

Through the Years

Section I: Historical Data



Drawing by: Bruce Cooper

THROUGH THE YEARS

The following was taken from Parish Record Book #1, Page 5.

For a number of years previous to 1865, in the early days of the township's settlement, the German-speaking Lutherans had occasional meetings in the Benjamin Sarver home, with the Rev. J. C. G. Schweitzerbarth preaching to them, but they had no church organization. Later, a group of English-speaking Lutherans met in the home of Samuel Fleming. (Samuel Fleming still resides at St. Paul's as he is buried there in the Sarverville Cemetery.)

During the year 1865, Rev. J. H. Fritz, pastor of the English Lutheran Church of Butler, PA., and St. Luke's English Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hannahstown, Butler, Co., PA., frequently preached to a number of worshippers assembled in "Kelley's School House" near Sarverville, Butler Co., PA. After a service held in that school house, July 16th, 1865, a Committee was appointed by the congregation, consisting of Messrs. Henry Smith, Adams Bartley, Robert Harbison and Jonathan Walker "to inquire for how much the Covenanters Church, located near Sarverville could be bought" -- the congregation of that church having died out, with the exception of a few members.

At a subsequent meeting the Committee reported, "that the Covenanter Church property could be bought for five hundred dollars". (Known as the Lovejoy Church) The same Committee was then instructed to buy it at that rate with power to raise subscriptions to pay for it. On Saturday, August 12, 1865, the Committee bought the Covenanter Church property for five hundred and seventy-five dollars in trust and for the use of an English Evangelical Lutheran Congregation to be organized in that church.

The church building having been comfortably repaired, the first service was held in the church on the National Thanksgiving evening, December 7, 1865. At a service held in the church on Sunday, December 24, 1865, it was published that on that day two weeks, the Congregation would be regularly organized, and that all persons who desired to become members should bring Certificates of Good Standing or other satisfactory evidence of orderly and regular membership of some Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The earlier histories stated that the Charter was signed in 1866. However, we now have learned that the Constitution was signed January 7, 1866. Twenty three names previously believed to have been the Charter Members coming from various congregations were the original members, who in most part, were also the Charter Members as well. They were the first people received into membership, January 7, 1866, at the time of adopting and signing the Constitution of this Congregation.

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**Pastor J. H. Fritz
1867-1871**

On Sunday, January 7, 1866, after the morning service and a sermon on the nature and object of a church discipline, a Congregation Meeting was held. The meeting was called to order and opened with prayer by Rev. J. H. Fritz. Brother Jonathan Hazlet was then called upon to serve as President of the meeting and Brother Henry Smith as Secretary, both being communicants of St. Luke's Church.

The certificates and vouchers of those desiring to become members were then handed in and examined when the following proposed membership appeared namely:

From St. Luke's Hannahstown:

*Brothers Henry Smith, Adams Bartley, Jonathan Hazlet
Sisters Margaret N. Smith, Mary Ann Bartley, Martha E. Drain,
Mary Ann Hazlet, Grizella Greer, Jane Walker*

From St. John's English Evangelical Lutheran Church, Freeport, Armstrong County:

*Brothers Robert M. Harbison, James M. Fleming, Samuel S. Fleming,
William Fleming, Sr., Michael Heckert, George Gardner*

*Sisters Susanna Harbison, Ann Fleming, Margaret J. Fleming,
Catharine A. Fleming, Margaret Fleming and Elizabeth C. Heckert.*

From the Butler, PA., English Evangelical Lutheran Church:

Brother J. C. Emrick

These Brothers and Sisters were then declared to constitute the regular voters. The form of Constitution and Discipline recommended to the Churches in connection with the Pittsburgh Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church was then presented by Rev. J. H. Fritz, read chapter by chapter and section by section. The blanks, thereof, filled and adopted and then by calling the yeas and nays, unanimously adopted as a whole.

