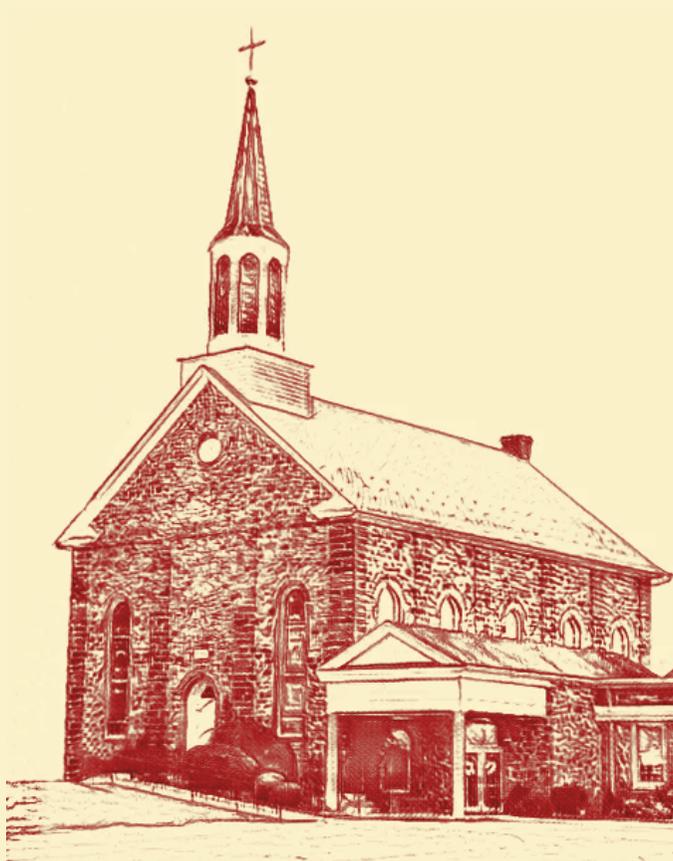


THE
THREE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY



THE NEW HANOVER
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
GILBERTSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

FOUNDED IN 1700

September 2024 - December 2025

THE
THREE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY



THE NEW HANOVER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2941 Lutheran Road

Gilbertsville, Pennsylvania 19525

Phone: 610-326-1335

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Online: www.newhanoverlutheran.org

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

DEDICATION

With deep reverence and joyful celebration, this Three Hundred Twenty-fifth Anniversary history booklet is dedicated to the enduring faith, unwavering commitment, and boundless grace that have sustained our congregation through generations. For over three centuries, this sacred place has stood as a beacon of hope, a sanctuary of worship, and a cornerstone of community.

We honor the legacy of those who came before us—visionaries, servants, and believers—whose prayers, sacrifices, and steadfast devotion laid the foundation upon which we continue to build. We give thanks for the present, where hearts are still moved, lives are still changed, and the Spirit still speaks. And we look ahead with courage and conviction, trusting that the same God who guided us through 325 years will lead us into the future with purpose and peace. To God be the glory—yesterday, today, and forevermore.



IN APPRECIATION



With hearts full of gratitude, the New Hanover Lutheran congregation wishes to express its deepest appreciation to The Reverend Scott A. Staub in recognition of his Fifteenth Anniversary of Ordination and seven years as our pastor. His unwavering faith, compassionate spirit, and tireless dedication have touched each of our lives in profound ways.

Pastor Scott's ministry has been a beacon of light in our community, guiding us not only in worship but in the everyday walk of faith. Through sermons, prayers, and personal example, he has reminded us that the heart of the Gospel is love - love for God, love for one another, and love for our neighbors. He challenged us to live out our faith beyond the walls of the church, to serve with humility, and to extend grace to those in need. Whether it is visiting the sick, offering a listening ear, or his joyful laughter, his commitment to loving and serving others has inspired us all.

Pastor Scott's leadership during the pandemic, finding new ways to worship, the formation of Peer Ministry Support, Loaves and Fishes, the Garden of Hope, and opening our doors to a Christian Learning Center are testaments to his strength and devotion. We are especially grateful for the way he led us in embracing our calling to be the hands and feet of Christ in our community. He taught us that every act of kindness, every moment of service, and every prayer lifted for a neighbor is a reflection of God's love.

Thank you, Pastor Scott, for being our shepherd, our teacher, and our friend. We pray that God continues to bless you, just as you have blessed us.

LEADERSHIP



Nicole Young
Director of Children,
Family and Youth
Ministry



Susan Gutshall
Office Manager



Patricia Nyce
Director of
Music Ministry



Barbara Eisenhart
Handbell Choir
Director



Lindsey Waltermyer
GRACE Praise Band
Director



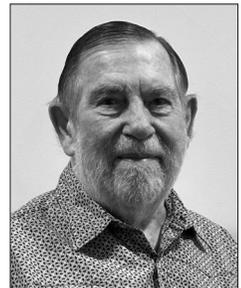
Jena Marinelli
Sunshine Learning
Center Director



Christopher
Fatzinger
Food Ministry
Chef



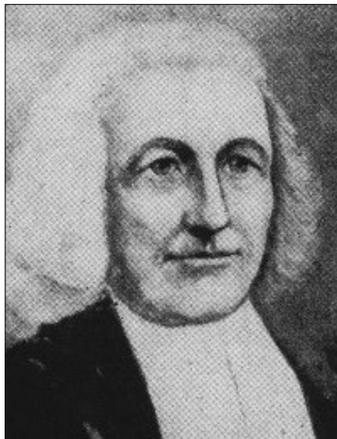
Jennifer Boyer
Sexton



Thomas Faust
Maintenance

PASTORS OF THE CONGREGATION

Daniel Falckner	1700-1708	Conrad Roeller	1780-1782
Andrew Rudman	1702	Christian Streit	1782-1785
Andrew Sandel	1704	Daniel Lehman	1786-1787
Anthony Jacob Henckel	1717-1728	Timothy Kuehl	1788
Samuel Hasselius	1720-1723	Frederick Weinland	1789-1796
John Casper Stoever, Sr.	1728-1732	Fr. Wm. Geissenhainer, Sr.	1797-1809
John Christian Schultze	1732-1733	Jacob Miller	1809-1829
John Casper Stoever, Jr.	1733-1735	Conrad Miller	1829-1852
Gabriel Falk	1735-1741	Nathan Jaeger	1853-1857
N. Schmidt	1742	Henry Wendt	1858-1864
Henry M. Muhlenberg	1742-1761	Abraham H. Groh	1865-1866
Assistants	1745-1759	Leonard Groh	1866-1886
Peter Brunholtz		John Jacob Kline	1886-1945
John Nicholas Kurtz		Edgar M. Cooper	1945-1992
John Helfrecht Schaum		Paul H. Howells	1992-1993
John Albrecht Weygandt		Richard H. Elliott	1994-2004
John William Kurtz		Susan P. Lynch	2000-2010
Frederick Schultze		LeRoy T. Ness	2005-2006
Lucas Rauss		Thomas M. Lang	2006-2016
Jacob Van Buskerk	1763-1765	Wayne R. Shelor	2016-2018
John Ludwig Voigt	1765-1776	Scott A. Staub	2018-2025
Frederick A. C. Muhlenberg	1777-1778		
Henry Ernst Muhlenberg	1779-1780		
Frederick Ernst	1780		



Henry Melchior Muhlenberg
Patriarch of American Lutheranism



John Helfrich
Schaum



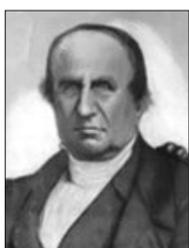
Frederick A. C.
Muhlenberg



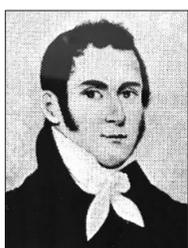
Henry Ernst
Muhlenberg



Christian Streit



Fr. William
Geissenhainer, Sr.



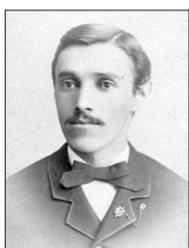
Jacob Miller



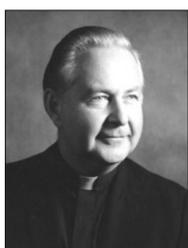
Nathan Jaeger



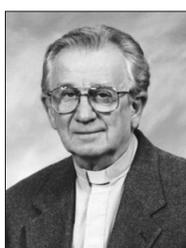
Leonard Groh



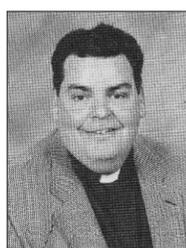
John Jacob Kline



Edgar M. Cooper



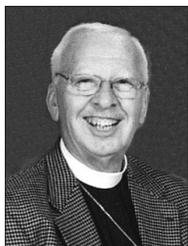
Paul H. Howells



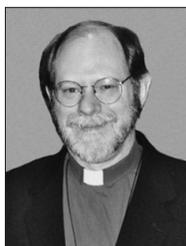
Richard H. Elliott



Susan P. Lynch



LeRoy T. Ness



Thomas M. Lang



Wayne R. Shelor

HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION

The beginning of the New Hanover Lutheran Congregation goes back to a little band of Germans who settled in what is now New Hanover Township, Pennsylvania, more than 325 years ago. During the late seventeenth century, many Lutherans, largely from the Palatinate region of Germany, came to the new world to escape religious persecution. Most of these Lutherans, upon reaching the new world, settled in Pennsylvania. Many of the new arrivals made their way up the Schuylkill River Valley and settled in an area that they named “New Hanover” in honor of the city and province of Hannover, Germany, from which many of them had come.

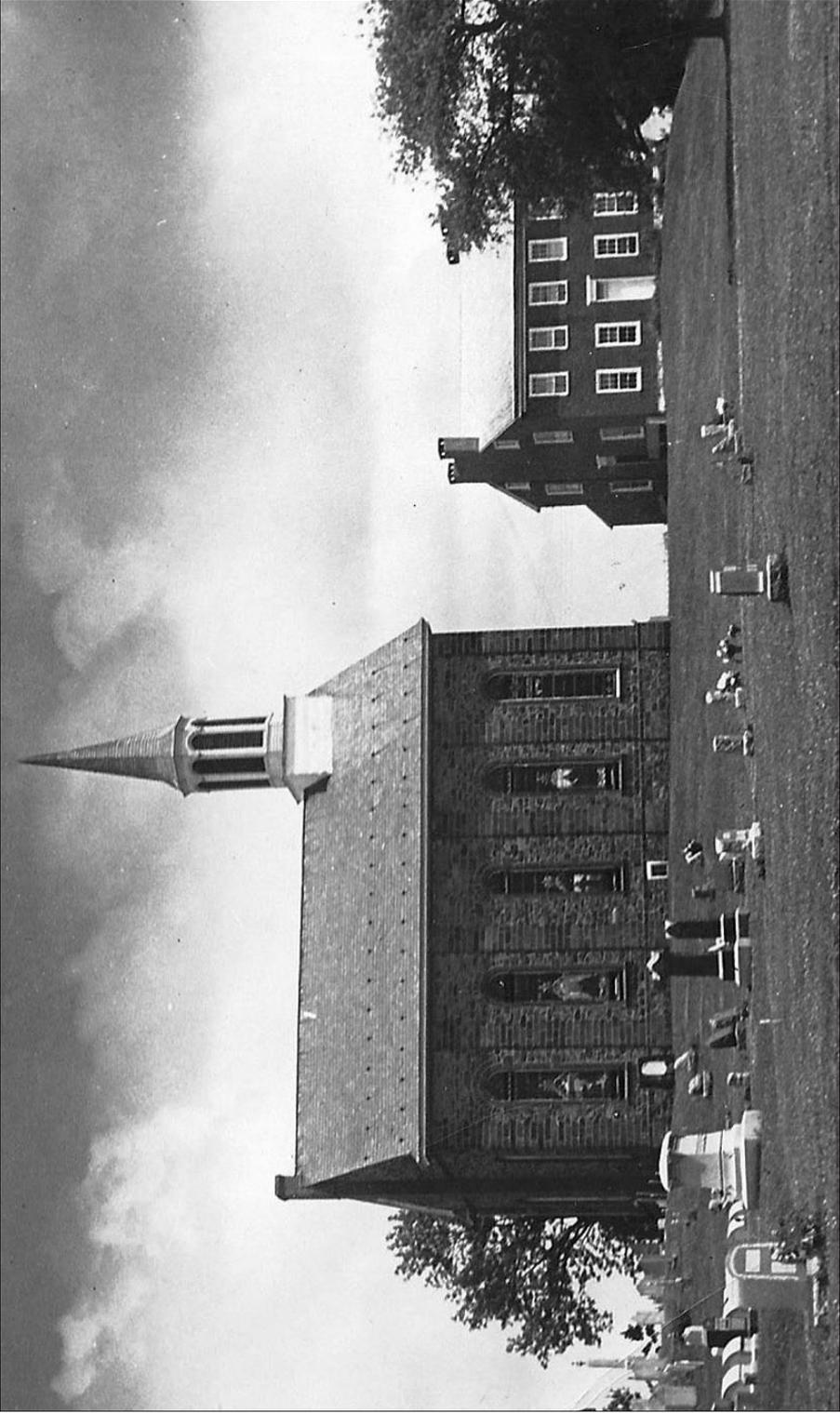
These settlers were for the most part devout Christians. In fact, most of them had sought the shores of the new world for the sake of religious freedom. It was only natural then, that that for which they had braved the perils of an unknown world to obtain was not neglected in their new homes.

About the same time, Daniel Falckner, a German theological student, came to America as an agent for the Frankfort Land Company. In the course of surveying, selling land to newcomers, and promoting the colonization of the land between the Schuylkill River and the present Pennsburg, Falckner came into close contact with these new settlers. Realizing that men do not live by bread alone and looking upon these hundreds of new settlers as sheep without a shepherd, Falckner, who had been ordained as a minister of the Gospel while on a visit to Germany shortly before 1700, ministered the Word and the Sacraments to these scattered Lutherans and organized them into a congregation. It was not long before the first house of worship was erected. It was a rude log hut entirely free of adornment and ornamentation. The exact location of this first church is unknown but is believed to be in the vicinity of the present structure.

Daniel Falckner was identified with many activities in and around Germantown. At one time he served as bailiff of the settlement. Later in life he ministered to several churches in New Jersey at the request of his brother, Justus Falckner, whom Daniel had urged to come to America. Justus Falckner was the first Lutheran minister to be ordained in the North America colonies.

During these early years, widely separated settlements were more closely drawn together than they are today. It was the accepted arrangement for pastors to serve any group that requested their assistance. Thus, the same pastor at one time served communities, which today have little contact with one another. Following Falckner’s pastorate at New Hanover, there is no record of any regular pastor other than the occasional ministrations of the neighboring Swedish Lutheran pastors from Molatton (Douglasville) and Wicaco (Philadelphia), Andrew Rudman and Andrew Sandel.

Anthony Jacob Henckel, mistakenly known as Gerhardt Henckel, was ordained in 1692 and arrived in America in 1717. “He was a court preacher, exiled by his sovereign against whose corruption he had inveighed.” A large family, some already married, accompanied him to America. He settled near New Hanover and



Exterior of the church and the organist/school master's house - circa 1940

served the congregation intermittently from 1717 to 1728. A long line of his descendants both in and out of the ministry have exerted a lasting influence upon the Lutheran Church in this country.

For some reason, Henckel gave up the parish at New Hanover for a few years. During this interval, Samuel Hasselius, first resident pastor at Molatton, ministered to the congregation. Henckel again took the charge in 1723 and served faithfully until his death in 1728.

One of the more trying experiences of the settlers was coping with the Indians. Most of their relationships with the red men were friendly, but occasionally the settlers were compelled to endure the wrath of natives whose ordered lives were interrupted by the persistent advance of the settlers. There is still extant a petition pertaining to this threat. It follows in the style of the original:

*To his Excellency Patrick Gordon Esqr Governour Generall In
Chie(f) Over the Province of pensilvania And the Territoris
Belonging Benbrenors township and the Adjacences Belonging
May ye 10th 1720*

*We think It fit to Address your excellency for Relief for your
Excellency must know That we have Sufered and Is Like to Sufer
By the Ingians they have fell upon ye Back Inhabitors about
falckners Swamp & New Coshahopin Therefore We the humble
Petitioners With our poor Wives And Children Do humbly Beg
of your Excellency To Take It into Consideration And Relieve
us the Petitioners hereof Whose Lives Lie at Stake With us and
our poor Wives & Children that Is more to us than Life
Therefore We the humble Petitioners hereof Do Desire An
Answer from our Excellency By ye Bearor With Speed So no
More at present from your poor Afflicted People Whose names
are here Subscribed (A list of sixty names follows . . . all men)*

A second petition was written eight years later. It is very similar in content and bears the name of Rev. Henckel among the signers.

A thoughtful glance at some of the experiences of our predecessors engenders our admiration for them. It was nothing for these early Americans to face dangers and hardships which today would stagger us. Early accounts tell us that worshipers came to church at New Hanover from miles around. Some were known to start for services on Saturday night and arrive about ten the next morning. Even on such a peaceful mission as attending church, the rifle was a constant companion. Though perhaps seldom called into use, its presence discouraged any attack along the way. Chief among their hardships were those imposed by the elements. When services were held there were few hindrances other than sickness that could discourage attendance by the faithful. A heart-warming sight pictured by the historian is a group of worshipers walking barefooted to worship who, when in sight of the church, would put on their shoes . . . a practice intended to conserve shoe leather.

The Stoevers arrived in America in September 1728. It is generally believed that they settled somewhere in this vicinity. The elder Stoever was an ordained minister upon his arrival according to the log book of the ship. The father spent five years in America before he accepted the charge in Virginia. During these years he undoubtedly served the New Hanover congregation among others.

