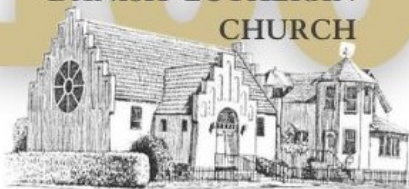


The
Ansgar
Congregation

100
ANSGAR
DANISH LUTHERAN
CHURCH



1923 - 2023

EDMONTON ALBERTA CANADA

The Ansgar Congregation

A very short story of Ansgar Danish Lutheran Church of Edmonton

Our Church has many roots. Some of them are just tiny connections to people of the past. Others are like big taproots that feed our little Church tree and

nurture us to serve the Danish immigrants in Edmonton and Northern Alberta, their descendants, as well many others who find our faith, traditions and way of worshipping meaningful. As we are the only Church in Edmonton with living roots to Scandinavia, we may also appeal to the other Scandinavian communities here in our city.

Our strongest and most active roots in our Church are, of course, the Christian roots, the Bible and the ancient

traditions of our Church that are more than 2000 years old. We also have our Lutheran roots stemming back 500 years as an important part of who we are. Of course, we have strong roots in Denmark, too, through the many people who still have a living relationship to their old country and through the pastors who are called from Denmark through our mother organisation, Danske Sømands- og Udlandskirker (Danish Church Abroad / Danish Seamen's Church). Those three roots are written into our name as Danish and Lutheran and Church. Those three words in our name define us and make us unique from any other organisation in Edmonton and Northern Alberta.

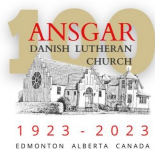
However, in our official name we have also both "Ansgar" and "of Edmonton". These two words are what makes us different from any other Danish Church

in the world, and this short story is about these aspects of who we are. Numerous volumes have already been written about the Christian Church, the Lutheran faith and Denmark and Danish culture. This short story is about how we at Ansgar became a living tree in our unique ground and under our unique circumstances throughout the last 100 years and more.

Edmonton and the Danes

One tiny root that makes our place unique is the fact that there have been people living in the Edmonton area since the end of the last ice age. People settled here as soon as there were favourable living conditions in the so-called Beaver Hills. The Cree name for Edmonton is Amiskwacîwâskahikan, which means Beaver Hills House. You will understand this name when you go to Elk Island National Park East of Edmonton. Here you will experience how most of the area would have looked before modern development: a parkland-landscape with small hills and small ponds in between the hills, almost all of them inhabited with beavers. Today, we begin our services at Ansgar by acknowledging this history and the Treaty that defines our relation to the original inhabitants of this place we call home.

In 1795, the Hudson's Bay Company established a House (and later a Fort) for their Factor and named it Edmonton. The purpose of this establishment was to trade pelts, mainly beaver pelts, with the indigenous population for guns, ammunition, wool blankets, glass beads, flour and other European goods. The era of the settlers began with this trade. Much later, Danes came to the area to homestead and to seek opportunities.



The first person, that we know of, with Danish roots in Edmonton was Peter Erasmus (1833 - 1931), son of a Danish father and a Cree mother. He was born in Manitoba in 1833 and came to Fort Edmonton in 1855. He functioned as an interpreter at the negotiations for Treaty #6 in 1876 at Fort Carlton as he could speak many languages, including several indigenous languages. You can learn about his life and career in Fort Edmonton Park: another good reason to visit this great museum about our city.

The first Danish immigrant to Edmonton that we have extensive knowledge of is Peter Klaus Andersen (1868 - 1945), aka Pete Anderson. He arrived in Edmonton around the same year the railroad opened to Edmonton in 1891. By 1901, he had established his own brick yard in Strathcona. Pete left Edmonton in the early 1930s when he retired.

Many Danes arrived in the Edmonton area in the 1890s to 1920s. They came mostly to homestead and farm. Also, tradesmen and labourers came to the growing city. However, when you look in the first Church records from the 1930s, you will find that the majority were farmers.

