

100TH ANNIVERSARY



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

WHITESTOWN, INDIANA

OCTOBER 1, 2, 3, 1948

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION
of
ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Whitestown, Indiana

October 1, 2, 3, 1948

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FRIDAY, October 1

7:30 P.M. Musicale and Pageant
Refreshments served afterwards

SATURDAY, October 2

7:30 P.M. Sound Movie, "The Salt of the Earth"
produced in 1948 by the United Lutheran
Church in America

Songfest

Refreshments served afterwards

SUNDAY, October 3

9:30 A.M. Sunday School

10:30 A.M. Holy Communion

12:00 Noon Centennial Dinner

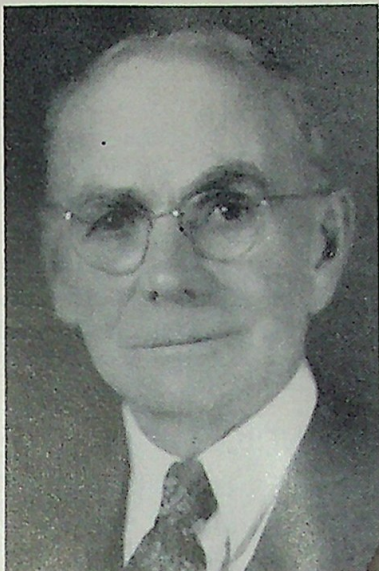
2:30 P.M. One Hundredth Anniversary Service



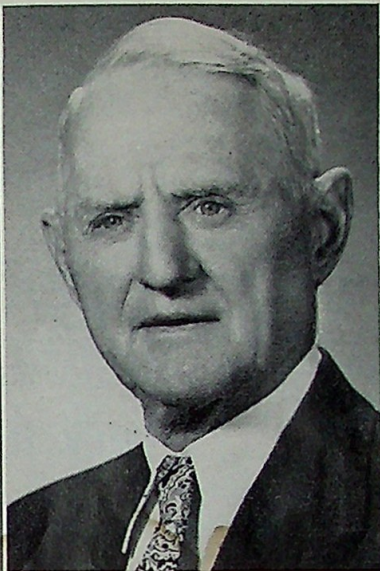
REV. JOHN R. SPANGLER

FOREWORD

The purpose of this booklet is to set before you a brief resume of the thrilling one hundred years' history of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. Numerous sources were used—interviews with old settlers, old family records, and church files,—to bring you this interesting story. The omission of any names that should be included is purely unintentional. The Centennial Committee has worked hard to make this anniversary a memorable one. The cooperation of everyone who has contributed to the success of the celebration is greatly appreciated.



SAMUEL SANDERS



CHARLIE B. LAUGHNER

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Samuel J. Sanders	-----	Chairman
Adrian Cline	-----	Co-chairman
Virginia McKenna	-----	Secretary
Opal V. Etter	-----	Secretary
Lillie Jackson	-----	Treasurer
Charles B. Laughner	-----	Historian
Harry G. Etter, Mrs. Albert Hine, Mrs. Robert Hancock, Mrs. Cleveland Hine, Mrs. Mae Wardle, Mrs. Buren Hackley, Mr. Buren Hackley		

SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Program	-----	Mrs. Robert Hancock
Music	-----	Mr. and Mrs. Harry G. Etter
Social	-----	Mrs. Russell B. Hine and Mrs. Marion Harmon
Publicity	-----	Mr. and Mrs. Buren Hackley
Decoration	-----	Mrs. Albert Hine
Display	-----	Mrs. Elvira Livingood
Housing	-----	Adelbert Neese
Registration	-----	L. Earl Witt
Ushering	-----	Harry R. Thompson

Officers of the Church

October 1st, 1948

Rev. John R. Spangler	Pastor
Samuel J. Sanders	Vice Chairman
Harry G. Etter	Recording Secretary
Adelbert Neese	Financial Secretary
C. O. Laughner	Treasurer
Russell B. Hine	Benevolence Treasurer
Adrian Cline	Repair Fund Treasurer
Opal Etter	Organist
Mardelle Kouns	Assistant Organist
Janice Thorpe	Assistant Organist

CHURCH COUNCIL

Rev. John R. Spangler	Russell B. Hine—(Trustee)
Samuel J. Sanders	Buren R. Hackley
Adelbert Neese—(Trustee)	Harry R. Thompson
L. Earl Witt	Harry G. Etter—(Trustee)
Adrian Cline	Cecil O. Bennington

Meetings the first Tuesday night of each month.

