



Photo courtesy Bev Otte

While their new church was being built, a Randolph, Minn., Lutheran congregation moved into a barn on Tom Otte's farm, installing pews, altar, cross and wall hangings.

This Congregation Meets In A Barn

If a barn was good enough for the birth of Jesus, it should work just fine for Sunday worship. That's what a Randolph, Minn., congregation decided when they went looking for a temporary place of worship while a new church was being built.

"When the chairman of the church board asked if they could store the pews and altar in our barn, I suggested we sweep it out, bolt down the pews and hold services there," recalls Tom Otte who with his wife Pat, owns the barn.

The Lutheran congregation is in the process of building a new church. They had to sell off the old one and the buyer wanted to take over immediately.

Originally, the congregation planned to hold meetings at a nearby school. Instead, Otte cleaned out his barn, moving snowmobiles, boats and other items that he and family members stored in the loft. Church members moved in pews, altar, cross and wall hangings.

The barn sanctuary has had its highs and lows. As anyone who has ever stacked bales in a hayloft knows, it can get hot. And once autumn came, getting rid of heat wasn't a problem in the uninsulated barn. A noisy heater has been supplemented with extra layers of clothes by regular attendees. Members bring blankets and afghans for use



Sign on farm alongside a highway invites congregation members into barn church.

by visitors. Overall, spiritual warmth more than makes up for any physical cold, suggests Otte. "We've had lots of friends and neighbors who don't belong to the congregation come to services to see what's going on," he says, adding that the nicest thing was the continuity with familiar surroundings for older members. "Everything was here...the pews, the altar, everything. That's something we wouldn't have had meeting in a temporary site."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tom Otte, 28937 Northfield Blvd., Randolph, Minn. 55065 (ph 507 645-4816).



Otte cleaned out the barn to make room for pews.

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Swing has hay rake wheels on the side and horseshoes across the top.



Paul Ezra made this metal palm tree using hay rake tines for branches.

Sculpture Hobby Keeps Retired Farmer Busy

"I thought other FARM SHOW readers might be interested in the sculptures I make out of old farm equipment," says Paul Ezra, retired farmer from Winamac, Ind.

"The metal palm tree has a disc blade for a base and hay rake tines for branches. The trunk is a piece of pipe wrapped with a steel rod.

"The swing has hay rake wheels on the side, horseshoes across the top, a pair of hames on the top corners, and a couple single trees directly over the swing."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul Ezra, 9341 S. State Road 39, Winamac, Ind. 46996 (ph 574 278-7219).

Toy Box Barn

The top half of this home-built toy barn opens up on hinges so kids can do "chores" inside the barn and also store their toys inside when they're done playing. It also makes a good hiding place for little guys.

It was built by Keith Landgraff, Hutchinson, Minn., out of 1/2-in plywood. The exterior finishing consists of clapboard siding and shake shingles that you can buy at any hobby shop. It has 16 real glass windows and front and back sliding doors that open to accommodate all 1/16th scale toy tractors.

There's a "prop rod" inside the barn so the lid will stay up when lifted. A small cable keeps the barn from being opened too far.

The barn measures 17 in. wide and 25 1/2 in. long. It's fitted with 1,182 cedar shingles, and four sliding doors.

One tip Landgraff passes along. "Don't use just any glue in putting something like this together. Liquid Nails is a must for something like this - otherwise the shingles and other fixtures will start falling off," he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Keith Landgraff, 1165 Carolina Ave., Hutchinson, Minn. 55350.

Top half of toy barn opens up on hinges so kids can do "chores" inside barn and also store their toys inside when they're done playing. There's a "prop rod" inside barn so lid will stay up when lifted.

