



The Georg Sverdrup Society

NEWSLETTER

Missionary John Lee to Address GSS Annual Meeting



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Rev. John Lee, AFLC Missionary to Brazil, will be the program speaker for the seventeenth annual meeting of the Georg Sverdrup Society. The title of his presentation will be "Bringing Sverdrup to Brazil." St Paul's Free Lutheran Church of Fargo, North Dakota, will be hosting the event, scheduled for Saturday, October 17. A buffet luncheon will be served at noon, followed by the program at 1:00 and the annual meeting at 2:30.

Rev. John Lee and family arrived back in the United States in August after spending a two-year term in Brazil.

Under the guidance of senior missionaries, Rev. Paul and Becky Abel, the Lees have been serving in Bateias, a suburb of Curitiba, a coastal city of almost two million and the capital of Paraná, a state in southern Brazil situated in the mountains above the Atlantic Ocean. Lee, who has an aptitude for languages, has spent his first term learning Portuguese and working with Rev. Fernando Hunhoff, a Brazilian national pastor serving congregations in the area. Together, they have been translating AFLC documents into Portuguese, including writings of Georg Sverdrup

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Pastor John Lee

Sverdrup Forum at Green Lake

Georg Sverdrup

- Born to Pastor Harold Ulrich Sverdrup and his wife Caroline Metella, nee Suur, at Balestrand, Sogn, Norway, on December 16, 1848.
- Died on May 3, 1907, in Minneapolis, MN, and buried in the Lakewood Cemetery.

Green Lake Free Lutheran Church of Spicer, Minnesota, was the location for a Sverdrup Society Forum on Saturday, July 25, 2020. The Green Lake congregation was organized in 1883, and in 1962 became a charter member of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. The theme for the day was "Kandiyohi County—One of the Centers of the Lutheran Free Church." I had long ago found the history of the Lutheran Free Church in this area fascinating, having served two summers back in the early 1980s as a youth



Green Lake Free Lutheran Church

worker at Zion Free Lutheran Church in nearby Willmar. I also had the opportunity to regularly preach at nearby Gausdal Lutheran Church near Georgeville

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The Journal Development Committee

The board of the Georg Sverdrup Society has seen the need to work more proactively in planning future issues of the *Sverdrup Journal*. To that end, the board has established the Journal Development Committee, whose main responsibility is to develop the themes and content of future journals. The members of the committee are Mr. Loiell Dyrud, Pr. Brian Lunn, Mr. Larry Walker, Pr. Martin Horn, and Dr. James Molstre, Dean of the Free Lutheran Seminary. The committee has met twice.

In addition to working on the 2020 *Journal*, the Journal Development Committee has proposed themes for the 2021-2023 *Journals*. The proposed title of the 2021 *Journal* is “Sverdrup and Life in the Congregation.” This journal will focus on Sverdrup articles that deal with Bap-

tism, Confirmation, and the Catechism.

The proposed title for the 2022 *Journal* is “Sverdrup and Missions of Mercy.” This journal will focus on Sverdrup’s view of social ministry, especially on the Deaconess Home in Minneapolis. The 2023 *Journal* will be titled “Sverdrup and the Servant Pastor,” with translations of Sverdrup articles dealing with pastoral training and Sverdrup’s understanding of pastoral ministry.

The Journal Development Committee has also explored the possibility of making past *Sverdrup Journals* available in a format compatible with Logos Bible Software. The search capabilities of Logos Software would make the journals more accessible to students and pastors. The journals would be able to be searched by

keyword or phrase and by Scripture references. The Georg Sverdrup Society Board has decided to go forward with this project, and a group of volunteers (Pastors Brian Lunn, Kevin Hall, and David Handsaker) will be working on this project. The Sverdrup Society will announce when the Logos version of *The Sverdrup Journal* is available.

—Pastor Martin Horn

Missionary Lee to Address Annual Meeting (cont.)

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and the Lutheran Free Church.

According to Lee, Brazilians have a strong desire to learn about our congregational heritage (which, after all, is their heritage as well) and are eager to incorporate Sverdrup’s biblical view of the congregation into their congregations.

Lee is uniquely qualified for the work. He was born on the mission field in Bangladesh to parents Rev. Robert and Margaret Lee, who from 1981 to 1997 served with World Mission Prayer League (WMPL). His maternal grandparents were also missionaries. Pastor John and Lois Ottesen served in East Pakistan under WMPL and worked among the Santal people from 1956 to 1977.