DORCAS SOCIETY

Mrs. Russell B. Hine	President
Mrs. Charles Kouns	Vice President
Mrs. Claude Cline	Secretary
Mrs. Marion Cline	Treasurer

Meetings the first Thursday of each month.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Clyde Neese, Jr.	Superintendent
Adrian Cline	1st Ass't Superintendent
Samuel J. Sanders	2nd Ass't Superintendent
Hubert Gene Etter	Secretary
Gloria Dean Ottinger	1st Ass't Secretary
Edwin Hine	2nd Ass't Secretary
Mrs. Lillie Jackson	Treasurer
Mrs. Charles Kouns	Pianist
Mrs. Geothe Thorpe	Ass't Pianist

Sunday School every Sunday at 9:30.

Teachers and Class Officers

FRIENDLY FELLOWS

Adelbert Neese.....Teacher
W. H. Witt.....Secretary

BETHANY

Mrs. Claude Cline.....Teacher
Mrs. Adelbert Neese.....Secretary
Mrs. Luther Laughner.....Treasurer

HOME BUILDERS

Charles B. Laughner.....Teacher
Mrs. Buren R. Hackley.....President
Harry R. Thompson.....Vice President
Mrs. Marion Cline.....Secretary
Harry G. Etter.....Treasurer

CHRISTIAN WORKERS

Cecil O. Bennington.....Teacher
Mrs. Howard Glascock.....President
Mrs. Clyde Neese, Jr.....Vice President
Mrs. Everett Allen.....Secretary
Paul Groover.....Treasurer

YOUNG PEOPLES

Paul Groover.....Teacher

INTERMEDIATE

Mrs. Marion Harmon.....Teacher

PRIMARY

Mrs. Mae Wardle.....Teacher

BEGINNERS

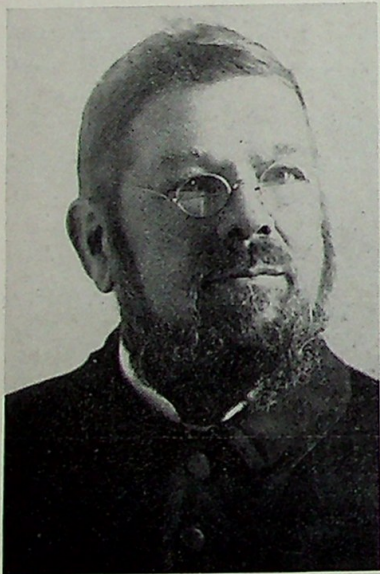
Mrs. Fred Isenhower.....Teacher

Roster of Pastors

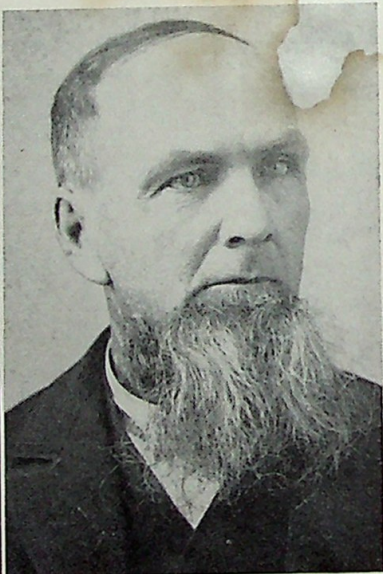
Traveling Pastors - - - - - 1834-1866
 Revs. E. S. Henkel, J. P. Rudisill, John Livengood, D. P. Ground

