



The Georg Sverdrup Society

NEWSLETTER

Rev. Brian Lunn to Speak at 2021 Annual Meeting

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The eighteenth annual meeting of the Georg Sverdrup Society will be held at Heritage Hall on the AFLC campus, 3134 East Medicine Lake Boulevard, Plymouth, Minnesota, Saturday, October 9. Beginning at noon, a meal will be served in the cafeteria of the Free Lutheran Bible College at a cost of \$10 per person.

The program will follow in the FLBC choir room at 1:00 p.m. The speaker for the program will be Rev. Brian Lunn, a 2020 graduate of the Free Lutheran Seminary, currently serving as a pastor in Upsala, Minnesota. He and his wife, Leeanna, have four children. During seminary, he studied Norwegian under Mr. Larry Walker and has translated portions of Sverdrup's

writings for the last two Sverdrup Journals. His presentation entitled "Lutheran Ceremonies from the Reformation to Norway and America" will discuss changes that have been made to the rituals we use in the Lutheran church, with special reference to the baptismal service. Several changes have been made as the ritual was revised by Luther and later for Dano-Norwegian and American Lutheran altar books.

Others on the program include Pr. Kevin Borg leading in devotions, Mr. Larry Walker reading from one of his recent translations, and Rev. Robert Lee leading the traditional "Sverdrup Songfest."

Following the program, the annual membership meet-



Pastor Brian Lunn

ing will be held at about 2:00. Much has happened since the last annual meeting. Plan to come for an update on the activities of the Society and to find ways to be involved yourself.

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.

Status of the 2020 Sverdrup Journal

This year's journal is considerably later than usual. The customary goal is to have the journal printed by June. This year's journal was progressing on schedule through March, when additional editing and publishing demands required our full attention. However, these demands have now been met, and we are working at full speed to get the journal ready for the printer.

This year's journal focuses on the biblical congregation—Sverdrup's great love—and will include exegetical studies of the congregation as "The Bride of Christ" and "The Body of Christ." As usual, several new translations of Sverdrup's writings will be included by an expanded group of translators including Kristofer Coffman, Brian Lunn, Kris Nyman,

Carl Vaagenes, and of course, our editor, Larry Walker.

We look forward to publishing the journal in the month of October, and we thank you for your patience. We have every intention of publishing next year's journal by June.

—Loiell Dyrud

Sverdrup's Education

By Dr. Martin Horn

What follows is a “snapshot” of Georg Sverdrup’s education in Norway, one of the factors that contributed to his stature as a Norwegian-Lutheran theologian in America.

Sverdrup’s education began when he was tutored at home by Frederick Schiørn, the assistant pastor in his father’s parish. Schiørn, an orthodox Lutheran theologian with a deep concern for spiritual life and a love for the congregation, had a profound influence on Sverdrup’s early spiritual and theological development.

At the age of fifteen in 1865, Sverdrup entered Nissen’s Latin School in Christiania (now Oslo). After two years of study, Georg took the “*examen artium*,” which qualified him for entrance into the University of Christiania. The exam covered thirteen areas including Norwegian, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, French, religion, history, geography, and mathematics. Sverdrup received the highest possible score in eleven subjects, with an overall mark of *laudabilis*, or “praiseworthy.” Ironically, Sverdrup’s lowest score came in Norwegian composition, where he received a score of *godt* or good.

After one year at the university, Sverdrup took the *examen philosophicum*, which would allow him to pursue his chosen field of study. Sverdrup was tested in seven areas including mathematics, natural history, Greek, Old Norse, history,

physics, philosophy, and astronomy. He received the highest possible score in all eight areas and was awarded an overall score of *laudabilis preceteris* (highest praise).

Sverdrup spent the next five years studying theology and philosophy at the University of Oslo. During his theological studies, Sverdrup was greatly influenced by professors Gisle Johnson and Carl Caspari. Johnson was professor of systematic theology and leader of what came to be called the “Johnsonian Awakening,” which swept Norway in the 1850s. Carl Caspari was a leading Hebrew and Old Testament scholar of the day and inspired Sverdrup’s interest in Old Testament studies. In 1871, Sverdrup took the *theologisk embedsexamen*, which qualified him for a pastoral position in the state church. Sverdrup received a mark of *laudabilis* in all subject areas of the exam.

After completing his university studies, Sverdrup did not take a pastoral position, but remained in Christiania and pursued post-graduate study in theology and linguistics. During this time, he also studied for several months in Germany. In 1873, Sverdrup spent six months in Paris studying Semitic languages including Arabic and Assyrian. He also attended lectures on Assyrian and Egyptian history.

An early biographer of Georg Sverdrup wrote that as

C. F. W. Walther occupied first rank among German-Lutheran theologians in America, so did Georg Sverdrup among Norwegian Lutherans. Sverdrup’s stature as a theologian was due to a deep personal faith, his native intelligence, and, in no small part, to the comprehensive and intensive education he received as a youth in Norway. There can be little doubt that Sverdrup’s education made him one of the most highly trained Norwegian theologians in America of his time.

January Discussion Forum to Be Held at the Free Lutheran Seminary

The annual Seminary Discussion Forum will be held Friday, January 14, at the Free Lutheran Seminary in Plymouth, Minnesota. Watch for more details on the Georg Sverdrup Society website and Facebook page.