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Having now law and church order, the Congregation proceeded to the Election of Officers with the following results:

*Elders: Robert M. Harbison, Term two years from January, 1866
Jonathan Hazlet, Term one year from January, 1866*

*Deacons: Henry Smith and Samuel Fleming, Term two years from
January 1866, and Adam Bartley and William Fleming, Sr.,
Term one year from January, 1866.*

*Trustees of the Church Property: Adams Bartley, Jonathan Walker
Robert M. Harbison and Henry Smith.*

"St. Paul's English Evangelical Lutheran Church" Sarversville, Butler Co., PA., was then declared to be regularly organized. Rev. J. G. Fritz then closed the meeting with prayer. The Congregation sang the long metre doxology:

*Praise God from whom all blessing flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below.
Praise Him above ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

and was dismissed with the benediction.

*Altest: J. H. Fritz, Pastor, President, Secretary
St. Paul's Engl. Ev. Luth. Church
Sarversville, Jan. 7, 1866*

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Pastor J. K. Melhorn

1867-1871

CHARTER MEMBERS (February 28, 1868)

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. F. A. Kelly | 30. Harriet Fleming |
| 2. John ___ Atkinson | 31. Annie Fleming |
| 3. Marot Atkinson | 32. Samuel H. Fleming |
| 4. Geo. Gardner | 33. Margaret A. Fleming |
| 5. M. Gardner | 34. E. C. Heckart |
| 6. G. F. Gardner | 35. J. T. Atkinson |
| 7. E. L. Gardner | 36. Sarah Atkinson |
| 8. Wm. A. Bartley | 37. Jas. M. Fleming |
| 9. M. A. Bartley | 38. Margaret Fleming |
| 10. T. H. Hepler | 39. M. J. Fleming |
| 11. B. A. Hepler | 40. C. A. Fleming |
| 12. ___ Hepler | 41. Sarah Walters |
| 13. Benj. Sarver | 42. Mary Atkinson |
| 14. Mary Sarver | 43. Lizzie Walters |
| 15. Emma Sarver | 44. Jennie Walker |
| 16. M. T. Smith | 45. William Walker |
| 17. E. A. Smith | 46. H. R. Walker |
| 18. Lizie Keam | 47. Mag. E. Walker |
| 19. Susannah Harbison | 48. Rebecca Walker |
| 20. Maggie J. Harbison | 49. John Hazlett |
| 21. James H. Harbison | 50. Sarah Drain |
| 22. J. Hazlett | 51. Elizabeth Drain |
| 23. Wm. Lasier | 52. J. R. Boyd |
| 24. J. C. Emrick | 53. Lyda Boyd |
| 25. H. A. Hazlett | 54. Ellen Lasier |
| 26. M. E. Boyd | 55. Cath Lasier |
| 27. N. A. Boyd | 56. Mary Lasier |
| 28. S. E. Boyd | 57. Jas. Lasier |
| 29. Wm. Fleming, Sr. | 58. John Harbison |

"The Original Constitution is recorded on Pages 6-18 of the Parish Record Book # 1.
There were some interesting expectations recorded therein:

We whose names are undersigned believing that the objects for which the church was established by Jesus Christ its divine founder and head, can be secured only in an associated capacity, hereby solemnly form ourselves into a Christian church. In doing this we receive the Augsburg Confession, the great symbol of the Reformation as the band of union; but we acknowledge above all human creeds the Holy Scriptures, as the only infallible and sufficient rule of faith and practice, and hereby pledge ourselves to God and to each other to be governed by the following Constitution and Discipline:

...Chapter 2nd Of the Bishop

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Sec. 1st: The Office of Bishop or Pastor was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ and is of perpetual standing in the church.

Sec 2nd: He must be blameless - the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt. to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy character; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one who ruleth well his own house. Having his children in subjection with all gravity; not a novice. Finally he must have a good report of them which are without. 1st Tim. 3:2,7

The deed for the property, including one acre and 156 perches, was secured January 7, 1868. Four additional acres were secured later for cemetery purposes. The Church was incorporated, March 4, 1868.

The following was taken from Book #1 of the Parish Record, Page 5 in the front section of the Book:

St. Paul's Church, February 28, 1868, Congregation met according to appointment. The Pastor was elected President and Secretary. Meeting was constituted with reading and prayer by the Chair. The object of the meeting was to adopt a Form of Charter for the Congregation to take steps to have it chartered and form was presented by the Chairmen and it was then received and adopted unanimously. Meeting then adjourned with prayer and benediction.