Full-time Pastors

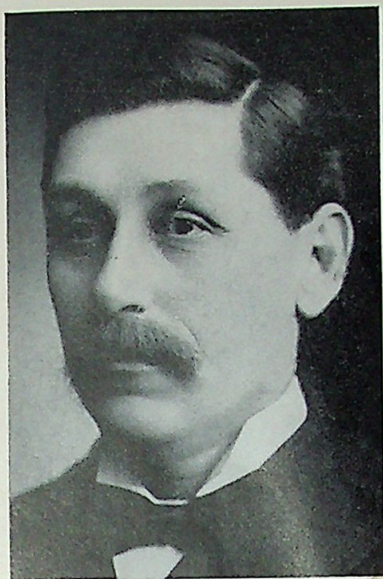
Rev. Miles J. Stirewalt	- - - - -	1866-1869
Rev. Jacob Wesner	- - - - -	1870-1874
Rev. J. G. M. Hursh	- - - - -	1876-1877
Rev. W. C. L. Lauer	- - - - -	1878-1880
Rev. Isaac Hursh	- - - - -	1881-1882
Rev. J. C. Barb	- - - - -	1883-1894
Rev. J. J. Stirewalt	- - - - -	1895-1897
Rev. S. P. Fryberger	- - - - -	1897-1900
Rev. D. L. Reese	- - - - -	1900-1905
Rev. C. L. Warstler	- - - - -	1907-1909
Rev. S. D. Myers	- - - - -	1909-1911
Rev. C. L. Warstler	- - - - -	1911-1917
Rev. B. L. Westenbarger	- - - - -	1919-1921
Rev. W. C. Laughbaum, D.D.	- - - - -	1922-1923
Rev. H. Grady Davis	- - - - -	1924-1937
Rev. G. L. Kleespie	- - - - -	1937-1944
Rev. Raymond A. Heine	- - - - -	1945-1947
Rev. John R. Spangler	- - - - -	1948-



REV. M. J. STIREWALT



REV. J. C. BARB



REV. D. L. REESE



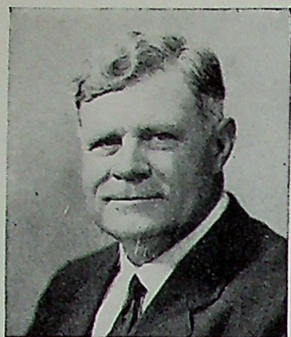
REV. C. L. WORSTLER



REV. S. D. MYERS



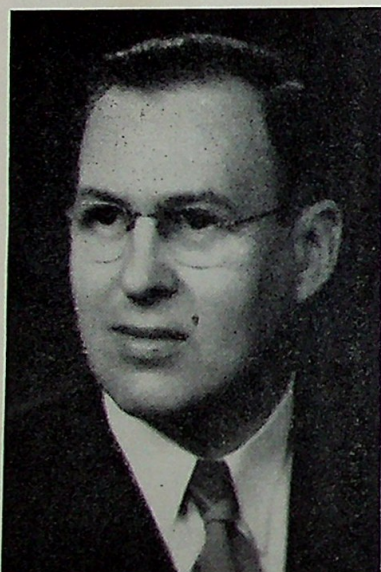
REV. B. L. WESTENBARGER



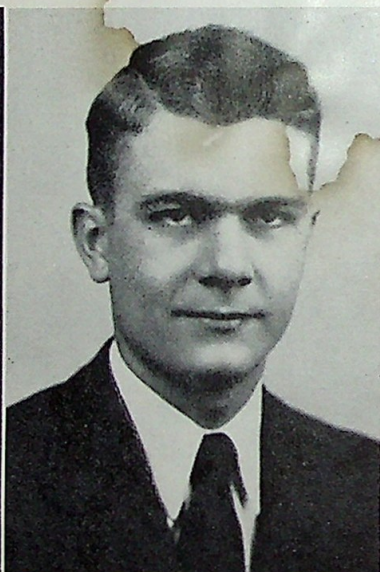
REV. W. C. LAUGHBAUM, D.D.



REV. H. GRADY DAVIS



REV. G. L. KLEESPIE



REV. RAYMOND A. HEINE

A

HISTORICAL SKETCH

AS EARLY as 1848, Whitestown was a hamlet of about a dozen log cabins. Deer and other wild animals still roamed the rugged terrain. Gradually settlers were arriving from Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The first man who came to this place was Lemuel White, after whom the town was later named.

