

**The Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.
A Short History**



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Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. and the Duluth Bethel Building Complex

The origins of the Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., in Duluth, Minnesota, date from 1871 when the Duluth Ship Canal was dug between Lake Superior and St. Louis Bay. With the opening of the canal, the City of Duluth, incorporated in 1857, became a major inland shipping port. Cargoes shipped out of the port reflected the economy of the area, with lumber harvested by the logging industry and grain grown on the farms in the Red River Valley and the Dakotas, dominating outgoing freight. Coal was a major cargo coming in to the port.¹

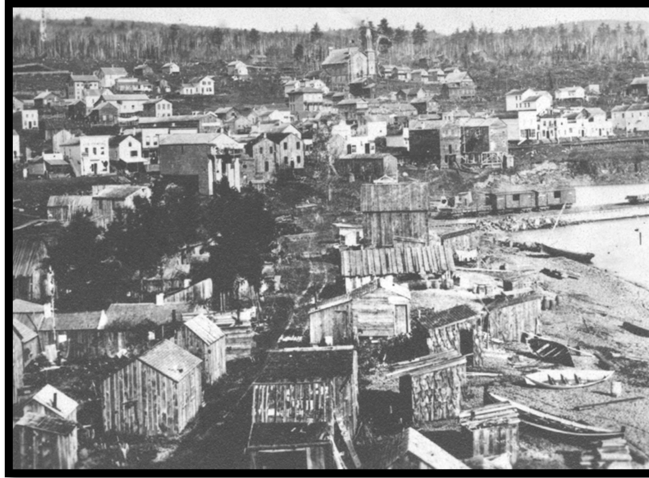
In 1869, Duluth was recognized as the fastest growing city in the country. As the city and shipping industry grew, sailors came to Duluth in increasing numbers. To serve as missionaries to the sailors, in 1871-2, several representatives from the Western Seamen's Friend Society of Cleveland, Ohio, another Great Lakes port, traveled to Duluth. These representatives, Robert Smith, B. Frankland, and Captain Peter Kitwood, are recognized as the Bethel pioneers in the city. Each man brought skills in working with the seamen, with Kitwood adding his experience as a ship captain to the group.²

The three missionaries began their ministry at Superior Street and 1st Avenue East, an area that brought them into regular contact with sailors from Great Lakes ships. The area already was known as the Bowery; the following rather colorful description provides insight into what it was like: "In those days, most of the shipping that came into the Duluth harbor was unloaded in slips adjacent to Lake Avenue, a district made up of saloons, gambling dens, and flop houses. Here, on shore leave, congregated the seamen, swarming the gin mills, gaming tables, and other places of amusement, in riotous release from the monotony of life aboard ship. Here, too, gathered those who garnered a livelihood by preying on the reckless sailors, and rash, indeed, were those who ventured into this lawless terrain." This was where Smith, Frankland, and Kitwood began their work.³

¹ "Harboring a proud place in history," *Duluth Seaway Port Authority*, <http://www.duluthport.com/port-history.php>, accessed 12/29/2015.

² "A History of the Duluth Bethel," *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, <http://duluthbethel.org/history.htm>, accessed 11/19/2015.

³ Dora Mary Macdonald, *This is Duluth* (Duluth, MN: Duluth Board of Education, 1950):75.



Duluth waterfront prior to the opening of the ship canal, 1870

Photo credit: zenithcity.com

http://zenithcity.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ZCA_DEV_NoMansLand1870_DPL.jpg,
accessed 3/29/2016

From the beginning, the Bethel Association benefitted from supporters who were well-known community leaders. This became apparent early on. In 1873, several leading members of the community, many of whose names continue to be known today, incorporated the new organization. Luther Mendenhall—a successful businessman and Civil War veteran, Luke Marvin—whose family would be associated with the work of the Bethel for several generations, Roger Munger—a successful entrepreneur and businessman who was in charge of the opening of the Duluth Ship Canal, and J.C. Hunter—a banker who gave his name to the Hunter’s Park neighborhood, were among the early incorporators. They named the organization the Bethel Association, thereby identifying it as a traditional sanctuary or place of safety for sailors. The word Bethel itself means “House of God.”⁴

The Duluth Bethel is one of the oldest continuously operating social service organizations in northeastern Minnesota. It defined its mission in 1873 as promoting “temporal and spiritual welfare of seamen and their families and of such as may not have been provided for by regular religious and benevolent societies in the city and vicinity.” As time went on and logging, mining, and railroads also became major industries in northeastern Minnesota, the Bethel mission expanded to include services to lumberjacks, miners, and railroad men. Eventually those served by the Bethel were defined broadly as transient men who, because of the seasonal nature of their work or other factors in their lives, did not have steady employment or a permanent place to live.

⁴ “A History of the Duluth Bethel,” *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, <http://duluthbethel.org/history.htm>, accessed 11/19/2015. Tony Dierckins, “Lost Landmark: the 1888 Duluth Bethel,” *Zenith City Online*, <http://zenithcity.com/lost-landmark-the-1888-duluth-bethel/>, accessed 11/26/2015. “Roger S. Munger,” *Zenith City Online*, <http://zenithcity.com/zenith-city-history-archives/biography/munger-roger/>, accessed 1/14/2016. “Luther Mendenhall,” *St. Louis County Historical Society Veterans Memorial Hall*, <http://www.vets-hall.org/stories/civil-war/luther-mendenhall>, accessed 1/14/2016.

Service to families mentioned in the mission statement included programs for residents of the communities in which the buildings were located. Overall, the commitment of the Bethel Association was to serve those in greatest need of help and support.⁵

Until 1887, the Bethel Association operated out of various temporary locations, sometimes setting up tents and other times, just working on the streets. But that year, Bethel chaplain Dr. Charles C. Salter was named director of the association. Seeing a continuing and growing need for services provided by the Bethel, Dr. Salter began to work toward erecting a permanent building. Salter also was well known in community. He had come to the city in 1871 from Minneapolis, where he had served as a pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church. Before leading the Bethel, he had served as minister of Duluth's Pilgrim Congregational Church. A Civil War veteran with lingering health problems, he worked free of charge at the Bethel, retiring in 1893. Dr. Salter lived in Salter Terrace, a row house designed for him and his family by noted Duluth architect Oliver Traphagen. When support for the new Bethel Building began to grow, Dr. Salter persuaded Traphagen to design it.

The first main Bethel Building, built at a cost of \$35,000, opened in 1888. It was a two-story clapboard structure with a corner tower located at 246 Lake Avenue. It had furnished rooms for transient men, a chapel, reading rooms, and a restaurant. Salter held a religious service in the building each evening and L.A. (Luke Arthur) Marvin established his popular Sunday school program there. For a number of years, the Bethel hosted Thanksgiving dinner for the city's 600-800 newsboys, first in the building and then, when the event outgrew that, in larger spaces in downtown Duluth.⁶

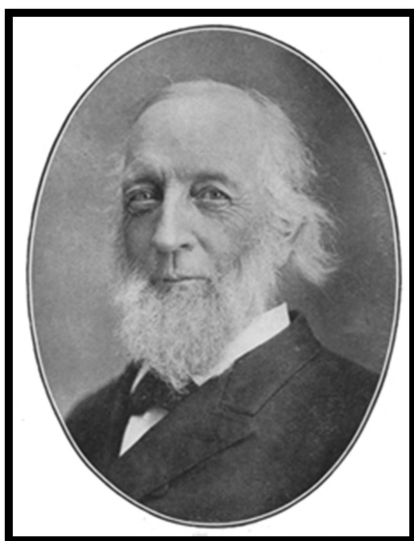


Duluth Bethel Society Sunday School, 1893 or 1894
Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

⁵ "A History of the Duluth Bethel," *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, <http://duluthbethel.org/history.htm>, accessed 11/19/2015. Dora Mary Macdonald, *This is Duluth* (Duluth, MN: Duluth Board of Education, 1950):95.