The First Beginnings of Ansgar

This leads us to the very beginning of our congregation. At the establishment of the Province of Alberta in 1905, Edmonton became the capital. However, in 1923, Edmonton was only a small city of about 60,000 inhabitants. But there were enough Danes living in and around Edmonton in the beginning of the 1920s that they felt the need to organise themselves in the cultural and social society, Dania (1921) and to gather and ask Danish Pastors to visit Edmonton on a regular basis.

It was thanks to Niels Petersen, that Pastor Mathias Gammelgaard Christensen of Sharon Evangelical Lutheran Church of Calgary was asked to visit Edmonton. The first Danish service in Edmonton was officiated the Fall of 1923 at First Scandinavian Lutheran Church, later Central Lutheran Church, now New Life Chinese Lutheran Church. This Church had a Norwegian background and is located only about two blocks from our present Church. Pastor Christensen visited Edmonton at least once a month until a missionary Pastor from the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church was permanently stationed in Edmonton. Pastor Anders Peter Hansen (1870 - 1927) came in September 1924 and officiated services twice a month in Edmonton. The other weeks of the month, he travelled to different Danish communities in Alberta, among others, Ponoka and Lloydminster. Pastor Hansen retired for health reasons and went back to Denmark in February 1927.

The Formational Years

Another important figure in the Danish congregation arrived in 1928; Niels Gran. He was friends with Niels Petersen, and they became instrumental in the formation of Ansgar. They were both involved in inviting Dansk Kirke i Udlandet (DKU – Danish Church Abroad) to send their first Pastor to Canada. Pastor Max Matthiesen arrived in Edmonton in the fall of 1928. Pastor Matthiesen was dynamic and outgoing and ensured that an empty German Reformed Church was rented, exactly where our present Church is located. During his time, the Church was formally founded on January 30, 1930. During his years and in many years to come, a major concern for the congregation and its pastors was the



physical and mental well-being of the many immigrants who came from Denmark in search for better life circumstances. Not only economical hardship, but also loneliness were huge problems for the mostly young men who came to Edmonton. The Church became a home away from home to the many who struggled to get by in a foreign country. The pastors and the members of the Church have worked hard throughout the years to find and help the many who were caught by unfavourable times with meals and fellowship and mutual support. Pastor Matthiesen went back to Denmark in 1931.

The same year, Pastor Emil Nommesen arrived from Salmonhurst, New Brunswick. Pastor Nommesen was ordained in the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church but was formally accepted and employed through DKU. During his time, the Church became incorporated on August 8, 1933, and the Church building that the congregation rented, was purchased same year. Choir, Sunday School, Young People's group, and Ladies Aid were developed. Pastor Nommesen and the Ansgar Singers reached the many Danes scattered around the vast lands of Alberta through radio.

All these activities required a church hall beside the sanctuary. A basement was needed. In 1938, the Church obtained blueprints for a new Church from the Danish architect Anton Christian Holnn-Møller (1883 – 1955). Architect Holnn-Møller lived in Canada and the United States 1921 – 1934 and had designed several Danish Churches in Canada, among others the Churches in Winnipeg, Calgary, Dalum and Tilley. He knew the Canadian way of construction in frame and stucco, and he also had a good sense of traditional Danish

style. This sense of Danish tradition and style was important to the immigrants who in their daily struggles had a nostalgic longing for the old country. The Church should feel like a home to them: a haven in difficult times; a rock to rely on.

The construction of the Church began in the Fall of 1939, but the entire building was not completed before 1942. It was a huge accomplishment while the world and Ansgar were in deep crisis. It is amazing to think that the Church was finished under such circumstances. World War II was raging. The economy was tight. The connection to the motherland and DKU was cut. Pastor Nommesen's compensation from DKU halted. Pastor Nommesen moved to a calling in Tilley, where Danes had built a thriving agricultural community and were able to support a Church under the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church. But Ansgar persevered with a firm faith and optimism and with the generosity of a few pillars in the congregation. Without the support of Niels Gran, P.N. Tuchsén, and Mr. Christensen, the Church would not have survived.

