



**Finding Aid to the  
Falun Evangelical Lutheran  
Church**

**Records, 1887-1995**

Topeka, Kans.:  
KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2000  
Collection 5021: Microfilm MF 4777-MF4781

**Contact  
Information**

Reference staff  
Library & archives division  
Center for Historical Research  
KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
6425 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Av.  
Topeka, Kansas 66615-1099  
(785) 272-8681, ext. 116  
E-mail: [reference@kshs.org](mailto:reference@kshs.org)  
Web site: <http://www.kshs.org>

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## 1 DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

This section provides basic information about the collection and a brief overview of its contents.

**A. Repository:** Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka.

**B. Creator/  
origination:** Falun Evangelical Lutheran Church.

**C. Collection title:** Records.

**D. Collection dates:** 1887-1995.

**E. Collection identification:** Collection no. 5021.

**F. Collection size:** Five reels of microfilm.

### **G. Abstract:**

The collection contains the records of a Lutheran church in Falun, Kans., a community settled almost exclusively by Swedish immigrants in the 1860s and 1870s. The records include minutes of meetings of the church governing board, annual business meetings, financial accounts, records of baptisms, marriages, confirmations, deaths, records of the choir and Sunday school, as well as men's and women's organizations.

## 2 COLLECTION LEVEL ACCESS TERMS

The terms listed below may include names, places, subjects, occupations, titles, and other words describing this collection. These terms are used in the ATLAS catalog used by the Kansas State Historical Society and affiliated libraries in Topeka, <http://lib.wuacc.edu/search>, as well as libraries and archives subscribing to OCLC, a national library/archives database. Searches on these words should produce a description of this collection as well as other books and collections that may be of interest.

**A. Corporate names:** Falun Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church.  
Falun Evangelical Lutheran Church.

**B. Geographic names:** Falun (Kan.)  
Saline County (Kan.)  
Salemsborg (Kan.)  
Lindsborg (Kan.)

**C. Subjects:** Swedes in Kansas.  
Lutheran Church in America.

### 3 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

This section provides more detailed information about this collection that may be helpful to those wishing to use it, including its history, restrictions, copyright information, other formats, and a suggested citation form.

- A. Acquisition information:** Loaned by the Falun Evangelical Lutheran Church, for the purpose of microfilming. Accessioning no. 2001-094.01.
- B. Custodial history:** Property of the Falun Evangelical Lutheran Church, Falun, Kansas.
- C. Copyright/ publication rights:**

**Notice:** This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17, U.S. Code). The user is cautioned that the publication of the contents of this microfilm may be construed as constituting a violation of literary property rights. These rights derive from the principle of common law, affirmed in the copyright law of 1976 as amended, that the writer of an unpublished letter or other manuscript has the sole right to publish the contents thereof unless he or she affirmatively parts with that right; the right descends to his or her legal heirs regardless of the ownership of the physical manuscript itself. It is the responsibility of a user or his or her publisher to secure the permission of the owner of literary property rights in unpublished writing.

- D. Preferred citation:**  
[*identification of individual item, sub-series, series, and/or subgroup*]; *Falun Evangelical Lutheran Church*; MS. collection no.5021; Library and Archives Division, Kansas State Historical Society.
- E. Accruals:** The Kansas State Historical Society may receive on loan future additions of records from the Falun Evangelical Lutheran Church for microfilming.
- F. Processing information:** This collection was loaned to the Kansas State Historical Society in November of 2000 for the purpose of arranging and describing the collection, and for microfilming. Processing and preparation of this finding aid were done by Robert A. McInnes, 2000.

### G. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Falun, in Saline County, Kansas, was settled by Swedish immigrants beginning in the late 1860s. Some of the Falun residents came directly from Sweden, while other arrived after having

lived in Bishop Hill and Galva, Illinois. Falun was named after a city by the same name in the province of Dalcarlia, Sweden.

Swedes are predominantly Lutheran, and at first the area residents were members of Lutheran churches in the neighboring towns of Salemsborg, and Lindsborg, both Swedish communities. Falun at first had a "Christian Union Association," a church with an ecumenical orientation, however, support for this church eventually declined.

A turning point in the history of Falun came in 1886, when the Union Pacific Railroad put rails through the township, and a station in the town. From that point onward, Falun's economic base was secure.

It was in the following year that the residents of Falun decided that their numbers had grown sufficiently for them to establish and sustain their own church. The initial meetings for the establishment of a church were held in the Falun school house in October of that year, and the first order of business was to petition the Salemsborg and Lindsborg Lutheran churches to release from their rolls their members living in Falun.

The minutes from their church records indicate that progress toward establishing their new church advanced rapidly. Within just a few weeks of their first meeting, the congregation had purchased land and the church owned by the Falun Christian Union Association and physically moved that building to the newly purchased lot. As these arrangements were taking place, the leading members filed for, and received an incorporation charter for the *Falun Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church* on November 16, 1887. Because the Falun church was started in the fall (after the harvest had been gathered and sold) fundraising progressed with equal success. Even though they had many expenses in starting a new church, paying these expenses did not pose a problem.