⁶ "A History of the Duluth Bethel," *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, <http://duluthbethel.org/history.htm>, accessed 11/19/2015. Tony Dierckins, "Lost Landmark: the 1888 Duluth Bethel," *Zenith City Online*, <http://zenithcity.com/lost-landmark-the-1888-duluth-bethel/>, accessed 11/26/2015. "Annual Report of the Chaplain and the General Superintendent," *The Bethel Record*, November 1906, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records.

In 1892, the City of Duluth built the Lake Avenue viaduct. It improved access across the railroad tracks between Duluth businesses and the waterfront, but was elevated and cut off access to the main entrance of the Bethel Building. The Association raised the building and expanded it by adding a new first floor at a total cost of \$2,500. In 1899, in response to an ever-growing need for services, the Association added a fourth floor to the building.⁷



Reverend Charles C. Salter, nd
Photo credit: Duluth Public Library



Duluth Bethel Association
Sutphin Street Building, ca. 1900.
Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

The services of the Bethel were always in demand. To help meet this demand, in 1894, the association rented an additional building in the 500 block of W. Superior Street. Nightly Gospel meetings were held at the branch building and the Sunday school run by L.A. Marvin filled its meeting room to capacity each week.⁸

In 1901, the Association expanded its services for families with the purchase of the Bethel Home for Women at 432 6th Ave East in Duluth. The building opened in October 1902 under the directorship of Mary Shannon. It served women and girls, many of whom faced the considerable stigma of the time of being unwed mothers.⁹

⁷ Tony Dierckins, “Lost Landmark: the 1888 Duluth Bethel,” *Zenith City Online*, <http://zenithcity.com/lost-landmark-the-1888-duluth-bethel/>, accessed 11/26/2015. Telephone conversation, Graden Grobe with Barb Sommer, 11/26/2015.

⁸ “Annual Report of the Chaplain and the General Superintendent,” *The Bethel Record*, November 1906, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. “Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Duluth Bethel Society,” *The Bethel Record*, November 1907, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., records.

⁹ “East Hillside Bethel Home for Women, Duluth, MN,” Northeast Minnesota Historical Center collections, Kathryn A. Martin Library, University of Minnesota Duluth, Duluth, MN. *Minnesota Reflections*, <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/nemhc/id/3833>, accessed 1/13/2016. “A History of the Duluth

In November 1903, the Bethel Association re-incorporated itself as the Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., the name under which it operates today. Incorporators were H. H. Hanford—an active participant in the work of the Bethel for many years, Judge W.D. Edson—who would serve as president for many years, L.A. Marvin, James T. Hale—who would serve as a long-time officer, Luther Mendenhall, W.S. Moore, and R.W. Mars—Civil War veteran and businessman. Officers elected at the first meeting of the new Duluth Bethel Society were H.H. Hanford, President; Ward Ames, Vice President; James T. Hale, Secretary; and L.A. Marvin, Treasurer. Familiar names on these lists illustrate not only how effective the Bethel was in attracting powerful friends but also how effective it was in keeping its supporters. Names of people new to the lists also would go on to serve the Bethel for several decades.¹⁰

Charles Roebel, Dr. Salter’s successor, ran the Bethel until his retirement in 1905. He was succeeded by Bethel chaplain J.T. Moody who was named superintendent (general manager) of the Duluth Bethel Society that year. Under the leadership of Moody and Duluth Bethel Society directors, discussions about the need for a new, larger building began. The minutes of the meeting on June 11, 1907, record the result of these discussions: “Resolved that the Duluth Bethel Board hereby authorizes the starting of a fund to be known as ‘The Building Fund’ to be kept separate and used solely for a new building. And authorizes the general manager and officers to receive subscriptions and contributions thereto.” With this, although a location was not yet determined, planning began for construction of the 1912 Duluth Bethel Society building.¹¹

The need for the new building was discussed at each board meeting and annual meeting. In July 1909, following a resolution proposed by James T. Hale and passed unanimously, the Board began to actively fundraise for two new buildings—a new facility for the men’s program and one for the women’s program: “Resolved that the Board undertake to raise the money to build a new Bethel Building and a new building for the Rescue House.” At the same meeting, Board members assigned fundraising duties to Superintendent Moody, suggesting he should be “sent out to secure contributions,” and gave Executive Committee members “final and executive

Bethel,” *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, <http://duluthbethel.org/history.htm>, accessed 11/19/2015. Tony Dierckins, “Lost Landmark: the 1888 Duluth Bethel,” *Zenith City Online*, <http://zenithcity.com/lost-landmark-the-1888-duluth-bethel/>, accessed 11/26/2015.

¹⁰ “Duluthians & the Civil War,” *Zenith City Online*, <http://zenithcity.com/zenith-city-history-archives/duluth-culture/duluthians-civil-war/>, accessed 1/14/2015. Tony Dierckins, “Lost Landmark: the 1888 Duluth Bethel,” *Zenith City Online*, <http://zenithcity.com/lost-landmark-the-1888-duluth-bethel/>, accessed 11/26/2015. Minutes of the First Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 11/21/1903, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. First Meeting of the Members and Incorporators of the Duluth Bethel Society, 11/21/1903, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records.

¹¹ Minutes of the Meeting of Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 6/11/1907, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. “Thirty-fifth Annual Report,” November 1908, *The Bethel Record*, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records.

charge of the campaign to raise money.” Board members in 1909 included Ward Ames, Luther Mendenhall, W.J. McCabe, and H.M. Peyton.¹²

In the midst of the campaign for new buildings, leadership of the Duluth Bethel Society changed hands. J.T. Moody resigned and, after much discussion, the Directors accepted his resignation. The Society hired Henry E. Ramsayer as Superintendent. He served until 1918 when the Board of Directors agreed that a “change should be made” and hired Charles Beatty. Ramsayer went on to found the Northern Bible Society, erect the Northern Bible House, and assemble the Ramsayer-Northern Bible Society Collection.¹³

Throughout 1911, work on the Bethel Building moved ahead. The purchase in April of a plot of land described as lots 120-122 and 124, Block 15, Third Division, for “a price of \$11,000.00 cash” was a major step. This was followed by the hiring of Frederick G. German as architect for the new building. The Society sold the Traphagen building in September for \$18,000. Bids for construction of the new building were opened on 10/24/1911; George H. Lounsberry was the low bidder at \$59,000.¹⁴

F.G. German began his architectural career as a draftsman for Oliver Traphagen and went on to become one of the city’s premiere architects in his own right. Buildings he designed in Duluth, in addition to the Bethel, included the downtown YMCA, Pilgrim Congregational Church, Glen Avon Presbyterian Church, Lester Park Library, Marshall Wells Wholesale Hardware company buildings, Washington Junior High School, and the Duluth Curling Club. German also designed many buildings in Superior, Wisconsin, and on the Iron Range. George H. Lounsberry was a leading general contractor in the city. He was described as a “master of details of every phase of the building industry” and was vice president of the Verna Brick Industry—helpful for an organization looking to build a large, brick building (although it is unclear whether the red bricks used on the Bethel Building came from this company). Other Lounsberry projects in Duluth

¹² Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 7/26/1909, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Duluth Bethel Society, 11/9/1909, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records.