Another blessing came to Ansgar in those difficult years: Pastor Bentsen and his wife. Pastor Bentsen had retired in the States after having served at Dickson and other the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Canada. Pastor Bentsen happened to visit Edmonton in 1940 and promised to come back to help the struggling congregation. He accepted the calling even though he received hardly any compensation. The Pastor and his wife even donated generously, among many other gifts, the beautiful main entrance doors that we still have. They were donated in memory of their late son.



The Golden Years

After the war, the question of affiliation was vividly discussed. Should the congregation join the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church (in the States) or go with DKU? In 1946, a final decision was reached and Pastor Paul Overgaard-Thomsen (1908 - 2003) and his wife, Eva, with their son, were called to Edmonton from a position with DKU in Vienna.

The ten years Pastor Overgaard-Thomsen served in Edmonton coincided with a Golden Age of the congregation. In 1947, oil was struck in Leduc just south of Edmonton, and a booming industry arose from this find. Many Danes came to seek opportunities and found a spiritual home in the Danish Church. The Church thrived in any way possible, and the pastor and his wife were its beloved centre. Also, the Danish Women's Club, or the "Young Women", was started at that time. It has supported the Church throughout the years and is still going strong. The Church services were of course well attended, and the "Immigrant Aftener", where newcomers were welcomed, filled the basement. When the Overgaard-Thomsens left for a position at the Danish Lutheran Church in Toronto in 1957, people cried as a not only a great Pastor and his wife left, but also two good friends with their now seven kids.

It was, however, still good times in the Church. Many Danes arrived in Edmonton every month, and the Immigration office still called the Church when they knew that a Dane had come to town. The Pastor or a member of the Church was then able to welcome the newcomer to Edmonton and to the Church for support and fellowship. The Church was no longer struggling, though the congregation still did not

fully pay the Pastor's compensation.

And the Church went on. Danish pastors came and went. There were good years and years of struggle, but the Church remained a rock to rely on: a safe haven and a spiritual home for both the many newcomers as well as for the old-timers. Pastor Mogens Predstrup came in 1957 from a position in London, Ontario and stayed until 1962. Then Pastor Sigurd Svenningsen stayed at Ansgar for about 4 four years, until Pastor Oskar Filtenborg came in 1966 from a position in Toronto and stayed until 1973.

In 1973, the congregation made a controversial decision. They offered Pastor Holger Madsen the position at Ansgar. He was educated and ordained in Canada. He was Canadian born though of Danish descent. This meant that the financial support from DKU was withdrawn. But the congregation insisted on their choice. A new era came to Ansgar maybe more in line with the Canadian ways than before but still with a strong sense of where the congregation had its roots. Pastor Madsen also already had a house in Sherwood Park and did not want to live in the parsonage. This was something new, too. Pastor Madsen was, however, a dynamic Pastor who was instrumental in many new ventures, such as realisation of the need for low-income housing with the establishment of Ansgar Villa. The Villa has played an important part of the life at Ansgar for many years though it is no longer affiliated with the Church.

After Pastor Holger Madsen, Pastor Jørgen Henriksen came, then Pastor Lars and Liselotte Basbøll, Pastor Rikke Aagaard Nielsen, Pastor Carl Gustav Christensen. The present pastor is your humble servant, Pastor Lasse Hultberg.



In the following pages we will hear from all these pastors about their time here at Ansgar.

