Their choice of that name may indicate that they had grandiose dreams for the growth of this new community."

- A. Gerald Dyste, *The Twin Churches Christiania, Minnesota*

The first settler of the Christiania community was seventeen-year-old Ole Olson, who claimed 120 acres on Chub Lake in the fall of 1853. He was joined by his family and the Sampson family in July, 1854. The next to arrive, in June 1855 were Peter Thompson and Juel and Inga Knutson; the Knutsons were subsequently the parents of the first child born in the community, Thedeman, born December 1, 1855.

Although the Olsons had originally emigrated from Hallingdal, Norway, the later groups of arrivals to the new community were almost evenly split between those from Eidsvoll in Akershus and from the Seljord parish of Upper Telemark. Eidsvoll is a flat, agricultural community just to the north of the country's capital, and is where the country's constitution was signed in 1814. Telemark is a mountainous, inland area, where "free heel" telemark skiing was invented. The two communities, though only 246 kilometers distant, were remarkably different socially, economically, and politically – even their dialects varied enough so that communication problems ensued.

The first wagon train of these new settlers arrived in late summer, 1855, with six families. As with the previous families, they were all relocating from the Wisconsin communities of Muskego and Koshkonong. Those two communities had already become known for oversettlement, for dampness-related disease, and most of all, for religious conflict between those who wanted to recreate the Lutheran State Church of Norway (generally the Eidsvollers) and those promoting the Hauge movement (usually the Telemarkers). This schism was indicative of the major religious divisions among the immigrants, and were the precursors to the later synod divisions.

There was a concern that the religious issues that had plagued the Wisconsin communities might come to pass in the new settlement. However, the new residents also had a lot of hope, and united behind the symbolic name "Christiania," as suggested by community leader Peter Ruh in 1855.

Footholds of Religion

Although the Wisconsin communities had suffered religious strife, and while the new settlers of Christiania came from disparate areas of Norway, there was hope that their Lutheran faith would unite

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them, much as the state church of Norway had done. To this end, the new community was eager to find a resident pastor, though their small size and relative isolation made their position more difficult. Perhaps the entire story of the community would have been changed had their first religious leader been a different choice.

Daniel Brown (likely a pseudonym) came to preach in Christiania in 1857, after a rather checkered past. He had trained in a Swedish seminary, but was reported to have been forced to flee after an unknown legal situation. Upon returning to America, he set out to be a frontier evangelist. His first position as such was with the East Union parish in Carver County in 1856, but was driven out of that area due to his alcoholism in 1857. He arrived in Christiania soon after, where he established a congregation, and shortly thereafter the choir (Christiania Lutheran Church has thereafter always been known as "the singing church"). Brown has the singular distinction of being the only pastor to serve the whole of Christiania in one united congregation.

However, Brown apparently soon started drinking again and became derelict in his duties. Thus, Christiania congregation's first great divide was not based on a religious schism, but upon the far more prosaic issue that some backed Brown and some wanted him removed. The latter won out, and in 1859 Brown left Christiania. He attempted to gain a foothold as a pastor in Moore's Prairie and then in Superior, but neither was successful, and he joined the 5th Minnesota Volunteer Infantry in 1862, dying of tuberculosis soon after the battle of Vicksburg.

The Christiania congregation hoped to heal the divide in the community by finding a more qualified, Lutheran-approved pastor. Unfortunately, by that point the Norwegian-American Lutheran church had essentially divided itself into three disparate synods, reflecting the essential divisions of the church. Each of these synods lobbied for control in Christiania.

The Eielsen Synod (originally named the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), had been organized in the Jefferson Prairie settlement of Wisconsin by Eiling Eielsen in 1846. Eielsen had been active in Muskego and in Fox River, Illinois, and was a Haugean lay preacher. This philosophy emphasized the importance of repentance and conversion, eschewing formalism, ritualism, and clerical authority. Eielsen is said to have come to preach in Christiania, but the exact date is not known. Many in the community were drawn to this synod, based on its focus on evangelical salvation and on lay preaching, as well as its similarity to the Haugean ideals.

