

History of Lutheran Church  
Whitestown, Indiana

Among the religious denominations of Boone County, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, at Whitestown, deserves special mention. About the year 1834, Rev. E. S. Henkle organized a congregation of Lutherans east of Whitestown. This congregation was composed of John Good, Sr., Adam Catron, John Neese, Solomon Neese, Daniel Buck, John Peters, Jacob Ditzenberger, John Miller, Peter Keslerig and their families. This congregation first worshiped in the house of John Good, Sr., next under a shed that stood on the ground where the Lutheran Church now is. They also worshiped for a time in a school house that stood on the same ground. About the year 1840 they built a log house 30 x 24 feet, in which they held religious services for many years. That log house at this writing still stands, although it is in a very delapidated condition. Old settlers tell us that the congregations which assembled here to worship God were often so large that they were necessitated to hold services in the grove.

The people came to this place of worship from all parts of the surrounding county, some on foot, some on horseback and some in farm wagons, for in that day of mud roads, buggies and spring wagons were not in use. The first person that was buried near this church was Daniel Buck, about the year 1834. This denomination of christians, by additions to the church, increased to such an extent that in the year 1851, Revs. J. A. Rudisill and J. Good organized a congregation in a log house that stood on the farm of Ambrose Neese, in the southeast part of what is now known as Whitestown. They worshiped in this house for a short time, then, by permission granted them, worshiped in <sup>a log church house in the northeast</sup> ~~this-house-for-a-shert-time,-then,~~ part of said town. Soon, however, they built a large frame building which was known as the Lutheran Church until the year 1868, when the present commodious, substantial and comfortable brick building, known by the name

of St. Marks Evangelical Lutheran Church, was erected. This church stands in a convenient part of the town, and its membership is composed of many of the leading citizens of Worth Township.

The early Lutheran ministers of this section of the country were Revs. Henkle, Rudisill, Good, Grounds and Livengood. Since their day the church has been served by Revs. M. S. Stirwalt, Jacob Wesner, C.L. Lauer and J. G. M. Hursh. The present pastor is Rev. J.C. Barb, who was called to the work in 1833. But few of the original members are now living. The church is said to be in a prosperous condition. The church roll contains one hundred and eighty-five names.

The first Lutheran Church (frame) stood where Boswell's garage is now. It was sold to Jesse Simpson's father to be used by the Campbellites and Lutherans. Sold for \$300. Jesse Simpson had the brass bell from the first church.

The first frame church had a partition 4 or 5 feet high through the center of the church that divided the men's seats from the women's.

Rev. Rudisill helped Henkle, the first permanent preacher that Jack Bocher could remember.

The first brick church was built just after the civil war. Sarah Goodwin, who is now 85 years old, was sprinkled in the frame church in infancy.

May 15, 1904, Sunday School was held in the school house.

January, 1905, the congregation raised \$4000 when the church was dedicated.