Present and Future

To conclude: Ansgar is still going strong. We are still here for mutual support and fellowship. We are still feeding the poor, still offering education in the Christian faith and our Church traditions in bible study group and for confirmands. We have choir, family services and social and support groups. We still celebrate Danish traditions and holidays. We still organise family summer camp at Camp Kuriakos at Sylvan Lake. The Danish Women's club is still active. We are to this day a spiritual home for Danish immigrants, for their descendants, for people with other Scandinavian backgrounds, and for many who just like our way to relate the Christian faith. But we also look forward and beyond ourselves. We have begun a relation with our Lutheran neighbours at St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. We are strengthening our music profile by installing a pipe organ in our sanctuary. And we are investing in new art by the world-renowned Danish artist, Peter Brandes, to inspire the world around us and attract the new generation to visit us and possibly join us for the next 100 years.

The congregation has gone through many changes over the years. People have come and gone. They have worshiped together; and they have built and maintained Ansgar to create a place to gather and to bring the message of God's love to the Danes in Edmonton, to their children and their children, and to the world around them.

Our Church tree is still growing and changing with the times, but our Church

is only strong because it has roots in the soil where it lives and grows. It finds nourishment through its living roots. Roots that reach deep into the past and to the many who lived here before us. They created our little Church, Ansgar Danish Lutheran Church of Edmonton, and made it into who we are today. Praised be their memory!

*Pastor Lasse Hultberg,
August 2023*

Further reading:

60 Years old / A story of the Danes and the Ansgar Danish Lutheran Church, published by Ansgar Danish Lutheran Church, 1990.

Buch Jensen, Kaj; Anton Christian Holnn-Møller / The neglected if not forgotten architect, in 2023 Heritage Book, Federation of Danish Associations in Canada, 2023.

Buschardt Christensen, Rolf; The Establishment of Danish Lutheran Churches in Canada, in The Bridge, Vol 27 no 1, p 126 – 165, 2004.

Erasmus, Peter; Buffalo Days and Nights: As Told to Henry Thompson. Calgary: Fifth House Publishers, 1976.

Jensen, Kurt; Escape from Germany: Canadian officer Pete Anderson's successful escape from Germany, Commoners' Publishing 2019.





The original church building



Ansgar east interior



The altar in the original church



Ansgar west interior



Fun at Camp Kuriakos





1928-1931
Pastor M.Mathiesen

1931-1940
E.Nommesen

1940-1943
E.Bentsen

1943-1944
K.M.Mathiesen

1945-1946
P.Thorslev

1947-1957
P.Overgaard Thomsen

1957-1961
M.Predstrup

1963-1965
S.Svenningsen

1966-1973
O.Filttenborg

1974-1986
H.Madsen

1986-1987
LI.Basbøll

1987-1991
J.L.Henriksen

1991-2001
L. & L.Basbøll

2001-2008
R.Aagaard Nielsen

2008-2015
C.G.Christensen

2016-
L.Hultberg



It's been more than 30 years since I said a truly heartfelt goodbye to all you good people in Ansgar Church. It's weird. Mind blowing. When you start to

**March 1, 1987 -
June 1, 1991**



**Jorgen Ingberg
Henriksen**

think back so many years, memories tend to turn a little too bright and glorious. It easily and quickly turns into a fairytale. A glorious fairytale. But is that true? I doubt it! Then again, maybe it was a fairytale. A simple, everyday down-to-earth kind of fairytale, because of all the welcoming parishioners in Ansgar Church and the friendly people of Edmonton.

I will never forget the first couple days in Edmonton. Those few days prepared me to begin my life as pastor in Ansgar Church.

I recall I arrived Thursday March 5th in Edmonton. I was picked up at the airport by the chairman of the Church Board, Kris Kristensen. Instead of driving me to the parsonage, he drove me to his family in Leduc. What thoughtfulness! I had a nice and quiet evening with his family. That was exactly what I needed on the first night, to be with someone and feel safe and welcomed in a whole new city and country - I could relax.

The next day, Kris drove me to the parsonage on 108A Avenue. He was a little nervous. How would I react to the parsonage? It was an old house. Would I be satisfied and content? I was content and more than happy for the old parsonage. For me it was a little castle. I came from two small rooms in a barrack at Thule Air base. Time went by and one day the Church inherited

some money and the parsonage started to grow with the help of many the volunteers in the congregation. The residence was transformed into a smaller castle with a small tower. It was quite a fairytale!