¹³ Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 3/10/1911, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 7/23/1918, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 11/4/1918, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. “Ramsayer-Northern Bible Society Collection,” <http://www.d.umn.edu/lib/bible/>, accessed 1/14/2016.

¹⁴ Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 4/20/1911, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 6/12/1911, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, September 1911, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 10/24/1911, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records.

included development of Morgan Park, the Dewitt-Seitz (Happy Sleeper) Building, and the Duluth National Guard Armory.¹⁵

In April of 1912, the Board of Directors came to the conclusion they could not afford to build two buildings at the same time. They tabled further work on the women's and children's building in favor of continuing to move ahead with the Bethel Building, built at a cost of \$80,000 and dedicated on October 20, 1912. This men's only building with its mix of large dormitory-style spaces and individual rooms was designed to provide lodging for 200 men. The single or private rooms were rented by elderly men on old-age assistance, paid for by the county. Men staying in the dormitories paid a small fee per night and were accepted on a night-by-night basis.¹⁶



Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. Building, ca. 1915
Photo credit: University of Minnesota Duluth, Kathryn A. Martin Library,
Northeast Minnesota Historical Center Collections

¹⁵ "Oliver Traphagen," *Zenith City Online*, <http://zenithcity.com/zenith-city-history-archives/biography/traphagen-oliver/>, accessed 1/5/2016. "German's Passing Mourned," *Northwest Architect*, January 1938. "Frederick C. German," *Zenith City Online*, <http://zenithcity.com/zenith-city-history-archives/biography/german-frederick/>, accessed 1/3/2016. "George Lounsberry," *Master Bricks*, <http://www.mnbricks.com/george-lounsberry>, accessed 1/14/2016.

¹⁶ "A History of the Duluth Bethel," *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, <http://duluthbethel.org/history.htm>, accessed 10/11/2015. "A History of the Bethel – 1873-2015," unpublished manuscript, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., p. 5.



Interior, Duluth Bethel Building, nd
Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

The Board resumed discussions about the rescue home in 1914. Working again with F.G. German, the Society built a rescue home for women and children at 1230 E. 9th Street. With completion of the rescue home project, discussions about additional buildings stopped for the duration of U.S. involvement in World War I (1917-1918). The rescue home eventually became known as Hillcrest House and was administered by the Duluth Bethel Society until changing times and financial support options for social services resulted in its closure and sale in the 1990s.¹⁷



Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. Rescue Home/Hillcrest House, ca. 1925
Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

¹⁷ Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 4/29/1912, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 7/21/1914, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Duluth Bethel Society, 11/5/1915, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 7/3/1916, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 7/26/1916, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. "East Hillside Bethel Home for Women, Duluth, MN," Northeast Minnesota Historical Center collections, Kathryn A. Martin Library, University of Minnesota Duluth, Duluth, MN. *Minnesota Reflections*, <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/nemhc/id/3833>, accessed 1/13/2016. "A History of the Duluth Bethel," *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, <http://duluthbethel.org/history.htm>, accessed 11/19/2015. Tony Dierckins, "Lost Landmark: the 1888 Duluth Bethel," *Zenith City Online*, <http://zenithcity.com/lost-landmark-the-1888-duluth-bethel/>, accessed 11/26/2015.



Interior views, Hillcrest House, nd
Photo credits: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

For many years, support of the work of the Duluth Bethel Society was dependent almost solely on gifts and donations. Gifts and donations are still an important part of Society support, but funding sources began to expand in 1921 when formal contact was made with the Duluth Community Chest (forerunner of the United Way). W.J. McCabe was appointed as the Duluth Bethel Society delegate to the Community Chest Committee. He was joined by Kirby Jones, H. A. Hoxie, and Superintendent Beatty. This step helped bring some stabilization to Society funding sources; it would prove crucial during the Great Depression years.¹⁸

In January 1924, the Society began to plan for another new building. This one was to be a Sunday school building, built on a lot purchased for this purpose next to the Bethel Building. Society directors, working again with F.G. German, were moving ahead on a design for the new building when they learned of the death of longtime Bethel supporter L.A. Marvin in September of that year. In the minutes of a hastily-called special meeting, they recognized his more than thirty years' involvement with the work of the Bethel Society, especially the Sunday school program. Leadership of the Sunday school program passed to his son, Luke A. (Ned) Marvin,

¹⁸ Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 9/26/1921, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records.

and in January 1925, the directors decided to call the new building the L. A. Marvin Memorial building in honor of his work.¹⁹

Fundraising for the \$35,000 building was successful and on July 10, 1925, the Directors voted to move ahead with construction. Bids were awarded to Carl Gustafson as general contractor, Sher-Hendrickson as the plumbing and heating contractor, and Commercial Electric Company as the electrical contractor. The cornerstone was laid on August 28, 1925, and the building was dedicated in November.²⁰



L.A. Marvin Building, ca. 1925

Photo credit: University of Minnesota Duluth, Kathryn A. Martin Library,
Northeast Minnesota Historical Center Collections

With this, facilities were in place at the Bethel Building to provide services to men and at the Marvin Building to provide services to children and families in the central and west end areas of Duluth. The rescue home on E. 9th Street provided services to women and girls. When the stock market crashed in 1929 and the Great Depression set in, the need for these services became very apparent. During the decade of the 1930s, as unemployment skyrocketed and the economy worsened, people lost jobs and homes. Unemployment reached 25 percent on an average across the country and 80 percent on the Iron Range. Among young men, aged 18-25, unemployment hovered around 50 percent throughout much of the decade. The services of the Bethel helped many through a decade often described as “Hard Times.”

¹⁹ Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 1/8/1924, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 9/17/1924, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 1/6/1925, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records.

²⁰ Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 7/10/1925, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. Special Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Duluth Bethel Society, 8/28/1925, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records. “A History of the Duluth Bethel,” *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, <http://duluthbethel.org/history.htm>, accessed 10/11/2015.



Duluth Bethel, 1931

Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

This situation stretched the resources of the Duluth Bethel Society to the limit. Space in the buildings was at a premium and the practice of men bedding down in hallways of the Bethel Building when the dormitories were full was not uncommon. When the needs of transient men exceeded space entirely, the City of Duluth offered use of the old City Hall on Superior Street as an overflow facility. Even after funds from St. Louis County were cut off, donations and funds from the City of Duluth and the Community Chest allowed the Duluth Bethel Society to continue to help homeless, transient men throughout the Great Depression. A report written in 1931 at the start of the Great Depression by a committee of the Society board, tasked with touring the 1912 Bethel Building and reporting on its condition, found the Bethel Society was serving 475 men a day at the two facilities—more than double the 200 men that the Bethel Building was originally designed to hold. Dormitories in the Bethel Building were described as being covered with single cots on the floors and bunk beds along the walls, providing space for 80 men in each one. The committee also reported on conditions in the building—sheets and linens were clean and the building, though it was showing signs of wear from constant use, basically was clean and functional. As the report described it, “The walls and floors and stairs show the wear and tear of endless use and stern washing.”²¹

²¹ “Committee Reports upon conditions at Bethel for Men,” H.F. Salyard, Edward L. Touhy, J.H. Hearing, 12/23/1931, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. records.



