

History of Gold Hill Lutheran Church

In 1890, Per Skogan (US adopted name Peder Pederson), a shoemaker, joined with the Norwegian immigrants to establish a Lutheran Church on the corner of Alaska and Copper Streets. The first services were held in 1892. The church was the center of the Norwegian families' lives where they could continue their customs and speak Norwegian. All records from our early church including the financials are written in Norwegian. We know that they struggled financially to keep the heat on and the repairs completed. They even charged the choir of the church to pay for the wood they burned during rehearsals.



A committee began working in 1936 on the planning process for a new church. After Elig Halvorson, a visiting Minnesota Lutheran, was appalled at the condition his fellow Lutherans were worshipping in and felt compelled to build a new building. He was able to get his fellow Minnesotan workers who were here to remodel Butte High to volunteer to help him build our current sanctuary. He finagled free materials including concrete from as far away as Denver and bricks from buildings he was tearing down. The Anaconda Company contributed the land lots on the 900 block of Placer Street.



The dedication and groundbreaking took place on April 25, 1937. By 1957 the space in the basement and the sanctuary was not enough space for the growing congregation and its mission. Pete Godtland designed and oversaw the building of our social parish hall. The mural on the outside of the Parish Hall was created by Rudi Audio.





In 1977 Ralph Godtland oversaw the creation of a new altar. His daughter, Charlene Redicker Greene designed the lamb on the front of the altar. In 1995 another facelift in the sanctuary took place with new stained -glass windows on the south wall and a new lectern crafted from wood by Bruce Grimes. The new railings and pulpit were designed to match the baptismal font – an original piece from the 1890s. Today we continue to maintain our building and property and the Garden Club (with help from interested members) cares for the grounds around our church.



Our church has had a few names: the First Scandinavian Independent Evangelical Church, the First Norwegian Independent Evangelical Church of Butte, the United Norwegian Lutheran Church of Butte, Gold Hill Norwegian Lutheran Church, Gold Hill Evangelical Lutheran Church of Butte, and Gold Hill Lutheran Church. The church's first constitution was written in Norwegian and it wasn't until 1956 that it was finally translated and updated. In 1961 there was a revision of the constitution and deacons were no longer used in the church. This constitution with few revisions was in place until 2013 when it was updated and given the mission statement "Empowered by the Holy Spirit- United to Serve."



We have been served by nineteen full time Pastors, several interims and interns during our 125 years. Each brought to our church different skill sets and gifts. Many leaders – pastor and lay -- have helped our congregation follow God, study God’s word, and expand our mission throughout our community and the world. In the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s we held three services weekly, two on Sunday and one on Thursday. Our children have been formed in the Christian faith by many different guides throughout the years with the largest Sunday school attendance in the 1980’s - approximately 100 students per week. Unfortunately, our Sunday School has gotten smaller in recent years and new methods of instruction are being tried.



The women’s group, whether called the Ladies Aid, the ALCW or WELCA, have been an integral part of our church. They have provided Bible Study, entertainment, mission outreach and funds throughout our history to help our church, our community and the world. Today there is no formal women’s group but monthly Bible Study does continue.



The first Men’s Group – the Lutheran Brotherhood, began in the 1940s. They raised funds usually for repairs on the church, served a dinner to the women for Mother’s Day and held Bible Study. They have met off and on throughout the years for Bible Study.

The youth group, established in 1939, enjoyed Bible Study, socialization, serving the community and raising funds for the church and their national youth gatherings. Despite fewer numbers, the youth still are encouraged to serve the Easter breakfast, make cookies for Tech students and have a pasty sale when they are interested in raising funds for the national youth gatherings.



The different groups above, as well as ad hoc groups have had annual Mothers' Day teas, luncheons and dinners, Fathers' Day dinners, Lutefisk Dinners, Beast Feasts, talent shows, progressive dinners, potlucks for various reasons. Usually, funds from these events were given to the church for updating, remodeling or to mission projects.



Our congregation remains "Empowered by the Holy Spirit- United to Serve!" on the new and exciting paths God is calling us to follow in the 21st Century.