Now back to Friday the 6th. The rest of the day Kris help me with all the many practical things that needed to be done: bank account, health insurance, immigration and so on and so forth. In the driveway there was a vehicle I could use. All the practical was now taken care of. What a gift!

The day ended with a nice pleasant dinner with the Church Board with a lot of talking and laughing. Again, I felt welcome. What a blessing.

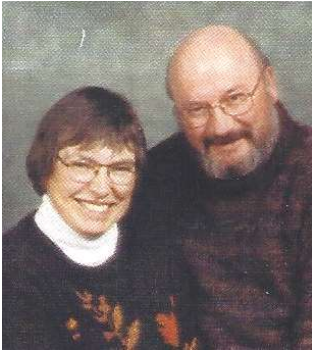
The next day pastor Lars and pastor Liselotte from came up to parsonage. Liselotte had been the Church's pastor during the vacancy. She told me all I needed to know about the church and the congregation. And now I was, so to speak, well dressed and ready to be the new pastor in Ansgar Church.

It was friendly and welcoming congregation. I was received with open arms and along the way I experienced the wonderful fact that I was more than just the pastor of the congregation. I was part of the community, the fellowship. I belonged. What a blessing!



Our arrival in Edmonton was very likely different from most of our fellow pastors. We had spent 10 years in Calgary as pastors for the Danish

1991 - 2001



Liselotte & Lars Basbøll

congregation there, and our time was up, so we moved to a parish in Vendsyssel in Denmark. But we soon realized that we had lost our hearts to Alberta, so when the opportunity of coming to Edmonton presented itself, we applied and got the job.

We will never forget our arrival at the Airport in Edmonton. When the customs officer saw our returning resident permits, he sent us a big smile and

said: "Welcome home!" And home it was. Edmonton became our home for the next 10 years.

Our first real meeting with Edmonton and Ansgar was the first DKU Convention, which was held in Edmonton shortly after we had arrived in Calgary in 1980. This gave us a first hand impression of what would be our closest Sister congregation and we were in a bit of awe about it all. The pastors became our closest colleagues and good friends and the members of Ansgar helped us learn how things were done "over here". With Ansgar settled between the Italian community and the Chinese part, it felt like a real multinational place. And right across from Ansgar the indigenous Sacred Heart church reminded us of the history of the country we had come to. It was a wonderful and very special environment.

We arrived in Edmonton in November 1991.

Just two years later we celebrated Ansgar's 70th Anniversary, with dinners, speeches, songs and much festivity. As the oldest DKU/DSUK congregation in Canada, we had much to celebrate and much to be thankful for.

What stands out for us as we remember our years in Edmonton are the camps. First a Sunday school kids' camp at Birgit and Henning Rasmussen's place close to Pigeon Lake, later the parents wanted in on the fun and we moved to Dana Lodge at Camp Kyriakos, spear-headed by Kathy and Robin Stuart. When Dana Lodge became too small for our group – which one year counted about 50 participants – the campsites were booked and a few tents set up around the Lodge. Outdoor service and games, water activities and campfire with "snobrød" were part of it.

A special place to visit was Ansgar Villa, a place where several of our seniors lived. Always an open door and a warm fellowship which we truly appreciated.

Many of the older members of our congregation met their life's companion at Ansgar church's "Immigrant aftener". Later the congregation would expand and local people would join. And yet, it still happens that Danes find Danes there and get married. This is what gave us a permanent connection to Edmonton and Ansgar - our oldest son found his sweetheart and wife at an Ansgar picnic, and she happened to be a member of Ansgar and was part of a faithful Ansgar family.

And so, we have much to thank Ansgar Danish Lutheran Church for.

Congratulations with the 100 years. Just keep going!