Front entrance, Duluth Bethel Building, ca. 1930s.

Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

The Depression, and with it, the increased demand for Bethel services, lasted until the United States entered World War II in December 1941. Throughout the war and immediate post-war years, the Bethel continued to provide board and lodging services, although with less urgency than during the Depression years. The Duluth Bethel Society raised funds, worked with the Community Chest, and charged lodgers at the Bethel Building a nominal fee to support this work. The Bethel Home for Women, operating on its own budget, began caring for handicapped babies with support from St. Louis County Social Services and the Community Chest. These funding streams provided some support for the work of the Society, but left little or nothing for maintenance or upgrading of the buildings.²²

For a number of years, the Executive Director of the Bethel Society lived onsite in an apartment on the second floor of the east wing of the Bethel Building. Private access to the apartment was by way of the fire escape and a ramp to the apartment door.

²² "A History of the Duluth Bethel," *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, <http://duluthbethel.org/history.htm>, accessed 11/19/2015.



Mr. and Mrs. William Grobe in the apartment, Bethel Building, nd
Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

By the early 1950s, as the Bethel Society continued its mission of providing board and lodging to needy men and programs for children and families, the situation at the 1912 Bethel Building began to noticeably deteriorate. Even as the *Duluth News Tribune* ran an article in 1951 titled “Bethel is Home,” describing the role that it played for indigent elderly men, the Executive Secretary of the St. Louis County Welfare Board leveled charges of filth and improper record-keeping at the building. This was followed in 1953 by an expose’ written by *Duluth News Tribune* reporter Walter Eldot after he had spent time at the Bethel Building posing as an indigent man in need of its services. The 1953 article charged that the building was filthy, had major infestations of lice and bedbugs, and the staff was not providing food or adequate services to the men who sought board and lodging. It also reported the building had five showers and one bathtub and that clean towels and soap in the bathrooms and clean sheets and blankets on the beds were in short supply or nonexistent.²³

The building was not at capacity when the 1953 article was written. It was serving an average of 50-60 transient men a night and 34 elderly long-term residents receiving assistance from the county welfare board. Transient men were charged 35 cents a night for a dormitory room, 60 cents a night for a private room, 35 cents for breakfast or supper, and 50 cents for lunch (the big meal of the day). Charges for long-term residents were \$45 a month for a private room.²⁴

After the article was published, Reverend Graden Grobe stepped in as executive director of the Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. A 1954 follow-up article by Eldot described the resulting changes he instituted as “impressive.” There were no funds to remodel the building, but it was painted and cleaned. Men staying at the Bethel received clean sheets for the beds and clean towels and soap in the showers and bath tub. Regular use of the fumigator helped keep insect infestation down.

²³ Sinto Wessman, “Bethel is Home,” *Duluth News Tribune*, 10/7/1951. Walter Eldot, “Some Men Prefer to Sleep on the Floor,” *Duluth News Tribune*, 5/1/1953.

²⁴ Walter Eldot, “Some Men Prefer to Sleep on the Floor,” *Duluth News Tribune*, 5/1/1953. Walter Eldot, “No Palace – But It’s Much Better,” *Duluth News Tribune*, 9/26/1954.

Overnight rates were raised by 5 cents a night to provide additional revenue, food service was improved, and a newly-instituted “free line” gave men who couldn’t pay an opportunity to stay and eat free on an honor system.²⁵



Graden Grobe in the Bethel Building, nd
Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

Through the 1950s and 1960s, the Bethel Building served indigent men and offered children’s Sunday school, summer camp, and Boys and Girls Clubs from the Marvin Building.



Summer Camp, Lake Venoh, nd



Children’s Choir, Marvin Building, nd

Photo credits: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

²⁵ Sinto Wessman, “Bethel is Home,” *Duluth News Tribune*, 10/7/1951. Walter Eldot, “Some Men Prefer to Sleep on the Floor,” *Duluth News Tribune*, 5/1/1953. Walter Eldot, “No Palace – But It’s Much Better,” *Duluth News Tribune*, 9/26/1954.



Sunday School, nd
 Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

In 1965 the Society, using Gold Bond stamps, purchased a school bus for use by the children’s programs and hired local contractor Maynard Hanson to erect a \$40,000 Bus Barn and office facility between the Bethel Building and the Marvin Building, with common walls to both, to house the bus and provide additional administrative space. With this, the Bethel Building Complex at Mesaba Avenue was complete.²⁶



Duluth Bethel Building Complex. school bus and W. 1st Street façade, ca. 1965
 Photo credits: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

In spite of well-received and needed provision of programs and services, however, a lack of adequate, stable funding continued to be a source of concern for the Duluth Bethel Society. As it had throughout its history, although always providing services, the Society periodically reported it had large debts and a backlog of unpaid bills. Stories of the arrival of unexpected funds when they were especially needed are part of the legends and traditions of the Duluth Bethel Society. Two of the most noteworthy are the 1955/1957 gift of land in Carlton County from Harlow Watkins that allowed the Society to develop the Lake Venoh facility for chronic alcoholics and

²⁶ “A History of the Bethel – 1873 to 2015,” unpublished manuscript, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., pp. 12. Telephone conversation, Clyde O. Rogers with Barb Sommer, 2/29/2016.

the 1975 gift of funds from a family trust given by attorney and long-time Bethel supporter Jay Hoag. Both gifts allowed the Society to continue its mission while providing assets of value to support its work.²⁷



Lake Vennoah Facility, nd
Photo credits: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

The decade of the 1970s saw the beginning of major changes for the Duluth Bethel Society. Driven by shifts in social services funding, the Society began to transition the Bethel Building from use as a board and lodging facility to a multi-program, secular, fee-for-service treatment center. Programmatic focus on the Bethel Building Complex (the Bethel Building, the Marvin Building, and the Bus Barn) was furthered by the sale of Hillcrest House in the 1980s and the Lake Vennoah treatment center in 1994/1995. Executive directors Clyde O. Rogers, Tom Dawson, and current ED Dennis Cummings have guided and facilitated the changes.²⁸

The changes began in 1971 when the state of Minnesota passed a law making drunkenness a non-criminal offense. With this, the Duluth Bethel Society created Duluth's first center, the Bethel Port Rehabilitation Center. The door on the W. 1st Street side of the east wing of the building provided direct access into the detox center; it was used for about fifteen months before being boarded up. The Society operated the program on a fee-for-service basis, providing a stable funding stream for its administration.²⁹

Duluth Bethel Society funding changes continued in 1972, when the United Way, successor to the Community Chest, announced it would no longer include the Bethel in its Red Feather

²⁷ "A History of the Bethel – 1873 to 2015," unpublished manuscript, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., pp.9-10, 13.

²⁸ Telephone conversation, Clyde O. Rogers with Barb Sommer, 1/6/2016.

²⁹ Telephone conversation, Clyde O. Rogers with Barb Sommer, 1/6/2016. "Drug & Alcohol Residential Treatment – Residential," *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, http://duluthbethel.org/treatment_res.htm, accessed 2/5/2016. Telephone conversation, Clyde O. Rogers and Barb Sommer, 2/29/2016.

Society.³⁰ The United Way gave the Society one final gift of \$18,000, which was used to upgrade the Bethel Building kitchen and dining room, bringing both up to required health standards.