John Casper Stoever, Jr., was ordained April 8, 1733. He served the New Hanover congregation during the absence of the regular pastor, John Christian Schultze, who went to Europe in the fall of 1733 with the delegates, Weissiger and Schoener, from the Providence and Philadelphia congregations. The purpose of their mission to Europe was to secure financial assistance as well as to ask for a qualified minister to serve their churches. Schultze remained in Germany. Young Stoever continued to come back to New Hanover at regular intervals to hold services and to perform pastoral acts while he was serving congregations as far away as Lancaster.

Gabriel Falk served as pastor of the church from 1735 to 1741. He absented himself for a period of two years during which time he traveled. It was during this period that the quack N. Schmidt thrust himself upon the congregation and was given a call by a portion of the congregation.

Ten years elapsed between the first petition to Halle for a minister to serve the three United Congregations and the date when that request was granted. The youthful Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, born at Einbeck, Hannover, Germany, was presented with the call and, after careful thought, set sail for America.

Muhlenberg arrived in Philadelphia on November 25, 1742. His destination was the three United Congregations, New Hanover, Providence, and Philadelphia. The call he carried included the following provisions:

- 1 – Muhlenberg was to go to Pennsylvania for three years on trial.
- 2 – He was to receive his traveling expenses.
- 3 – Expenses and salary were to be paid out of funds collected by Dr. Ziegenhagen of London.
- 4 – The official call was to be extended to him in London.

Arriving late in the afternoon at Philadelphia, Muhlenberg at once set out for New Hanover. He was informed by the proprietor of a local hostelry that the congregation had already engaged a certain N. Schmidt as minister and that his trip would probably be in vain. A horse was procured as well as a traveling companion, Philip Brandt, who was to leave that evening for New Hanover. The two arrived at their destination late in the evening of November 26. The next day, Saturday, Muhlenberg called together some of the Church Council and presented to them his credentials and the call which they had sent to Germany. Would the church have two pastors? Muhlenberg was adamant. It was decided that he should preach the following day.

His initial sermon was preached on the First Sunday in Advent, November 28, 1742. This was the first formal sermon that Muhlenberg preached in America. For his text he chose II Corinthians 5:19, 20. Following the service, he presented his

credentials to the congregation. There was perceptible joy among the members; he was immediately accepted by the congregation. Schmidt, the acting minister, was resigned to the decision. The following week Muhlenberg returned to Philadelphia to preach on December 5. He was received at Trappe the next week. Thus did Henry Melchior Muhlenberg become the pastor of the three United Lutheran Congregations.

Rev. Muhlenberg did not return to New Hanover until Christmas. He administered the Lord's Supper for the first time at this Festival Service. The same evening, he met with the Council and entered into a formal agreement with them as lawfully ordained minister of the Gospel. The Council pledged themselves to see that no one who could not show a regular call according to Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession should preach or administer the sacraments to their congregation.

The new pastor entered into his work with great zeal. He encouraged the completion of the unfinished log church which had been started in 1741. A schoolhouse was erected during 1743. Muhlenberg immediately began instruction of the young and schooling for those of all ages. He encouraged the mastery of the English language, for he firmly believed that America was to become an English-speaking nation. The first catechumen confirmed at New Hanover by Rev. Muhlenberg received her instruction in English.

Henry Melchior Muhlenberg married Anna Maria Weiser on April 22, 1745. She proved to be a great collaborator and a prime reason for his achievements.

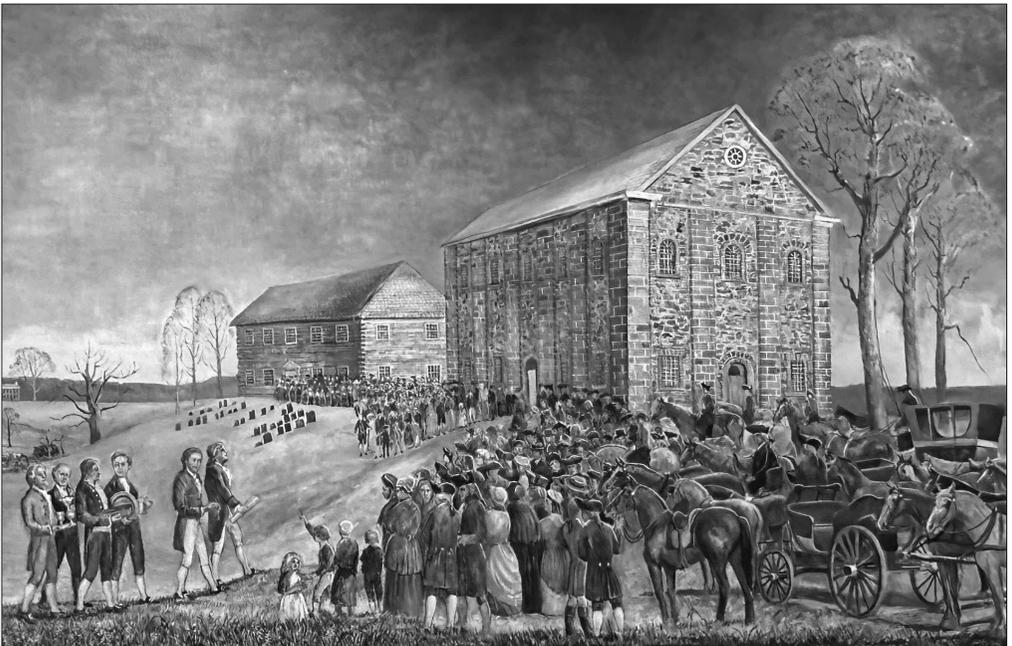
The first Lutheran Synod in America was organized on August 15, 1748, in Philadelphia. Rev. Muhlenberg became the first president. The New Hanover congregation was prominently represented at this first meeting and through the years was a faithful member of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.

On five different occasions during the early years of the Synod's life, the New Hanover church served as host to the assembly. The first meeting of Synod held in this church was June 16-18, 1754, before the present building was erected. Thirteen delegates were present. Again, on November 6-7, 1768, the synod met here to share in the dedicatory services of the new church built in 1767. The Ministerium met at New Hanover during two successive difficult years of the Revolutionary War. These meetings were held May 25, 1777, and October 4-6, 1778. At this latter meeting a significant action was taken – the first constitution of any Lutheran Synod in America was adopted. Again, in June 19-22, 1791, the Synod met at New Hanover for the last time. The significance of this meeting was the presentation of a memorial to Synod asking that lay delegates be “accorded a seat and vote in every meeting of the ministerium.” Synod decided to grant this right. This important action changed the whole form and constitution of the body to a free representative body of the entire church.

During the period from 1745 to 1759, the congregation was led by a succession of trained assistants to Rev. Muhlenberg. It was quite impossible for him to hold services with any degree of regularity because of the increasing demands on his time and energy by the newly organized congregations of the Synod. The following



Communion Vessels used by the congregation between 1750 and 1800
(still in the church's possession)



Dedication of the church - November 6, 1768
(Note the log structure behind the church and the four deacons carrying
the vessels in the above photo.)

served the church as catechists: Peter Brunholtz, John Nicholas Kurtz, John Albrecht Weygandt, John Helfrich Schaum, John William Kurtz, Frederick Schultze, and Lucas Rauss. They taught the young and read or preached sermons according to their ability. Many of these men later served capably in influential congregations.

In 1761, Rev. Muhlenberg moved his family to Philadelphia in order for him to take personal charge of the congregation there.

A congregational meeting was held on May 29, 1765, in the church at New Hanover, at which time the constitution drawn up by Rev. Muhlenberg was presented to the members and adopted by them. That same year, the congregation elected Matthias Hollenbach, Adam Wartman, Matthias Reichard, and Tobias Juerger as overseers in the erection of the proposed new church building.

The successor to Rev. Muhlenberg as pastor of the New Hanover Church was Jacob Van Buskerk. He was the first pastor of the congregation born in the new world to serve in this capacity. Though of Dutch descent, he was a native of New Jersey. During his years of service here, he also acted as Muhlenberg's assistant at Trappe.

For the next eleven years, the congregation was served by John Ludwig Voigt, a Halle graduate. He came to this church in December of 1765 from the Barren Hill pastorate. The present church building was erected during this period. The stone church was begun in 1767 and completed in time for the dedication service on November 6, 1768. This was considered of sufficient importance to have the Synod meet at New Hanover and to take part in the service.

The invitation sent to the Synod was signed by the pastor and the following persons: Michael Weygel, Adam Wartman, George Burkhart, George Beck, Adam Kurtz, Ludwig Bickel, Moses Binder, Valentin Stigler, Casimer Misemer, Jacob Eppel, Michael Schlanecker jun., George Schweinhard, Jacob Kop, Conrad Gilbert, Johannes Schweinhard. It reads as follows:

Honorable President and members of the Ministerium Reverendum of the United Evangelical Lutheran Congregations in Pennsylvania, etc:

The building of a new church, begun by the congregation at New Hanover, in the name and in reliance upon the assistance of Him who can do more than we ask and understand, has, through the strength of the Omnipotent, been accomplished with such desired progress that we will soon see its completion. Hallelujah . . .

For the accomplishing of so exceedingly important a purpose, we extend our most obedient request to the Reverend Ministerium, to consecrate our newly built church to the service of Immanuel by prayer, intercession and thanksgiving, and to bring into it, by the proclamation of the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ, glowing coal to enkindle a fire that may burn with fervor

and blessed devotion, in our hearts, as well as in the hearts of our posterity. (The writer then suggests the XXIII Sunday after Trinity, November 6, as the proper time.)

With readiness and the offering of all possible love, we, who sign this remain, Honorable Praeses and Members of the Reverend Ministerium.

New Hanover, Sept. 10, 1768.

*Your most obedient,
Lewis Voigt*

The dedication service was held as planned. People came from far and near. The Master Builder, Michael Stoflet, and the schoolmaster, who carried the keys to the building, led the procession to the church. Four deacons followed carrying the sacred vessels. In the procession were the synodical delegates, elders from the local congregation and from Providence, together with representatives from the congregations in Philadelphia, Germantown, Barren Hill, Lancaster, Reading, Tulpehocken, Richmond, Weithenthal, Earlstown, Warwick, Macunshy, Upper Milfont, Saccum, Jordan, Heidelberg, Peikstown, and others.

Rev. Muhlenberg offered the first motto for the new church. It was Luke 10:5,6 "And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house, and if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again." Other mottos were suggested by the following ministers who participated in the service: The Revs. Kurtz, Sr., Stoever, Kurtz, Jr., Schaum, Krug, Voigt, Jung, Van Buskerk, Streit, and Kuhn. The congregation joined in singing two hymns invoking the gift of the Holy Spirit. It was customary on such occasions for one of the visiting ministers to baptize children; The Rev. Klugh performed the baptisms at this dedicatory service.

The new church was built of graystone with brownstone trimmings. The overall dimensions were 67 feet by 46 feet. The walls were exceedingly heavy, thirty inches and over in thickness. Most of the stone was brought from Chester County, a distance of six to seven miles.

The political and social life of the colonies was in a tense and uneasy state during the latter years of Voigt's pastorate. When the present church building was dedicated, rumblings of discontent could be heard. The restless colonies were chafing under the British yoke. The two sons of Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Frederick Augustus and Henry Ernst, returned to the environs of their father's home at Trappe. The Rev. Frederick Muhlenberg returned home from New York when hostilities broke out in 1776. He assisted his father in many ways, one of which was to assume the pastorate at New Hanover. From this pastorate, he entered civil life and was elected to represent Pennsylvania in the Continental Congress. Later he became an elected member of the first Congress of the United States. An additional honor was bestowed upon him when he was chosen as the first Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The Rev. Henry Ernst Muhlenberg, like his brother, was affected by the outbreak of war. He remained in Philadelphia as pastor until the British entered the city.

Being an ardent patriot in the struggle for liberty, it was unsafe for him to remain there. He, too, returned to his father's home and assumed the position of pastor of the New Hanover Church when his brother Frederick entered civil life.

The attitude of the pastors toward the cause of freedom was complemented by the ardor of the community. General Washington and his beleaguered forces found a haven of security when encampment was made at Fagleysville on the way to winter quarters at Valley Forge. The inhabitants of the community responded liberally and willingly to the request for warm clothing, food, and horses. For a brief time, the church edifice was taken over by the military and used as a hospital for soldiers of the continental army wounded during the battles of Paoli and Brandywine.

Very little is known about the next two pastorates at New Hanover. Frederick Ernst is mentioned as the catechist of the class of catechumens confirmed by The Rev. Conrad Roeller in 1780.

The second native son to serve the New Hanover parish other than the two sons of Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg was Christian Streit. He, like Van Buskerk, was a native of New Jersey. He was ordained with the Muhlenberg brothers in 1770 and served the New Hanover church along with Hill Church (Oley) and Amityville from 1782-1785.

The Halle reports upon which scholars have depended largely for information about the early history of the Lutheran Church in this country make no reference to the pastorate of The Rev. Daniel Lehman. Our own church records reveal that he administered the Lord's Supper at intervals during the period from 1786-88.

The Rev. Dr. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg quietly passed away at his old home in Trappe on October 7, 1787. He was laid to rest in the churchyard of the Augustus Lutheran Church in Trappe three days later.

The Rev. John Frederick Weinland, who was born in Roemhild, Franconia, was the next recorded pastor of the New Hanover Church. The years of his pastorate here are 1790-1796. During much of this time, he made his home in this community though he also served the congregations at Trappe, Amityville, and Hill Church. Five of his children are buried in the church yard though his grave is at Trappe.

The Church Council passed a resolution on January 20, 1794, to have the congregation incorporated. This became a reality in 1795 and, almost one hundred years later in 1889, a seal for stamping documents was obtained.

At a weekday service, Thursday, October 13, 1796, The Rev. F. William Geissenhainer, Sr., was unanimously elected as pastor of the congregation. The call provided that he was to serve as pastor for six years upon condition that his life and teaching conform to the word of God, and that he reside not more than six miles from the church. He was to receive 60 pounds per year (\$160) payable in December. Rev. Geissenhainer remained until 1808.



Christian Dieffenbach Organ

One of the best organ builders in the region was Christian Dieffenbach who resided in Bethel Township, Berks County, and on June 28, 1800, a contract was signed with him to build an organ especially for New Hanover at a cost of \$680.00. Dieffenbach was to have the instrument completed by August 1, 1801, but failed to do so. In March 1802, Adam Gilbert was appointed by the Council to visit Christian Dieffenbach at the congregation's expense to ascertain when the new organ would be completed. The organ arrived several months later and was dedicated on October 30, 1802. It had ten stops, one manual, a pedal, and a walnut case.

The Rev. Jacob Miller, the next pastor, was a confirmand of Dr. Geissenhainer at the Goshenhoppen Church. He studied for the ministry at Philadelphia and was called to become pastor of New Hanover, Goshenhoppen, Boyer's (apparently Boyertown), and Hill Church. He served the church for twenty years, from 1809-1829. From here, he went to Trinity Church, Reading. It is through the work of Rev. Miller that the church at New Hanover considers St. John's, Boyertown, a daughter congregation.

In 1820, a Council resolution specified that a collection was to be taken at every service held in the church except at the harvest festival, days of prayer and fasting, at preparatory services, and at funerals held on weekdays.

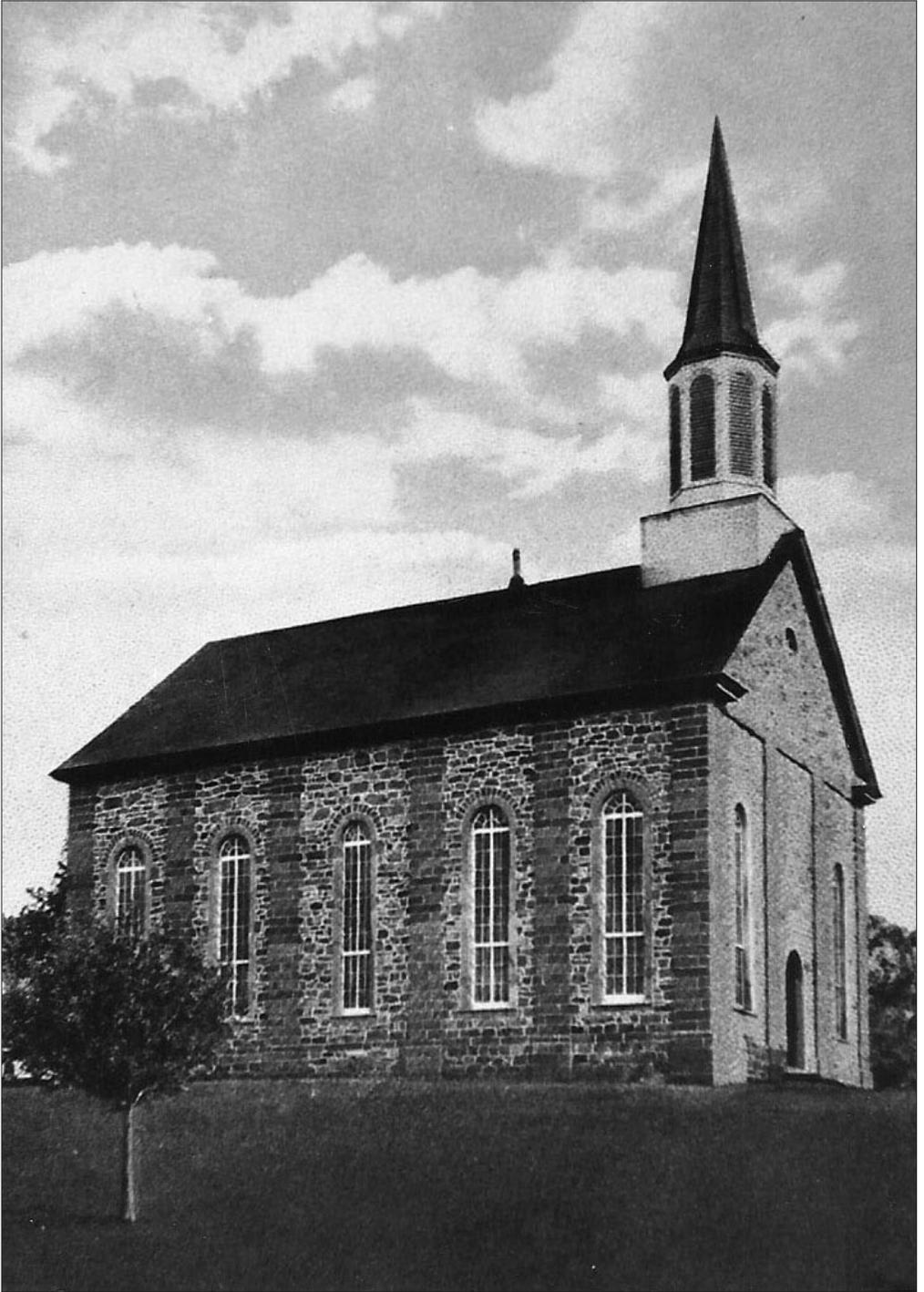
On April 22, 1826, after public notice from the pulpit, the congregation met in the schoolhouse to take action on proposed repairs to the church. It was resolved:

- 1 – That the brick be taken out of the church and a floor laid.
- 2 – That the windows be changed.
- 3 – That the church be painted, new doors put in, and other improvements made.