The Eielsen Synod's opposite counterpart was the Norwegian Synod, as organized in 1853 in Koshkonong, Wisconsin. This synod was most closely related to the Norwegian state church in its structure and strict class system. The Norwegian Synod sent frontier missionary Laur Larsen to Christiania with the stated purpose of removing a "false prophet" (Brown) (Dyste thesis, p48); he attempted to establish the community in a Norwegian Synod congregation, but there was much dissension. Later, Laursen went on to found Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.

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The third active synod of the time, the Synod of Northern Illinois, was organized in 1851 and fell ideologically between the Eielsen and Norwegian synods. This synod was the most diverse, made up of Norwegians, other Scandinavians (especially Swedes), and Germans.

Ole Paulson, a member of the Northern Illinois Synod, had been part of the group to drive Daniel Brown out of Carver County before himself becoming a colporteur (Bible peddler) in 1859. One of his first trips in his new capacity was to Christiania, and though a layman, he was warmly received when he organized two weeks of home-based prayer meetings. It seems to have been Paulson's presence in the community that tipped the scales toward the choice of the Synod of Northern Illinois, and he returned to Carver County with an invitation for its pastor, Peter Carlson, to establish a new congregation in Christiania. During the last week of December, 1859, a meeting was held to organize the new congregation, Carlson was issued a letter of call, and the church was officially named the Christiania Lutheran Church. This is the date that the Christiania Lutheran Free Church officially uses as its date of inception.

Once again, however, this fragile unity was not to last. Soon after, at a home revival meeting held in early 1860, an unnamed old woman experienced an extreme mental breakdown:

"Something unfortunate happened. An old, very lovable woman who hadn't been converted, but, at the same time needed the saving grace by faith of the Saviour, became at once deranged and entirely uncontrollable... She raved for a couple of weeks and died in this circumstance... Now Satan got 'water for his mill'..."

- Paulson memoirs, p40

Though a relatively minor situation in itself, hysteria over the old woman's breakdown colored the situation. Superstition, a lack of understanding, and fear of "the other" exacerbated tensions between the residents and heightened their differences. It was in this way that the revival incident instigated the first real "spilittelse" (church fight) within the community, which eventually led to the creation of multiple — and two main — churches in Christiania.

"Ingen strid som kirkestrid" (No fight like a church fight)

"And so a split occurred in the congregation, or perhaps more accurately, the people divided themselves into two factions, and the hot-headedness and anger and accusations and blasphemy, usually associated with such a split, unfortunately found all too open entrance to many a home and heart."

- Nils Wickre, *Lutheranen*, p394-5

Following the revival incident, during the early part of 1860, it appears that services for the Christiania Lutheran Church were especially contentious, with one group of congregants meeting to worship and another group gathering in opposition. There may even have been some physical altercations. Nevertheless, it seems that this dissonance was still under the umbrella of one congregation, with the

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final Articles of Incorporation for the first Christiania Lutheran Church completed in the home of early settler Juel Knutson on April 24, 1860. Pastor Peter Carlson continued to lead the church until July, 1861, when Pastor Nils Olson arrived as the first resident pastor. Olson's ministry was characterized as "sound and calming," though there was some criticism against his Frankean views (the Frankeans were a splinter group that varied in some views on the sacraments).

In the meantime, however, Pastor Bernt Julius Muus organized the opposition into a Norwegian Lutheran synod. Muus arrived in Christiania as a visiting pastor beginning in the winter of 1860, with a breakaway Christiania congregation issuing him a letter of call in 1861. Muus was not established in the community, however, until a second letter of call was issued in 1862. It remains unclear as to the reason for the delay, though speculation ranges from Muus not wanting to enter into such strife to the 1861 call being the final effort of members of the congregation to unite as one during the interregnum between Pastors Carlson and Olson. In any case, it appears the Norwegian Synod was firmly established by late 1862, although its Articles of Incorporation were not registered until 1864. One of the reasons cited by the new group for splitting with the original Christiania Church was Olson's Frankean views, though it is widely held that the split had more to do with aggressive competition between – and expansion of – the synods than it did with the views of one man.