Food service area, Duluth Bethel Building Complex
L-R: nd, October 2015
Photo credits: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

In 1975, to further help the Society plan for the future of the Bethel Building, funds from the Paulucci Family Fund and the Congdon Foundation supported a \$10,000 study to determine the feasibility of remodeling it. The study found the building was structurally sound and that remodeling of interior spaces from large open dormitories into social service program centers with sleeping units, lounges, and restrooms was feasible.



Graden Grobe and Clyde O. Rogers, nd
Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.



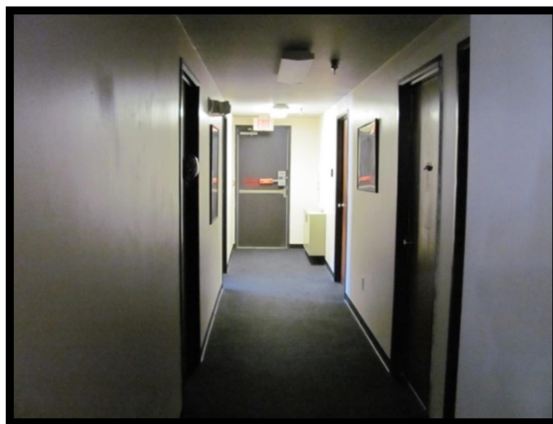
Clyde O. Rogers with
Jeno F. Paulucci and Donald Hagen, 1975
Photo credit: *Duluth News Tribune*

³⁰ The red feather was the traditional symbol of giving the Community Chest; the Red Feather Society denotes community involvement and identifies an area of generous giving for the common good. Telephone conversation, Clyde O. Rogers with Barb Sommer, 1/6/2016.

The gift from Jay Hoag and fees charged for program services helped fund this work. That same year, in an outward sign of the transitions taking place, the Society changed the name of the Bethel from the Bethel Mission for Men to the Port Rehabilitation Center for Chemical Dependency. The corporate name, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., remained unchanged. In the late 1990s, the name of the building complex was changed to the Duluth Bethel with the Port Rehabilitation Center for Chemical Dependency continuing as the longest-running of the five programs operating in the complex.³¹



Duluth Bethel Building undergoing renovation, ca. 1970s



Duluth Bethel Building hallway and apartments, October 2015
Photo credits: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

By the early 1980s, the Duluth Bethel Society was providing several levels of long-term residential chemical dependency treatment in the building on a fee-for-service basis. In 1984, the Society began administering the Messabi Work Release Program (MWRP), developed for aggravated and gross misdemeanor DWI offenders eligible for work release. A door cut into the

³¹ “A History of the Duluth Bethel,” *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*; <http://duluthbethel.org/history.htm>, accessed 11/19/2015. “Progress’ overtakes the Bethel,” *Duluth News Tribune*, 10/12/1975, pp.1,9. “2 foundations rescue Bethel,” *Duluth News Tribune*, 11/9/1975. “The Port (nee the Bethel) has rehabilitated itself,” *Duluth News Tribune*, 1/1/1978. Telephone conversation, Clyde Rogers with Barb Sommer, 1/6/2016.

W. 1st Street side of the building, accessed by a bridge from W. 1st Street, provided access to the MWRP. It remains in use today.³²

The Bethel Society added federal offenders eligible for work release under what is known as the Huber Law in 1986. The programs were, and continue to be, supported with fees charged the Minnesota Department of Corrections and the Federal Bureau of Prisons; they are the only work release programs north of the Twin Cities.³³

A major change in the source of funds for Bethel programs came in 1988 when, under the leadership of Governor Rudy Perpich, the Minnesota legislature passed the Consolidated Treatment Fund, a major piece of legislation affecting availability of funds for social service programs in Minnesota. Through this legislation, monies from federal and state social service programs were consolidated into one fund which was administered by the state on a fee-for-service basis. The fund continues to provide a large, centralized pool of money to draw from for social service residential and outpatient services, including those in the Bethel Building.³⁴

In 1988/89, working with Arrowhead Regional Corrections, currently a five-county consortium in northeastern Minnesota, the Society created the Female Offender Program, designated an area in the building for the program, and began accepting women. In 1990, the Society again partnered with Arrowhead Regional Corrections to develop the Community Watch Program (CWP), a jail diversionary alternative sentencing program providing electronic offender monitoring services for corrections.³⁵

³² Telephone conversation, Clyde O. Rogers with Barb Sommer, 1/6/2016, 2/29/2016. Telephone conversation, Dennis Cummings with Barb Sommer, 2/2/2016. "A History of the Bethel – 1873 to 2015," unpublished manuscript, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., p. 14.

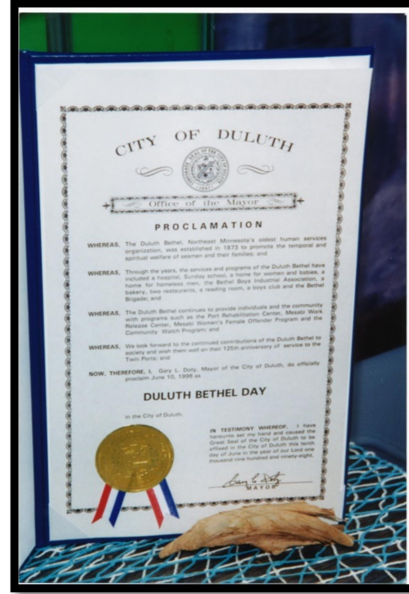
³³ "Huber Law," *2015 Minnesota Statutes*, section 631.425-Releasing Offenders for Employment, the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes>, accessed 2/6/2016. Telephone conversation, Clyde O. Rogers with Barb Sommer, 1/6/2016. Telephone conversation, Dennis Cummings with Barb Sommer, 2/2/2016. "A History of the Bethel – 1873 to 2015," unpublished manuscript, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., p. 14.

³⁴ "Consolidated Chemical Dependency Treatment Fund," *Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation*, <https://www.innovations.harvard.edu/consolidated-chemical-dependency-treatment-fund>, accessed 2/5/2016.

³⁵ Telephone conversation, Clyde O. Rogers with Barb Sommer, 1/6/2016. "A History of the Bethel – 1873 to 2015," unpublished manuscript, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., p. 15.



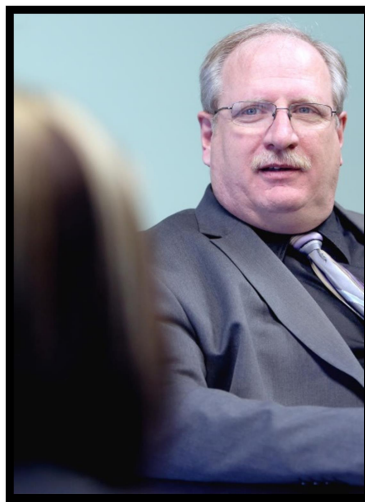
Executive Director Tom Dawson, nd
Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.



Mayor's Proclamation, 125th anniversary of
the Duluth Bethel Society, 1998
Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

In 1998, the Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. celebrated its 125th anniversary. The Mayor of Duluth and the Governor of Minnesota both declared the day to be Duluth Bethel Day.

Major changes in internal space use helped the Society meet the needs of the programs housed in it. Remodeling of the large dormitory areas used by boarders into defined treatment program areas with sleeping units, lounges, and restrooms provided the Bethel Building with a purpose and use that meets modern social service needs. Fees for services provided through the programs helped stabilize the Duluth Bethel Society budget.