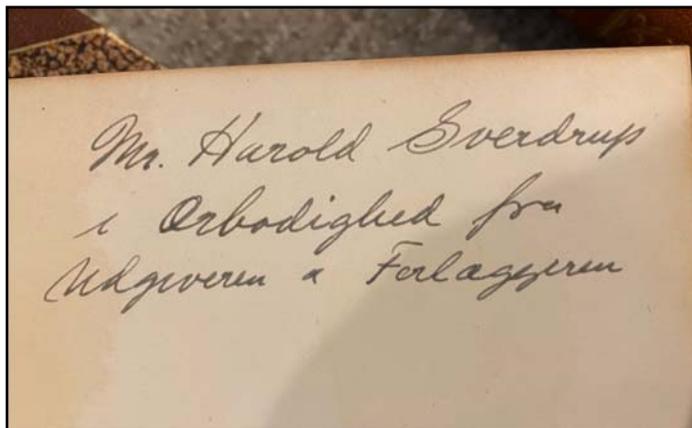
New Acquisition to the GSS Archives

We gratefully acknowledge the gift of a complete six-volume set of *Professor Georg Sverdrups Samlede Skrifter i Udvalg*, originally owned by Harold Sverdrup. The set was sent to us this past summer by Dr. Keith Sverdrup, great-grandson of Georg Sverdrup. Two of the volumes are signed (in Norwegian): “Mr. Harold Sverdrup, with compliments of the editor and publisher.” Obviously, they were given to him by Andreas Helland, editor of the six volumes.

The “Harold” in question was Georg Sverdrup’s son, named after Georg’s father, H. U. Sverdrup, a pastor in Norway, who was entrusted with reducing Pontoppidan’s *Explanation of Luther’s Small Catechism* from 759 questions and answers for use in confirmation in the Lutheran Church of Norway. (This reduced *Explanation* is included as part of the *Luther’s Small Catechism and Explanation* used by the AFLC today.)

We would like to thank Dr. Keith Sverdrup for this

generous and historic contribution from the family. It is much appreciated.



Dr. James S. Hamre, 1931-2021

We are saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. James S. Hamre on January 3, 2021, in St. Petersburg, Florida. He was perhaps the most revered Georg Sverdrup scholar of the last fifty years. As a society, we owe Dr. Hamre a great debt of gratitude, not only for his landmark biography of Georg Sverdrup and the large number of articles published on the man and his work, but also for his extensive translations for *The Sverdrup Journal*. A more complete obituary will be published later in *The Sverdrup Journal*.

From “Do You Want the Congregation?”

By Georg Sverdrup

The congregation is the body of Christ, full of His Spirit and Life, so that it both presents the figure of Christ and does His works. “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”

We will mention no more than this one thing in this connection. It is precisely this which cannot exist except “by the Holy Spirit.” It is the Spirit of God which works

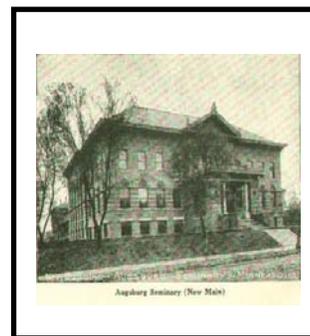
this miracle, that in the darkness of the world the congregation is light; in the rottenness of the world, it is salt. It is the Spirit of God which brings it about, that the congregation is a gathering of workers in the Lord’s great harvest in which one and all are at work in the great labor of love to gather in out of the damnation of the world to the Savior and

His cross.

“Do you want the congregation?” Does this question mean anything evil? Or is there anyone who can answer, “We have plenty of this already”?

Oh no. We do not already have plenty of this. Nor can we get enough or even too much in this world. For of course the question obviously means this: “Do you, who in

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**THE GEORG SVERDRUP
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER**

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to contact the treasurer at the
above address.

Sverdrup's Writings—New Series Planned

We are very pleased to announce that the Georg Sverdrup Society is undertaking the task of publishing a new series of volumes that will ultimately contain all of Sverdrup's writings found in *Samlede Skrifter*, *Aand og Liv*, and *Veiledning*, as well as some writings of Sven Oftedal. The first volume planned will be on the theme of *Sverdrup on the Congregation*, a topic most dear to the heart of the author. The other volumes projected for this series may include the following topics:

- *Sverdrup on Missions*
- *Sverdrup on Pastoral Training and Church Fellowship*
- *Sverdrup on the Old Testament*
- *Sverdrup on the New Testament and Church History*
- *Sverdrup on the Issues of His Day*
- *Sermons and Speeches of Sverdrup and Oftedal*
- *Life and Writings of Sven Oftedal*

Brian Lunn is coordinating this project.

From "Do You Want the Congregation?" (cont.)

(Continued from page 3)

name and in form are a congregation, also want to have the true spirit and life and activity of the congregation, so as no longer to be [just] paying members of an organization which supports a church, a pastor, and a parsonage, but truly and spiritually members of the body of Christ, active in His work of love on earth?

If anyone would answer, "We have plenty of this already," does that not indicate that he is happy with form without life and satisfied with the letter without the spirit?

For whoever has begun to look into the truth of this divine reproach: "I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive,

but you are dead," will indeed acknowledge that it is supremely necessary to ask whether the congregation, in spirit and truth, is among us. . . .

The issue is this, that we stand in a great crisis in our ecclesiastical development, in which this one question must be answered: Is the old state church order really appropriate to the need and necessity of our time and our country and our relations, or not? It might make no difference whether one considers the old church order adequate or not in the old country and in old times. We ask: can the Lutheran church fulfill its calling here among us through carrying on along the old paths?

We say, no. It is necessary for us to wake up and acknowledge that the con-

gregation is necessary. It is necessary that everyone participate in the work, that there be serious forsaking of the world, living love, burning zeal for the salvation of souls, not only among pastors, but among all congregation members.

(Translation by Larry Walker. The full translation will appear in the 2020 *Sverdrup Journal*.)