It seems that the confusion in the church names began almost immediately. When Muus' congregation registered their incorporation, they chose the name "Christiania Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation." Their articles went on to state that if that name was already in use, the name "Dakotah Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation," but that name was never used. Whether this was in a direct challenge to the established Christiania Lutheran Church, or a result of some other circumstance such as a hiatus or decline of the original congregation is unclear.

The Twin Churches

That the competing congregations eventually became "twin churches" is a statement about the overall character of the Christiania community. Although the settlers divided on Sunday mornings, they worked together during the week, serving in local government, attending school together, working together to harvest crops (with a few notable exceptions), and socializing. There were several intermarriages between the congregations, though both pastors warned against the dangers of "mixing." Perhaps most telling was the annual Fourth of July celebration that the two churches jointly sponsored, highlighting the town's American unity over its Norwegian dissonance.

The differences between the two main congregations as they operated were far less evident than they had been during their contentious division. The two synods may have differed, but they were still both branches of the Lutheran church, unlike other communities in which substantially different faiths were pitted against each other. In many ways, the strife in Christiania was indicative of the overall battles between the synods in the Scandinavian-American Lutheran church. By 1917 there were more than

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fifteen different synods, and the distinctions between these groups continues to this day, especially in the Norwegian factions. Many have actually credited the diverse synods with strengthening the Lutheran faith as a whole, allowing it to challenge itself within the faith and providing a variety of choices for its adherents. Others credit the American ideal of freedom of religion – in contrast to the single state church of Norway – as instigating the numerous divisions. In any case, this multiplicity stood the residents of Christiania well, where it is evidenced that several people were able to switch congregations if they had differences with the pastor or the other congregants, rather than leaving the Lutheran religion as a whole.

In Christiania, this multiplicity of faith was evidenced in that the original two congregations eventually split again and again; at one point, there were no fewer than four “Christiania Lutheran Churches” (as well as two other Danish Lutheran churches) in the community.

In truth, other than the church they attended, there were relatively few differences between the Christiania residents. They appear to have been of equal socio-economic class, with similar assessed land values (Dyste thesis, p76). Certainly, the theological differences were minor, though certainly present. The biggest division of the community appears to have been their original region of origin, with almost all of the Eidsvollers remaining with the original church, and the vast majority of the Telemarkers joining the Norwegian Synod congregation.

The original split between the two congregations was most visually represented by their church buildings, with the “twin churches” sitting side-by-side on the hilltop for almost a century. The first log church for the Christiania Lutheran Free Church was built in 1865, and was replaced by the new church (its present building) in 1877-78. The Norwegian Synod parish built their frame church just next door in 1867. The congregation expanded and eventually replaced that church with a new church on the same site in 1893; that church burned to the ground in 1957 and the congregation merged with another congregation, building a new church two miles to the west in Eidsvoll. That church is now known as the Christiania Lutheran Church of Lakeville, while the original Christiania Lutheran Free Church has been known as the Highview Christiania Lutheran Church since 1966.

The Splintering of the Synods

The drama of the conflicts in Christiania was heightened by the division between the various Lutheran synods nationwide. Although the residents of Christiania tended to live in harmony, further splits in the community were exacerbated by larger divisions within the church, particularly with regards to its educational institutions. This seemed to have a disproportionate effect on the small community of Christiania, whose charismatic religious leaders were often involved with these institutions and five of whom went on to become presidents of seminal Lutheran colleges in the area: Augsburg (in Minneapolis), Luther (in Decorah, Iowa), Gustavus Adolphus (in Saint Peter), and St. Olaf (in Northfield).