Allow us to begin on a different note. The Danish journalist and author Lise Nørgaard passed away recently. She was 105 years old. In her nineties she said: "I

**August 2001 -
January 2008**



Rikke Aagaard Nielsen

don't believe in thinking too much about the fact that time passes, and that you aren't a teenager any longer. It will just worry you, and it will give even more wrinkles, and then you will look more unhappy and sad!" She kept on going for many more years, like she had kept on going through different times and challenges. Her words – and mindset – give us the

opportunity to congratulate you all in keeping the beautiful Ansgar Church going for the first 100 years, through different times and challenges. Furthermore it gives us an occasion to reflect on our own meeting with the church, when our family received the calling and arrived for the position of pastor in 2001. It is many years ago already, the church even then was an elderly lady. Elderly, yet very alive, didn't look unhappy and sad at all.

The will and the energy put into keeping Danish heritage and a thriving church as part of your lives in Edmonton, was one of the first things that truly struck us as remarkable, when we met you and when we grew into daily life, and it has become an experience that has shaped us and follows us wherever we go. To this day, it still makes us happy and brings smiles to our faces to reflect back upon!

"A family" is how we often characterize life within and around the church. It made our move from Denmark to Canada into a warming experience that we keep in our hearts. An experience that we share with many others coming to Ansgar. A family

takes care of each other, and that was the case in the church. Everything concerning services, music, the English language, was explained to me as the new pastor.

Thank you for your kindness, patience and willingness to take part in new ideas. These are the words I use most often to describe the church: family. You, the board, the volunteers, all the members and churchgoers were part of this welcoming culture. It was also the case when you opened your families and fellowship to us, to our little family. It was very meaningful to us, and we are still thankful for your openness to us.

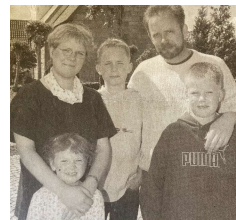
Thinking of Lise Nørgaard, we also come to think of "Matador". In our family it is associated with movie nights in the church basement! Wonderful gatherings with lots of cake...and in many ways the essence of how it was to be received in the church in Edmonton.

This leads into how important and the ongoing importance of keeping Ansgar Church a part of your lives and your fellowship. For us it is a living memory, about congregational life at its best. A family with all its different members being held together by hard work, energy, ideas, spirited continuously by the Gospel, of being brothers and sisters in Christ. That message is universal, and therefore we still regard ourselves as being part of the church, even though we live in different parts of the world.

The fact that time passes will not make us sad, but very grateful. We send you

all our best, and God's blessing in the celebration of the first 100 years.

Henrik and Rikke Aagaard Nielsen, Mathias, Mikkel and Astrid



A quick research in my archives from my years as a substitute pastor call on a lot of memories from two unforgettable periods in Canada: Edmonton 2008 and

*January - June
2008*



C.C. Jessen

Toronto 2012. I had the experience, what it meant to be a pastor in congregations which lived out of an authentic understanding of being a Christian community, responsible for the Christian message and the faith and service in today's world.

And now you see the congregation in Edmonton celebrate 100 years with that wonderful reality, in the hands of God to live in stewardship among Danes in the city and surroundings, but also as a part of the total church. To serve not only our own purposes and keep ourselves alive, but to be together with other Christians of all sorts in order to meet the needs of people around us.

100 years ago, Ansgar Church was founded by men and women, who heard a calling from God. Without that ongoing calling a church will not continue to exist. Being a center for Danish culture, language and traditions is very meaningful, but not, in the long run, enough to be a Christian community. Ansgar will always have to remember the foundation, which called the founding fathers to go forward in the name of the Lord. I have been fascinated by the 100-year history, and to learn about the fantasy and steadiness in Ansgar's congregational work during the decades. Example: The monthly meals with the people from the

streets and the aboriginals, I enjoyed it, meeting their needs as a pastor together with strong members of Ansgar's "Ladies Aid".