The Rev. Jacob Miller tendered his resignation to the Council and congregation on the January 17, 1829. His brother, The Rev. Conrad Miller, succeeded him as pastor, being elected on February 24, 1829. At this time, the New Hanover parish included Boyertown, Hill, Sassaman's, and Keelor's (Ziegler's). The Rev. Conrad Miller also served as President of Synod from 1841-1844. His pastorate was terminated by his death on October 9, 1852. He is the first pastor known to be buried in the church cemetery. His grave and monument are located just to the rear of the church.

On February 24, 1829, Mr. Storb was elected as the school master.

The Rev. Nathan Jaeger was pastor of the congregation from 1853-1857. On March 12, 1853, it was decided that he be permitted to preach in the English language occasionally. At a congregational meeting on October 15, 1853, it was decided by a vote of 33 to 1 that one-half of the church woodland and the field adjoining it should be sold. The sum realized from the sale was to be used to erect a house as the residence of the schoolmaster or organist and to replenish the church treasury. Matthias Kurtz was elected unanimously by the Council on June 18, 1854, to be the master builder for the new residence. Even though some discord between congregation and pastor marked the ministry of Rev. Jaeger, he was considered a good preacher and an excellent catechist.



Exterior of the church between 1867 - 1904

The last pastor to serve the congregation who was born in Germany was The Rev. Henry Wendt. He entered the ministry in 1851 and first came to America as a missionary from the institution at Basle to serve in Texas. In 1858, he moved to Pennsylvania and assumed charge of the New Hanover parish, still consisting of New Hanover, Keelor's, Boyertown, Hill Church, and Sassamansville. It was understood that he was on trial for the first year. The Council drew up a new constitution in 1858. The revisions were accepted by the congregation unanimously on December 11, 1858. Offering baskets were first used by the congregation in 1859. Prior to this, the offering was received on plates located at the door of the church.

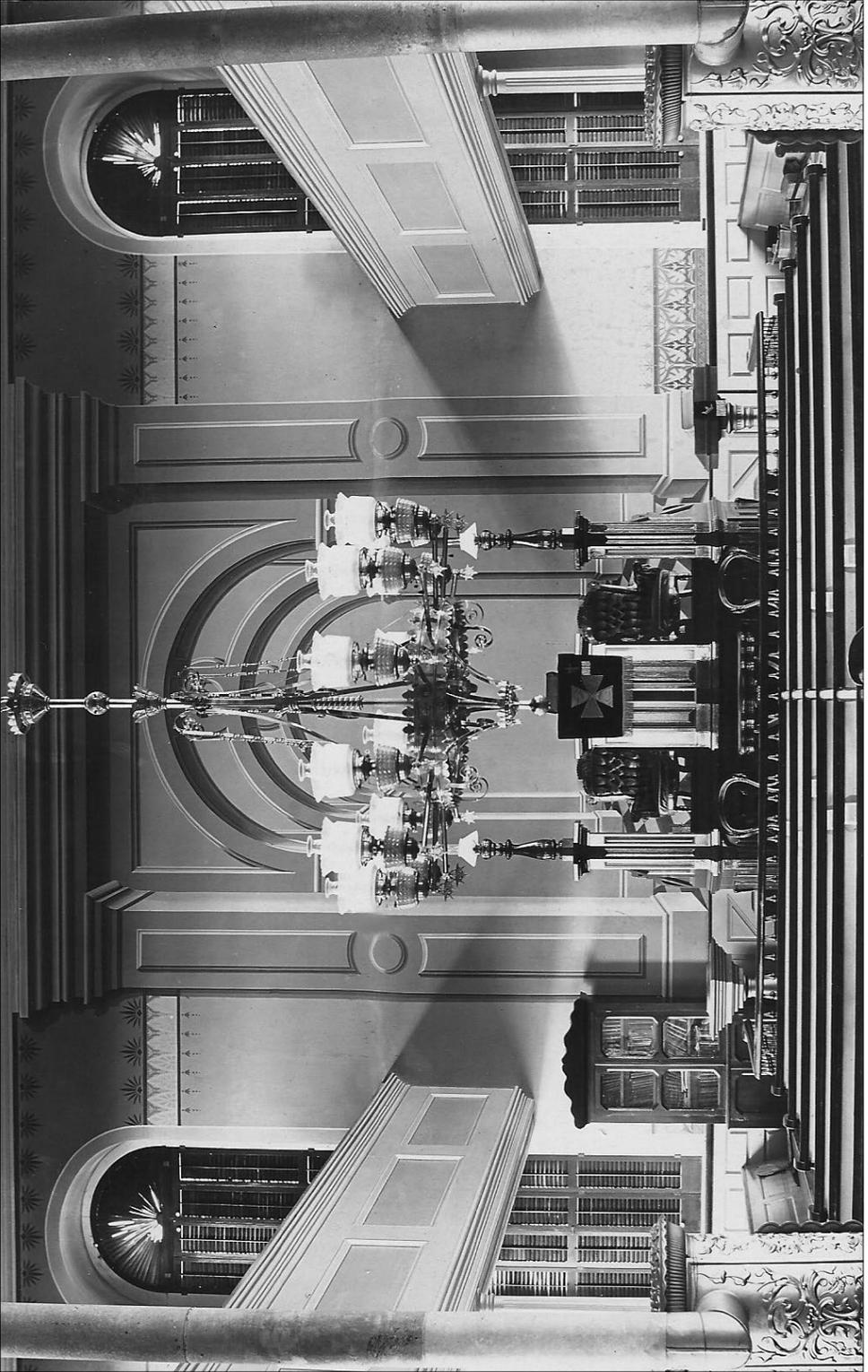
The Rev. Abraham H. Groh was elected pastor on February 26, 1865. He received his theological training at Gettysburg Seminary. The Ministerium of Pennsylvania ordained him in 1862. The parish included New Hanover, Keelor's, Boyertown, and Emmanuel, Pottstown. The demands of such a large parish coupled with poor health contributed to his early death at twenty-seven years of age. He ranked high as a preacher and gave great promise of usefulness in the church.

The Rev. Leonard Groh, a cousin of the former pastor, was called to New Hanover on March 6, 1866. He had supplied the charge during the illness of Rev. Abraham Groh. He served the churches at New Hanover and Boyertown from 1866 to 1886. The one hundredth anniversary of the church building came in 1867. It was decided to remodel the church for the occasion. A bell was purchased for \$165 but proved unsatisfactory and was returned and another procured. Rev. Groh moved from New Hanover to Boyertown in 1871, hence the parsonage and surrounding land at New Hanover were sold. A sum of \$4,200 was realized from the sale; this sum was put on trust until such time as the congregation at New Hanover would need it for a parsonage. The congregation voted to install blinds on the church windows in September 1872. Sheds for ten horses and vehicles were also to be erected at the northwest end of the church yard.

Action was taken to paint the church, fresco the walls, and repair the roof as soon as \$500 were secured for the work. Having been elected organist on December 17, 1853, Prof. Samuel L. Boyer, resigned in 1885 after 32 years of service. It was also decided to discontinue the evening English service and institute an English service every third Sunday morning.

On March 13, 1886, the New Hanover-Boyertown parish was divided. The Rev. Leonard Groh resigned and continued to serve as pastor of the Boyertown church.

The Rev. John Jacob Kline was elected to fill the vacancy. He was installed as pastor on July 11, 1886, by The Rev. Daniel Koch "D. K." Kepner, President of the First District Conference. The Rev. F. J. F. Schantz, D. D., preached the installation sermon. During August of that year, Huber's (Niantic), was added to the charge. Rev. Kline organized Trinity Lutheran congregation (Bechtelsville) and was appointed its first pastor by the president of the Reading Conference of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania on October 10, 1886. In 1896, Rev. Kline organized Grace Lutheran Church (Pottstown). Both Trinity and Grace are daughters of the New Hanover congregation. Rev. Kline studied at the University of Pennsylvania from 1891 to 1895 and received a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Wooster, Ohio, in 1899.



Sanctuary between 1867 - 1904

A new cemetery was laid out in lots next to the old cemetery beside the church and was consecrated on December 12, 1886, by the pastor. Mr. David Levensgood became organist in 1887 and served until 1896; Mr. Henry Schell succeeded him in the position.

In 1887, the present Sunday School was organized.

As the century drew to a close, the congregation began to anticipate the two hundredth anniversary of its founding. A resolution was passed directing the pastor, Rev. Kline, to prepare a history covering the two-hundred-year span.

With the coming of the twentieth century, the congregation reached its bicentennial year. Because of a confusion existing in the minds of the people concerning the year of the congregation's founding, the observance did not take place until October 1903. (The details of the congregation's founding in 1700 were brought to light after 1903 by Rev. Kline when he wrote the history of the congregation.) Accordingly in 1903, the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the New Hanover Lutheran congregation was duly observed on October 27-28. On hand for the occasion were The Rev. Dr. J. F. Schantz, President of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, and The Rev. Dr. T. E. Schmauk, President of the General Council.

Orlando S. Yerger, a son of the congregation, entered Muhlenberg College and graduated with second honors from his class in 1903. He graduated from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Chicago and was then ordained.

Early in 1904, William F. Lamb became organist and choirmaster, to which position he had been elected in September 1903. During the year, everything within the walls of the church was again removed. A cellar was dug beneath the church and a heating plant installed. A new floor was laid in the church and new chancel furnishings, pews, and memorial stained-glass windows were installed at a cost of \$6,000. To complete the renovations, a new pipe organ built by Bates and Culley of Philadelphia was procured later that same year through the efforts of James Brendlinger, Mrs. J. J. Kline, and organist, William F. Lamb, with the assistance of the Andrew Carnegie Foundation, an organization that was supporting similar projects throughout the country. Some of the best pipes from the one-hundred-two-year-old Dieffenbach organ as well as parts of the Dieffenbach case were used in the new organ. The cost of this instrument was \$2,450, a portion of which came from a grant by the Andrew Carnegie Company making possible the expense. In January 1905, the church was rededicated.

Prominent in the affairs of the congregation from the turn of the century to 1917 were Charles E. Renninger, Jacob M. Moyer, Luther Brendlinger, Ed Kepler, Irwin B. Grubb, Daniel B. Moyer, Daniel Richards, William C. Snell, and Solomon E. Renninger who served as officers of the Church Council during these years.

The year 1917, a turning point in world affairs due to the ending of World War I, was also a turning point in the history of the New Hanover Church. On March 3 of that year, the first English communion service was held in the church. Although services in the German language were maintained until 1935, from 1917 onward



Bates and Culley Organ

ORGANISTS OF THE CONGREGATION

Henry M. Muhlenberg
 J. Nicholas Kurtz
 William Kurtz
 John Helfrich Schaum
 J. Fred Viger
 John Jacob Goesser
 Michael Walter
 Samuel Schoch
 Peter Yerger
 Theodore Storb
 Samuel L. Boyer
 George Guldin
 David S. Levengood
 Henry Schell
 Mae Cummings
 William F. Lamb
 Kathryn Saylor



Kathryn Waltz
 Gloria Bechtel Adams
 Peggy Dotterer Jacob
 Alvin L. Spotts
 Nadine Rader
 Anita Anders
 Barbara Eisenhart
 Linda Mench
 Katherine Reier
 Jane Elliott
 Bruce Tonkin
 Lincoln Noecker
 Thomas Dressler
 Deborah Matthews
 Priscilla Landis
 Brian Tracey
 Patricia Nyce

English gradually supplanted the use of the mother tongue of the congregation's founders.

During 1918, the church walls were pointed and repaired and the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of the present church edifice was appropriately marked. The following year, the church steeple and roof and all outside woodwork were repaired and painted. A new roof was placed on the south side of the church in 1920. On September 28, 1919, a "Graveyard and Cemetery Fund" in honor of the young men of the parish who had served in the World War was set up. Later in 1920, a tablet, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. William Lamb, was placed in the narthex of the church in honor of the members of the parish who served in the World War.

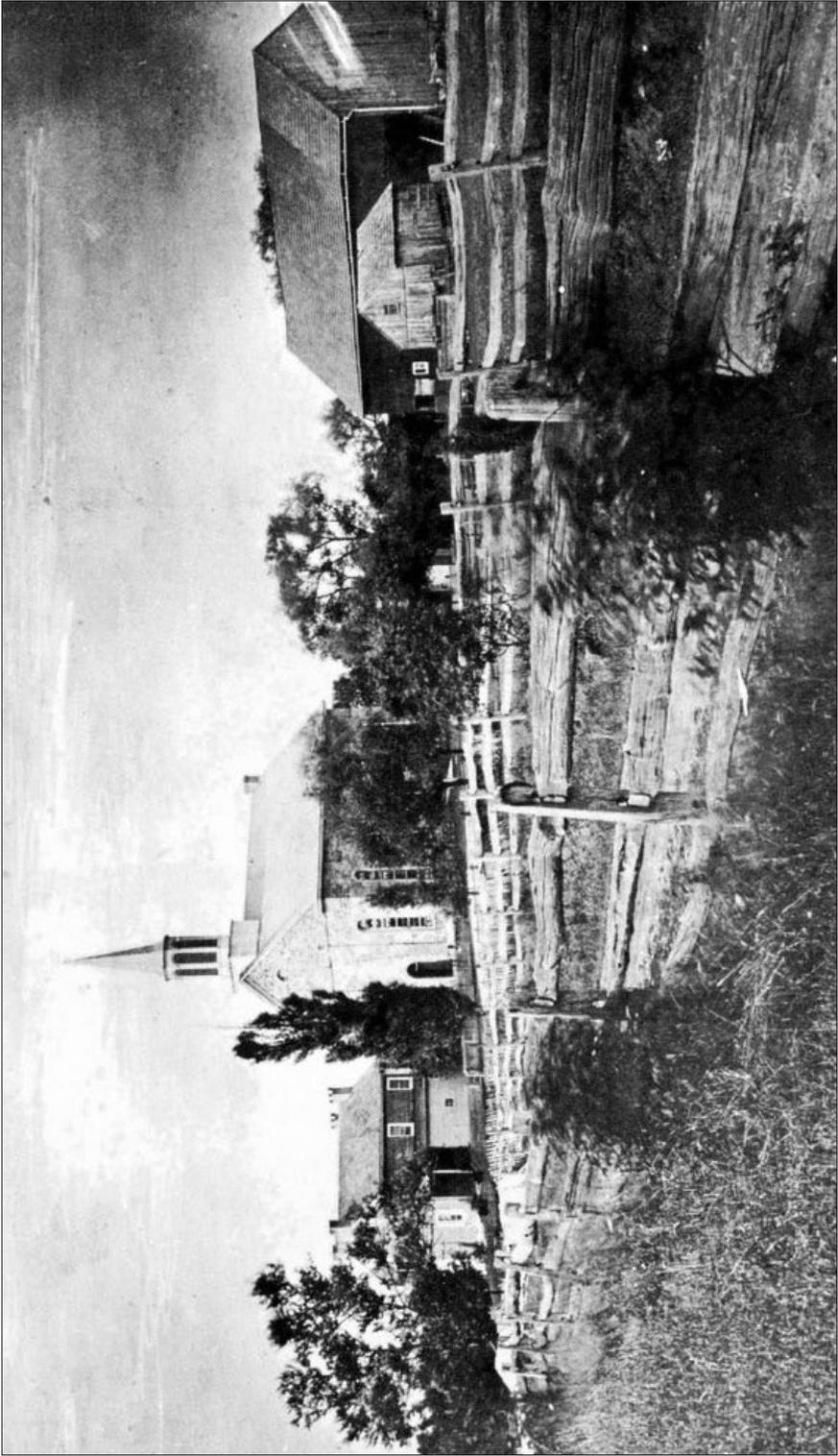
Significant events from 1919 to 1923 indicating that time was marching on were the introduction of the envelope system (1919) for the collection of church contributions, the electrification of the church and organ which was accomplished in 1923 at a cost of \$835.40, and the introduction of vestments for the pastor and choir (1922).