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The Augustana Synod had been established in 1860 in Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin. With its primary roots among the Swedish-American immigrants, it also included Danes and Norwegians, and was the group that founded Gustavus Adolphus College in 1862. However, in 1870, there was a split in the synod between the Norwegians and the Swedes, with the majority of the Norwegians leaving to form two new synods, the Norwegian-Danish Conference and the Norwegian Augustana Synod. The original Christiania Lutheran Church affiliated with the Norwegian-Danish Conference, thus becoming known as the "Conference" congregation and including many of the new Danes settling in the area. The congregation grew substantially, which predicated the need for the 1878 church building, replacing the smaller original log structure.

There was also conflict between the "old school" conservative positions and the "new school" that arose from church reform in Norway. This threatened to split the original Christiania parish during Pastor Wold's tenure from 1881-1888, but Wold managed to hold the group together. This dissension, however, may have served as a precursor to the Free Church controversy a decade later.

Meanwhile, in the late 1800s the Norwegian Synod was embroiled in a church war of its own, which has come to be referred to as the "election controversy." The theological debate, over the doctrine of justification and pre-destination, bitterly split the synod and led to creation of other groups such as the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood, but remarkably enough, Pastor Quammen was able to keep the Christiania group from becoming embroiled in the issue.

The Free Church

The original Christiania congregation was not one of the original congregations that formed the new Lutheran Free Church in 1897. It joined the movement later that year, after its popular pastor, Elias Aas, was expelled from the United Church after he agreed to ordain an Augsburg seminary graduate; this stemmed from a controversy within the United Church regarding the relative positions of the College of St. Olaf and Augsburg Seminary.

Layman (and respected Christiania resident) Ole Ruh led an opposition group, eventually seceding and creating the new United Christiania Church which operated until 1917, when the United Church, the Norwegian Synod, and the Hauge Synod merged to become the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America. This division was perhaps every bit as contentious as the original "church wars" that had formed the Twin Churches. When United Christiania dissolved, the majority of the congregation did not rejoin the Free Church, but instead chose to follow Quammen's congregation at the Norwegian Synod church.

Two other (Danish) groups split off in 1896 to form St. John's and Immanuel Lutheran, which dissolved in 1925 and 1964, respectively.

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The Free Church was a "low church," established on the principle of "a free church in a free land" (Carlsen p14). It followed reform principles that focused on spiritual awakening and promote a "living" Christianity (the *troende*) (Dyste thesis, p99). This focus on the lay person brought the movement full circle in similarity to the original Haugean principles promoted by Eiling Eielsen. It was seen as similar to new American churches, particularly revivalist congregations, in contrast to the more conservative, traditional Norwegian Synod church next door.

The Free Church had many expansive initiatives, including a vibrant youth ministry and a women's movement that allowed women full representation and voting in the church over twenty years before the American Constitution granted full suffrage. Lay activities were encouraged. The Free Church movement fully merged with the American Lutheran Church (TALC) in 1964; that group is now the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Both Christiania churches are now ELCA members.

Highview Christiania Church as a Physical Resource

As mentioned earlier, at one time there were six separate Lutheran churches serving the Christiania community. Four of these were called "Christiania Lutheran Church," two of which stood side by side as "twin churches."

The "Twin Churches"

- The Christiania Lutheran Free Church (Highview Christiania Lutheran Church) – the original Christiania Lutheran congregation.
- Christiania Lutheran Church (East Christiania Lutheran) – the Norwegian Synod church created during the initial split of the congregation. Now located in a new building two miles away from the original site.