A lot of people from the congregation come to my mind. I am lucky to have our friend Gunnar, who comes to visit us in Denmark nearly every year and renews the bonds with all of you. And going back I remember Kaj Nicolajsen, who gave a strong support to the interim pastor, in all ways, especially with the computer, but also when the snow came, removing it from the parsonage on Sunday mornings. The last time was on Pentecostal Sunday (Whitsunday)! With Marina Allemano one could, due to her hospitality, hers and many others, exchange a lot of views, also on Danish literature.

In the center of a pastor's calling you find the Sunday service. It is my hope that you will continue to meet and form the fellowship in a concrete way. Also, I hope that you will keep faithful with the offering, which is essential to the liturgy. Together with the strong prayer for the world, which more than ever needs a Christian congregation, also you: Ansgar in Edmonton.

God bless you richly in the days to come.

C.C.Jessen

Interim Pastor 2008, January to June.

f. 1941 former pastor in Copenhagen and Skagen. Gen.secr. In Danmission. ccjessen@gmail.com



***Congratulations to the
Ansgar congregation on the
100 year anniversary!***

***July 2008 -
October 2015***



Carl Gustav Christensen

In July 2008 Kirsten, I and our two cats arrived in Calgary. After the first of many long drives in Alberta, we arrived at 9554-108A Avenue and our Canadian adventure began. And an adventure it was!

Working and living abroad was a dream Kirsten and I shared. From the first moment and right to the day we left in October 2015 we were embraced with love and care. Many families in the church and the Danish community opened their doors and hearths to us and became our Canadian family.

We will for ever be grateful for that. Thank you! Being cared for from the first day made the transition from Denmark to Canada go well and smooth. Living on church street in the McCauley neighbourhood was interesting and added much colour to

our experience and widened our horizon in many ways (We do miss the Italian Centre Shop a lot).

Being part of the Ansgar family I would describe as serving a rural parish in Denmark decades ago, just in a very big city. There were and are many challenges for a Danish church abroad and many times I was humbled by the loyalty and dedication to Ansgar shown by the many members when facing challenges. Always with the goal that Ansgar should be a place for worship and social activities and a supportive community – all of that with a connection to the Danish heritage past and present.

The affiliation with DSUK gave us the courage to go to Edmonton. It was good to know that there was an organisation giving support when needed. At the same time, I was working very much on my own since I did not have Danish colleagues, dean, or bishop near by. That was a good learning experience for me.

As a family Kirsten and I enjoyed the Canadian nature and wildlife. Among many things we loved the road trips to the mountains and BC, the evening drives to Elk Island Park, the vacation in Montreal, the campouts, and parties with DANIA and most of all the times we spent with our Canadian families and friends.

Love Kirsten and Gus



"Priest on the Prairie"

"Are you and your wife up for some months at the Danish Church in Edmonton?"

2015- 2016



Jorgen Flensted-Jensen

That was the question to us in 2015, after we as a

retired couple have had 5 good years at the Danish Church in Grimsby in

Ontario, and just finished an 8-month substitute at the Danish Church in Brussels.

We said "yes", and had another positive and unforgettable experience in Edmonton. It underlined for us that one should never be afraid to take a step into the unknown, because there is often a special experience and joy hidden in it. We experienced this at our arrival to Edmonton 2015. The first few days, we were accommodated in a private home and welcomed by Inge, who was on the Church Board. At our arrival she asked us: "Do you know me?". Then it became clear to us that she was raised in the same little village on Fyn, where we still live, and Kirsten was her teacher at the small local school, but we were not aware she had immigrated to Canada.

We experienced a very warm and cordial reception everywhere in the congregation, and experienced that the church's services and activities were supported by many volunteers with a great commitment. We remember with pleasure how volunteers were busy refurbishing the parsonage for the new minister, who was to come.

We remember "Hyggeklubben, Mens Breakfast, Christmas Caroling and much more.