The first pastors for this new church were Rev. Carl A. Swenson, who would visit one Sunday a month, and Mr. Carl G. Norman, who was the regular pulpit supply. The first full-time minister was Rev. P. M. Sannquist, beginning in 1889. Rev. Sannquist died only three years later. Following his death, there were a few interim pastors who filled the church's ministerial needs. The next full-time, permanent ministers at FSELCL was Dr. John Elkhölm. Dr. Elkhölm served for eleven years, a period of growth for the church. As membership grew, the church acquired a bell, the building was enlarged by 14 feet, a sacristy was installed as well as a new roof, and the interior redecorated.

In later years, the church built a parsonage. Later, the Ladies Aid Society purchased a church building (previously owned by the Baptists in Falun), and had it relocated next to the the FSELCL, for the purpose of using it as social hall.

A phenomenon experienced at FSELCL, as with all ethnically oriented churches, was the passing of the immigrant generation, and the succession its American-ized descendants. When the church was first organized and incorporated, the word *Swedish* was intentionally and conspicuously included in the name of the congregation. Church services were conducted in Swedish and church records were also recorded in that language. However, it was inevitable that the children and grandchildren of the Swedish immigrants would learn and use English as their primary language. At the annual meeting in 1927, the congregation decided to remove the word *Swedish* from their corporate name. By January of 1929, they membership decided to conduct services in Swedish only one Sunday per month, and seven years later, services were conducted entirely in English.

The next long-serving pastor was Dr. Ernst F. Pihlblad, who came to Falun in July of 1927. Dr. Pihlblad ministered to FELC during some of its most difficult years. Falun and its economy have always been based on agriculture, and the "Dirty Thirties" were years of hardship for the farmers of the area. Not only were they having difficulties in making ends meet, but were also finding it difficult providing financial support for their church. As the FELC had to dramatically reduce its expenses, it disbursed its salaried organist, relying on volunteers instead. When before, the FELC was able to meet its obligations to the *Conference* and the *Synod*, it was not able to do so for a period of a year and a half.

The next event to influence Falun and its Lutheran Church was World War II. Not only were Falun's young men drafted into the military, but the U.S. Army built Camp Phillips, a training facility to the north and east of Falun. Even after World War II, the presence of this camp was felt for decades.

In the years following WWII, the church grew through a number of building and renovation projects. During the tenure of Pastor J. E. Liljedahl, the FELC added a building addition, installed a new heating plant, a new organ, and new chimes. In the mid 1960s the church social hall, bought and moved to FELC by the Ladies Aid Society, was replaced by a new structure. Soon afterwards, the old parish house was demolished and a new one built in its place. These building projects were followed by the installation of new sidewalks and landscaping. By the early 1970s, the FELC had installed new air conditioning and new pews.

Though the the 1960s and '70s were years of growth and renovation, the biggest change to take place was the establishment of a dual Parish system in conjunction with the Salemsborg Lutheran Church. A Joint Study Committee (compiled by members from both churches) examined the proposal and set the guidelines that would make a dual system operational. The committee extended a call to Ronald H. Olson, subject to ordination. Olson accepted the call on May 11, 1970, and was ordained on June 14.

Later in the 1970s, the FELC went through another round of renovations, this time in preparation for the church's 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1977. Improvements included a newer furnace, a remodeled sacristy and study, new entrance doors, a lighted bulletin board and church sign, and a memorial stone at the original church site at the cemetery.

## 5 SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTES

In examining the three cubic feet of records of this collection in context of a broad picture, church records offer a view of a community from its spiritual side. Papers such as these indicate what people valued, what they believed, and in part, how they conducted their lives. They provide a record of who lived in Falun between 1887 and 1995, and where they put their allegiance. They also indicate where the people of Falun came from, what their ethnicity was, what language they spoke, and the degree of homogeneity of the community's members.

This collection is arranged into ten different series, some of which are divided into subseries. The records found within this collection reflect the functions, activities and duties of the church, its staff and its members. These activities include recording church membership (births of members'

children, receiving new members, confirmation of children, marriages, and deaths & funerals), annual business meetings, church council minutes, financial records, the cemetery register, records of organizations within the church (men's and women's clubs), choir financial records, and Sunday school attendance and offerings.

Because this church was established by Swedish immigrants, it should come as no surprise that many of its earliest records were written in Swedish. Records written in Swedish are noted in the *Detailed Description of the Collection*. The first two volumes of Annual Business Meeting minutes are in Swedish, however an English translation of those two volumes follows them in this microfilm.

Most of the records in this collection are in the form of blank record or ledger books with handwritten information inside (for example, the columns in a record book would list names, date of birth, date of baptism, date of confirmation, date of marriage, etc.), or are minutes of meetings, (either handwritten, or typed) or are financial ledgers. This is the predominant format of this collection.