The other churches:

- West Christiania Lutheran – the parish that split from the original Norwegian Synod church, re-using their original church building by relocating it five miles away. This was a split due to distance, not theological concerns, and West Christiania was served by the same pastor and governed by the same council. West and East Christiania eventually re-united under the umbrella of the Christiania Lutheran Church.
- United Christiania – the group that split from the original congregation when that group joined the Free Church in 1897. United Christiania built a church in the village of Eidsvoll in 1908, but dissolved in 1917.
- St. John's Lutheran – a Danish group that split off in 1896 to form their own congregation.
- Immanuel Lutheran – another Danish group that formed its own congregation in 1896.

Of this rich and complicated history, only Highview Christiania Church remains in its original, historic

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building. The church is the sole remaining Norwegian Gothic Revival church in the area, and a physical touchstone of the conflicts between the congregations and the overall efforts of the area's Norwegian-American immigrants to establish their religious identity. As such, it is representative of the religious and ethnic history of the community.

When the congregation voted to replace their original log church with a new building in 1877, they presumably wanted one reminiscent of what they would have seen in their home country of Norway. This thesis is supported by the fact that the design of the church corresponds almost exactly to a stock plan designed in the 1850s by the State Church of Norway in an effort to increase the church's presence by making it easier for small communities to construct sanctuaries. National decree from 1851 decreed that church buildings should be able to seat 3/10 of the parish.

Pastor Laur Larsen has considered the relationship of the Norwegian-American churches to their counterparts in Norway at length. His assertion is that the Highview building is "a church that looks like a church," (Larsen, p25). It and other similar Norwegian Gothic revival churches had a typically a long rectangular footprint. One entered through the foot of the steeple (the "weapon house"). At the far end of the rectangular sanctuary was an altar, typically decorated with a large oil painting, and incorporating a baptismal font and a pulpit. Two small rooms, the pastor sacristy and the baptismal sacristy, flanked the altar. The balcony was reserved for the organ and the church choir, and the typical church had two small rooms in the back, that mirrored the altar sacristies.

The design of the building reflected neo-gothic ideals, concepts which translated well to the aspirations of immigrants in a new nation. The long sanctuary was to represent long perspectives, and a desire for endlessness — a journey through one's life. The altar provided distanced reflection, and the steeple a heavenward aspiration. Beyond the wide doors was the everyday world (Larsen, p 24-25). However, in the case of Highview and several other American churches, this long-perspective symbolism may have been less evident, as the American sanctuaries were typically more well-attended and crowded than their Norwegian country counterparts.

Although the relationship between Highview Christiania Lutheran Church (as well as other, similar Norwegian-American Gothic revival churches) and the State Church of Norway structures is likely, it remains speculative. There appear to be no original sources in Highview's archives that demonstrate that the 1878 church was an intentional reproduction of a State of Norway Church. This aspect would require further future research.

The altar painting at Highview is original, though the exact date of its painting and the artist are unknown. The painting was evaluated and restored by the Minneapolis of Institute of Art in 1967 and was determined to be one-of-a-kind, and not from the usual "altar painting factories" of the day. As many of the other altar furnishings (such as the frame, pulpit, lectern, and baptismal font) are from Cincinnati, it may have been painted there. The two large chandeliers are also original, though they have been electrified.

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The floor of the church is slightly raked, allowing for better sightlines and emphasizing the feeling of space. Original truss rods hold the side walls in tension, with no significant settling or shifting.

The interior acoustics are excellent, even after alteration of the ceiling, reflecting the church's original nickname of "the singing church" that may date as far back as Daniel Brown's leadership.

Other alterations to the church have generally preserved its character. In 1927 the church was raised and a basement added, with the excavation done by one man with a scraper and a horse and cart carrying the earth out. Other interior renovations were made in 1938, and an addition was constructed in 1963 that provided classrooms, offices, and the first indoor plumbing. A new parsonage was built on church land in 1969, and a second, larger addition was incorporated in 1989. The most recent addition was the nearby Celebration Center in 2006, connected to the original church by gardens and a covered walkway.

The churchyard cemetery has been in continuous uses since 1865, and, unlike other similar cemeteries, has never been fenced.

