

CAPITAL NEWSPAPERS ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

# Around TOWN

## STOUGHTON - OREGON

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Sons of Norway ..... 4
- Oregon Chamber ..... 5
- Stoughton FFA ..... 7



FRIDAY, MARCH 22, 2013



The church after renovation, summer 2012.



The Rutland Center Church as it appeared in 1935.

{ Old Rutland church }  
building has new life

By Teresa Bryan Peneguy,  
niche editor

**“Like living stones, let yourselves  
be built into a spiritual house.”  
– 1 Peter 2:5 (NRSV)**

There is something melancholic about an old building that’s been abandoned. Whereas once a house or a school or a church was full of people, protecting them from the elements and swathing them as they went about their tasks and

celebrations, an empty old structure appears truly lonely as its paint peels and its foundation sinks into the ground.

Perhaps most lonely is a deserted church – a building that once hosted baptisms, weddings and funerals, serving almost as a guest of honor during these momentous occasions.

The little church on Highway 14, about three miles south of Oregon,

was once such a building. Built in 1852 by the United Brethren in Christ, and one of the oldest extant church buildings in Wisconsin, the church housed services until 1912. By the beginning of the 21st century was in a state of decay. But a great many people combined their time and resources to save the building, and the church is becoming a guest of honor again.

The Rutland Center Church was once just one of a number of build-

ings, including a hotel, a school, a mill several businesses and one saloon that dotted the area and served a community there, according to Mark Hanson, co-chair (along with Myron Bacon) of the Rutland Center Church Renovation Committee. The settlers had arrived as early as the 1830s, and the original church was built with lumber taken from neighboring woods, on land that already housed a small cemetery.

*continued on page 2*

"Once they built a railroad through Brooklyn, in the mid-1860s, one by one things dropped off," says Hanson.

But the church stood guard over a cemetery, and the building was of historical value. "We came along in 2003, when it was sitting idle and beginning to rot. The weather was attacking it," says Hanson. "That's when we began a 10-year process to bring it back to its original condition."

With financial contributions by many individuals and groups including the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission and the Bryant Foundation in Stoughton – and without a penny of taxpayer money – the building (which is owned by the Town of Rutland and not affiliated with any organized religion) was lovingly refurbished. The process



The Church of the Brethren congregation. The photograph is undated, but it appears to be from the late 19th century.

was overseen by builder Michael Schmudlach of the Wisconsin Historical Society's Board of Curators.

The 25-by-35-foot building

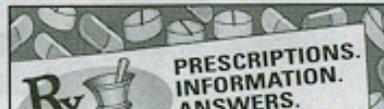
was integral to the United Brethren in Wisconsin, as the congregation's first site and as host for the congregation's state conferences five times between 1860 and 1887. The sect had been born during the "Great Meeting" revival movement of the late 1860s and was notable for its

stance against slavery. It merged with the Methodist Church in 1968.

An open house for the renovated building was held in August. Although the building no longer belongs to a religious organization, the donation of an acre of land from the Anthony family will allow the cemetery to grow. A funeral service is set for April and a wedding for later in the year. So the little old church on the highway will continue to embrace gatherings today and tomorrow.

The Rutland Center Church is located at 687 US Highway 14. More details are available at [www.rutland-church.org](http://www.rutland-church.org).

*Teresa Bryan Peneguy, niche editor at Capital Newspapers, is co-author of "Sacred Sites of Wisconsin" and "Sacred Sites of Minnesota," published by Trails Media. ■*

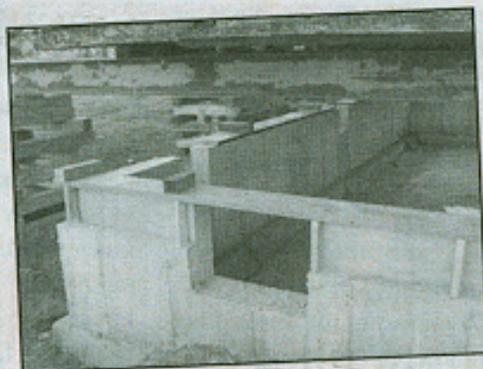


more Rutland church pics on page 3

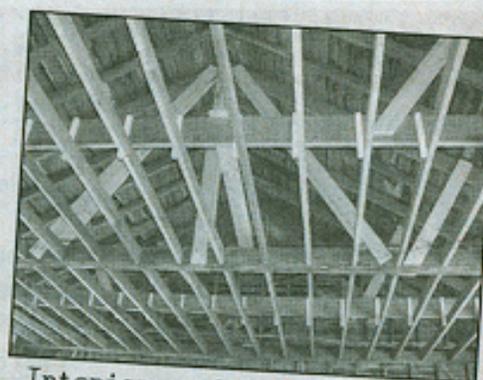
The side of the church is shown in decay, before renovation.



