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# UNION CONGREGATIONAL UCC OF HANKINSON

As disciples \* of Jesus Christ, associated in accordance with the teachings of the New Testament, for the public worship of God, for the observance of gospel sacraments and ordinances for mutual edification and encouragement in the Christian life, and for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, we do adopt the following CONSTITUTION (\* original spelling from the preamble of the constitution of The Christian Union Congregational Church of Hankinson)

A group of twelve men and women formed these words and the following Articles of Incorporation as they met in the Minneapolis-pacific Railroad depot on May 22, 1887. For those outside the community the most notable of these twelve were Mr. R.J. and Mrs. Etta Hankinson founders of this community. The Articles of Incorporation were sworn to before F.B. Lynch, Notary Public, Richland County, Dakota Territory, on May 25th, 1887. These framed articles are presently displayed in the sanctuary of Union Congregational Church, Hankinson, N.D.

Early services were held in a schoolhouse and the railway depot until the first church, a frame building was erected in 1888. The years went by fulfilling the dreams of those first twelve founders. Though the church faced lean times, they persevered and the church grew. At one time, the Sunday School enrollment stood at 185. Many of these were children of German speaking parents who wished their young to be instructed in the English language. The small building was filled to capacity and the need for a larger structure was evident.

On Feb 19, 1911, the new Union Congregational Church of Hankinson was dedicated to God's work. Our congregation is proud to be using this building with its historical architecture as our place of worship in the 21st century.

The church prospered for many years reaching its peak membership in the 1940's. With changing times, the membership slowly declined and at times it was difficult to obtain a resident pastor. In 1954 Union Congregational Church began to share pastors with other local churches. In 1961 it was decided to merge with the Eastern Association of the ND Conference of the United Church of Christ but to use the present name. In 1970 Union church began to share pastoral services with their sister church, Emmanuel United Church of Christ in Hankinson, N.D. In the mid-1990's when the size of Union Congregation appeared to be causing difficulties for our sister church in their search for a full —time pastor, the members decided to break ties with Emmanuel UCC and with the Lord's help once again be an independent congregation.

On March 12, 1995, the Lord sent Phyllis Hagen as a lay pastor to Union Congregational. In 2000 with hard work and dedication and the aide of the

congregation Phyllis Hagen became a Licensed Minister and was accepted as the 33rd Pastor of Union Congregational Church

Twelve years after the first whispers of closing the church our small congregation is still faithfully carrying on the words of the preamble formed in 1887. We average a gathering of twelve for Sunday mornings. We are overjoyed when friends and relatives join us increasing our numbers at worship. In spite of our size, we continue to enjoy the worship and fellowship of a larger congregation. Since Pastor Hagen has been our church leader, we have carried on Christian education and confirmation classes. Our women's fellowship is active in carrying on yearly church traditions and serving the needs of the church membership. Our current project is to re-decorate the church basement; we plan to celebrate its completion with our annual Easter breakfast held before the Easter worship service. The highlight of our church year is the community Christmas Candlelight service we sponsor each year. In this service, we share the advent story and the traditional Christmas carols with our neighbors of all denominations.

In compiling this brief history and over-view of Union Congregational Church, I was struck by the repetition of the symbolic church numbers of twelve and thirty-three. Union Church has truly followed in the steps of Jesus Christ and his Followers. For 120 years this church has opened its doors to all members of the Hankinson community--- often being referred to as "the church that will bury or marry anybody ". Instead, I believe this group of modern disciples have taken to heart and practiced the words of Jesus, " They will know you by your love." John 13, 35