Executive Director Dennis Cummings, 12/30/2015
Photo credit: *Duluth News Tribune*

Today, the Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. operates several residential and outpatient treatment programs. All are housed in and administered from the Bethel Building Complex located on Mesaba Avenue and W. 1st Street. The programs provide chemical dependency rehabilitation services, a halfway house, and extended care programs for men and women in segregated units. Specifically, they are:

- Port Rehabilitation Center – provides residential chemical dependency assistance through halfway house and extended care programs for men and women, including for transition back into society.
- Bethel Work Release Center (BWRC) – provides segregated alternative sentencing programs for men and women. Its programs include:
 - BWRC Men’s Program – helps sentenced and court-referred adult male inmates prepare for re-entering society; through contracts with county, state, and federal agencies, provides residential service for forty-five men.
 - Bethel Women’s Program (BWP) – helps sentenced and court-referred adult female inmates prepare for re-entering society; through contracts with county, state, and federal agencies, provides residential service for fifteen women.
 - Bethel Female Offender Program – an alternative jail sentencing program that provides life skills programming for women offenders. Ten beds in the BWP are designated for the Female Offender Program.
 - Bethel Community Watch Program (BCWP) – offers electronic monitoring as an alternative to incarceration.
- Bethel Outpatient Center (BOC) – provides chemical dependency services to men and women over the age of eighteen.³⁶

When founded, the Duluth Bethel Association/Society had a religious focus, but it was not tied to organized religion or any specific religious community. The changes from the 1970s forward moved its programs to a secular focus.

On 12/31/2015, the green light on the top of the Bethel Building tower was re-lit for the first time in many years. It signifies that the Bethel Building, under the management of the Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., continues its mission of providing a place of safety for those in need.³⁷

³⁶ *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, <http://duluthbethel.org/>, accessed 11/19/2015.

³⁷ “Beacon lit once again at Duluth Bethel,” *nncnow.com*, <http://www.northlandsnewscenter.com/news/local/Beacon-lit-once-again-at-Duluth-Bethel-363974271.html>, accessed 2/13/2016. Brady Slater, “Beacon of hope relit at Duluth Bethel,” *Duluth News Tribune*, 12/30/2016, <http://www.duluthnewstribune.com/news/3914317-beacon-hope-relit>.



The re-lit green light on the 1912 Bethel Building tower
Photo credit: <http://media.northlandsnewscenter.com/images/beacon3.jpg>, accessed 1/14/2015



Duluth Bethel Building Complex, nd
Photo credit: Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.

Appendix A: Timeline

The Duluth Bethel Association/Society, Inc. and the Bethel Building Complex

The Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. is a spiritually grounded, private nonprofit organization, offering individuals dignity, hope and the opportunity to improve their quality of life through chemical dependency rehabilitation and community correction services.

Source: The Duluth Bethel, <http://duluthbethel.org/>

Timeline

- 1871 – The connection between St. Louis Bay and Lake Superior on the Duluth side of the bay is opened. It becomes known as the Duluth Entry and the Duluth Ship Canal. The natural outlet between the bay and the lake on the Wisconsin side of the bay becomes known as the Superior Entry. The Duluth Ship Canal becomes the major shipping entry into the bay and helps the City of Duluth become a major inland port. Its earliest outgoing cargoes are lumber, harvested from the extensive white pine forests in the region, and bulk grain from the growing number of farms in the region; coal is a major inbound cargo.
- 1871/2 – Robert Smith is sent by the Western Seaman's Friend Society in Cleveland, Ohio, to the new Lake Superior port city of Duluth to do missionary work among sailors working on Lake Superior cargo ships. Others who come to help with the work are B. Frankland, president of the Western Seamen's Friend Society, and Peter Kitwood, a lake ship captain and general superintendent of the Society. These three men are the pioneer Bethel workers in Duluth; they begin the Bethel ministry on the corner of Superior Street and 1st Avenue East.
- 1873 – A stock market crash and national financial panic begins to sweep across the United States in May, causing losses of businesses and jobs.
- 1873 – In September, the Western Seaman's Friend Society opens a Duluth branch in a tent on Minnesota Point near the Duluth Entry/Duluth Ship Canal. The Bethel—the word means House of God—is established to "promote temporal and spiritual welfare of seamen and their families and of such as may not have been provided for by regular religious and benevolent societies in the city and vicinity." In the early years the Bethel serves seamen, lumberjacks, and other seasonal workers and their families. After the opening of the Minnesota iron mining industry in 1884, it adds miners to the list.
- 1873 – The Duluth Bethel Association is incorporated.
- 1884 – The first iron ore is shipped from Minnesota's Vermilion Range, via Two Harbors, to eastern steel foundries, including foundries in Cleveland, Ohio. As the Iron Range continues to be developed, ore began to be shipped from Minnesota's Mesabi Range in 1892 and from its Cuyuna Range in 1911. The year 1892 also marks the beginning of the use of Duluth as a major iron ore shipping port. Iron mining and shipping become major, seasonal northern Minnesota/Duluth enterprises.
- 1887 – Dr. Charles C. Salter, the Bethel chaplain, is elected director of the Duluth Bethel; seeing an increasing need for services, he begins work on acquiring a permanent building.
- 1888 – The first Bethel Building, designed by Oliver Traphagen, is built at the corner of Lake Avenue and Sutphin Street at a cost of \$35,000. It has a men's reading room, a nursery, a restaurant, and furnished rooms for men. Services offered by the Bethel Association in the

- building include a Sunday school, Gospel meetings, cooking school, mothers' meetings, a boys' club, and a sewing school. The Bethel also hosts an annual Thanksgiving dinner for newsboys.
- 1892 – The Duluth viaduct is built, cutting off the main entrance to the Bethel Building. The building is raised up so the main entrance is level with the viaduct and a new first floor is added under it at a cost of \$2,500.
- 1893 – The Panic of 1893 hits the country, causing economic upheaval; the Bethel Association sees an increased need for its services.
- 1893 – Charles Roebel (also spelled Robel) becomes Superintendent of the Bethel Association.
- 1894 – The Duluth Bethel, needing more space, rents a building in the 500 block of W. Superior Street. Gospel meetings are held nightly at the Traphagen building; a coffee shop in the building helps provide a source of revenue. A Sunday school led by Luke A. Marvin is very popular, filling the meeting room in the branch Bethel to capacity each week.
- 1895 – The City of Duluth grows from 33,115 people in 1890 to nearly 60,000 people five years later.
- 1899 – Through another remodeling, a fourth floor is added to the Bethel Building.
- 1902 – The Duluth Bethel opens the Rescue Home for Women at 6th Avenue East and 4th Street; Mary Shannon is named Superintendent of the home. During its first two years, it helps 137 women and girls and sees the births of 40 babies.
- 1903 – J.T. Moody joins the Bethel Association; he becomes Superintendent in 1905.
- 1903 – The Duluth Bethel Association is re-incorporated as the Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.
- 1905 – J. T. Moody becomes superintendent of the Bethel Society.
- 1910 – Moody and the Directors begins to focus on the need for a new, larger building for the Duluth Bethel Society and a new building for the women and children's building.
- 1911 – J. T. Moody resigns as superintendent of the Duluth Bethel Society. Henry Ramsayer is appointed to the position.
- 1911 – The site for the new building at 23 Mesaba Avenue is purchased from Heyne Hospital Society for \$11,000. A silver mine is located on the property but has not been mined since prior to 1873.
- 1912 – The old Bethel Building at Lake and Sutphin is purchased by H. E. Fryberger for \$18,000. It becomes the People's Hotel and Tavern before being demolished in 1948.
- 1912 – The new Bethel Building on Mesaba Avenue and West 1st Street, the Bethel Mission for Men, designed by Duluth architect F.G. German and built at a cost of \$80,000, is dedicated on October 20. The building has two wings, each coming out at an angle from a central tower, which serves as its main entrance. The floors have single and dormitory rooms designed to house 200 indigent and homeless men. On the roof at the top of the tower over the main entrance, a green light is installed to identify the building as a traditional place of safety for sailors.
- 1916 – The Duluth Bethel builds and dedicates a new building for the Rescue Home for women and children at 13th Avenue East; it later becomes known as Hillcrest House.
- 1917 – The United States enters World War I; the war ends on 11/11/1918.
- 1918 – The Duluth Bethel Society makes a change in its superintendent, appointing Charles Beatty to the position.
- 1919 – Prohibition begins with the passage of the 18th Amendment; the amendment is repealed in 1933.
- 1919 – The 19th Amendment passes giving women the right to vote.
- 1920 – In June, three African American men are lynched on 1st Street in Duluth near the site of the original Bethel Building.
- 1920 – The population of Duluth reaches 98,917.
- 1922 – In addition to support from area churches, the Duluth Community Chest helps raise funds to support the work of the Duluth Bethel Society.