The church's cemetery will not only remain, but will continue to be used in the future.



The building's new foundation.



Interior work began in 2010.



The pews were one of the final items replaced.

The Anthony sisters presented the deed for one acre of land that will double the size of the cemetery.



[https://agupdate.com/agriview/lifestyles/rutland-center-church-restoration-draws-community-interest/article\\_149aa790-d451-5333-88b1-ec93640ca739.html](https://agupdate.com/agriview/lifestyles/rutland-center-church-restoration-draws-community-interest/article_149aa790-d451-5333-88b1-ec93640ca739.html)

## **Rutland Center Church restoration draws community interest**

BY JOAN SANSTADT, NEWS EDITOR

“There’s a church in the valley by the wildwood,”—so the song goes.

In the Town of Rutland, there’s a church at the corner of Rome Corners Road and U.S. Highway 14.

The church was the first built in Wisconsin by the United Brethren Denomination. The denomination’s origin can be traced to the Revival Movement that took place in America in the mid-eighteenth century.

After Wisconsin became a territory in 1936, many people of United Brethren faith moved to the area that was to become the Town of Rutland. Many members of that church, which was built in 1852-53, are buried in the cemetery behind the building. Services in the church continued until 1912.

In 1858, it was the site of the first session of the Wisconsin Conference Evangelical United Brethren Church. Conference membership was 609.

In 1974, the church and cemetery were officially turned over to the Town of Rutland. Residents of the town were concerned about the deterioration of the building and wanted to insure preservation of the cemetery.

In 2004, Town Chairman Myron Bacon led a group of interested residents and formed a local committee that began planning how the preservation should proceed.

Their interest was important—but so was the task of finding the money that would be needed.

Myron, along with Charles (Chuck) Anthony and Joan Gefke, began discussing the preservation possibilities. (Since the work began, both Anthony and Gefke have passed away.)

Soon Mark and Jean (Sholts) Hanson joined Bacon on the committee. So did Gerald Neath, a local historian, who contributed his knowledge about the history of the area.

In 2004, three Anthony sisters, all relatives of Chuck, came to one of the committee meetings and presented the deed for one acre of land. That acre, added to the back of the property, will allow for the cemetery to be expanded. At the present time, over 100 people are buried in that cemetery.

“The gift of that acre of land is very important to the future of the church,” Mark Hanson emphasized.

In October, a group of citizens gathered on the church property to learn about its history and discuss what was needed. It was at this meeting that the Friends of the Rutland Center Church was organized.

As interest in the project grew, so did the financial response. Grants came from the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission and from the Bryant Foundation in Stoughton, along with donations from many individuals. In addition, many people have volunteered their labor.

“No taxpayer money has been used,” Myron explained. So far grants and donations have totaled close to \$50,000.

Authenticity has been the goal of the committee and it is especially important because the building has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places and on the Wisconsin Historical Society Registry.

Restoration advice has been provided free of charge by Arlan Kay, a Madison architect with Architectural Network, Inc.

Gary Champagne, Champagne Studio, Oregon, helped select historically coordinating colors.

“When you redo an old building you have to decide which decade you are going to use as your guide,” Mark said, adding, “we decided on 1910.”

As restoration work began, electricity was found to be present in the building. That was fortunate, because the Historical Registry allows for updating existing features.

The interior of the church was pretty much intact with two wood-burning stoves, an old lectern and pews.

Rewiring has been done and the committee is hoping some electric space heaters might be used when heat is needed.

In 2005, the restoration work focused on the foundation. The church was raised, excavation was done beneath it and then the building was dropped back onto its new foundation.

“Most of the restoration work has been done professionally,” Mark said. “We had a mason come in and put on the limestone fascia.”

The roof was the project in 2006. A local contractor replaced the old roof boards with new cedar shingles like those used in the original roof. Also new sill rim beams and a new center joist strengthened the building and eliminated wall bulge.

Next, in 2007, the windows were removed and taken to a professional window renovator. They were re-installed during the summer of 2008. The process of removing the white lead paint and restoring the side boards began in '07.

In 2008, the task of removing the old paint was concluded and the building received two new coats of paint. This is also when the long missing front deck and railings were added.

The interior work continued in 2009, when the pews were removed and stored, so the wainscoting, lath and plaster could be removed. This work continued into the following year, when the walls and ceiling were stripped of their plaster. Carpenters were hired to straighten and level the ceiling rafters and joists.