The Highview Christiania Lutheran Church – known historically as the Christiania Lutheran Free Church – stands today as an excellent historic resource demonstrating the Norwegian-American settlement of the Christiania community. Reminiscent of state-sanctioned churches in Norway, it translates these ideals to a new American immigrant church. Perhaps more importantly, though, it stands as the remaining "Twin Church" in Christiania, where the conflict between the Lutheran synods reflected in a microcosm the larger struggles of the faith as a whole. It is thus indicative of an entire movement both within the community and the nation, exemplifying the Norwegian-American immigrant religious experience.

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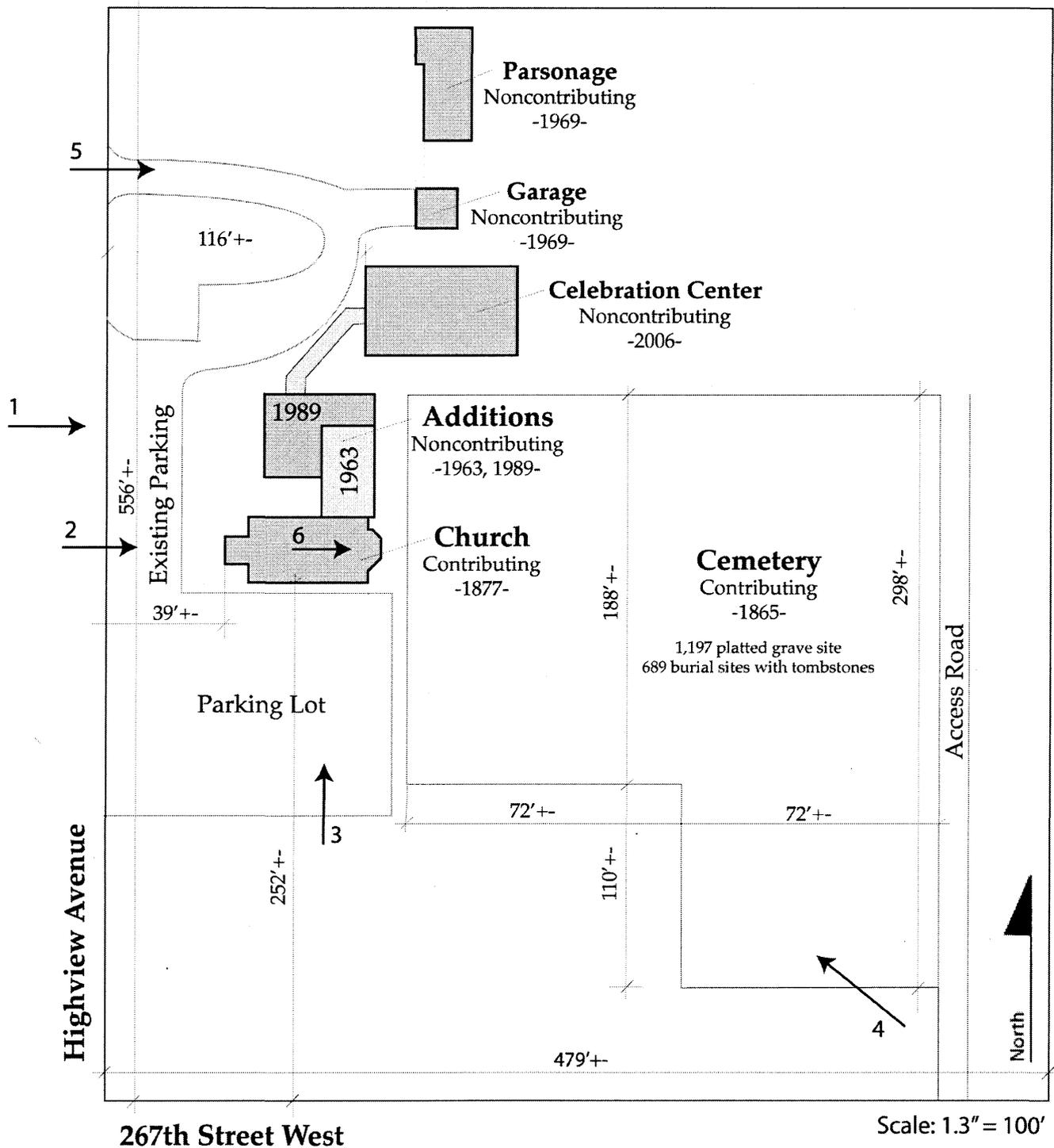