Lee’s early education took place in California and Minnesota. He graduated from AFLBS in 2009, Northwestern College in 2014, and Free Lutheran Seminary in 2017. He is married to Hannah Swanson, the daughter of Rev. Jeff and Jane Swanson, who have been serving

with the AFLC Alaska Mission in Naknek, Alaska. Hannah is a graduate of Aurora University, Illinois, and holds an MA from Concordia University, Portland, Oregon. She is also a graduate of AFLBS.

After John’s graduation from seminary, the Lees spent a year exploring the possibilities of mission work in India and Bangladesh before arriving in Brazil in 2018. The Lees have four daughters. Their future plans are to return to Brazil in 2021, when they will be moving to the interior city of Campo Mourão where John anticipates training congregational leaders and servant pastors at our Free Lutheran Seminary as well as making Free Lutheran congregational materials available to congregations and church planters. Hannah will also be working with the children in the Miriam Home.

As members of an organization whose major goal is interpreting and advancing the biblical basis of our founder’s congregationalism, we look

forward to hearing from Missionary Lee on the challenging work of adapting Sverdrup’s teachings to a culture with a strong Catholic, clergy-dominated tradition for over five hundred years. Nor can we forget Sverdrup’s two great passions—the congregation and missions work. This is an opportunity to hear about the combined progress of the two in Brazil.

The program will also include the traditional Sverdrup Songfest and a new Sverdrup translation. Bring a friend and join us in Fargo on October 17.

—Loiell Dyrud

Sverdrup Forum at Green Lake (cont.)

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during my seminary years. Both of those congregations have since closed their doors.

Pastor Carl Fiskness was host pastor and a speaker for the event. He was born in Willmar and grew up in the New London-Spicer area, so he is familiar with the churches in the area. He gave attendees a good glimpse into the significance of the pastors, lay leaders, congregations, and institutions in Kandiyohi County that were part of the Lutheran Free Church during its early years. The book *Our Fellowship* lists 9 parishes (22 congregations) in the Willmar District. Five miles north of Willmar is Eagle Lake Lutheran Church, and next door to that the LFC had Bethesda Homes, which included an orphanage and a home for the aged. Later, the orphanage closed and the elder care facility moved to Willmar. For a few years, there was a Lutheran Bible School in Willmar, which closed in 1927 and merged with Oak Grove Lutheran Seminary (High School) in Fargo, North Dakota. During

the years of the LFC's existence (1897-1962), at least six LFC Annual Conferences were held in Willmar, and it seemed to have been in many ways a hub for spiritual life activity in the LFC.

Pastor Martin Horn spoke to the second session of the Sverdrup Forum on the subject of "The Congregation As the Bride of Christ." He led attendees through a survey of the Old and New Testaments, noting throughout the theme of a marriage covenant relationship between God and His people. His presentation emphasized God's call to faithfulness in worship of Him only and explained how the nation of Israel was often unfaithful. At times God even declared that He gave up on them (divorced them), and yet He also offered restoration if they would return. In his survey of the New Testament, Pastor Horn showed how Jesus presented himself as the divine Groom coming for His bride, a theme that reoccurs all the way through the book of Revelation. I appreciated the Gospel focus of Pastor

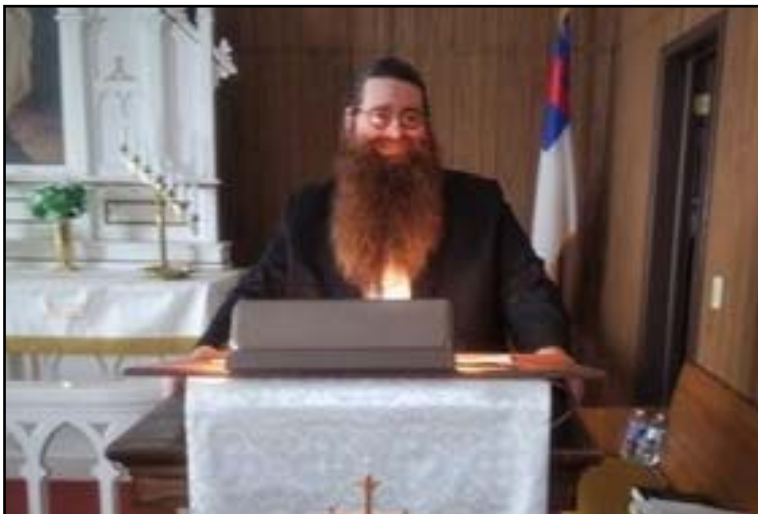
Horn as he emphasized Christ's delight in His congregation, whom He considers holy in spite of all of her known imperfections.