There had been no insulation in the building. “We used foam insulation because it is water-resistant and seals the building and keeps out insects. It also adds strength to the walls. When this was done, we had it professionally dry walled,” Myron said.

What's slated for this summer? "Refinishing the wood floor, along with some trim work on the windows," Mark said. "We'll also begin the work to refinish the pews."

"Rutland Center was an up and coming village at the time the church was built," Myron said. "It had not only the church, but a school, a hotel, two taverns, a grocery store and seven houses. The only evidence left is the church."

Rutland Center grew because it was a stop on the stagecoach route.

"What sealed the end for Rutland Center was the railroad to the west that went through Oregon and Brooklyn," Myron said.

The church is owned by the Town of Rutland and all of the town's funds and the church's funds are kept entirely separate. "This is an historical renovation and has nothing to do with the separation of church and state," Myron added. However, the town has responsibility for mowing the grass.

Any money that is donated is turned over to the clerk who deposits in a separate account. Before any work is done, the committee solicits bids and takes those bids to the town board for its recommendations. It is the town board that approves any purchases or expenditures for the restoration project.

Gerald Neath provided the answer to how a road called "Rome Corners" came to be located in the Town of Rutland.

"When townships were first formed, they were much larger than they are now," he explained. "What is now the Town of Rutland was just one part of the Township of Rome. Rome was later divided into the Towns of Oregon, Dunn and Fitchburg."

Neath said "Rome" came from the Town of Rome in Oneida County in New York.

"At one time, Rome Corners was the chief crossroads section in Rome Township—but it wasn't where its namesake road is now located. Rome Corners is what Oregon was known as at that time. It was basically the commercial area of the Town of Rome," Neath said.

Neath also wanted to "offer a tip for people who are working on family history or ancestry: Be sure to write down the source of the information you use."

What's in the future of the Rutland Center Church?

Myron's dream is that when work on the building itself is completed, some landscaping can be done. "Perhaps a little shelter with bathrooms could be built. That would allow the church to be used for small weddings, meetings or other civic activities," he added.

Jean, who is related to the Waterman family and some of the Waterman family members are buried in the church cemetery, said she hopes interest in the church and its history will continue.

"Shortly before he died, Chuck Anthony came over one day and talked on video tape about the history of the area," she said.

More information about the church as well as how to become a member of the Friends of Rutland Center Church and Cemetery is available on the website at <http://www.rutlandchurch.org>

# Oregon Area Historical Society

<https://oregonareahistoricalsociety.org/rutland-church/>



## Rutland Center

### Old Rutland

*(ED. NOTE: The following article signed only by "A Traveler", was mailed to us this week relating to some interesting reflections about Rutland area, which many may find of interest.)*

"One our vacation travels we passed through Old Rutland Center, Wisconsin and viewed the old U. B. Rutland Church which stood on the little knoll for a century or more (believe around 112 years or more). Many are the fond memories of this dear old church which has served its people well, the sermons, the beautiful voices which made of the choir, usually of young people. . .the concerts and the strawberry and ice cream socials with all the goodies one could eat (tickets 10 cents each). The huge tables were set out on the lawn in the evening with kerosene lanterns gung on posts to furnish light for the occasion.

All the old settlers who helped to build the church have passed on many years ago. . .Elias Waterman for one, purchased a 5 acre tract of land from Mr. Anthony on which he built a saw mill and sawed some limber for the church, also gave \$200 toward its building some time later.

Mr. Anthony wanted to buy the 5 acres back, so Elias sold it back to Anthony with saw mill included. I can't say if Mr. Anthony sawed any lumber for any buildings unless it might have been for the old hotel where Kip Waterman and others played for many dances.

Rutland was quite a village at that time, between 30 and 40 residents, a church, school house, 2 grocery stores (Elias Waterman operated one just south of the church and John Buntin the other; [there was] a shoe store just across the road from the school house, 2 blacksmith shops, one owned by a Mr. San Francisco, the other by William Perkins.

The Northwestern railroad was to have been built through Rutland, but it was voted on and lost by one vote, otherwise this village wold have sprung up instead of Brooklyn.

We were glad to see the dear old church still standing in such good condition.

—A Traveler

*(from The Oregon Observer, Vol. 82, No. 6, pg. 11, issue of 29 August 1963)*

[Visit the Rutland Center Church Website](https://oregonareahistoricalsociety.org/rutland-church/)

# THE OLD RUTLAND CENTER CHURCH

**Note: It appears that this article was written after the meeting held at the Rutland Church on March 27, 1911. Minutes of this meeting are included in the official record of the church.**

As far as we can learn, the church was built in the year of 1852, by the United Brethren in Christ and is one of the oldest church in Dane county.