J. K. Melhorn, President and Secretary

We do have a copy of the Original Charter. It is noted that the Charter was opened for signing at that first worship service in the recently purchased Covenanters LoveJoy Church, on that National Thanksgiving Evening, December 7, 1865. Finally, on the 28th day of February, 1868, Elders, Pastor Melhorn, R. M. Harbison, and M. S. Heckert and Deacons, H. S. Smith and H. Kelly closed the signing of the Charter and signed their names to the Charter dating it the 28th day of February, 1868.

On the twenty-third day of June, 1868, J. B. Clark wrote:

I, J. B. Clark, Prothonotary of the Court of Common Pleas in and for the County of Butler, do hereby certify that publication of the written case was made according to law June 23'rd, 1868.

J. B. Clark, Pro.

***It is noted on the bottom of the Charter that the Charter was recorded
March 13'th A.D. 1872.***

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The Rev. J. K. Melhorn collected by subscription as a Jubilee Offering in November and December, A.D. 1867, the sum of \$370.00 and paid out the following sums: \$314.65 being the amount of indebtedness of the St. Paul's Church, and lifted the deed on the 6th of January 1868; \$30.00 for Chicago Covenant Church, to Henry Smith for money paid on the Article with the Trustees of the Covenanters Church; \$7.00 for stove & pipe & the balance being paid to R. M. Harbison, Treasurer. The whole matter was audited by R.M. Harbison in the presence of his family on the 6th of Jan. 1868, with the Pastor. Recorded by request of R. M. Harbison by J. K. Melhorn.

During the first few years, the membership increased so rapidly that the church soon became too small. Thus, began the building of our "current church building." During the building process, the Congregation worshipped in the Kelley School House, Buffalo Township. At last a Cornerstone was laid by Pastor Melhorn on September 20, 1870.

Pastor J. H. A. Kitzmiller **1871-1881**

The building was dedicated by Pastor Kitzmiller, September 24, 1871. The Rev. S. Laird assisted the Pastor on the occasion. It was built of frame, 43 x 60, at a cost of \$4,000.

Entry Book #1, Page 31 in the back section:

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church Sarversville, Butler Co, PA. was dedicated to the Service of Almighty God on the 24'th day of September, 1871. Rev. B. H. Hunt of St. Stephen's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Philadelphia preached the dedicatory sermon. The Pastor, Rev. J. H. A. Kitzmiller, was assisted in the liturgical dedicatory service by Brother Hunt and J. K. Melhorn, the latter the former Pastor of the Congregation. A sufficient amount of money was raised to liquidate the remaining debt, and the church was dedicated to God, free from all incumbrance. Services were held in the evening at which time Rev. J. K. Melhorn preached a discourse on the Lutheran Church.

J. H. A. Kitzmiller, Pastor

*Note: No record found for the years 1872-1902 other than the names of the following Ministers:

H. K. Shanor	1882-1885
Nathanael Scheffer	1885-1889
C. A. Fetzer	1890-1891
Philip Doerr	1891-1892
Herbert Martens	1892-1895
N. N. Harter	1895-1901
D. B. Stahlman	1901-1903

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Pastor J. A. Beighey

1903-1908

1907

Something rather humorous happened to St. Paul's in 1907, at which time they found it necessary to amend the Original Charter. The following sentence made the Original Charter impossible to live with as a growing congregation in time of change:

"The yearly value of the income of said real and personal estate shall not at any time exceed Five Thousand Dollars."

Pastor J. A. Frischorn

1909-1911

Pastor Herbert Martens

1912-1921

1920

For a long time St. Paul's was connected with the Freeport Parish. For several years St. Paul's and St. Luke's of Saxonburg constituted the Sarver Parish. Beginning in 1920, St. Matthew's Church was included in what was known as the Saxonburg Parish.