Prominent in the affairs of the parish from 1918 to 1935 were Oscar Levengood, Charles M. Rhoads, Luther Brendlinger, William C. Snell, Charles E. Renninger, Jacob Moyer, Charles E. Grubb, Fred Emery, Charles A. Y. Davidheiser, Wayne Richards, Lloyd S. Reinert, Irwin B. Grubb, Casper Erb, Leroy L. Richards, Wilmer Hunsberger, Harry C. Knause, Howard Rosenberry, Charles J. Renninger, and John Stoudt. During these years, the picnic grove was improved (1924); a bronze tablet bearing the names of those pastors who had served this congregation and the years they served was placed in the narthex, the gift of Dr. Robert Ludy, M.D. (1930); a well was drilled and a hand pump installed at a cost of \$110.00 (1933); the old chandelier was removed from the church (1933); individual communion glasses were introduced (1934); and a Junior Choir was organized (1934).

On June 27, 1936, the congregation paid tribute to its beloved pastor, The Rev. Dr. J. J. Kline, on his Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination and as pastor of the New Hanover Church. This "Golden Jubilee" extended throughout the day and included addresses by prominent pastors, the presentation of a purse, a gold cup, and many letters of testimony bound in a book to Pastor Kline.

Another significant event took place on September 25, 1938, when the congregation honored Mr. Lamb on the completion of thirty-five years as organist and choirmaster of the church. That day Mr. Lamb's favorite hymns and anthems were sung by the choir of thirty-one members. At the Vesper Service, the North Penn Chorus joined in the celebration. At the December meeting of the Church Council, Mr. Lamb tendered his resignation expressing the desire that he wished to retire to permit some younger organist to carry on the work. Although Mr. Lamb was asked to continue in his capacity, the resignation was accepted at a later meeting of the Council. After considering several applications for the position, a capable successor was finally chosen in the person of Mrs. Kathryn Saylor.

A significant forward step in the life of the parish was the move to hold a service each Lord's Day. Up to this time Rev. Kline served the New Hanover Church and



Church property with Lutheran Road in the foreground - circa 1910

Grace Church, Pottstown, on alternating Sundays. Beginning in the fall of 1941, Rev. Kline relinquished his duties at Grace Church and devoted his full time to the New Hanover congregation, conducting a service there each Lord's Day.

The bicentennial of the arrival of The Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg was duly celebrated with a special service on July 5, 1942. The Rev. John W. Richards, D.D., pastor of St. Luke's Church, Philadelphia, and a direct descendent of Muhlenberg, was the preacher for the occasion. In honor of the event, the Norristown Conference met in the New Hanover Church in April.

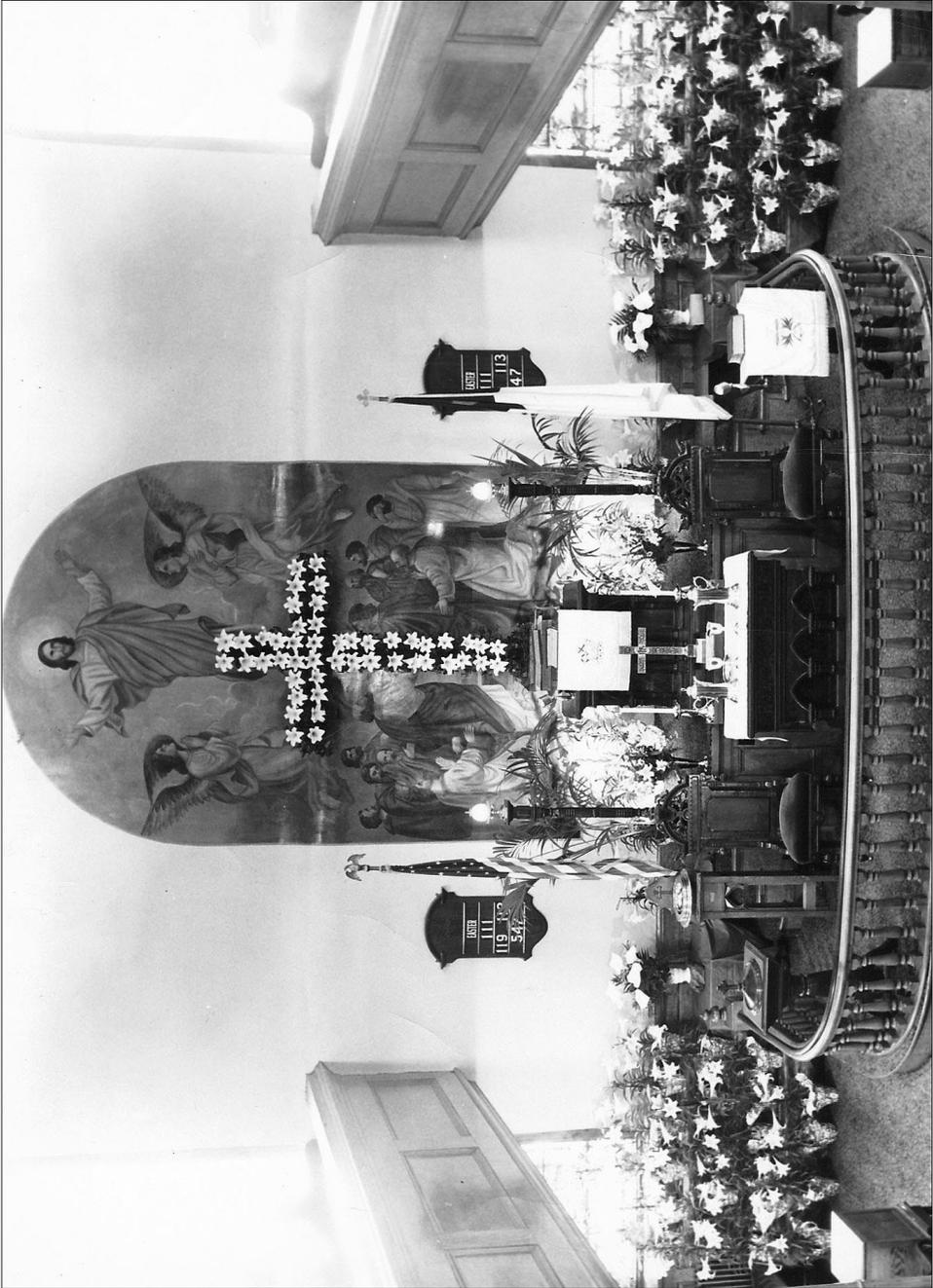
Significant events from 1936-45 not mentioned heretofore were: the translation of the congregation's constitution from German to English and its publication (1939-40), refrescoing of the church at a cost of \$618.00 (1939), removal of the remaining horse sheds (1939), installation of a new heating system at a cost of \$970.00 (1940), the first memorial service held (1941), Allen Erb appointed sexton (1941), bulletin boards placed in the narthex being the gifts and work of Leonard Saylor and Wayne Richards (1942), and World War II service flag presented by Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Renninger (1942).

At the meeting of the Church Council on December 8, 1944, the Council gave Rev. Kline permission to engage a seminarian to assist him with the parish work during the winter months. This assistant was procured in the person of Edgar M. Cooper. Seminarian Cooper continued in this capacity throughout 1945. On August 12, 1945, Rev. Kline, who had been ill since the previous March, having regained his health sufficiently, was present for the service and presented his resignation to the congregation, the same to become effective on September 16, 1945.

On Sunday, August 31, 1945, The Rev. Dr. J. J. Kline was elected Pastor Emeritus of the congregation and Edgar M. Cooper, who had been serving as assistant since the previous winter, was elected pastor. A letter of acceptance was read to the Council at its meeting on September 23. Pastor Cooper announced that he would begin his work on December 1, 1945. Thus, the longest pastorate in the history of the New Hanover Church (sixty years) and also one of the longest continuous pastorates in the Lutheran Church in America came to a close.

Leading the affairs of the parish during the last ten years of Rev. Kline's ministry were: Casper Erb, Charles J. Renninger, John Stoudt, Fred Emery, William Wolfgang, Levan Steltz, Leroy L. Richards, William F. Lamb, William Hunsberger, D. C. Hunsberger, Norman Richards, Chester Gerhart, John U. Renninger, Allen Renninger, J. Roger Moyer, Leonard Saylor, Wayne Richards, William Smith, Walter Richards, Rufus Gehris, and Fred Renninger.

A new phase in the life of the congregation began in 1945. A combination of factors accounts for this fact. World War II had just come to an end, as did the longest pastorate in the history of the church (only eight members of the congregation in 1946 had been confirmed by Rev. Leonard Groh, the predecessor of Rev. Kline), a mass exodus from the city brought numerous new families to the vicinity of New Hanover which had not seen a similar growth in any previous period of its history,



Sanctuary at Easter – circa 1940

and the whole outlook of the church-at-large was broadened by the new situations which arose during the war years.

Dr. Emil E. Fischer, President of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, preached the installation sermon and installed the new pastor on Sunday, November 11, 1945. The Rev. David F. Longacre, pastor of St. John's, Boyertown, gave the charge to the congregation. The Rev. Edgar M. Cooper assumed his duties as pastor on December 1, 1945; the initial sermon was preached the First Sunday in Advent.

The call stipulated that a parsonage would be provided. Since Rev. Kline owned his own home in Pottstown, the congregation had not needed a parsonage since the old parsonage had been disposed of in 1870. For more than two happy years, the pastor made his home with Mr. and Mrs. Wayne (Jennie) Richards in Pottstown. In April of 1947, it was recommended to the congregation that a parsonage be built. The congregation concurred with an overwhelmingly favorable vote. The building was begun on July 22; the cornerstone was laid at a special service on the evening of August 31. Virtually all of the contracts were let to members of the church. The home was completed at a cost of \$19,500 and ready for occupancy in May of 1948. A subscription of pledges by members, gifts from societies and friends, plus \$4,200 which had been in trust for such a purpose since 1870 liquidated the debt by 1950.

In keeping with the growth of the congregation, the next apparent need was an educational building for the Sunday School and auxiliaries of the church. The members were almost unanimously in favor of a new unit; the question was what to build. The final plans proposed to the congregation for the new Parish House were accepted by a vote of 114 favorable to 51 unfavorable on October 3, 1949. A contract for the building was given to Welsh and Renninger Builders of Pottstown. Arthur S. Kepner of Pottstown was the architect. Excavation for the building was begun in August 1950. Pledges toward the Parish House were solicited to be paid mainly in weekly gifts through the regular church envelopes. The building was named The Memorial Parish House of The New Hanover Lutheran Church. The entire project cost approximately \$56,000.

Significant events during the remaining years up to 1950 that have not been heretofore mentioned were: installation of an electronic carillon tower system (1946); enlargement of the parking lot (1946, 1950); organization of the first Vacation Bible School with enrollment of 114 pupils and teachers (1946); the repairing of the outside of the church and steeple at a cost of \$522.86 (1947); presentation of chancel paraments in four colors (1947); the holding of Council meetings monthly instead of quarterly beginning January 1948; sale of the barn on the church farm for \$325 and its removal (1948); organization of the Kathleen Ragan Society (1947); organization of the Brotherhood with a charter roll of fifty-six (1949); and the presentation of the Memorial Bulletin Board and circle of shrubbery along Lutheran Road by the members of the Young Women's and Young Men's Bible Classes (1950).

Leaders in congregational affairs during this period were: Leonard Saylor, Walter Richards, Levan Steltz, Norman Richards, John Renninger, William Smith, William Gehris, Fred Renninger, William F. Lamb, William Wolfgang, John Stark, Charles



Parsonage - 1948



Church and Memorial Parish House - 1951

J. Renninger, J. Roger Moyer, Sr., William Emery, Linford Moyer, William Romig, Walter Stetler, William F. Lamb, Jr., Wayne Richards, Allen Renninger, Rufus Gehris, Allen Erb, Leroy Seasholtz, Theodore Heinly, Paul Norton, and Raymond Haring.

Early in 1949, the congregation began to prepare for the proper celebration of the Two Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the congregation in 1950. Assurance that Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, President of the United Lutheran Church in America, and Dr. Emil E. Fischer, President of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, would take part in this significant anniversary, set the stage for an event long to be remembered by the entire membership.

The Two Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the congregation was observed from September 10 through September 17, 1950. A large three-pole tent borrowed from Pine Forge Academy was erected on the church grounds. Speakers for the celebration were: The Rev. Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, President of the United Lutheran Church in America; Dr. Emil E. Fischer, President of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania; and The Rev. Charles B. Foelsch, pastor of Holy Trinity Church, New York City.

Other events included a musicale featuring the works of Johann Sebastian Bach and a historical pageant written by Pastor Edgar M. Cooper "Mark Her Bulwarks" depicting scenes from the life of the congregation.

Death came to The Rev. Dr. John Jacob Kline, beloved Pastor Emeritus, on November 3, 1950. He attained the age of ninety-four years, one month, seventeen days. A church filled with parishioners, friends, and clergymen made his funeral and memorial service one of grateful remembrance of a productive life and the celebration of 'our hope in Jesus Christ.' Burial was in the New Hanover Church cemetery. He is the second known pastor of the congregation to be buried here.

In addition to his unique ministry of sixty years as pastor of the New Hanover congregation and five additional years as pastor emeritus, Rev. Kline is remembered for the publication of his monumental work *A History of the Lutheran Church In New Hanover, Pa.* by the congregation in 1910. Included with the history is a translation in alphabetical order of all pastoral acts recorded in official registers of the congregation dating back to 1743. Most of the entries were written in German. Rev. Kline was also editor and compiler of *The Norristown Conference Jubilee History* published in 1917. A missal stand for the altar was presented to the congregation in his memory by nieces and nephews soon after his death.

A congregational meeting on January 21, 1951, decided two matters of importance. Bonds were to be sold to church members bearing 3 percent interest to meet costs of the Parish House under construction until member contributions could amortize the mortgage. Also, the congregation voted to rebuild the steeple blown down by a severe windstorm on Thanksgiving Day, 1950. A vote on March 11 further decided the steeple would remain a spire rather than a cupola.

Over the weekend of April 29, 1951, the congregation was host to a choir of thirty-five young people from the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, who gave a concert in the church on Sunday afternoon. The visitors were housed with members of the congregation. The director was Mr. Robert McGill, guest organist at the Bach musicale during the 1950 anniversary program.

The 1951 Confirmation Class presented a gift of money to pay for the wrought iron railing at the steps leading to the parking lot. In May 1951, Pastor Cooper received his Master's Degree in Sacred Theology from Mt. Airy Seminary. His thesis was the historical pageant, "Mark Her Bulwarks," which was written for the Two Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary celebration.

The Dedication of the Memorial Parish House took place on Sunday, September 23, 1951. Participating with the pastor was The Rev. Theodore Fischer, President of the Norristown Conference. Dr. Henry H. Bagger, pastor of Holy Trinity Church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, gave the address. Mr. William F. Lamb, President of the Church Council, unveiled the memorial tablets in the entranceway to the Parish House including one erected by the congregation to the memory of Rev. J. J. Kline.

Other services included a musical program by the church choirs and the Sunday School orchestra; Mrs. Leonard (Kathryn) Saylor was organist and Miss Thelma Richards was orchestra leader. Dr. C. C. Kepler, a teacher from Reading, Pennsylvania, and a former member of the congregation, gave the address. A Congregational Dinner on Saturday, September 29, 1951, with Dr. G. Elson Ruff, editor of "The Lutheran" magazine as speaker concluded the observance.

During November 1951, the interior of the church was repainted. The redecoration was a project of the Women's Missionary Society.

Troop 367 of the Boy Scouts of America came into being on Charter Night, May 19, 1952. The troop was sponsored by the Brotherhood. The first scoutmaster was Mr. Charles B. Pflieger. The roll of six scouts included Paul Embody, David Evans, Arland Haring, Irvin Heinly, William Kingsepp, and David Pflieger.

On June 8, 1952, the congregation was host to a reunion service of ethnic Germans who were resettled in Pennsylvania under the sponsorship of Lutheran congregations following World War II. A noon day service was held in the church followed by an afternoon program in the church grove.

Pastor Cooper attended the Assembly Meeting of the Lutheran World Federation at Hannover, Germany, in August 1952. He went as an "Official Visitor" of the United Lutheran Church in America to the convention. As representative of the three United Congregations that had called Henry Melchior Muhlenberg to come to America in 1742 (New Hanover, Trappe, and Zion-St. Michael Church, Philadelphia), Pastor Cooper carried a bronze plaque made by Jacob Pattern Works, Pottstown, Pennsylvania, and presented it to the city of Einbeck, Germany, the birthplace of the patriarch. The presentation was made to the city fathers in a public ceremony in the town square. The plaque memorializes The Rev. Dr. Henry

Melchior Muhlenberg's contribution to the Lutheran Church in America. It was erected in the narthex of the church in which Rev. Muhlenberg was baptized.

The Sixtieth Convention of the Norristown Conference was held in the New Hanover Lutheran Church on September 10, 1952, at morning and afternoon sessions.

The first Church Councilmen's Dinner for area congregations was held at New Hanover on Reformation Day, Friday, October 31, 1952. This event was held at the church annually for many years.

The first issue of the church paper, "New Hanover Horizons," was published in February 1953. A running commentary and history of the life of the congregation, it was in its fifty-eighth year when the final issue was published in 2010.

The Luther League was organized early in 1953 with the following officers: Robert Lamb, president; John Warfel, vice president; Gertrude Buchholtz, secretary; and Hazel Smale, treasurer. The first League Lenten Retreat was held on a Sunday afternoon in March of that year at a cabin in Earlville, Pennsylvania. Harold L. Smale was program leader; seminarian Jacob Longacre and the pastor were discussion leaders.

The stage curtain was installed during April of 1953. It was purchased from Bastians, Inc., Trexlertown, Pennsylvania.