As the settlers came, a little band of Lutherans began worshipping in a small log cabin. It is known that this tiny group first met about 1834 to sing and pray together.

Among the first members of this congregation were: William J. Laughner, Christopher Bowers, Jacob Harmon, Ambrose Neese, George Lucas, John Ottinger, John Neese, Joseph Beelar, Solomon Buck, Jacob Ditzenberger, John Hull, Daniel Buck, their wives, and a Miss Elrod. As the number of the group increased and the need was felt for a larger place in which to worship, they moved to a spot one and one-half miles east and one mile north of the village which was later to become Whitestown. There they met in the woods on a large hill.

Soon after this change of meeting place death came to one of their number, Daniel Buck, who was buried on the same hill where they were worshipping. The date, as shown on the tombstone which is still standing in the Lutheran Cemetery, was 1835.

To accommodate the worshippers the men built a log cabin which served as the first church building on this site. This little cabin was soon replaced by a larger building, 15' by 24'. To this church the settlers came on foot, in wagons, or on horseback to hear God's word and to have their children catechised. The Rev. E. S. Henkel, an early Lutheran Circuit Rider, was responsible for forming the tiny congregation.

Each visit of Pastor Henkel was a red-letter day for the congregation. On these occasions the entire day was devoted to church services and administering of the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism. Often it was late evening before the day's program was completed.

In 1835 the Rev. Ezra Keller visited the new congregation. He was sent to this region as a missionary explorer by the Missionary Society of the Pennsylvania Ministerium (the first Lutheran Synod in America). In reporting his travels to the synod he wrote, "I went to Boone County, where I found a number of Lutherans from East Ten-

nessee, settled about six miles south-east from Lebanon. These people have been visited occasionally by the Rev. E. S. Henkel of the Indiana Synod, who speaks of taking up his residence among them. I preached to them in a cabin."

By 1842 the members again felt the need of a larger meeting place more centrally located in their community. At this time an offer was received from a few Campellites (forerunners of the Christian denomination) to unite with them in forming a Union Church in the village. Since this seemed to fulfill their wants, the offer was accepted and the new edifice was called the Newtown Church. It was a frame structure erected on the south side of the street, a short distance east of the main road intersection in present Whitestown.

The traveling ministers who preached in the Newtown Church were Pastors J. P. Rudisill, John P. Livengood, D. P. Ground, Eusebius S. Henkel, and John Good. The Rev. Miles J. Stirewalt received a call from the congregation in 1866 and became its first regular pastor. Few churches had full time pastors because they were not available in this early age of Indiana's history.

The records of the Indiana Synod reveal that the synod met at the Newtown Church in November 1859. Nine clergymen plus several lay delegates were present at this gathering.

Another interesting fact garnered from synodical records is that Whitestown had been selected as the site for a proposed college to be established by the synod. In 1865 the synod adopted a constitution for the college, adopted a definite plan for the erection of suitable buildings, and selected Whitestown as the location. A committee report in 1866 shows a decline of interest in the institution, and the effort of the Union Synod to establish it in Whitestown came to an end. Later the college was founded at Mulberry, Indiana.

One of St. Mark's present members, Mrs. Sarah Goodwin, nee Laughner, who received the sacrament of Holy Baptism from the Rev. Henkel, was the first infant baptised in the Newtown Church. Later other groups of children were catechized by Pastor M. J. Stirewalt. Under his labor the size of the membership soon outgrew the building and plans were made to build another house of worship.

The written records of the church began on April 11, 1868, the date of a congregational meeting. Since the old frame structure was badly in need of repair, the members took preliminary steps at this time to plan a new church building. After subsequent meetings they voted to build a brick church 50' long, 36' wide, and with a 16' ceiling. Serving on the building and finance committees for the proposed structure were: John Neese, Phillip Ottinger, Ambrose Neese, William Laughner, S. J. Laughner, Mose Neese, Andrew Ground, Jacob Ottinger, and Joseph Etter.

The site selected for the new church was the lot on which the present church now stands. The new building was begun in the fall of 1868 and completed in the spring of the following year. It was during this period that the name was changed from the "Newtown Church" to "St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church." Sunday worship began in the new edifice July 3, but it was not until August 15, 1869, that the building was dedicated. Dignitaries present at this joyous occasion were Pastors E. Rudisill, E. S. Henkel, J. L. Sirawal, J. E. Wesner, and M. J. Stirewalt.