But one of the things we had not experienced elsewhere were the days when the church had taken on the task of feeding the homeless in the city. It was a task that showed in practice how a church can reach out to the surrounding community. We have included that experience as a feature on the video film, which shows the church's activities and other daily life. A film we include into the many lectures we perform in Danish Churches and parishes about our time in Edmonton.

In addition to the work and the joy of being part of the Danish church in Edmonton, we were often invited to what else was going on in the city, such as Ice hockey, and the Ice-Castle exhibition, Christmas concerts and many visits to private homes. There was also time for visiting the Rocky Mountain National Parks.

We wish the church congratulations on its 100th anniversary and we admire the work it is doing among Danish immigrants and their descendants and at the same time opening up to the close community of which it is also a part. Thank you for a good experience which is now part of our many good memories of the time in Edmonton.

Kirsten and Jørgen Flensted-Jensen

*Anniversary Greetings from
Pastor Lasse and Frederikke Hultberg
and Cordelius, Ambrosius and Thaddeus*

**March 2016 -
Present**



Lasse Hultberg

Blessings at Ansgar I, Pastor Lasse Hultberg, and my wife, Frederikke and our three sons, Cordelius, Ambrosius and Thaddæus, came to Ansgar seven and a half years ago. Every day here has been a blessing to us!

We arrived in Edmonton in the beginning of March 2016. Our boys were 14 and 8 years and 7 months old. We came to Alberta in the middle of winter, far away from home, and with nothing but our suitcases and each other. It could have been a shock. It could have been difficult. It could have been alienating and challenging for us. In reality, it was like coming home. Not because the weather was or is nice, not because the city was or is splendid, not because everything was or is perfect here. No, rather because EVERYBODY here at Ansgar has been and still is so helpful and warm-hearted, friendly and appreciative towards us. We have, from the very beginning, received a new family here, our Church family, our Ansgar family.

At Ansgar, we care for one another. That makes it a blessing to be a pastor here. We have all in our own little family

been involved in the life of the Church. Everything that we have done together with the congregation has been blessed with a supportive enthusiasm that has been encouraging.

Looking back on the last seven and a half years, my family and I find it impossible to pinpoint any specific events that have meant the most to us. There have been so many. To mention a few: Reformation Jubilee with other Lutheran Churches in the neighbourhood, 800 Year Jubilee of the Danish flag, the summer camps at Kuriakos, but also choir practices and bible studies, Danish language hour, children's events such as "Church Owls" and family Sundays with "Hosanna in-the-highest". Also, potlucks at the festive seasons, the Christmas bazar, the Christmas special services with Santa Lucia or Nativity Pageants as well as attending the Danish Women's Club, the Men's breakfast, "Hyggeklubben" and many, many more activities and functions.

But it has not been the events that have mattered the most to us. It has been the Sunday services and the daily life together with the congregation, at happy occasions as in sorrow. All that is what has counted to us. We have shared joys and challenges with the congregation. And we have all supported one another in good times as in times of trial. That is the real blessing of being a pastor's family here at Ansgar.

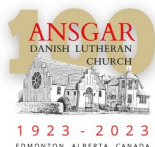


Our time here has been scarred with one big challenge above all - the Covid-19 lock downs. For almost two years we have been operating the Church under strict regulations, limiting our ability to meet and function as a true Church. Since the final opening of society, it has felt like beginning anew in many ways. But it has also given us the chance to consider the value of our Church and our unique fellowship here as well as becoming more aware of our roots and at same time more open to the world around us. I hope that you,

the Ansgar congregation, will grab the centennial as yet another opportunity to engage yourselves in our history, in our present as in our future. May it be glorious!

***God bless Ansgar!
God bless you all!***

Pastor Lasse and family





St. Lucia Pageant



Best Frikadelle Contest



Fastelavns Fun



"Hosanna in the Highest" speaks to the children



Confirmands



Palm Sunday



Easter Egg Hunt