The Young Ladies' Bible Class published a Cookbook composed of favorite recipes of members and friends of the congregation during the summer of 1953. The book had wide distribution. That same summer, the men and boys of the congregation and the Sunday School erected a pavilion 72 feet by 36 feet dimension in the church picnic grove. Total cost for materials was \$660.00.

The lights illuminating the church at night were first turned on and dedicated at a Thankoffering service sponsored by the Missionary Societies of the congregation on the evening of November 22, 1953. The installation was a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Charles J. (Helen) Renninger.

Brownie Troop No. 38 was organized on Thursday, April 22, 1954, with Mabel Kingsepp as leader. The Young Ladies' Missionary Society was sponsor of the troop.

Mrs. Leonard (Kathryn) Saylor, organist, on September 19, organized a third choir. Known as the Chapel Choir, it had twelve charter members of high school age. It later became known as the Youth Choir.

At a special congregational meeting held on Sunday, November 14, 1954, after the morning service, a new constitution was adopted. It replaced an outmoded constitution amended from time-to-time during the previous two hundred years but was hopelessly inadequate for the needs of the congregation.



Congregation Council - 2025

(front, l. to r.) Pastor Scott Staub; Yvonne Peto; Monique Becker, Secretary;
 Andrew Van Dyke; Scott Geiser, Financial Secretary
 (back, l. to r.) Edward Becker, Treasurer;
 D. Martin Hauser, Vice-President; Todd Rothermel, President
 (missing: James Mack)



Three Hundred Twenty-fifth Anniversary Committee
 (front, l. to r.) Jayne McHugh, Ligia Garcia, Leslie Gates, Jane Manthorne,
 Patricia Berger, Barbara Eisenhart (chairperson)
 (back, l. to r.) Pastor Scott Staub, Nicole Young, Ricardo Garcia, Amanda Schlick,
 Sharon Tracey, R. Leland Wesner, Jr., Steven Eisenhart

The Minister Creek bed was re-routed off of church property during the fall of 1954. This eliminated the need for the wooden bridge just off Swamp Pike on Lutheran Road. The creek bed was filled and the area landscaped.

A two-year Catechetical program was instituted in the fall of 1954.

A growing Sunday School with crowded conditions in every department prompted the congregation to vote 146 in favor to 34 against a recommendation from the Church Council to build an addition to the Parish House. The vote was taken at the annual congregational meeting held on January 30, 1955, after the morning service. A Building Committee met with Sanders & Thomas architects for the first time on March 18. By May, the first drawings were posted for congregational study.

The Altar Guild was organized in 1955 and the first meeting was held on April 25. There were eight charter members; Mrs. W. Ford (Dorothy) Sands was the first president of the organization.

The memorial windows in the church were re-leaded and cleaned in May 1955, and storm windows were installed as an added protection. During the same month, the field between the church and parsonage was leveled and landscaped as a recreational area and ball field.

A \$50 check from the church was sent to Einbeck, Germany, to help pay for the \$2,000 bells installed in the new St. Mary Church as a memorial to The Rev. Dr. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. The new church replaced the one in which Rev. Muhlenberg had been baptized as an infant.

The congregation also sent \$235 toward the \$30,000 flood relief administered through the synod to churches and residents suffering losses as a result of the flooding in the Pocono Mountains caused by Hurricanes Connie and Diane in August 1955. Three of our youth campers had to be airlifted out of the Ministerium Camp due to the rising water level of the Delaware River.

The church purchased a copy of the widely acclaimed film, "Martin Luther," for \$150. The first showing here was October 30, 1955.

A campaign was conducted during the fall of 1955 to eliminate the remaining debt on the Parish House built in 1950. The debt of \$12,000 at the beginning of the year was completely wiped out by November 27. A special Thanksgiving Service was held on Sunday, December 4, to celebrate the payment of all debt remaining on the Parish House.

On February 12, 1956, Ernest and Miles Mauney, duo pianists and Columbia artists from Long Island, New York, played a benefit concert in the Parish House on behalf of the Building Fund. The identical twins had also played at the Bach musicale during the Two Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary celebration of the congregation.

The congregation, at a called meeting on April 29, 1956, voted 139 to 29 to build an addition to the Parish House to alleviate over-crowded conditions throughout the Sunday School.



Exterior of the church - 1957

Two morning services were to be held on communion Sundays beginning on May 27, 1956. Mrs. Kathryn Saylor, organist, asked for a leave of absence beginning the week following June 10 for health reasons. Miss Kathryn Waltz was chosen to serve as organist during this leave of absence. She began her duties on August 1, 1956.

A special congregational meeting on August 5, 1956, by a vote of 144 to 17, gave the green light to a building program. By September 16, the congregation shared in a groundbreaking service at the close of the morning worship on the site of the new building. The C. Raymond Davis Co. of Kimberton, Pennsylvania, was selected as the contractor for the Parish House annex.

The Church Council authorized the issuance of \$60,000 in bonds of \$100 denomination to be offered to church members and friends of the congregation bearing 3½ percent interest, so that funds would be available for construction payments.

Announcement was made on December 30, 1956, that the congregation had completed the pledged amount to Muhlenberg College. A contribution of \$4,300 was made to the college to furnish an office in the new East Dormitory as a memorial to The Rev. Dr. J. J. Kline, former pastor at New Hanover for sixty years.

Highlights of 1957 included the New Hanover congregation's Evangelism Mission Week from February 10-14. Our Missioner was The Rev. Marshall F. Mauney from Holy Trinity Church, Lynchburg, Virginia. More than 1,600 worshippers attended the week of services.

The Parish House Annex was dedicated at special services held on Sunday, June 16, 1957. A service was held in the church followed by a procession to the entrance of the new building. Dr. Charles M. Cooper, President of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, was the preacher. In addition to the pastor, others taking part in the service included The Rev. Robert M. Lamparter, Mr. C. S. Bicksler, architect; Mr. C. Raymond Davis, contractor; and Mr. Charles J. Renninger, President of the Church Council. More than twelve area pastors shared in the service and procession on an extraordinarily hot afternoon.

The men and boys of the congregation swarmed over the parsonage during the week of September 15, 1957, to give it a much-needed coat of paint.

The Women's Missionary Society celebrated its twentieth anniversary on November 18. The banquet speaker was Mrs. Roy Winters, former president of the national organization. Mrs. Charles J. (Helen) Renninger, the first president of the local group, presided. As part of the celebration, the Society arranged for Dr. Ruby Manikam, wife of the Lutheran Bishop from India, to be the Thankoffering speaker on December 8, 1957, at a Sunday service.

On April 12, 1958, the Norristown Conference Luther League convention was held at New Hanover Church. Programs for youth were held in the afternoon and evening with dinner provided by the church.

The first member of Boy Scout Troop 367 to be awarded the Eagle Scout rank was David Pflieger. The honor was presented at a Father-Son banquet on May 17, 1958.

New carpet for the church sanctuary was given by the Women's Missionary Society and Brotherhood. It was installed at a cost of \$4,597 in early June of 1958. The gift included a new vacuum cleaner and repairs to sagging floors in the church, which had to be re-enforced. They were then professionally treated against insects that might damage the new carpet. The green carpet taken out of the church had been in service for at least forty-three years. Men and women of the congregation removed the pews and thoroughly cleaned the church. The chairs in the chancel that were upholstered in green to blend with the previous carpet, were re-upholstered free-of-charge by Mr. Russell Hollowbush. The Young Women's Missionary Circle purchased the material.

The *Service Book and Hymnal* was introduced to the congregation. The Church Council on July 11, 1958, established a Hymnal Fund with the hope that members would contribute the cost of one or more hymnals; four hundred hymnals were purchased and fully subscribed to by November 2.

In the fall of 1958, it was arranged for Pastor Cooper to have a student assistant from the Mt. Airy Seminary. Mr. E. Ralph Walek, East Hartford, Connecticut, came each Sunday during that school year to assist.

Also that fall, the Norristown Conference was phased out of existence. In place of the seven conferences of the Synod, there were to be eighteen Districts. The New Hanover Church became one of twenty-eight congregations making up the Trappe District.

Significant in 1959 was the new schedule of two morning services on a regular basis starting on May 24.

The Student Assistant for the 1959-60 school year was Mr. William Fryer, a Pottstown native.

On December 20, the Intermediate Luther League was organized with twenty members. Miss Kathleen Rhoads was elected president.

Every five years a significant anniversary of the congregation rolls around: 1960 marked the Two Hundred Sixtieth Anniversary. On May 8, the congregation, at a called meeting, voted 156 to 23 to rebuild the organ. The instrument, installed in 1904, would be completely rebuilt and a new electric console added. This would replace the original tracker action. The resulting instrument, built by Paul Fritsche Co. of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, consisted of 19 stops and cost \$9,700.00.

On September 25, 1960, the congregation posed for a formal picture taken between the two morning services at 9:45 a.m. More than five hundred were in attendance.

The Student Assistant during the 1960-61 school year was Mr. John Dreisbach of Allentown.

The first Boyertown Area Reformation Service was held in the New Hanover Church on October 30, 1960. Six area Lutheran congregations participated. The Rev. Robert M. Lamparter, Dean of the Trappe District, was the speaker.

The rebuilt organ was ready for use and dedication on Reformation Sunday, October 30, 1960. On November 27, Maestro Giuseppe Moschetti, organist of St. John Lutheran Church, Allentown, Pennsylvania, played the dedicatory recital.

The Two Hundred Sixtieth Anniversary of the congregation was formally celebrated on November 20, 1960. Dr. Charles B. Foelsch, President of Pacific Lutheran Seminary, spoke at the morning service. The Rev. Dr. Abdel Ross Wentz, President Emeritus of Gettysburg Seminary, was speaker at the evening service.

The Acolytes Guild, composed of nineteen young men, planted two Colorado blue spruce trees in the yard on each side of the main entrance of the church as part of the Two Hundred Sixtieth Anniversary year celebration. The trees were purchased with funds provided by the 1956 confirmation class set aside for beautification of the church property.

During the Christmas Eve services, the new organ chimes were heard for the first time by the congregation. They were given by Mrs. Beatrice Smale and family in memory of her husband, George D. Smale. The chimes were formally dedicated the following morning at the Christmas Day service.

Two acres of ground purchased from Mr. Harry Moyer for \$2,000 were added to the church cemetery as a result of congregational approval at the annual meeting on January 29, 1961. The Cemetery Board, under the direction of Paul Clemmer, divided the two acres into individual cemetery plots and made them available for purchase by church members at \$50 per grave. Plots for two, three, and four grave spaces were provided. It was consecrated at the Memorial Day service on June 3, 1962.

Mr. Allen Erb, sexton of the congregation since 1941, submitted his resignation effective the end of April. He and Mrs. Erb had occupied the home adjacent to the church for twenty years. They moved into an apartment within sight of the church. Mr. Erb was eighty-four at the time of his retirement. Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Steffey began their duties as the new sextons on June 1, 1961, and shared custodial responsibilities.

The Student Assistant for the 1961-62 school year was Henry K. Johnson.

Roof problems necessitated a called meeting of the congregation on November 26, 1961. By a vote of 200 to 3, the Council was authorized to have the William E. Yeakel Co. of Emmaus put a new slate roof on the church between August and September of 1962 at a cost of \$5,721.59. This replaced the roof that had served the congregation since 1885.

In November 1961, the three women's organizations of the church were merged to form one organization to be called the United Lutheran Church Women. The



Congregational Picture - 1960

merger included the Senior Missionary Society, the Young Ladies' Missionary Society, and the Altar Guild.

When the Church Council reorganized in January 1962, Mr. John U. Renninger submitted his resignation as treasurer of the congregation. He had served in that capacity since 1940, a tenure of twenty-two years.

A concert by the Lenoir Rhyne College A Cappella Choir on April 5, 1962, under the direction of Professor Kenneth B. Lee, was well received by the community.

Pastor Cooper attended the biennial convention of the church at Detroit, Michigan, June 29, 1962, at which the Lutheran Church in America came into existence. The new Church Body was a merger of the United Lutheran Church in America, Augustana, the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the Suomi or Finnish Lutheran Body.

The Student Assistant for the 1962-63 school year Mr. Thomas Reinsel of Reading.

Of great significance was the phasing out of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania founded by The Rev. Henry M. Muhlenberg in 1748. It became a part of the complete reorganization of synods in 1962, when the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) was formed. At that time, New Hanover Lutheran Church became a member of the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod.

On March 31, 1963, a Confirmand Rally was held at New Hanover. More than four hundred fifty youths attended the service.

The first season of Camp Falckner was held in the church grove from July 9-12, 1963. The enrollment was fourteen youths and four adults, who camped in tents for the four days. By the late 1960s, the camp had expanded into two sessions. One was held at the grove for seventh, eighth, and ninth graders, and a second session for tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders followed at the Renninger's summer home along Swamp Creek. Named for the first pastor of the congregation, The Rev. Daniel Falckner, who organized the church in 1700, the camp program continued until 1983. It resumed again in 1988.

Mrs. Kathryn Saylor, organist of the congregation for twenty-five years, submitted her resignation in August 1963. Miss Gloria Bechtel began her service as organist on January 12, 1964. A third choir for junior and senior high students was reorganized in March under her direction.

Pastor Cooper attended the Lutheran World Assembly Meeting in Helsinki, Finland, in August of 1964.

A Kindergarten, operated by the New Hanover Elementary School under the Boyertown Area Jointure, began its session in the facilities of the Parish House annex in September. More than one hundred children attended each day. This arrangement continued for two years until the school's facilities could be enlarged.

The Student Assistant for 1963-64 school year was Mr. James Delong of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania.

On November 17, 1963, a congregational meeting was held to vote on acquisition of more than an acre of land adjoining the church property. The vote was 164 to 3 in favor of the purchase at a cost of \$1,000. The land will be of use to the cemetery in the future.

During the fall months, aluminum siding was put on the upper story of the parsonage. The work was done by Ajax Products Co. of Boyertown at a cost of \$1,245.

A freak windstorm toppled the cross on the church steeple on January 20, 1964. It was replaced with an eight-foot stainless steel cross and was blessed during the Memorial Day service, May 30, 1965. Wayne Beck, assisted by William Bowman and Chester Moser, fabricated the cross. The CryoChem Co., Boyertown, made the eighteen-inch stainless steel sphere on which the cross sits.

An eleven-foot mural featuring the New Hanover Lutheran Church was hung in the New Hanover Branch of the National Bank of Boyertown on Washington's birthday, Saturday, February 22, 1964, with appropriate unveiling ceremonies. The mural depicts the bringing of soldiers who were wounded in the Brandywine and Paoli engagements to the New Hanover Church, a temporary hospital, in 1777. Mr. George Walters of Spring City was the artist.

A new lectern Bible was purchased by the Altar Guild in April. It was the Revised Standard Version and replaced a King James Version of the scriptures printed in 1857.

A Congregational Dinner in June 1964 provided opportunity to honor Mrs. Kathryn Saylor for her faithful service as organist. It took the form of "This Is Your Life" with narration and pictures. Mr. Robert Fulmer was presented with the Lamb citation and medal of the National Lutheran Committee on Scouting for his exceptional service record at the same event.

A new roof was put on the Parish House in August 1964 at a cost of \$1,700. William Yeakel of Emmaus, performed the work.

The Student Assistant for the 1964-65 school year was Mr. Walton R. Horn.

New Hanover member, Joan Bauer, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Bauer, was invested as a Deaconess of the Lutheran Church in America at an impressive Investiture Service on May 22, 1966, at the Deaconess Home in Gladwyne, Pennsylvania. After one year, Sister Joan was consecrated as a full-fledged member of the Diaconate.

The Parish House was completely repainted on the interior during February 1965. The total cost was \$1,223 that was provided by willing workers' proceeds from the sale of chow-chow and by the women who regularly quilt during the winter. Mr. Richard Hollowbush of New Berlinville was contracted to do the work.

New gowns for the Senior and Youth Choirs were purchased from the Collegiate Cap and Gown Company. They were worn for the first time on April 25, 1965.

The steeple was repaired and painted when the cross was erected in July 1965. The total cost of the project was \$2,801. Insurance money provided \$1,300 of the expense.

The Student Assistant for the 1965-66 school year was Mr. Craig Bartholomew of Rochester, New York.

Pastor Cooper was asked to lead a Lutheran Foreign Seminar Tour to the Lands of the Bible. Highlights of the trip included Rome, Athens, Cairo, Luxor, Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem and environs, and many sites associated with the life of Christ. The tour was from April 14 through May 5, 1966. While in Bethlehem, Pastor Cooper purchased and gifted a wooden nativity set to the congregation. It continues to be displayed in the Narthex each Christmas season to this day.

A Service of Ordination for candidates to the ministry of the Lutheran Church was held at New Hanover on the evening of August 28, 1966. Dale I. Gregoriew, called to be pastor of St. Luke Church, Gilbertsville, and David H. Pflieger, a son of the New Hanover congregation, called to be pastor of the Jacksonville Parish, Lehigh County, were ordained by Dr. Samuel E. Kidd, president of the Eastern Pennsylvania Lutheran Synod. Dr. Claude E. Schock, secretary; Dr. Philip J. Hefner and Pastor Cooper, sponsors, assisted. Pastor Cooper gave the sermon.

The Student Assistant for the 1966-67 school year was Mr. Richard A. Mowery of Philadelphia.

The Philadelphia Seminary Choir sang at the 10:15 a.m. service on January 22, 1967, taking the place of the sermon period. The service was broadcast over radio station WPAZ.

The first pictorial church directory prepared by the congregation was distributed to the membership at the end of February 1967.

At the June 1967 Church Council meeting, the Council gave permission to the teenagers of the congregation to hold Teen Dances. The first dance was held on Friday, July 14, from 7:30-10:30 p.m. for youth ages 12-19 years.