Figure #1
Christiania Lutheran Free Church Site Plan
Photography Key

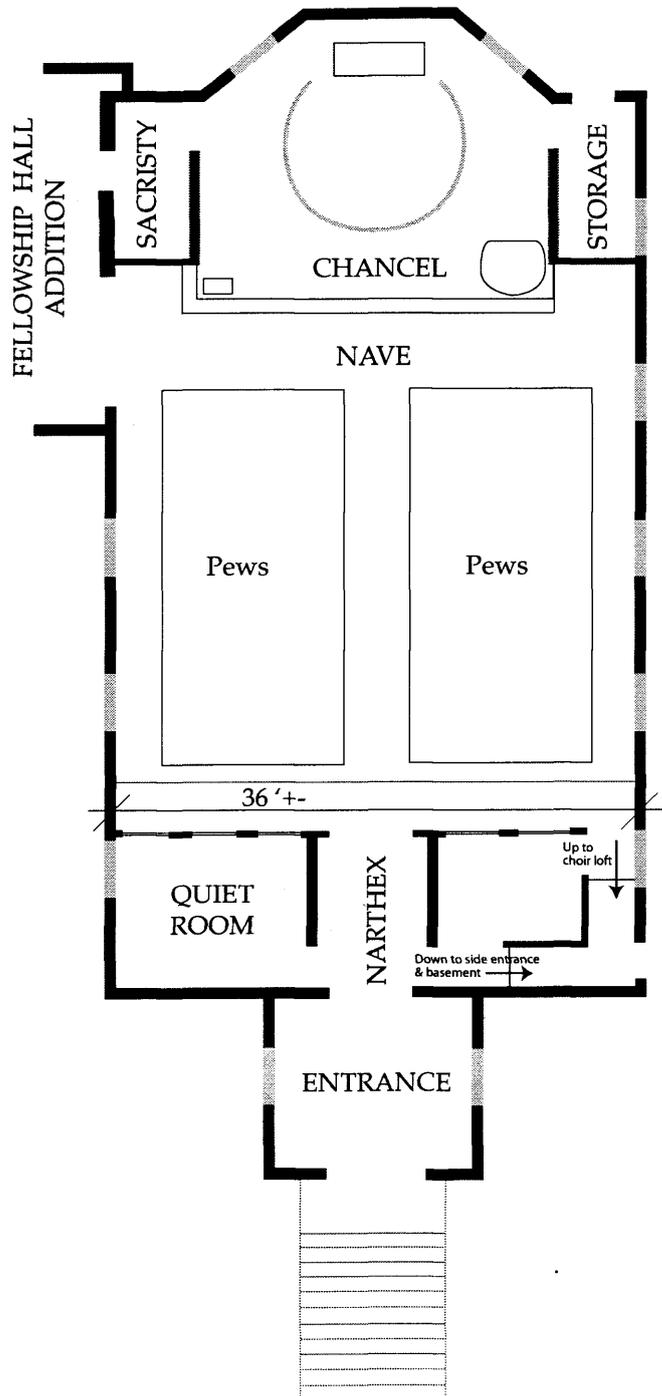


Figure #2

Christiania Lutheran Free Church Floor Plan