The branch of the United Brethren at Rutland then consisted of a class of about 65 members with W. T. Bunton as pastor, John C. Hanan, class leader, Joseph DeJanes Taylor Valentine and A. G. Newton as trustees.

The lumber from which the church was built was part taken from the neighboring woods and sawed into lumber at the local mill on the David Anthony farm. The rest was hauled by ox teams from Stoughton, as that was the nearest railroad station at that time.

The land on which the church stands and also what is now occupied by the cemetery, was part of the farm bought by David Anthony from the government at \$1.25 per acre, in the year 1846, and was sold to the United Brethren for \$10.



Since then the church as been used as a place of worship and many of the present residents of Rutland and surrounding places remember the church with many pleasant memories.

Recently the church and property was sold to the Cemetery Association to be used in connection with the cemetery and for funerals, religious services and other moral purposes.

The funds for buying the church were donated by persons interested in keeping the church as a memento of the work of their forefathers and a monument of pioneer days.

The persons who contributed in this fund and amounts are given below:

\$5.00 F.M. Ames, Duane Glidien(?), Mrs. Almeran Eager, Fred R. Graves, David C. Anthony, Lena Anthony, Chas. Anthony, H. L. B. Gorman, D. T. Hanan, Chas. DeJanes, Morrison Bros., W. C. Barrows, Alma Family, C. W. Waterman, Frank Newton, H. S. Smith, W. K. Sholts, Arthur Sholts, Wm. Houtby, C. R. Johnson, Arthur Johnson, Homer Sholts, Dr. Carl Sholts, Mrs. M. V. Sholts, Chas. Newcomb, D. A. Anthony, W. S. Bell, George and Mrs. R. W. King.

\$3.00縫. R. Meloy, Geo. Sholts.

\$2.50 Amy Nichols.

\$2.00 C.H. Anderson, J. V. Collins, E. M. Wilder Lumber Co., John Odegard, Owen Roberts, Virgil Hopkins, W. M. Van Wormer, H. C. Rasmussen, Geo. Prichard Estate, F. A. Phillips, W. J. Bossingham, Orin Alma, Urbin DeJanes, H. E. Waterman, Andrew Knudson, Mrs. Anna Emmes.

\$1.00 Leland Graes, M. L. Mason, Roberts Sisters, Park Ames, H. D. Hanson, E. A. Smith, L. M. Burt, L. E. Claflin, Phillip Wachman, H. A. Miller, Joe Millsbaugh, M. C. Karmgard, Floyd Smith, John Baker, Ralph Smith, E. E. Combs, Geo. McGee, Miller & Winn, V. A. Axtell, R. Gillman and Son, Biglow and Roderick, J. H. Meyer & Co., W. D. Groh, C. H. Walker, G. W. Seeman, E. W. White, R. E. Shuster, F. A. Baker & Co., Robt, Hartley, Bank of Evansville, N. T. Slauson, Helgerson & Park, Dr. J. W. Ames, L. Van Wort, M. L. Ellis, W. H. Johnson, T. C. Richmond, V. C. Holmes, A. E. Hart, E. Record & Sons, Evansville Electric Co., Davis Bros., Byron King, O. F. Flint, Wm. Sholts, Addie Anthony, Willis Sholts, Ruben Heehrer.

.50 cents Chas. Tolles.

The Cemetery Association wishes to extend their thanks to all persons who helped with money and labor in securing the church for the benefit of the public and the upbuilding of mankind.

If any errors have been made in this account or if any person's name who contributed has been left out of this list, we will thank you to call our attention to it and we will rectify the mistake, or if any other person wishes to contribute to this fund, it will be thankfully received.

We wish especially to thank Mr. And Mrs. F. M. Ames for their help and also Fred M. Schlingen of Madison for \$10.00 for the upkeep of the cemetery.

What money is left after paying the church will be used in repairing the church and fencing and platting part of the land for cemetery purposes.

Yours Very truly,

Rutland Center Cemetery Association  
 Frank Newton, Secretary  
 R. F. D. 2  
 Oregon, Wis.

Funds for Buying the Church  
 (Taken from above article)

30	\$5.00	\$150.00
2	\$3.00	6.00
1	\$2.50	2.50
16	\$2.00	32.00
48	\$1.00	48.00
1	\$ .50	.50
Total:		\$239.00