

Skjeberg Lutheran Church ELCA Teien Township, Minnesota

Steeped in history and tradition, Skjeberg Lutheran Church can offer a unique experience for someone willing to lead our congregation into the future.

Skjeberg Lutheran Church is located in Northwestern Minnesota, on County Road #7 in Teien Township, Kittson County. Just across the river from Drayton, North Dakota, the congregation is formed from both sides of the Red River of the North. Established in 1883 by settlers from the Sarpsborg, Norway area, they named the church after their home church. The congregation was established in 1883 and the original building was dedicated in 1893. The bell, which is inscribed "Come, for all things are now ready." Luke 14:17, was hung from the tower in 1901.

A deep bond has continued with our mother church, Skjeberg Kirke in Norway. Correspondence and visits have taken place back and forth for over a hundred years. For our 125th celebration, fifty-two Norwegians traveled to Teien to participate in our three-day celebration. They brought a twenty-person choir, organist/choir director and hired a professional violinist to accompany them. Each time Skjeberg Kirke's members come they participate in our services by providing special music.

Skjeberg is known as a warm and welcoming church. Our history is rich with events held at the church throughout the years. We are known for events for mothers/daughters, secret pals, Spring Flings, Tables with a Flair, Christmas parties, Sunday school programs, Honoring our older members, Mid-summer picnics, and a Corn and BBQ Ribs Feed. We love pot lucks, having the men serve a Palm Sunday breakfast, and hold an annual Harvest Festival service with special music.

On March 4, 2018 a rare thundersnow storm came through the area and lightning hit the spire on top of the tower, hitting the bell and setting the church on fire. Five fire departments fought the blaze, saving the garage next to the church. The only things that survived were the bell which had fallen down the roof and was found next to the building and the cross that had been on the altar. In the ashes, a page from the organist's hymnbook showed the song, "Oh, that the Lord would Guide My Ways". This became our theme as the congregation voted to rebuild the church. Crosses were constructed with the square nails found in the ashes and given to each family as a remembrance of the old church. Articles of the fire and rebuilding from area papers were laminated for posterity. Each year we celebrate "Remembrance Sunday" to remember the fire and all God has given us since.

Going against the odds, the Lord guided our way to rebuild our church. The members did not want to lose our church family. Almost every community within 50 miles of the church had a

piece in rebuilding Skjeberg. The support was overwhelming. A news article went online and raised over \$50,000 from people all over the USA. Our Norwegian family raised money for us. Closed churches contacted us and donated almost everything that can be found inside the church building. One year, 6 months and 4 days after the fire we held our first service in our new building. Within 5 years the loan we took out was paid off. The church has no debt, is all one level, handicapped accessible, with air conditioning, a new sound system, and the original bell in the bell tower to ring out each Sunday before services.

Skjeberg has an active Sunday School and Women's group. The women meet from January through April to quilt each Wednesday and provide quilts to Lutheran World Relief as well as to local hospitals, nursing homes, cancer centers and other agencies in need. We support local and regional benevolences. Sunday School is held after church each Sunday. Skjeberg's new building has become an event center for the community holding funerals and wedding receptions. We have held two professional concerts' produced by a friend of the church where talent near and far and past members share their music. Another concert is scheduled for September 2026, entitled the Power of Music 2026.

Three books have been published about Skjeberg's history when celebrating its 75th, 100th and 125th Anniversary's. These books share the church's history and the history of its people, as well as documenting events that have happened in the community during the years.

Skjeberg's congregation is welcoming and enjoys reaching out to our community. We are excited about our new journey with our Presbyterian friends in finding someone to lead us into the future. This move was undertaken as members want this church to continue growing and still be here for years to come. We are looking for someone excited to join us in this new adventure!