- 1925 – The Marvin Building, built for \$35,000, is dedicated in November; it serves as a community center for the growing number of Sunday School and family services headquartered at the Bethel complex and is named for L.A. Marvin, Superintendent of the Bethel Sunday School for thirty years prior to his death in 1924. Luke E. Marvin, the son of L.A. Marvin, takes over from his father as Superintendent of the Sunday School and as president of the Duluth Bethel Society Board of Directors. An active summer program, including a summer camp for children, is run through the program.
- 1929 – After serving five years as assistant superintendent of the Duluth Bethel Society, Henry Gordon Richardson is named superintendent. In September, he passes away after a brief illness. Charles Robel resigns from the (interim?) position in November 1929.
- 1929 – The stock market crash marks the beginning of the Great Depression.
- 1930 – William J. Grobe is named interim general superintendent of the Duluth Bethel Society. He serves in that position for twenty-three years until October 1953 when his son, Reverend Graden Grobe, is named general superintendent. The Grobe family, including three children, live in an apartment on the east end of the second floor of the east wing of the Bethel Building.
- 1931 – The City of Duluth, St. Louis County, and the Duluth Community Chest ask the Bethel Society to help with the large increase in the number of homeless and indigent people resulting from the economic downturn of the Great Depression. The City of Duluth donates use of the old City Hall on Superior Street to provide additional space to house homeless men.
- 1934 – St. Louis County and the federal government end funding to the Duluth Bethel Society for care of transient populations; supported primarily by private and donated funds, the Duluth Bethel Society continues to provide board and lodging for homeless men throughout the Great Depression years.
- 1941 – In December, the United States enters World War II. The war ends in 1945.
- 1949 – Maintaining its original mission, the Duluth Bethel Society continues to provide housing and meals for unemployed seasonal laborers such as seamen, loggers, railroad workers, and miners. Funding for this service comes from nominal fees charged the men, supplemented by private sources and donations.
- 1951 – The Bethel for Women begins caring for handicapped babies. Funding for the annual \$24,000 budget of the Bethel for Women comes from St. Louis County Social Services and the Duluth Community Chest.
- 1952 – Spencer Brady, a member of the St. Louis County Welfare Board, levels charges of filth, inadequate facilities, and improper record-keeping at the Bethel Society and its Mesaba Avenue building.
- 1953 – Walter Eldot, a reporter for the *Duluth News Tribune*, writes a scathing expose' of the Bethel Mission for Men after spending time posing as an indigent man in need of its services. Rev. Graden Grobe steps in as general superintendent (later executive director) and begins to make changes and updates. A newspaper article written by Eldot the next year notes “sweeping changes” for the better. The Bethel has three departments—the Bethel Mission for Men, the Youth and Family Department, and Hillcrest House.
- 1954 – Graden Grobe works with Ordean Charities and the United Way to develop the freeline—a program allowing men to stay free for a night at the Bethel if they sign up for its program, including a Gospel meeting in the evening.
- 1955 – Harlow Watkins, a farmer in Carlton County, donates 40 acres of land to the Bethel Society for use as the Bethel farm; it becomes known as Lake Venoah—the fourth department at the Bethel. It is developed as a retreat facility with a work program for chronic male alcoholics.
- 1960 – Graden Grobe helps lead the coalition of community supporters in developing the Christian station [WWJC]; for several years, Grobe and others broadcast a program from

- second floor of the Bethel Building.
- 1965 – The Duluth Bethel Society purchases a 60-passenger school bus with Gold Bond stamps to serve its youth and family programs.
- 1965 – The Duluth Bethel Society contracts with Maynard Hanson, a local contractor, to build a \$40,000, two-story, brick and concrete building connecting the Bethel Building and the Marvin Building; it adds office space, meeting rooms, and a garage for the bus. Marvin family members are major contributors to this project. With this, the Bethel complex is complete.
- 1971 – The Minnesota legislature passes a law making drunkenness a non-criminal offense; in response, the Duluth Bethel Society, beginning the transition of the Bethel to a secular treatment center, creates the Bethel Port Rehabilitation Center for Chemical Dependency. A door cut into the detox center on the second floor of the W. 1st Street side of the east wing, sometimes called the 1040 door, is used for access into the detox center for about fifteen months; it is now closed.
- 1972 – Clyde O. Rogers becomes the Executive Director of the Duluth Bethel Society.
- 1972 – Support for the work of the Duluth Bethel Society come from St. Louis County Social Services and the Area Board of Northeast Minnesota, which is responsible for management of funds for mental health-MH, mental illness-MI, and chemical dependency-CD programs in northeastern Minnesota. The Duluth United Way (formerly the Community Chest) announces it will no longer provide funds to support Duluth Bethel Society services. The Duluth Bethel Society is \$400,000 in debt.
- 1972 – The Duluth Bethel Society discontinues its operation as a Union Gospel Mission.
- 1972 – Hillcrest House closes for one year
- 1972 – The Duluth Bethel Society continues its transition its use of the Bethel Building from residential lodging for transient boarders to a treatment center and from dependence on financial gifts to providing social services on a fee-for-service basis; this step lays the foundation for stabilization of funding for the Duluth Bethel Society and the Bethel building
- 1972 – The St. Louis County Health Department (Jim Riley) notifies the Duluth Bethel Society that the food service area in the Bethel Building does not meet minimum standards and must be upgraded before the end of the year. A final \$18,000 gift from United Way provides funds to purchase commercial restaurant equipment that meets the standards of the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF). The purchase covers a scullery, a dishwasher that meets standards and codes, food heaters, stainless steel tables, ranges, and refrigerators. All items meet St. Louis County Health Department standards and national standards.
- 1975 – Funds from the Paulucci Family Foundation and the Congdon Foundation support a planning study to determine the feasibility of renovating the Bethel Building for use in housing social services programs. The study finds renovation of the building is feasible.
- 1975 – The Duluth Bethel Society is named as one of the participants in a trust set up by attorney Jay Hoag. Initial funds from the trust help get the remodeling off the ground. With careful investments, the gift is valued at \$250,000-\$350,000 over time.
- 1975 – The Duluth Bethel Society changes the name of the Bethel Building from the Bethel Mission for Men to the Port Rehabilitation Center for Chemical Dependency. The corporate name of the parent organization, Duluth Bethel Society, Inc., remains unchanged. The name of the building complex becomes the Duluth Bethel in the 1990s.
- 1977 – Bethel for Women, now Hillcrest House, becomes a long-term residence for abused women before being rented to a non-profit agency. It is sold in the 1980s.
- 1983 – Lake Venoah is remodeled for use as a long-term facility for chronic, elderly alcoholics. The facility is sold in 1994/95 and continues to operate as a private facility.
- 1983/85 – Changes in administration of chemical dependency (CD) services have an impact on

