St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church to host Vossler

The letters, written by and sent to families with names like Bader, Bender, Ketterling, Heiser, Hochhalter, Martel, Heupel, Kraemer, Boschee and others have been called “Extremely Important Historical Documents” by scholars, and the film has been shown on public television stations across the United States.

Vossler’s books and films related to this topic will be available for purchase, with proceeds going to St. Andrew’s Church.

We thank all of you for your past support and hope we can count on you again. This historical site will be 125 years old in 2018 and we hope to do some roof repair on the steeple and paint the 1893 sod church with other needed repairs prior to this year when we hope to have several church services by former pastors.

Guests will be able to tour both the 1893 and the 1906 church structures.

St. Andrew’s Lutheran Church known as the “Beacon of the Prairie” was founded by 15 families from South Russia who came to the Dakota Territory to take up homestead land beginning in 1884.

The property includes a 29 by 22 foot stone church, dedicated in 1893 as Andreas Gemeinde. To build the church the founding families paid a total of $395 and each adult male member donated 15 days of labor. Using the architecture style they had known in Russia, the founders used materials from the land and transported sandstone by ox and stone boat, horses and wagons from a bluff 12 miles northwest of the site. This stone church is one of the only structures of similar architecture and style left on the prairie today.

In 1906 a tall white, carpenter Gothic style church 26 by 60 feet with a 10 foot square bell tower entry rising 60 feet to the steeple and cross was built.

Keeping clergy to serve a country parish is difficult, so regular services are no longer held at St. Andrews. Instead the buildings are used for special events. The churches and cemetery have been maintained all these years by the families that remain actively involved - including the St. Andrew’s Centennial German Choir members have performed in the region for last 25 years.