Due to Covid 19 and various other challenges, a very small number were able to attend this event. Many others would have enjoyed and been enriched by both of these presentations. Following each there was ample time for questions and discussion. The ladies of the Green Lake congregation provided a great box lunch at noon for all, before we hit the road on a beautiful day for the ride home. Before I left, I had to first stop and visit the Green Lake Lutheran cemetery and the gravesite of former LFC and AFLC Pastor Trygve Dahle (1891-1987). Pastor Dahle served the Green Lake congregation from 1947 to 1951, and later retired in the area. His first wife, Agnes, was buried there in 1963, and his second wife, Anna, was also buried alongside him in 2014.

—Pastor Lloyd Quanbeck



Pastor Martin Horn speaks on "The Congregation As the Bride of Christ."



Pastor Carl Fiskness greets attendees at the Green Lake Discussion Forum.



THE GEORG SVERDRUP SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Prospective members are invited
to contact the treasurer
at the above address.

The Georg Sverdrup Society was organized in December 2003 and is open to anyone interested in the life and work of noted Norwegian-American theologian Georg Sverdrup (1848-1907). The society is registered in the State of Minnesota as a 501 (C)(3) nonprofit corporation. Its activities, which are guided by a seven-member board of directors, include:

- Promoting the study and understanding of the New Testament congregation as understood and explained by Georg Sverdrup;
- Endeavoring to advance the ideal of “free and living congregations” as envisioned by Sverdrup;
- Seeking to foster further translation of Sverdrup’s writings into English;
- Encouraging the study and application of the “Fundamental Principles” and “Rules for Work” as used in the Lutheran Free Church and as continuing to be used in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations;
- Enlarging the interest in Sverdrup’s works by organizing discussion groups and providing speakers on request;
- Operating a **Sverdrup Society** website linked to <www.aflc.org> for members of the Society and others interested in the life and work of Georg Sverdrup;
- Maintaining a current bibliography of Sverdrup’s translated work as well as a current bibliography of materials written about him;
- Publishing a newsletter for members that provides information on the Society’s activities as well as general information about Georg Sverdrup;
- And encouraging research and study of Sverdrup’s life and work by publishing an annual **Sverdrup Journal**.

From “Do You Want the Congregation?”

By Georg Sverdrup

But those who reply, yes, we want to have the Spirit and the congregation, must consider what they are dealing with. For God’s Spirit brings with it all goodness, righteousness, peace, joy, and all the blessed fruits. But the Spirit of God brings with it also a struggle with the flesh, strife with the world, the raging fury of the devil, and hell. The Spirit of God is a Spirit that drives us to follow Christ on the way of suffering and the cross, and which compels us through the power of God’s love to seek the lost and work for the salvation of souls.

Therefore, the congregation is no association for laziness and comfort. It is a living, fighting, and suffering association of burning love.

As is the Head, so is the body; as is the body, so are its members. If Christ

has loved, labored, sacrificed, and suffered, so it must be with His body and His Bride. Love Him, work with Him, sacrifice oneself for Him, and suffer with Him is the congregation’s condition and calling.

Is it then foolish to ask, “Do you want the congregation?”

Or is it so certain that we can be satisfied with the soporific statement: We already have the congregation; we need no one to come to us and talk about the congregation? This has been how the slumbering congregation in all times has comforted itself with [the idea] that everything is in order. But it has always been a false comfort, and therefore Scripture says, “While people are saying, ‘There is peace and security,’ then sudden destruction will come upon them.”

Certainly the question is appropriate now as in all times. And we make so bold

as to add that it is so much more appropriate [now] as there is so much greater opportunity to have the congregation. The outward hindrances which barred the way for the congregation’s development and revelation are gone away; God has placed an open door before His people. It is a time of visitation among us, when the Lord is to be found by those who seek Him, and is near to those who call upon Him. It seems to us that never has the question been more reasonable:

Do you want the congregation?

(Excerpt from an 1898 *Folkebladet* article in *Professor Georg Sverdrups Samlede Skrifter i Udvalg*, 2:182-192. Translation by Larry Walker.)