CHURCH BUILDING IN 1869

On July 31, 1869, a congregational meeting was called for the purpose of organizing the church on a legal basis. Up to this time the congregation had neither constitution nor by-laws. A constitution was adopted and signed by 41 charter members at a meeting held August 12, 1869.

Several years later as the building settled, the walls spread into a dangerous position. It became necessary to rebuild the roof and walls of the new church. However, the repaired structure served as the house of worship for the congregation for thirty-three years.

No unusual events were recorded during that period; however, we do know that the congregation, under the leadership of seven dif-

ferent pastors, steadily grew and the church continued to be an active force in the community. It is believed that the Sunday School was begun sometime during these years.

The passing years again found St. Mark's Church in need of repair and remodeling. In 1903 the congregation, under Pastor D. L. Reese, took action to build a new church instead of remodeling the old one because the reported cost of remodeling was almost as much as that of building a new structure. The new church was to be made of brick, trimmed in stone, and to cost about \$7,000. The present church is the outcome of these plans.



PRESENT CHURCH BUILDING

The men responsible for the building and finances were: Charles B. Laughner, Andrew G. Laughner, O. S. Taylor, W. H. Witt, R. O. Laughner, Ora Ottinger, and Pastor Reese. Four members of this committee are still living: W. H. Witt, R. O. Laughner, Charles B. Laughner, and Ora Ottinger.

While the new church building was under construction, regular church and Sunday School services were held in the school house. At this time the Sunday School took on new life and increased considerably in size. In the spring of 1904 the old church was torn down, and excavation of the basement was begun. The foundation was completed in May. In June the Corner Stone was laid at special services conducted by the pastor and the Rev. A. H. Arbaugh of Frankfort.

The Dedication Service was held on January 29, 1905. Participating in the three services for the day were Pastors Hiram Peters, President of Synod, A. H. Arbaugh, W. J. Seiberling, and D. L. Reese.

The choir of the Frankfort Church provided the music for the first service. A children's service was conducted at 3 P.M. under the direction of J. T. Frank Laughner, Superintendent of the Sunday School.

The church which now serves the congregation was quite a contrast to the previous building. Its advantages consisted of a main auditorium with a seating capacity of approximately 400 and a basement containing a dining room, kitchen, and furnace room. The church was equipped with an up-to-date gasoline lighting system. The bell, organ, and some of the seats were placed in the new building from the former church. The dimensions were 48' by 70'.

Improvements have been made in the present church since it was built. In 1913 hardwood floors were laid in the church proper. Subsequently electric lights took the place of the gasoline lamps. And in 1946 a blower-type furnace was installed.



An extensive decoration program was carried out early in 1948. The floors and pews were refinished, new carpeting was laid, and the entire interior was repainted. A display sign was acquired and placed in front of the church.

In 1919 a house located on the north side of town was purchased and used as a parsonage. There being no town fire fighting equipment, it burned in a three house blaze in 1925. The present parsonage was built on the same foundation.

Since 1936 an important annual event on St. Mark's calendar has been the Fish Fry held each summer. It has gradually become a homecoming festival for friends and relatives, many from afar, who gather for an evening of fellowship.

Another singular event makes 1948 an outstanding year in the life of St. Mark's Church. In March a Baldwin Electronic organ was installed in the church. The instrument offers many varieties and combinations for interpreting the sacred music played for the service.

Its tones are clear and distinct and add keenly to the atmosphere of worship. The Home Builder's Class sponsored the organ project.

The Church is the expression of the moral and religious life of a community. As we pause to review the inspiration of the loyalties and devotions in the past, let us look to the challenges of the future with the same faith and courage as the pioneer men and women who began our congregation. Having reached the century mark, we must not stand still. There are many frontiers before us. Men and women of God are needed now more than ever before. Let us carry on in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHARTER MEMBERS

Roll of names of those who signed the Constitution.