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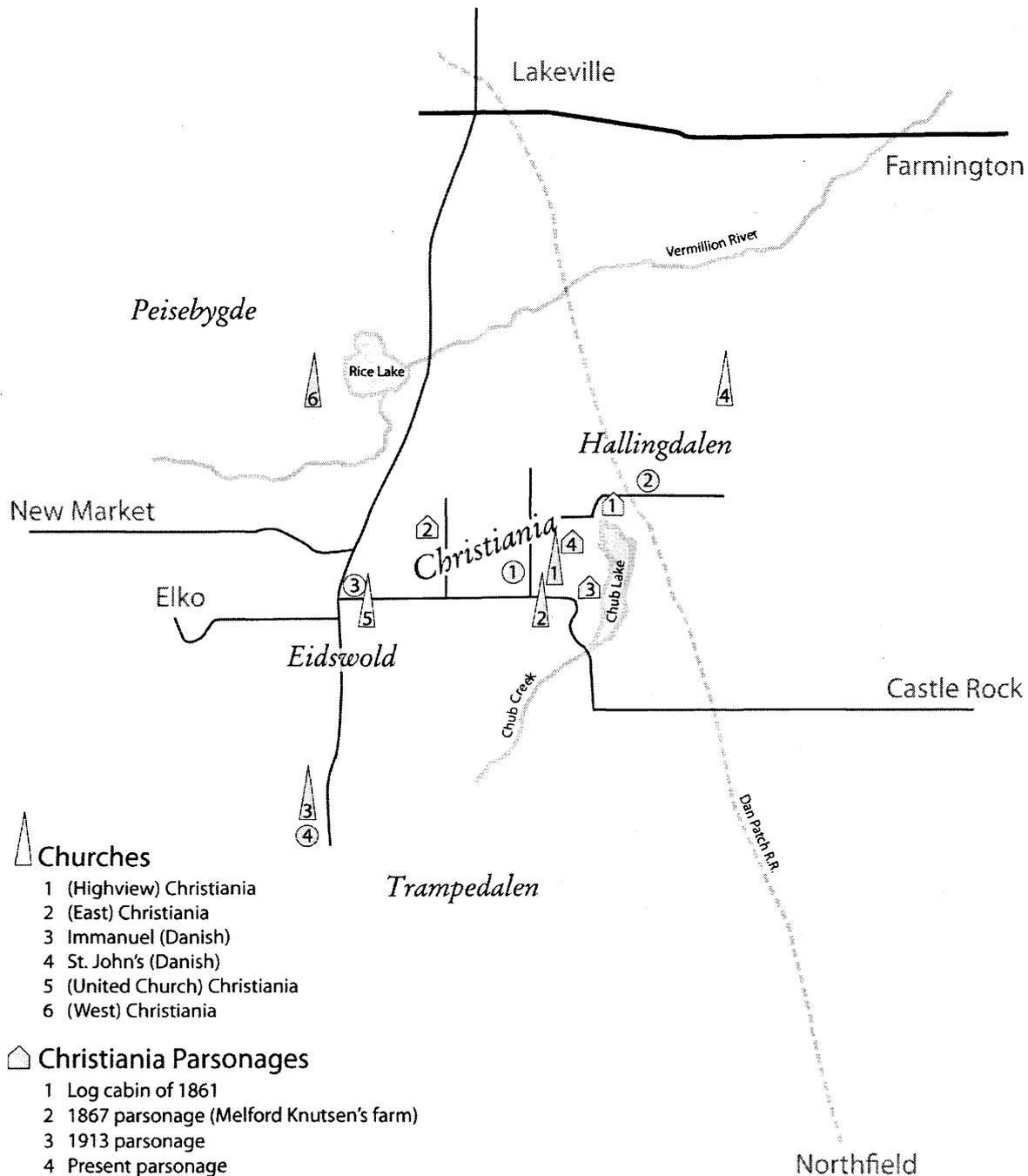


Figure 3
Area Map of Christiania Norwegian Community
The Church They Called The Free Church by A. Gerald Dyste