A called congregational meeting on June 25, 1967, after the morning services, voted 210 to 20 that the parking area around the church should be paved. Mr. Stern Nester was contracted to do the work at a cost of \$16,760. Spaces for one hundred fifty-eight cars were provided.

The congregation took note of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the present church building (erected in 1767-68) with special services beginning on October 29, Reformation Sunday. The preacher was Dr. Samuel E. Kidd, synod president. The Boyertown Area Lutheran churches sponsored a Reformation Rally at New Hanover that evening. There were 404 persons in attendance.



Aerial view of the church property - 1968

On November 5, 1967, Dr. Werner H. O. Wedel, Board of World Missions, was the speaker. His remarkable experiences as a Christian under the Nazi regime and later under the Chinese Communists gave him the opportunity to speak at assembly programs at area schools during his stay at New Hanover.

The Muhlenberg College Choir presented a concert in the church on the evening of November 12, 1967. Dr. Ludwig Lenel conducted.

The congregation posed for a group picture on Sunday, September 10, 1967. The year ended on a joyful note with announcement that the two-year Seminary Appeal Goal of \$13,275 was reached.

Early in January 1968, an Improvement Committee was appointed with authority from the Church Council to develop plans for the renovation of the interior of the church.

Members of Christian Action and Altar Guild committees began making 'Chrismons' in February. These handmade Christian symbols would be ornaments for the church sanctuary Christmas trees and were used for the first time in 1968.

A stone retaining wall was built around the bulletin board in the parking lot and shrubbery was planted in June 1968.

On September 16, 1968, Bishop Hans Lilje of Hannover, Germany, and newly elected president of the World Council of Churches, arrived at the church to share in the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the present church building (1767-68). The bishop planted a tree in the church lawn, shared in a congregational dinner, and addressed an overflow crowd at the 8:00 p.m. service in the church.

Upon approval by the Lutheran Church in America, two new synods came into being: the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod (NEPA) and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (SEPA). New Hanover Lutheran Church is a member of the SEPA Synod situated at its extreme western border. At that time, one hundred ninety-eight congregations made up the synod with headquarters in Philadelphia. Dr. William A. Janson was elected president on October 22, 1968.

On December 15, the newly elected president of the LCA, Dr. Robert J. Marshall, preached at both morning services, spoke to the Sunday School, and planted a tree to commemorate his visit on the occasion of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the church building.

The congregation, at a called meeting on April 27, 1969, voted 131 to 87 to renovate the interior of the church in the style of Greek Revival as it had been during much of its earlier history.

The first service at New Hanover for the Consecration of a Deaconess was held for Sister Joan Bauer. The service took place on May 18, 1969, at 3:00 p.m. Joan, a daughter of the congregation, was the first member of New Hanover to become a Deaconess.



Sanctuary - 1969



Dedication Service for the Sanctuary - December 21, 1969

New roofs were put on the hallway and a connecting room between the church and Parish House during July 1969.

The congregation responded generously to a special appeal called ACT (Act In Crisis) intended to meet unusual needs throughout the Church. More than \$5,000 above the regular budget was subscribed.

The rededication of the newly renovated church sanctuary was held on December 21, 1969. Dr. William A. Janson, synod president, preached at both morning services. The congregation had worshipped in the Parish House during the alterations. Sharing in the Rededication Service were G. E. Brumbaugh and A. F. Ruthrauff, architects; C. J. Ecker, contractor; and sub-contractors, William Fosnocht (electrical), Russell Hollowbush (upholstery), Paul Oswald (pew refinishing), E. R. Seiverling (painting), and William Tapper (carpeting).

The December 28, 1969, service was highlighted by the preaching of The Rev. David H. Pflieger, son of the congregation.

An Evening Community Service was held on Sunday, January 4, 1970, at which The Rev. Robert M. Lamparter (Emmanuel, Souderton) preached. Officiants were The Rev. Richard Hoffert, (Grace, Pottstown) and The Rev. Clyde Fry, (St. John's, Boyertown).

The concluding service marking the rededication of the renovated church was on January 11, 1970. Dr. Charles B. Foelsch, New York, was the speaker, and the liturgist was Dr. L. Grady Cooper, Newberry, South Carolina.

Pastor Cooper's Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Ordination and his Twenty-fifth Anniversary as pastor of the New Hanover Lutheran Church were noted by the congregation on October 31, 1970. The evening featured a surprise dinner, where The Rev. Robert Lamparter was Master of Ceremonies and Dr. William Janson was the speaker. Mr. Linford F. Moyer narrated a "This Is Your Life" slide program. Presentation gifts included a thirty-five pound scrapbook with hand-carved cover made by Mr. Linwood Hartenstine and illustrated by Mrs. Richard (Lucille) Powell, a console stereo, and a painting of the church by Mr. George Walters done in oils. The Rev. Marshall F. Mauney, Norfolk, Virginia, preached at both morning services the following day in honor of the occasion.

An organ recital was given on Sunday, February 21, 1971, by Miss Peggy Dotterer, supply organist since the resignation of Mrs. Gloria (Bechtel) Adams in October of 1970. Miss Dotterer became the organist in April 1971.

A fire originating in the roof area of the Parish House annex completely destroyed the building and damaged the Parish House on Friday, June 18, 1971. The church sanctuary suffered smoke damage. Fourteen fire companies responded to the alarm sounded at 2:17 p.m. The fire inspector described the fire as being electrical in origin.

The Church Council immediately appointed a re-building committee. Vacation Bible School was held in St. Luke Lutheran Church, Gilbertsville, and the



Parish House Annex fire – June 18, 1971



Parish House Annex fire – June 18, 1971

congregation held services at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Sassamansville, until the church could be cleaned. At the first service back in the church on July 4, the congregation contributed \$320 to a freewill collection that was given to Gilbertsville and Sassamansville Fire Companies.

A congregational meeting on Monday, September 20, chose Warren B. Zern, Inc., as contractor for the rebuilding project. As low bidder, Zern's contract was for \$123,226. Sanders and Bicksler Architects of Pottstown prepared the plans.

The year ended with joy of thanksgiving that the cost of the restoration and improvement of the 1969 church sanctuary was completely paid, \$43,716.77. A Service of Thanksgiving was held on December 26, 1971.

The new Parish House annex was dedicated at special services on June 11, 1972. Dr. Janson, synod president, participated. Others were Charles Bicksler, architect; Donald Maurer, contractor; Allen Renninger, Council President; Charles J. Renninger, 1971 Council President; Philip Bechtel, Kenneth Jacob, Jr., and Sunday School officers.

The Insurance Company of North America (INA) supplied \$121,620 toward the cost of rebuilding the Parish House annex, which was \$162,000. With these INA funds and contributions from members and friends, the congregation had a total of \$146,000. The remaining \$16,000 was entirely paid off by the end of 1973.

The congregation collected funds amounting to \$1,100 for flood relief as a result of July 1972 floods in Pennsylvania. The money was given to St. John Lutheran Church, South Pottstown, because of their serious losses.

Mr. George Walters, commemorating the dedication of the church building in 1768, painted a painting 10½ feet by 4 feet. It was dedicated on November 12, 1972, during a morning service patterned after the service used when the building was dedicated on November 6, 1768. The picture is on display in the Welcome Center at the church.

The LIFE campaign (Lutherans Involved For Everyone) was concluded successfully by December 1972. The congregation contributed \$12,737 to the special two-year synodical appeal on behalf of its institutions.

Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Steffey, sextons for twelve years, retired in March 1973. A congregational reception and purse of money was given in their honor. Mr. George Harple became sexton on April 1, 1973.

The congregation received an Arcadian Bell Instrument made by the Schulmerich Company, in the fall of 1973, as a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Charles Jacob in memory of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harry C. Knause. The instrument plays through speakers in the tower and tolls the hours of the day automatically by time clock.

In January 1974, church members petitioned the County Commissioners to repair the stone bridge on Church Road, which had been closed since flood damage in 1972 due to Hurricane Agnes. Repairs on the historic bridge were scheduled to

begin in September. One hundred eighty-seven members of our congregation signed the petition.

Pew cushions had been given in 1970 for the main sanctuary as a memorial to Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Yerger by their children. In September 1974, pew cushions were provided in the balcony.

By action of the Church Council, a Student Assistant to help Pastor Cooper was arranged. Mr. George Harple was chosen for the 1974-75 school year.

Girls were permitted to serve as acolytes for Sunday services by action of the Church Council in October 1974.

On March 17-18, 1975, an Evangelism Workshop was conducted by The Rev. Asa Wohlsen of the synod staff to sharpen the congregation's perception of the call to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.

On August 24, 1975, the Eastern Pennsylvania Historical Society summer pilgrimage was held at New Hanover. The fall prior, Pastor Cooper was elected to a three-year term as president of the Society.

Mrs. Arthur (Joyce) Milligan, Parish Secretary since January 1966, submitted her resignation on September 15, 1975, and was replaced by Mrs. Thomas (Ane) Hollifield shortly thereafter. Mrs. Kenneth Jacob, Jr. (Peggy Dotterer) resigned from her duties as Organist and Choir Director of the Youth and Senior choirs, a position she held for five years, on September 28, 1975. Since October 1971, Fay Feick directed the Junior Choir until she resigned on August 13, 1975. Mr. Alvin L. Spotts became organist and choir director on November 1, 1975.

The Two Hundred Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the founding of the New Hanover Lutheran congregation was celebrated during the month of November 1975. Also notable was the Two Hundred Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the birth of Frederick Muhlenberg. The Rev. David H. Pflieger, a son of the congregation, preached at the 7:45 a.m. service on Sunday, November 2, and Mrs. Joan M. (Bauer) O'Connor, life-long member and former deaconess, spoke at the 10:15 a.m. service. Liturgist for both services was Mr. Robert Williams, a first-year student at Gettysburg Seminary and a son of the congregation. The following Sunday, November 9, The Rev. Dr. William A. Janson, Jr., President of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, spoke at both morning worship services.

A full day of anniversary festivities came on Sunday, November 16, beginning with Mrs. Robert J. Marshall, First Lady of the Lutheran Church in America (L.C.A.), who spoke at the 10:15 a.m. service. Later that afternoon, at 2:00 p.m. a mass jump of more than 20 sky-divers from the New Hanover Sky-divers School offered their salute to the occasion and to the Speaker of the House, the Honorable Carl Albert, who was the keynote speaker for the afternoon. Then began a parade around the country block of more than twenty golf carts carrying dignitaries of State and Church. Many youths also rode bicycles carrying transistor radios playing march music especially broadcast over Pottstown station WPAZ for the occasion. Two hundred fifty vested choir members from seventeen area Lutheran congregations

processed from Falkner Swamp Reformed Church to the New Hanover parking lot where the parade ended for the outdoor ceremony. The event was viewed from the church ball field and parking lot where a crowd of 1200-1500 persons assembled. Mr. Albert gave an address honoring the memory of The Rev. Frederick A. Muhlenberg, First Speaker of the House of Representatives, a signer of the American Bill of Rights, and pastor of the New Hanover Church in 1777-1778 at the time he entered public service as a member of the Continental Congress. Mr. Frederick A. Muhlenberg, III, was present for the honoring of his great-great grandfather.

Rounding out the anniversary events, The Rev. Dr. Albert P. Stauderman, Editor of "The Lutheran" Magazine, spoke at the 7:45 and 10:15 a.m. services on Sunday, November 23. The climax of the month-long celebration was the communion service on November 30 attended by a congregation of 600 persons. The Two Hundred Seventy-fifth Anniversary year was heralded as a year of grateful remembrance for the abundant blessings experienced by the congregation.

Dividing the last twenty-five years into time segments, the following served the congregation as members of the Church Council for one or more terms. 1950-1959: William Bauer, Philip Bechtel, Radcliff Bergey, Robert Biehl, Paul Clemmer, William Emery, John Garner, Samuel Hartline, Jr., Raymond Haring, Russell Hollowbush, William F. Lamb, William F. Lamb, Jr., John C. LeVan, Jr., Earl Mackrich, Franklin Moyer, J. Roger Moyer, Sr., Linford F. Moyer, Clarence Mutter, Stern Nester, Earl R. Norton, Paul K. Norton, Paul Pollock, Kenneth C. Rhoads, George Rittenhouse, Norman Richard, Wayne Richards, Allen Renninger, Charles I. Renninger, Charles J. Renninger, John U. Renninger, William Romig, Henry Rosenberry, Leonard Saylor, Earl Seasholtz, Leroy B. Seasholtz, Harold Smale, John Smith, John Snyder, John Stark, Levan Steltz, Walter Stetler, Norman Swavely, William Tapper, Ralph Wirt, and William Wolfgang.

1960-1969: William Bauer, Philip Bechtel, Wayne Beck, William Bowman, Paul Brendlinger, Michael Buchholtz, Paul Clemmer, Gerald Eisenhart, Robert Fulmer, Peter Ganovsky, Forrest Ginder, Harvey Gist, Jr., Raymond Green, Samuel Hartline, Russell Hollowbush, Kenneth C. Jacob, Sr., Richard C. Knause, John LeVan, Jr., Earl Mackrich, Kenneth Miller, Arthur Milligan, Franklin Moyer, J. Roger Moyer, Sr., Linford F. Moyer, Chester Moser, Daniel Moser, Stern Nester, Richard Norris, Paul Norton, John Price, Charles J. Renninger, Charles Rhoads, George Rittenhouse, Harold Smale, John Smith, Jacob Stark, William Tapper, Paul Weber, Jewel Webb, George Weaver, and Ralph Wirt.

1970-1975: Philip Bechtel, William Bowman, James Boyer, Sydney Buchanan, Raymond Feick, Robert Fulmer, James Freed, Forrest Ginder, James Gross, Sr., Wilmer Hollowbush, Kenneth C. Jacob, Sr., Kenneth C. Jacob, Jr., John Jerman, Richard Knause, Arthur Milligan, Chester Moser, Daniel Moser, Gary Moser, Robert Moyer, J. Roger Moyer, Jr., William C. Moyer, William R. Moyer, Paul Norton, John Price, Allen Renninger, Charles J. Renninger, Kenneth Renninger, Laverne Renninger, Charles Rhoads, Walter Romig, Frederick Smith, George Weaver, Donald Wirt, and Ralph Wirt.

Apoc. 18. 4. 5.
 Gehet von euer ans, mein Volf, das euer
 nicht teilhaftig werdet eurer Sunden, Auch
 das euer nicht empfanget etwas von eurer plagen
 Denn eure Sünde werden bis zum himmel
 und der Hölle dempff an euren freunt.
 1545
 Mart. Luther

Inscription and signature by Martin Luther in the book: "Against the Roman Papacy"



Sketch of Martin Luther in the book: "Against the Roman Papacy"

The Student Assistant for the 1975-76 school year was Mr. Greg Johnson.

In January 1976, Fay Feick was elected to serve on the New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church Council. She was the first woman to be elected to Church Council.

On February 9, 1976, Marie Glass and her son, Wolfgang Glass, began their duties as sextons. The congregation sponsored Mrs. Glass and her family when they first came to the United States from Romania in 1952 in the resettlement of refugees following the aftermath of the second World War. The family spent their first night in America in the sexton's house with Mr. and Mrs. Allen Erb as their host. They resided at the parsonage for approximately five months until they were able to establish their own home in South Pottstown.

Pastor Edgar M. Cooper offered the prayer at the second session of the 94th Congress of the U. S. House of Representatives in Washington, DC, on May 4, 1976. The invitation was extended by Speaker Carl Albert. The occasion commemorated the Two Hundred Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the founding of the New Hanover Lutheran congregation as well as the Two Hundred Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the birth of the first Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and former pastor of New Hanover church, Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg. A son of Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Frederick Augustus served this congregation from 1777 until 1778. As a member of the Continental Congress, he signed the Bill of Rights and was elected Speaker in 1789, a position he held until 1791. Speaker Carl Albert presided over the House that day using the special block and gavel belonging to the congregation which was made in 1950 for the Two Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the congregation.

Approximately 200 people greeted the Primate of the Lutheran Church of Sweden on July 1, 1976. Archbishop Olaf Sunday came to visit historic New Hanover Lutheran Church as part of his official bicentennial trip to America. The Archbishop planted a European white birch tree at the rear of the Parish House.

The Student Assistant for the 1976-77 school year was Mr. John Henrich.

On August 22, 1976, Mr. Alvin Spotts combined the voices of New Hanover Lutheran Church and Falkner Swamp Reformed Church to present a bicentennial cantata, "Our Religious Heritage in Song," by composer Robert W. Thygerson.

New Hanover, St. Luke, Gilbertsville, and Falkner Swamp Reformed Church joined forces to sponsor the Red Cross Bloodmobile for the first time in January 1977.

Pastor Cooper married Jacqueline Golden Wyrick from Corbin, Kentucky, at New Hanover Lutheran Church on April 16, 1977. Dr. William A. Janson, President of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, officiated. This was the first and only time that a minister of the congregation was married at New Hanover Lutheran Church.

Two octaves of handbells were purchased through the Memorial Fund. The Handbell Choir presented their first anthem at the 10:15 a.m. service on June 19, 1977.

Camp Falckner was held in the church picnic grove from August 1-4, 1977. Thirty campers and staff members participated in the event. The four days were filled with study, recreation, crafts, fellowship, and worship. The first season of Camp Falckner was held in the church grove from July 9-12, 1963.

The Student Assistant during the 1977-78 school year was Mr. Carl Filer from Reading, Pennsylvania.

A Christmas Craft Night was held on Friday evening, November 25, 1977. This was the beginning of many fall and spring socials held at New Hanover.

In May 1978, Barbara Eisenhart assumed her duties as Parish Secretary. She replaced Ane Hollifield who held the position since September 1, 1975.