Pastor G. J. Diener

1922-1926

Pastor Elmer A. Ortner

1926-1930

Under the Pastorate of Elmer A. Ortner (serving St. Paul's from 1926-1930), the church basement was completely excavated and dedicated on May 8, 1927 and the Jehoiada Chest was also introduced during his pastorate.

Entry in the Secretary's Book, Page 11, dated January 15, 1929:

"Next, Cogley suggested that our Congregation install a Jehoiada Chest. Second on motion by Mrs. Mochel and so ordered. Mr. Sauter and Mr. S. Falkner were to make a chest."

George W. Cogley, Secretary

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Historically speaking, the Chest is named after Jehoiada, the High Priest in Jerusalem who organized and led the coup that overthrew Queen Athaliah of Judah (842-837 B.C.), together with the Baal Cult that she supported, and established the boy King, Joash' rehabilitation of the Temple of the Lord. (II Kings 12:1-6)

Jehoiada apparently acted as regent for the new King during the latter's minority and later inspired Joash' rehabilitation of the Temple of the Lord. (II Kings 12:1-6)

In the summer of 1929, the Nave of the church was remodeled. Three arches were formed in the east end making a Sanctuary in the center; a Baptistry in the north side, and a Choir Loft in the south side. The Pulpit was remodeled; a new Altar, Altar Lights, Cross, and Baptismal Font installed. The walls were redecorated. The pews and ceiling were refinished and the roof trusses repaired. The cost was under \$1,000.00 but the labor was largely donated enhancing the value of the church at least \$3,000. The Sanctuary was rededicated September 29, 1929, St. Michael's and All Angels' Day.

Pastor Donald K. Fetterly **1930-1959**

Donald K. Fetterly moved to Saxonburg November 24, 1930, and preached his first sermon November 30, the First Sunday in Advent. He served until 1959, a pastorate of 29 years.

1936

During the summer of 1936, the basement was thoroughly overhauled. The furnace was moved to the northwest corner of the room. After a winter's trial in that location, where it gave complete satisfaction, it was shut off in a room of its own. Drains were laid under the walls. The basement floor was cemented and a new coal cellar was built. The old coal cellar was converted into a pantry and cloak room. The kitchen was equipped with a new sink. A second piano was secured for use in the church auditorium and this did away with having to carry one piano up and down the basement stairs.

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1937-1940

In 1937, electricity was installed. The church yard was plowed up and shrubbery planted. In 1939, table service for 100 persons was secured in Allegheny Metal by the Busy Bee Class of the S.S. A flag pole erected in May, 1940, was donated by W. G. Campbell. The flag was given by Ladies of G.A.R. of Tarentum through the Patriot Instructor, Mrs. John Ekas.

The basement of the church was remodeled for a Sunday School Room. The Juniors, Intermediates, Beginners, and Primary Departments held their own worship period in this room. In 1940, a new "air conditioning" furnace was installed at the cost of \$650.00 which was paid for when completed.

1941

In the spring of 1941, the ceiling and walls of the church auditorium were painted, and a new hardwood, oak floor was laid by the men of the church. The new chancel chairs of quartered oak were made by Mr. Oliver Grimm--only the material had to be paid for. *A picture in oils of Christ in Gethsemane, 6' x 4' 11" was presented to the Congregation as a gift from the Pastor and Mrs. Fetterly.* New carpet was laid in the aisles and up to the altar by the Busy Bee Class. The Ladies Aid paid for the three new doors and the painting of the outside of the church. One hundred blue spruce were planted at the edge of the driveway being cultivated until large enough to replant for the beautifying of the church lot.

July 1941 75th Anniversary

The 75th Anniversary was observed in July 1941. The President of Synod, the Rev. H. Reed Sheffer, preached in the morning and the following four former Pastors spoke at the afternoon service:

Rev. John A. Beighey, Rev. John A Friskhorn, and Rev. E. A. Ortner. The Rev. John F. Heckert, son of the Heckert Family who belonged to this congregation, also spoke.

(Recall that an E. L. Heckert signed a Charter. We feel confident this would have been a relative of Pastor Heckert. However, we do not know if he would have been a father, grand-father, or possibly an uncle.)