William J. Laughner	Martha Laughner
Ambrose Neese	Elisabeth Smith
Jacob Ottinger	Lucretia Ottinger
John E. Ottinger	Emma Bowser
Davault M. Sigman	Lovina Ground
J. Franklin Stewart	Margaret Ground
S. Jackson Laughner	Hester Ground
J. E. Neese	Harriet Stewart
A. M. Laughner	Mary Jane Surfild
Philip Ottinger	Eve Catherine Ottinger
A. G. Laughner	Susanna Neese
John Neese	I. H. Fredrick
Henry V. Laughner	S. P. Propes
Samuel K. Neese	Jacob P. Ottinger
David Ottinger	George Nease
James Laughner	Catherine Neese
Charles P. Millar	Mrs. H. M. Isenhour
Joseph Etter	Mrs. Roana Laughner
Sarah Isenhour	Miss Sariah Ottinger
Catherine Laughner	Miss Melvina Ottinger

Casia Kimble

HIGHLIGHTS

The Dorcas Society is an organization composed of all women of the Church. Their work has always been promoting social activities and sharing the responsibilities of the church. They have contributed much to the upkeep of the parsonage. Their latest improvement in the church is the new carpet bought this year. Altar committees are appointed from this society to take care of the chancel, the altar, and its appointments each week.

The Home Builders Sunday School class was organized in 1926 under the supervision of the church pastor, Rev. H. Grady Davis. There have been some worthy accomplishments since then. In 1941 they had a well driven and completed by piping water to the kitchen and installing a cabinet sink. The main working project of the class is the annual Birthday Calendar which has been published six years. Their greatest event was the installation of a new Baldwin Electronic organ on March 17, this year, sponsored by the class. Mr. and Mrs. Harry R. Thompson are the only charter members living here at the present time.

The Christian Workers Class, consisting of young married couples, was organized in 1939. Among their projects, two highly successful plays have been given. They have twice redecorated the children's department rooms and secured a piano for them. Six members of the class served in the armed forces and were safely returned. After organizing the Junior Choir and purchasing new robes, the class built a wardrobe for the vestments. Their latest work is the installation of a Bulletin Board on the Church lawn.



THE JUNIOR CHOIR

During the first part of the pastorate of Rev. H. Grady Davis, a choir was organized and was directed by him. During these years members gained a great amount of musical education and pleasure. Later vestments were made and were worn for the first time on April 16, 1933. Harry Etter is the present director. For many years Mrs. Etter has served faithfully as pianist and organist.

Since its erection there have been fourteen weddings in the Church.

A stimulating feature of our Sunday School for several years was a good Orchestra, at one time fourteen participating.

In 1932, on the 200th birthday anniversary of George Washington, a tulip poplar tree was planted on the church lawn. The work

was done by Rev. Davis, Adrian Cline, Paul Groover, Bonsal Witt and William Groover.

Our Harvest Home service on the first Sunday in October has been an annual event for a number of years. It is not only a grand service but a home coming day for many members and friends.

Rev. H. Grady Davis served as pastor here for the longest time, thirteen years.

Rev. Lewis Westenbarger, a son of a former pastor, was supply minister six months during this last year.

The oldest living member is D. M. Ottinger, 89 years of age, and the next oldest is Mrs. Sarah Goodwin, 88 years.

Charlie B. Laughner has taught various Sunday School classes over a period of fifty-five years, and has taught his present class more than twenty years.

Adelbert Neese has a very commendable record of forty-four years of teaching, financial secretary for more than 25 years, and on the church council 44 years continuously with the exception of one year.

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde O. Laughner have taken care of the communion service for more than 30 years. Mr. Laughner has also served on the council 35 years.

Albert F. Hauser was a member of the church council for a great number of years. When his health would not permit his attendance, he was voted a life member.

Harry G. Etter very capably served the Sunday School for twenty-five years as Superintendent. An unusual coincidence is the fact that according to the records of the church, the first secretary of the Newtown Lutheran Church in 1868 was Joseph Etter, the grandfather of the present secretary.

Mrs. Lillie Jackson has been the Sunday School treasurer for the past seventeen years.

A member to whom honor is due is Mrs. Flora Laughner who has not missed Sunday School for almost 12 years and has only missed 4 times in the past 29 years.