Ceremonies marking the first official recognition of the graves of 48 of the 52 Revolutionary War soldiers buried in the New Hanover Lutheran cemetery were held on Sunday, June 4, 1978, at the 10:15 a.m. worship service. Major General Orris E. Kelly, Chief of Chaplains of the United States Army from Washington, D.C., was preacher at both morning services and participated in the out-of-doors ceremonies in the cemetery. Representatives of the First Continental Regiment of Foot in regimental dress took part in the ceremony. The New Hanover church building was used as a military hospital during the Revolutionary War.

The Student Assistant for the 1978-79 school year Mr. David Brant.

At a special presentation ceremony in the church on October 27, 1978, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Boyer of Boyertown presented to the congregation a leather-bound volume entitled, "Against the Roman Papacy," written and signed by The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther and published in 1545. The Rev. Dr. Roland H. Bainton, noted educator, author, and lecturer, was the speaker.

Robert Williams of Pottstown, a son of the congregation, graduated from Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary on May 18, 1979. He was ordained on June 3, 1979, at Messiah Church in Philadelphia.

Members of the Church Council from 1976-79 were: William Bauer, Philip Bechtel, Marlyn Bieleski, William Dames, Janet Deloplaine, Fay Feick, Peter Ganovsky, Kenneth Jacob, Arthur Milligan, Robert Morrell, J. Roger Moyer, Glenn Moyer, John Price, Charles Rhoads, Charles Sagwitz, Calvin Schaffer, Gerry Scott, Harold Smale, Barry Steltz, Victor Warnquist, Donald Wirt, and Ralph Wirt.

On September 9, 1979, Alvin Spotts resigned as Organist and Choir Director at which time Nadine Rader was appointed to serve as supply organist. Gloria Adams began her duties as Organist and Choir Director on December 1, 1979, with Nadine Rader continuing as her associate until February 1982, when Anita Anders replaced her. A youth handbell choir was formed under the direction of Gloria Adams in September 1982. Anita Anders assumed the duties of Organist on January 1, 1983, following the resignation of Gloria Adams.

The Student Assistant for the 1979-80 school year was Mr. Peter Pettit.

“The Heritage,” a 35 voice Chamber Choir of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, LCA, presented a concert at New Hanover on Sunday, May 18, 1980, at 7:30 p.m. The choir was directed by Dr. Robert Bornemann of the faculty of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

Robert LaRiviere and John Fritch were the Student Assistants during the 1980-81 and 1981-82 school years, respectively.

A special congregational meeting was called on July 18, 1982, where the Property and Finance Committees sought approval of the connection of the Sexton’s house to the sewer (\$14,000), the replacement of shingles on the Sunday School roof and the repair or replacement of various broken sidewalks (\$12,500). The sewer project was approved by a vote of 168 to 4, and roofing and sidewalk project by a vote of 153 to 19, with 2 votes against the sidewalks only. The work was accomplished during the remaining months of 1982.

The “Food for Friends” pantry was established in 1983 where members were asked to bring non-perishable items on the fourth Sunday of each month. The items were then distributed to those in need through Boyertown Area Multi-Service.

In July 1983 the maple tree in front of the Parish House was taken down and its stump removed. The church parking lot and parsonage driveway were repaired and resurfaced by Stern Nester, paving contractor. Lines were painted on the parking lot by the Property Committee and other volunteers.

The Five Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther was celebrated at New Hanover on November 20, 1983. Two fifteen-foot red oak trees were planted in front of the Parish House in honor of the occasion and in memory of Mr. and Mrs. George D. Smale. Luther had declared, “If I had but one day to live, I would plant a tree.” An exhibit of Luther memorabilia was on display that day.

The Adult Handbell Choir under the direction of Anita Anders played for two Boyertown Area Elementary Schools: New Hanover-Upper Frederick and Colebrookdale in the spring of 1984.

Masonry contractor, Arthur Peroni, repointed the stonework on the west end of the church building and then applied a sealer to the entire surface in July 1984 at a cost of \$6,300. While scaffold was erected on the west end, church members Carl Eisenhart and Daniel Moser painted the cornice around the gable end.

Other projects completed in 1984 were the painting of trim around the Parish House for \$200, replacement of the pump for \$881, exterior lighting upgrades for approximately \$500; and the installation of ceiling fans in the sanctuary and Parish House were donated by a church member. During this time, improvements were also made to the tower above the Parish House by Mr. William Bowman and his son, Mark, and the church steeple was repaired and restored by the AcrySyl company from Pottstown.



Bach Cantata - 1985



Kid's Praise Musical - 1993

During March 1985 the interior of the sexton's house was refurbished by members of the church and re-wired by Keen Electric of Boyertown at a cost of \$1800. An open house for the congregation was held on April 14 after the morning services.

Peggy Jacob again assumed the duties of Director of Music at New Hanover on June 1, 1985, following the resignation of Anita Anders.

William Kleman joined the staff as Sexton on June 23, 1985, replacing Marie (Glass) Johnson who resigned after nine years of service.

By the early 1980s, the organ, which was installed in 1905 and rebuilt in 1960, began to show signs of age in addition to having suffered severe water damage. This prompted the formation of an Organ Committee to investigate the options for its repair, rebuilding, or replacement. At a special meeting of the congregation on September 15, 1985, a recommendation was made by the Organ Committee and approved by the Council to purchase a new pipe organ. The congregation voted 181 to 33 to purchase a new 18-rank pipe organ to be built by the Schantz Organ Company from Orrville, Ohio, at a cost of \$118,240.

A special service to commemorate the Fortieth Anniversary of Service at New Hanover for Pastor Cooper was held on December 1, 1985. The Rev. Michael Merkel, Secretary and Assistant to the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, delivered the message at both services. A dinner and program followed the 10:15 a.m. church service.

The choir program was expanded in 1985 with the addition of three new choirs. They were the Cherub Choir (children ages 3½ years to 2nd grade), the Men's Choir (all men of the congregation), and the Golden Jubilee Choir (all members 65 years or older). The Cherub and Golden Jubilee Choirs first participated in the worship service on November 22 while the Men's Choir sang their first anthem on December 1.

The Three Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of Johann Sebastian Bach, the great Lutheran composer, was celebrated on Sunday, December 8, 1985, during the 10:15 a.m. service. The Junior, Youth, and Senior Choirs, under the direction of Peggy Jacob, presented Bach's Cantata #410 "Wachet Auf" during the sermon period. Soloists were Fay Feick and R. Leland Wesner, Jr.; accompanists were Teresa Sloan, violin; Dr. Arthur Mann, cello; and Peggy Jacob, harpsichord.

Throughout the months of April and May 1986, the interior of the church was painted and new carpeting installed at a cost of \$7,000 in anticipation of the new organ. Funding for the organ and interior renovations came from insurance reimbursement for water damage to the existing organ, trust fund monies, contributions, and pledges from members and friends of the congregation. The entire project was paid off in two years.

One service was held on June 1, 1986, at 10:15 a.m. at which the dedication of the Schantz organ took place. A dedicatory recital was performed by Dr. James Boeringer, author, composer, and performer from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, at 3:00 that afternoon. The hymn, "Rise, Ye Children of Salvation," was set to a

hymn tune composed by Dr. Boeringer especially for the occasion and was sung by the Senior Choir and congregation. The words to the hymn were written by Justus Falckner, the first Lutheran pastor ordained in America and brother of Daniel Falckner, the founder of the New Hanover congregation in 1700.

Director of Music, Peggy Jacob, combined the congregation's six choirs to present "Kid's Praise" in 1986 – an energetic children's musical featuring "Psalty the Songbook" as the main character. Additional "Kid's Praise" musicals and a variety of others would follow into the early 2000's.

At the March 1987 meeting, the Council voted to name Mr. and Mrs. William (Gina) Coulston to the church staff as Sextons. The Coulston's served for one year and were followed by Mr. and Mrs. Jack Campbell, who began their service on April 12, 1988.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was created in the spring of 1987, combining the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), the American Lutheran Church (ALC), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). The Rev. Dr. Herbert Chilstrom was elected bishop. The ELCA is divided into synods (geographical regions) and New Hanover Lutheran is located in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. Within the synod, conferences were formed, ours being the Upper Montgomery Conference. The first joint Reformation Service of the Upper Montgomery Conference was held at Jerusalem Lutheran Church, Schwenksville, on October 30, 1987. Three young people from New Hanover, Steven Eisenhart, Adam Jacob, and Jennifer Moser, participated as crucifer and torch bearers.

Banner Sunday began in 1987 as a way to recognize individuals with perfect attendance at Sunday School. A Perfect Attendance banner was given to the class with the highest attendance percentage for the previous month.

On Church Music Sunday, May 17, 1987, Peggy Jacob presented a recital of organ music marking the first anniversary of the installation of the Schantz pipe organ.

Council approved the formation of a Historical Research and Archives Committee in 1987. R. Leland Wesner, Jr., was appointed as chairperson.

The Church Council created a new staff position of Director of Christian Education. On August 24, 1987, Peggy Jacob assumed the duties of the combined position of Director of Christian Education and Director of Music.

Children's Sermons became a regular part of the worship at New Hanover Lutheran Church in 1987.

Kids' Crusade, a mid-week program for children ages 4 to 15 years (9th grade), began on January 12, 1988. The program was held on Thursday evenings for ten weeks and provided a meal, Bible study, music, and a craft time.

New Hanover hosted three musical programs during the spring of 1988. On March 9, the forty-two voice Susquehanna University Concert choir performed during a

Lenten service. On April 13, the "Mauney Duo" comprised of Miles and Dorothy Mauney from Hilton Head, South Carolina, performed a concert of piano and violin music. Vivian Cotellese, a member of the church, presented a recital of marimba music on May 1. Her daughter, Cara Schollenberger, flutist, and Joan Valentine, pianist, accompanied her.

In July 1989, air conditioning was installed in the sanctuary and Parish House. The contract was awarded to William M. E. Yeakle & Sons, Inc., Emmaus, and G-C Electric Co., Allentown. The total project cost was \$44,118. A gift of \$35,000 from Kenneth C. Jacob in memory of his wife, Annabel, was given for this improvement. The balance came from contributions of the church membership.

A computer, monitor, and printer were purchased for the church office during the summer of 1989.

The Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO) was reorganized on September 10, 1989, under the leadership of Peggy Jacob.

Congregation Council members from 1980-89 were: Philip Bechtel, William Bowman, James L. Boyer, Janet Deloplaine, Gerald Eisenhart, Brent Feick, Robert Fulmer, Peter Ganovsky, Rufus Gehris, Jr., Scott Geiser, Forrest Ginder, Raymond Green, Henry Hoffman, James Hoveland, Kenneth Jacob, William Kleman, Kevin Kurtz, John LeVan, Jr., Chester Moser, Gary Moser, Lawrence Moser, Glenn Moyer, J. Roger Moyer, Jane Moyer, John Price, James Price, Lester Reinhart, Charles Rhoads, Charles Sagwitz, James Scheffey, Gerry Scott, Harold Smale, Jean Smale, D. Scot Smale, Frederick Smith, Rodney Snell, Barry Steltz, Mabel Swartley, Donald Swavely, Mary Alice Van Dyke, Victor Warnquist, Stieven Weidner, R. Leland Wesner, Jr., Ruth Ann Williams, Donald Wirt, and Ralph Wirt.

The construction of an exterior handicap ramp from the Narthex door to the parking lot was completed in July 1990. The work was completed by Dennis Irey of Gilbertsville for a cost of \$7,430. An iron railing was installed by Amity Welding, Inc., of Douglassville, for a cost of \$2,820. The monies for these projects came from the Improvement Fund.

Plans were made to restore the picnic grove in 1990. The old buildings (except for the pavilion) were demolished. These buildings were estimated to be over 75 years old and were in poor condition. A new 36 x 72 foot building with a kitchen and toilet rooms replaced the old long building and kitchen. The project cost an estimated \$30,000. Contributions in multiples of \$10 given to the Picnic Grove Restoration Fund were given credit in the building block program. The new building was dedicated on Sunday, September 30, 1990.

March 12, 1991, marked the second time that Pastor Cooper gave the invocation to open the day's proceedings in the United States House of Representatives in Washington, DC. This time it was part of New Hanover Township's Two Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary celebration. The New Hanover Lutheran congregation is actually forty years older than the township after which it was named.



Picnic Grove - 1989
(l. to r.) long food building; ticket booth; kitchen and pavilion



Picnic Grove - 2025

The Fifth Anniversary of the Schantz Organ Installation was celebrated on September 29, 1991, at 4:00 p.m., with a program of organ music, choir anthems, and congregational hymn singing. Approximately 300 members and friends from the community attended. Guest organists provided a variety of organ selections. They were Mignon Bozorth, Augustus Lutheran Church, Trappe; William Nash, III, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Pottstown; Audrey Reinhart, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Gilbertsville; Leroy Remp, St. John's Lutheran Church, Boyertown; Peggy Jacob and Steven Eisenhart, New Hanover Lutheran Church. Also featured were John Specca, trumpet; Vivian Specca, timpani; and Sandy Wesner, flute. A massed choir of 64 voices from area churches presented several anthems including "Rise, Ye Children," written by James Boeringer for the organ dedication in 1986, and "Benediction," written by R. Leland Wesner, Jr.

Members of the New Constitution Committee met bi-monthly from April-September 1991 to review, update and develop a new congregational constitution in line with the new ELCA Council and approved at their October 10, 1991, meeting. This document was then sent to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Committee on Constitutions for review and approval. The congregation approved the adoption of the new constitution and by-laws by a vote of 134 to 7 at the annual congregational meeting on January 19, 1992.

The Two Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the arrival of The Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, patriarch of American Lutheranism, was observed at New Hanover Lutheran Church on Sunday, November 29, 1992. The original liturgy was used at the anniversary service. Rev. Muhlenberg's first official sermon preached in Pennsylvania was delivered at New Hanover Lutheran on November 28, 1742. At this time, he indicated his acceptance of the call to serve as pastor of the United Congregations, New Hanover, Philadelphia, and Trappe. These congregations had extended the call to him by way of the Halle Institute, Germany.

The church parsonage was connected to the public sewer system in June 1992 at a cost of \$6,310.

A new concrete stage replaced the wooden stage in the picnic grove in 1992. A flag pole was also installed.

In September of 1992, Pastor Cooper announced to the congregation his intention to retire during the up-coming December. A farewell dinner and program were held at the General Washington Recreation Center in Audubon, Pennsylvania, on Saturday, December 5, at which a grateful congregation showed their appreciation to Pastor Cooper for his faithful service to the congregation for forty-seven years. Family, clergy, parishioners, and friends totaling 330 persons attended the gathering. The Rev. Robert M. Lamparter gave the invocation which was followed by a meal. Following the dinner, The Rev. Richard G. Hoffert, Master of Ceremonies, proceeded with the program during which selected persons representing various committees and organizations from the congregation paid tributes to the pastor. Among them was the presentation of a check for \$5,785.50 offered from the congregation, and The Lamb Award, the most prestigious award given by the Boy Scouts of America for unselfish dedication to scouting.

Additionally, the establishment of the Edgar M. Cooper Award was announced which will provide a \$100 scholarship award each year to the outstanding scout in Troop 367 for the purpose of summer scout camp subsidy. Several musical selections by members of the congregation along with the Youth, Junior, and Cherub Choirs were offered. Emotional and moving remarks were offered by Pastor Cooper and Jackie followed by the "Benediction" (written by R. Leland Wesner, Jr.) sung by the Youth and Senior Choirs.

On December 6, 1992, Pastor Edgar M. Cooper conducted his last official service as pastor at New Hanover Lutheran Church. One worship service was held at 10:15 a.m. so that the congregation could worship as one body to commemorate this farewell to Pastor Cooper and his wife, Jackie. Four hundred sixty persons including parishioners, family, clergy, and friends were in attendance. Anthems were offered by the Senior, Youth, Junior, Cherub, and Golden Jubilee Choirs, and favorite hymns of Pastor Cooper and Jackie were sung. Council President, Lance Schaeffer, announced that the Council, by unanimous vote, agreed that the honorary title of Pastor Emeritus be bestowed on Pastor Cooper and that it would be recommended to the congregation for a vote at its annual meeting on January 24, 1993. Amidst tears of joy and solemnity, the congregation sang "God Be With You Till We Meet Again" ending a rich era in the life of the New Hanover Lutheran congregation, and the second-longest pastorate in the congregation's history. A fellowship hour was held in the Parish House following the service.

The Rev. Paul H. Howells was appointed Interim Pastor beginning on December 7, 1992.

On January 24, 1993, the congregation approved the honorary title of Pastor Emeritus for Pastor Cooper.

In late March 1993, a blizzard forced the cancellation of church services at New Hanover and other Lutheran churches throughout the area. This was the first time services were cancelled at New Hanover since February 16, 1958, also due to a blizzard.

Wilmer Hollowbush was acknowledged for sixty years of service as a choir member at the services on June 6, 1993. Later that year, on December 12, Thursa Rhoads was given a plaque in honor of her dedicated service as a Sunday School teacher for 48 years.

On June 13, 1993, Pastor Cooper presented a gift of a wood carving entitled "Blessing of Fields" to the congregation. Abner Zook of Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania, created the carving for Pastor Cooper in 1974.

Students in grades 7 and 8 participated in the Pottstown Cluster Catechetical Retreat at Bear Creek Lutheran Camp and Conference Center on September 17-19, 1993. This was the first year a retreat was included as part of the Catechism program.

Historically at New Hanover, all youth had to be confirmed before receiving communion. To keep up-to-date with the practices of the Lutheran Church, in

September 1993, a group of young people in grades 7 and 8 participated in an instructional class explaining the significance of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. They received their First Communion on World Communion Sunday, October 3, 1993. First Communion for children in grades 5 and 6 took place on November 28, 1993.