In the early years of the FSEL, the "Annual Business Meetings" were actually held a number of times during a year. It was not until 1895 that the annual meetings were truly once-a-year events. It may have been that the volumes labeled *Annual Business Meeting Minutes* doubled as minutes of the Church Council. The minute books of the Church Council begin in 1927, the year after the last of the *Annual Business Meeting Minutes* in Swedish. The Annual Business Meeting minutes for 1927-1989 (the fourth volume in that series) also contains the Incorporation Charter from the State of Kansas (1932), a copy of the *Constitution for Congregations of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church* 1955-56), and a copy of the *Approved Constitution for Congregations of the Lutheran Church in America* (1962) under the front cover.

The first of the women's organizations within the FSEL was the Falun Ladies Aid, sometimes identified as the *Falun Ladies Aid and Missionary Society*. The women's church organizations within the church contributed greatly toward its needs. It was the women's club that acquired the first social hall for the church. During World War I, The FLA worked as an extension of the Red Cross, and prepared bandages for American servicemen. At the November 3, 1958 meeting, the FLA voted to change their group name to the *Augustana Lutheran Church Women*, a change which came into effect as of the February 12, 1959 meeting. Two other subgroups formed under the auspices of the LCW: the Esther Unit and the Priscilla Unit. The first records listed for all of these groups are their minutes, followed by financial ledgers for both the Ladies Aid and the LCW.

There are chronological gaps in some series in this collection. The earliest Church Council minutes begin in 1927. Any Council minutes preceding this volume are no longer extant. The Luther League also has gaps in its timeline. The first volume of minutes ends in 1892, and the next existing volume begins in 1906. While that one ends in 1911, the following book begins in 1927.

While some record series are incomplete, others are continuous, even through organizational changes. When the Lutheran Church Women changed to become the Falun Ladies Aid, its minutes continued without a break. The financial ledgers for both of these organizations also continue uninterrupted.

The last two series record the receipts and expenditures of the choir and Sunday schools. The Sunday school superintendent's ledgers, 1919-1963, also include attendance rolls.

## 6 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Microfilm is available on a self-service basis in the Research Room or may be borrowed from the Kansas State Historical Society through interlibrary loan.

### Series 1 Church Registers

Volume 1 ca. 1887 - 1908 (English)

Volume 2 ca. 1887 - 1970 (English)

Lists members' names, residences, gender, dates for birth, baptism, confirmation, marriage, and immigration. Also lists birthplaces -- usually placenames in Sweden. Members' names are listed sequentially, rather than alphabetically. Much of the information in volume 2 is copied from volume 1.

### Series 2 Ministerial Acts 1888 - 1970 (English)

Lists baptisms, confirmations, marriages, reception and dismissal of members, and funerals.

### Series 3 Annual Business Meetings

Minutes 1887 - 1912 (Swedish)

Minutes 1887 - 1926 (Swedish)

Minutes 1887 - 1926 (English translation of the preceding two volumes)

Minutes 1927 - 1989 (English)

Minutes 1990 - 1992 (English)

### Series 4 Church Council

Minutes 1927 - 1969 (English)

Minutes 1969 - 1992 (English)

### Series 5 Treasurer's Records

Financial Ledger 1887 - 1892

Financial Ledger 1893 - 1909

### Series 6 Falun Cemetery Records

Register of grave locations 1888 - 1954

Financial ledger 1915 - 1929



**Series 7 Women's organizations within the church**

**Falun Ladies Aid**

Minutes	1918 - 1927
Minutes	1936 - 1944
Minutes	1944 - 1951
Minutes	1952 - 1959
Minutes	1959 - 1969
Minutes	1970 - 1983
Minutes	1984 - 1995
Financial Ledgers	1922 - 1952
Financial Ledgers	1953 - 1984
<b>Esther Unit, Minutes</b>	1969 - 1974
<b>Priscilla Unit, Minutes</b>	1966 - 1975

**Series 8 Men's Organizations within the church**

**Luther League**

Minutes	1888 - 1892
Minutes	1906 - 1911
Minutes	1927 - 1964

**Falun Lutheran Brotherhood**

Minutes	1954 - 1965
Financial Ledger	1935 - 1967

**Series 9 Choir**

Financial Ledger	1955 - 1971
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**Series 10 Sunday School**

Superintendent's Ledger	1918 - 1957
Superintendent's Ledger	1957 - 1963

## 7 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This section includes lists of sources used in the preparation of this finding aid, collections on similar subjects that may be of interest to researchers, items cataloged separately, and items removed from the collection.

### 1. **Bibliography:**

Blomberg, DeVere E. *Heart & Heritage*. Ellsworth Printing Company, Ellsworth, Kansas, 1987.

Lindquist, Emory Kempton. *Smokey Valley People: A History of Lindsborg, Kansas*. Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas, 1953.

### 2. **Related materials:**

Salemsborg Lutheran Church Records, 1879-1995, Collection 5000, Microfilm MF 600-607.

Freemont Lutheran Church, 1869-1990. microfilm -- MS 1284.

Bethany Lutheran Church, 1869-1954. microfilm -- MS 747-749.

Bethany Lutheran Church, 1904-1992. microfilm -- MS 1184.01.

Elizabeth Jaderborg: Misc. Jaderborg.

Inventory of Swedish-American Church Archives -- Kansas: Hist. Swedish-Americans.