

## History of St. John's

1861-1863: the Rev. Theophilus Helig held services for Lutherans in the vicinity of Stroudsburg. In 1863, the Rev. Helig turned the Lutheran activities over to the Rev. D. M Henkel, who for three years made strong efforts to establish a congregation.

December 23, 1866: the congregation was organized with twelve male members.

January 2, 1867: the first Communion was held in the Presbyterian Church on Sarah Street.

1867: St. John's became a member of the Synod of Pennsylvania. Land was purchased from William and Esther Rees for \$1600. The purchase included the land where the church is located and three lots north of the church.

To erect the building, an old foundation was removed (some people claim this was part of old Fort Hamilton). The men of the congregation were asked to furnish stone for the new church. To secure money to build the church, it was resolved that certain subscribers obligate themselves to raise \$8,000 to be added to an amount already pledged by other subscribers.

May 8, 1868: S. O. Wetzel, a Philadelphia architect, was selected to design a church 44 feet by 65 feet with a tower on the southeast corner. The contractor was Thomas W. Rhodes, who also built the Stroudsburg National Bank in 1859 and the Holland Thread Mill in 1865.

July 4, 1868: the cornerstone was laid on by Dr. F. A. Muhlenberg. On that day, the church received \$10,000 for the building.

October 24, 1869: St. John's was dedicated. Three services were held on this day. C. W. Schaeffer, of Philadelphia, was the main speaker in the morning service. The Rev. A. T. Geisenheimer, of Philadelphia, delivered the main address in the afternoon, and the Rev. Belfour, of Easton, in the evening. At the time, St. John's was one of three mission churches in the area. The other two were St. Paul's of Tannersville and Zion of Shawnee.

1871: seats were installed.

1872: the women asked to vote on church affairs and they were refused permission.

January 7, 1889: a memorial window for Pastor Henkel was installed. Stained windows replaced the plain windows at this time.

November 5, 1896: the congregation decided to start a new congregation in East Stroudsburg.

December 29, 1896: 30 to 40 members left for the Grace Lutheran congregation in East Stroudsburg.

July 5, 1897: the council recommended the Rev. B. F. Apple's proposal to have a picture of *Christ the Good Shepherd* painted in oil in the pulpit recess for the sum of \$25. This picture was painted by a Mr. Wunderly of Bethlehem. A sum of \$43.28 was subscribed for the picture and renewing church furniture.

January 1, 1901: a parsonage was rented at the northwest corner of North 8th and Sarah Streets where Mr. and Mrs. Zahorik now live.

April 1903: the Ladies Aid Society and the Mission Society purchased a double house on South 8th Street from A. B. Melick for \$3,000. Rev. Apple paid \$10 per month rental.

May 20, 1909: Mrs. Wilson Fisher and Mrs. Clarence Kitchen were authorized to solicit funds to purchase the Easton Family pipe organ or a new pipe organ. There were subscriptions of \$542, but the Easton Family organ was not purchased.

December 28, 1909: a motion was made to buy a new organ not to exceed \$2,000. In 1910 an organ was purchased. One thousand dollars was donated by Andrew Carnegie, the great steel philanthropist from Pittsburgh.

February 19, 1910: the council authorized a two-story recess, 12 feet by 15 feet, on the southwest corner of the church to house the organ.

April 1912: the council thanked Mr. W. H. Lewis of Philadelphia for his donation of the beautiful cross. The cross was placed in the rear of the church above the door. (This cross has since been silvered and mounted on a staff. It is used in formal processions.)

March 18, 1913: a parsonage was authorized not to exceed \$5,000 in cost.

December 1916: the 50th Anniversary of the church was observed in a special service. The following ministers participated: The Rev. Johnson of the Methodist Church, The Rev. Dr. Peter Emmons of the Presbyterian Church, The Rev. Kriebel of the Reformed Church, The Rev. Coxe of the Episcopal Church, and The Rev. Coster of the A.M.E. Church. Because of drifted snow, the Mt. View Trolley was not running. To ensure that The Rev. Steimle of Allentown could be present for the service, Walter Heckman and Thomas Rinehart drove to Portland to meet him.

1923: Mr. Farrell was awarded a contract for \$1230.00 for new opalescent windows to replace stained glass formerly used. The large window in the front of the church, ***Christ Knocking at the Door***, was purchased by the A. F. Everitt class in memory of Ernest E. Marsh, Steward K Nevil, Russell E. Hartman, and Allen E. Shafer who lost their lives in World War I.

March 13 to March 20, 1927: the 60th Anniversary of St. John's Lutheran Church was celebrated with eight days of services. Improvements made at this time were: new church windows, modern glass in front doors, morene process on walls and ceiling, new partition placed between church room and the narthex, new lighting system, new heating system, new pulpit and lectern, baptismal font, altar enlarged, pair of candelabras, smaller size cross, furnishings for pastor's room, two Sunday School rooms refloored and relighted, library and choir room repainted. The total cost of this project was \$6,000.

1937: at the time of the 70th Anniversary, the organ was rebuilt and chimes installed. Choir stalls replaced chairs in use, new chairs for the clergy, new hymn boards, new communion rails, choir robes, paraments of red, green and violet, kneeling cushions at the communion rail, and the outside bulletin board was erected. Paneling and organ pipes were installed on the right side of the pulpit at this time.

May 13, 1942: the 75th Anniversary was observed with a nine-scene pageant portraying the history of St. John's Lutheran Church. Mrs. Gilbert Barthold painted the scenery, Mrs. Miles Greene did research work, and the cast was trained by Mr. Alfred Munson.

1946: the 80th Anniversary of the church was emphasized. The church walls were cleaned, new pews with kneeling benches installed, new carpet was placed and new offering plates received. In May 1946, St. John's hosted the convention of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.

1952: for the 85th anniversary of the church, the original brick front of the church was restored and the church was painted and reroofed.

1954: the first unit of a new education building was finished. This was a one story brick building on the west side of the church, built at a cost of \$27,000. The heating system was changed to oil, the Sunday School furniture was painted white, and two bronze plaques were placed on the walls in the church. One plaque listed the names of the pastors and dates of their tenures. The other plaque gave the names of the sons of the congregation who entered the ministry.

1957: the 90th Anniversary was also the occasion to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Dr. Wohlsen's pastorate at St. John's Lutheran Church. The church paid \$3,000 for a room in the new boys' dormitory at Muhlenberg College in Allentown in memory of former pastors.

1961: a building fund campaign was conducted to raise \$175,000. The amount subscribed was \$180,000.

July 1963: ground was broken for the new education building.

September 6, 1964 to April 11, 1965: while the church sanctuary was being rebuilt, the regular church services were held in the all-purpose room of the new building. The architect was Charles A. Scheuringer, the general contractor was Paul L. Edinger, heating and plumbing by H. C. Archibald Co. Approximately 32 different people or companies contributed products, time and talents to complete the sanctuary. The total cost of the new education building and the renovated church was \$440,066.

April 18, 1965: this was a memorable day for St. John's. The new education building, and the completely renovated and rebuilt church sanctuary were dedicated on Easter Sunday. The cross on our church seemed to stand a little higher and the heavens descended somewhat lower. Though the two did not meet, history will prove a great accomplishment was realized on that day.