- provision of services in the Bethel Building. The Duluth Bethel Society begins to provide for long-term residential CD treatment in the building on a fee-for-service basis; after 30-90 day CD treatment, clients in the program can move to Halfway House in another wing of the Bethel Building, also supported on a fee-for-service basis. The programs help clients find work and transition out of facility. Federal block grant funding becomes available to help support Bethel programs.
- 1983 – Duluth Bethel Society employees are given a retirement program, developed through American Express/Ameriprise. The cost is included in fee-for-service program fees.
- 1984 – The Bethel begins administering the Messabi Work Release Program (MWRP), a county-based program to allow male DWI offenders and people convicted of gross misdemeanors to work during the day and sleep at the Bethel at night to get credit for time served. The MWRP is funded through St. Louis County.
- 1984 – The Duluth Bethel Society contracts with St. Louis County to establish The Port Outpatient Center to provide chemical dependency services to men and women over the age of eighteen; prior to this, services were provided as outpatient treatment at the St. Louis County jail.
- 1985 - A door is cut into the W. 1st Street side of the east wing of the Bethel Building and a bridge is built to provide access from W. 1st Street into the building to create access to the Messabi Work Release Program.
- 1986 – As part of the Messabi Work Release Program, the Bethel Society begins accepting men into an Offender Re-entry Program at the Bethel Building. The men in the program are on federal probation, in federal pre-trial services, and in residential services, and are eligible for work release through what is known as the Huber Law. The Duluth Bethel Society contracts with the Minnesota Department of Corrections and the Federal Bureau of Prisons for these services. Fees support management of the program and ongoing remodeling of the building complex for use by the program. The Duluth Bethel Society is the only organization north of the Twin Cities offering this service.
- 1988 – The Duluth Bethel Society renovates the Bethel Building complex for co-correctional program use.
- 1988 – Under the leadership of Governor Rudy Perpich, the Minnesota legislature passes the Consolidated Treatment Fund, a major piece of legislation affecting availability of funds for social service programs in Minnesota, including those offered by the Bethel Society. Through this legislation, monies from federal and state social service programs are consolidated into one fund which is administered by the state on a fee-for-service basis. The fund provides a large, centralized pool of money to draw from for social service residential and outpatient services.
- 1988/9 – Working with the Arrowhead Regional Corrections Center, the Duluth Bethel Society creates the Female Offender Program and, through this service, the Messabi Work Release Program (MWRP) begins accepting women.
- 1990 – The Duluth Bethel Society partners with the Arrowhead Regional Corrections, a five-county consortium in northeastern Minnesota, to develop the Community Watch Program (CWP) within the Messabi Work Release Program (MWRP); the CWP provides electronic offender monitoring services to men and women for corrections and law enforcement purposes.
- 1995 – The Duluth Bethel Society discontinues residential treatment for women.
- 1996 – Kjell Rodne is named as the interim Executive Director of the Duluth Bethel Society; planned installation of an elevator to meet ADA accessibility standards is tabled due to funding needs.
- 1997 – Tom Dawson is hired as the Executive Director of the Duluth Bethel Society.
- 1997 – Work Release Program chemical dependency treatment services become the Bethel Outpatient Center and the Work Release Center turns its focus to community corrections

- services.
- 1998 – The Duluth Bethel celebrates its 125th anniversary of continuous service to underserved populations in Duluth and northeastern Minnesota.
 - 1998 – An unexpected and timely contribution of \$20,000 helps the Duluth Bethel Society cover the costs of some immediate programmatic needs.
 - 2001 – The Duluth Bethel Society becomes a partner in Drug Offenders–Drug Court.
 - 2011 – Rules for the Chemical Dependence Treatment Payment are changed; the change continues to help stabilize support for programs at the Bethel complex.
 - 2013 – Dennis Cummings becomes the Executive Director of the Duluth Bethel Society, Inc.
 - 2013 – The Duluth Bethel Society purchases a building across 1st Street and rents it to Lutheran Social Services (LSS) for a program called Open Doors that provides emergency housing for high-risk, homeless youth.
 - 2015 – The Duluth Bethel Society resumes residential services for women.
 - 2015 – The green light on the roof of the Bethel Building, unlit for many years, is turned on in a short ceremony on the last day of the year.
 - 2016 – The Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. operates the following programs. All are administered from the Bethel complex. Treatment programs are housed in the Bethel Building; the Marvin Building and Bus Barn provide space for additional treatment and administrative services.
 - Port Rehabilitation Center – provides residential chemical dependency assistance through halfway house and extended care programs for men and women, including for transition back into society.
 - Bethel Work Release Center (BWRC) – provides segregated alternative sentencing programs for men and women. Its programs include:
 - BWRC Men’s Program – helps sentenced and court-referred adult male inmates prepare for re-entering society; through contracts with county, state, and federal agencies, provides residential service for forty-five men.
 - Bethel Women’s Program (BWP) – helps sentenced and court-referred adult female inmates prepare for re-entering society; through contracts with county, state, and federal agencies, provides residential service for fifteen women.
 - Bethel Female Offender Program – an alternative jail sentencing program that provides life skills programming for women offenders. Ten beds in the BWP are designated for the Female Offender Program.
 - Bethel Community Watch Program (BCWP) – offers electronic monitoring as an alternative to incarceration.
 - Bethel Outpatient Center (BOC) – provides chemical dependency services to men and women over the age of eighteen.
 - 2016 – The Duluth Bethel Society, Inc. completes a study funded by the Legacy grants program of the Minnesota Historical Society on the history of the Bethel Building, the Marvin Building, and the Bus Barn, and evaluating the nomination of the Bethel complex to the National Register of Historic Places.

Sources: "A History of the Duluth Bethel," *The Duluth Bethel: Helping Put Lives Back Together*, <http://duluthbethel.org/>, accessed 11/19/2015.

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Appendix B: Duluth Bethel Association/Society Superintendents/Executive Directors

1871/3 – Robert Smith, B. Franklin, Peter Kitwood
1887 – Charles C. Salter
1893 – Charles Roebel (also spelled Robel)
1905 – J. T. Moody
1911 – Henry E. Ramsayer
1918 – Charles Beatty
1929 – Henry George Richardson
(Charles Robel, interim)
1930 – William Grobe
1953 – Graden Grobe
1972 – Clyde O. Rogers
1996 – Kjell Rodne
1997 – Tom Dawson
2013 – Dennis Cummings

The Rescue Home for Women and Girls (incomplete list)

1902 – Mary Shannon
1906 – Jessie [Jean?] Mauck
1920 – Sina Hagen
1955 – Margaret Wedegren

Lake Venoh

1955 – Don Swanson
1961 – Ardel Broberg
?? – Lowell Gause
1977 – Roy Lundstrom
1992 – Al Leeper



Duluth Bethel Building, 12/30/2015
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