During a special congregational meeting on October 14, 1993, renovations to the 46-year-old parsonage were approved. Part of the work was the construction of a two-story addition, which would include a family room and a master bedroom. The project was completed in 1994 for a cost of \$50,000. Initial monies were borrowed from members through interest-bearing loan notes. The remainder was paid by congregational giving.

Later that month, at a special congregational meeting on October 17, 1993, the congregation voted 226 to 13 to extend a call to The Rev. Richard H. Elliott who was serving as pastor of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wheeling, West Virginia. Pastor Elliott accepted the call and began his service at New Hanover on January 3, 1994.

With the call of a new pastor, the duties of the Interim Pastor, The Rev. Paul H. Howells, came to an end. Pastor Howells' leadership was incredible during the time of transition for the congregation. He preached his last sermon at the services on January 2, 1994.

The Rev. Richard H. Elliott was installed as pastor of New Hanover Lutheran Church on March 20, 1994, at 3:00 p.m., during a festive service of Holy Communion. Special music began at 2:30 p.m. The Rev. Dr. Robert Hughes, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and a noted preacher and author, delivered the sermon. The Rev. Paul Shoop, a classmate of Pastor Elliott and the pastor of the Lutheran Church of Our Savior in Rochester, New York, served as Liturgist. Sharing the Rite of Installation of a Pastor were The Rev. Michael Merkel, Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; The Rev. Wayne Dreyman, Dean of the Upper Montgomery Conference and pastor of St. Luke, Gilbertsville; and The Rev. George Scheitlin, Synod Staff member.

During June 1994, the east and north sides of the church were re-pointed. Frank B. Costanzo of Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania, was chosen to do the work at a cost of \$18,384. During the process, the masons made discoveries that revealed more than was previously known about the original construction of the building. Pockets were found in which wooden "scaffold" supports were placed as the building rose higher. When the scaffolding was removed, smaller stones or mortar filled the void. There was also no evidence found of a door being located on the south wall.

Two large-scale projects were completed in 1994. The first was the replacement of the church's boiler as recommended by the Property Committee, which was approved unanimously at a special congregational meeting held on June 26. The work was done that fall by William R. Gift of Boyertown at a cost of \$11,110. The second project was completed in fall 1994 to the pipe organ. Water from an air conditioner blockage spilled over and leaked into the organ chamber causing severe



Children's Choir - 2025

(front, l. to r.) Carolina Hansley, Lainey Soupik, Kylie Ewing
 (back, l. to r.) Patricia Nyce, Director; Richard Garcia, Tanner Quigley,
 Hadley Mornhineway, Kady Singley, Keena Wright



Adult Choir - 2025

(front, l. to r.) Patricia Nyce, director; Bethlyn Bechtel, Leslie Gates, Faye Weidner,
 Kay Kurtz, Jane Manthorne, Carolyn Fleming
 (back, l. to r.) Ronald Fegley, R. Leland Wesner, Jr., Edward Becker, Dee Singley
 (Missing: Scott Geiser)

damage. Also detected at the same time were several leaks in the steeple allowing water to drip inside. With the appropriate repairs made, the Mangam Organ Company of Philadelphia repaired and replaced the damaged organ parts. The insurance deductible paid for all but the \$250 of the \$6,728 repair costs.

On April 1, 1995, The Rev. Paul H. Howells joined the church staff as Pastor of Ministry Development. This position was established at a congregational meeting on January 29, 1995, by a vote of 133 to 31. Pastor Howells coordinated volunteer recruitment and training, assisted in visitation of the sick and homebound members, and provided leadership training.

The annual Synod Assembly of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod took place at the Valley Forge Sheraton from May 4-6, 1995. The Rev. Richard Elliott led opening devotions, and The Rev. Edgar Cooper, Pastor Emeritus of New Hanover, was honored for his Fiftieth Anniversary of Ordination. Pastor Cooper preached at the worship services the following morning, the first time since his retirement that he addressed the congregation. Congregation Council President, Lance Schaeffer, presented him with a white stole. On the stole were the words "Rooted in the Past...Reaching to the Future" with the years 1700 and 2000. The stole was hand-crafted by Sandra Wesner.

The Ursinus College Meistersingers, under the direction of Mr. John French, presented a program of secular and sacred choral music at New Hanover Lutheran Church on Sunday, March 26, 1995.

Repairs and improvements were made to the church steeple during the summer of 1995. Bill Schalles' Old World Roofing did the work for a cost of \$14,200. Monies from the Improvement Fund and trust fund interest designated for building improvements were used to fund the project.

In 1995, a committee was formed to plan and prepare for the congregation's Three Hundredth Anniversary.

New blue paraments and pastor's stole for Advent were dedicated on December 3, 1995, in memory of Dorothy Gimont by her children, Marlene Hansley and Stanley Gimont, and by contributions given to the Memorial Fund in her memory.

Pastor and Mrs. Elliott hosted a Parsonage Open House on January 6, 1996. This gave church members an opportunity to view the renovations to the parsonage, which had recently been completed.

The Tenth Anniversary of Installation of the Schantz Pipe Organ was observed on Church Music Sunday, April 28, 1996. Organists of the congregation who participated in the service were Megan Boyd, Charles Eisenhart, Steven Eisenhart, Jane Elliott, and Peggy Jacob. As part of the anniversary celebration, a new zimbelstern was dedicated in memory of Mrs. Charles (Helen) Eisenhart by her children and by contributions given to the Memorial Fund in her memory. Built and installed by the Schantz Organ Company, the zimbelstern adds the sound of five bells played at random to the organ.

A “50 Plus Social,” an event for persons who have been members of New Hanover for fifty-plus years, was sponsored by the Three Hundredth Anniversary History Committee on November 17, 1996.

The Parish Nurse Group was formed in 1996 to focus on the holistic health and wellness of the members through education, counseling, and resources.

New white paraments and a stole for the pastor were dedicated on Easter Sunday, 1996, in memory of Raymond Haring. New choir gowns for the Youth Choir were dedicated on Sunday, September 22, 1996.

On September 30, 1996, Peggy Jacob resigned as Director of Christian Education and Director of Music. Peggy had served the congregation for sixteen of the last twenty-six years, seven as Director of Music and nine in the dual role as Director of Christian Education and Music. During that time, she introduced the Golden Jubilee Choir, Men’s Choir, Cherub Choir, orchestra, spring musical, Kids’ Crusade program, mid-week Bible Study, and reinstated Camp Falckner. In October, Linda Mench was hired as interim Director of Music until Katherine Reier, A.I.M., assumed the position the following March. Following Katherine’s resignation in August 1997, Jane Elliott served as the Interim Director of Music, Joanne Conrad served as Youth Choir Director, and Vivian Specca served as Junior Choir Director. Pastor Paul Howells filled the role of Christian Education Director until March 17, 1997, when Carol N. Detweiler, A.I.M., began her duties as the same.

Other staff changes included the resignation of Sextons, Jack and Mary Campbell, and the hiring of Tom and Barbara Faust in December 1996. The Campbell’s were the last residents to occupy the Sexton’s house.

Women of New Hanover joined with the women of Trinity Lutheran Church, Lansdale, Pennsylvania, for a time of spiritual renewal on a women’s retreat held at St. Francis Retreat Center in Easton, Pennsylvania. The retreat occurred regularly well into the 2000s.

As the congregation at New Hanover continued to grow in numbers, the existing facilities could no longer provide a comfortable place for education and fellowship programs. A Facilities Planning Committee was formed in 1996 to evaluate the needs of the growing congregation. Part of the committee’s work focused on the future need and use of the sexton’s house, constructed in 1853 adjacent to the church. Several options were investigated, but all were deemed inadequate for the needs of the congregation. At the annual congregational meeting on January 19, 1997, the congregation voted 138 to 31 to dismantle it.

At a special congregational meeting held on June 22, 1997, the congregation voted 97 to 9 to establish an escrow account with the New Hanover Township Planning Commission. This allowed the Facilities Planning Committee to continue the evaluation of the current church facilities and plan for the future building needs.

Several youth members attended the 1997 National Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July. To show their appreciation for the support they received from the congregation, they presented a communion chalice and patten to the church upon

return. Their gift was dedicated on September 29, 1997. This was first of many gatherings attended by the youth of the congregation. Future gatherings would take them to the cities of St. Louis (2000), Atlanta (2003), San Antonio (2006), Detroit (2015), and Houston (2018).

Bruce W. Tonkin, A.I.M., became the Director of Music Ministry on February 2, 1998. On November 1, he presented the first HBO Night, **Hymns, Brass, and Organ**, a one-hour program followed by dinner in the Parish House.

The church parking lot was restriped during the summer of 1998.

A special congregational meeting was held on October 11, 1998, where the congregation by a 76 percent majority, approved the motion that the Council be authorized to proceed with the proposed building expansion and renovation plan presented by the Facilities Planning Committee at a cost not to exceed \$1 million and to secure the loans necessary for construction and eventual long-term financing. The project included an addition to provide more classroom and meeting room space, alterations of existing space to provide a new and larger narthex, and the relocation of the church offices to the educational wing.

During the fall of 1998, J. Bradley Zuchero, as his Eagle Scout project, created New Hanover's first website.

Sunday, February 7, 1999, marked the kick-off for the "Together We Grow" capital campaign to be conducted by church fund-raising specialists, Kirby-Smith Associates.

As bids for construction were received and evaluated by the Facilities Planning Committee, it became necessary to increase the project's budget. At a special congregational meeting on March 21, 1999, the congregation agreed by a vote of 171 to 5 to increase the budget to \$1.5 million. Also approved were resolutions to secure a construction loan from National Penn Bank and a long-term loan from Lutheran Brotherhood.

On April 11, 1999, a groundbreaking ceremony for the Building Expansion and Renovation Project was held at the close of the 10:15 a.m. service. This began the construction, which continued until the end of the year. Wirt-Vitable Architects of Norristown was the architect and Branch Valley Associates, Inc., of Sellersville, Pennsylvania, was the General Contractor.

Rebecca W. Knox joined the staff as New Hanover's first student assistant under the seminary's intern program on July 5, 1999. She continued through the school year and in May 2000, having completed her internship requirements, left our congregation to pursue her first call and ordination.

The Three Hundredth Anniversary of the New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was celebrated from September 1999 through November 2000. The opening service was held on September 12, 1999, where one thousand members and friends of the congregation gathered in the Boyertown Area Senior High School auditorium at 4:00 p.m. for a service of Holy Communion. Participating were



Mass Choir and Clergy at the Three Hundredth Anniversary Opening Service – September 12, 1999

The Rev. Dr. H. George Anderson, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA; The Rev. Dr. Roy Almquist, Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod; and, from New Hanover, The Rev. Edgar M. Cooper, Pastor Emeritus; The Rev. Richard H. Elliott, Pastor; and The Rev. Paul H. Howells, Pastor of Ministry Development. A combined adult choir of one hundred forty voices from fifteen area churches, New Hanover's Youth Choir and Sunday School children, and a brass ensemble provided special music. An anniversary banner was designed and stitched by several church members. Refreshments in the lobby followed the service.

A hymn was commissioned for and used throughout the anniversary year, entitled "God, Whose Word Like Seed Was Planted." The text was written by The Rev. Dr. Herman Stuempfle, Jr., former President of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. The tune, which was named "ELLIOTT" in honor of Pastor Richard Elliott, was written by Dr. Paul Bouman, who resided in Oak Park, Illinois. Both were in attendance.

The Rev. Paul H. Howells, Pastor of Ministry Development, ended his service to the congregation on October 3, 1999, having served in this capacity since 1995. He was presented a plaque and a gift certificate to Willow Valley Resort. A fellowship hour was held in his honor following the 10:15 a.m. service.

A Lutheran Brotherhood Art Exhibit was on display in the Parish House from September 27 through October 11, 1999. This art show featured original drawings and prints of European and American artists from the fifteenth to twentieth centuries, including Rembrandt and Durer. Pictures of New Hanover Lutheran Church's historic artifacts were also on display.

October 1999 was designated as German Month, where the congregation had the opportunity to learn about the heritage and culture of the German Lutherans who settled at New Hanover. On October 16, church members and friends participated in a bus trip that followed the route that Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg traveled from Philadelphia to New Hanover. Stops included Old Swede's Church, St. Michaels' Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Seminary, the Perkiomen Bridge Hotel, the Muhlenberg House, Augustus (Trappe) Lutheran Church, and the Dewees Tavern. A worship service, conducted entirely in the German language, was held on November 21, 1999.

The dismantling of the sexton's house, which was built in 1853, occurred during November and December of 1999. Paul Burkholder of The Building Recycler's of Kutztown, Pennsylvania, carefully gutted the inside and then knocked down the outside walls, later using the salvaged floorboards and beams in other restoration projects. Prior to dismantling, Randy Huber, Antique Broker and Appraiser, and R. Leland Wesner, Jr., Chairman of the Historical Research and Archives Committee, went through the house and determined that very few items of historical interest still existed. One found item of value was a door, believed to have been used in the church in the late 1700s or early 1800s, which was retained and is still in the church's possession.

Members of the Congregation Council from 1990-99 were: Craig Beaver, Mark Bowman, Joanne Boyd, James L. Boyer, Jean Boyer, Janet Deloplaine, John Dugan, William Eddinger, Dorothy Eisenhart, Michael Fritz, Roberta Ganovsky, Scott Geiser, James Gross, Jr., Marlene Hansley, Michael Hipple, Patricia Hoffman, Kenneth Jacob, Daniel Johnson, Kathy Kane, Judy Kingsepp, Michelle Krasley, Kevin Kurtz, Michael Lambert, John LeVan, Jr., Greg Levengood, Gary Moser, Chester Moser, J. Roger Moyer, Sr., Jeffrey Renninger, George Rittenhouse, Gary Rohrbach, Norma Sabrick, Kenneth Saylor, Jr., Lance Schaeffer, Gerry Scott, Charles Silcox, Jr., Harold Smale, Frederick Smith, Rodney Snell, Mabel Swartley, Andrea Swavely, Donald Swavely, Daniel Van Dyke, Victor Warnquist, George Weaver, Lori Weisbach, R. Leland Wesner, Jr., Ruth Ann Williams, Donald Wirt, and Sandra Zuchero.

With the ushering-in of the new century, the congregation gathered on New Year's Day, January 1, 2000, to celebrate 300 years of community and fellowship with a traditional Pennsylvania Dutch dinner of pork and sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, cherry cobbler, and ice cream.

On January 2, 2000, the congregation opened the time capsule that was buried in 1950. The contents included a Bible, Common Service Hymnal, Parish School Hymnal, an anniversary booklet, newspaper and magazine articles about the Two Hundredth Anniversary celebration in 1950, \$1 bill and coins from 1950, Sunday School and Bible School literature; church bulletins, and congratulatory letters.

A Service of Dedication and Re-dedication of the church facilities was held on January 9, 2000, with The Rev. Larry Hand, Assistant to the Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, present for the festivities. Gary Schaffer, Project Manager from Branch Valley Associates, Inc., and Donald Wirt, Architect and Chairman of the Facilities Planning Committee, presented the keys of the new addition and renovated facilities to Kathy Kane, President of the Council, and Pastor Elliott. Also in attendance was Wilma McConnon, benefactor for the new addition to the educational wing given in memory of her mother, Anna L. Buchholtz. A fellowship hour and open house followed the service which was attended by more than 300 persons.

A historical coloring book, with drawings done by church members, was created and given to the children of the church.

A Fastnacht Social was held on March 7, where homemade potato fastnachts were served. Those in attendance learned about the history of fastnachts and their place in the Lenten traditions of the Pennsylvania Dutch. Huff's Union Church Handbell Choir, under the direction of Gloria Adams, provided entertainment. Fastnacht Socials have been a tradition of the congregation since the 1950s.

During the season of Lent, at the Wednesday evening services, pastors who had served the congregation in the past as Student Assistants were invited to preach on the theme "The Hymns of Lent." Those who participated were The Revs. John Fritch, Carl Filer, George Harpel, Peter Pettit, and Tom Reinsel.

An “unusual fashion show” was the program at the Gathering of Daughters, a covered-dish social held on May 9. On display were garments worn by women over the past three centuries.

On May 21, 2000, the Boyertown Community Chorus, under the direction of Margaretta Lamb, presented a program of sacred and secular music in the church. at New Hanover.

In July 2000, the position of Administrative Secretary (formerly Parish Secretary), held by Barbara J. Eisenhart since May 1978, was enhanced to Administrative Assistant. Her bookkeeping responsibilities were relinquished so she could assume a greater share in the church’s administrative work. Sandra Wentzel was hired as the part-time bookkeeper.

The annual Congregational Picnic was held on July 30, 2000. The theme was “Heritage Day.” The entertainment included historical skits and a do-it-yourself genealogy chart.

A Revolutionary War Camp Re-enactment of the church and church grounds being used as a makeshift hospital following the battles of Brandywine and Paoli took place on August 13. The First Continental Regiment of Foot with several horse drawn wagons, church members, Boy Scout Troop 367, and members of the local historical society set up camp as it is believed to have been in the fall of 1777. Visitors were invited to tour the cemetery, which dates from the late seventeenth century.

On September 17, 2000, at a special congregational meeting, the congregation voted 129 to 12 to extend a call to The Rev. Susan P. Lynch as Associate Pastor – the first Associate Pastor at New Hanover since Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg served as pastor of the church.

Members and friends of New Hanover visited Washington, DC, to be present while Pastor Elliott gave the opening prayer in the House of Representatives on September 21, 2000. This event was to commemorate the tenure of Pastor Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg’s (pastor of New Hanover from 1777-78) participation in both the Continental Congress and the First Congress of America where he became the first Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The congregation celebrated with a Global Hymn Sing on October 29, 2000. The event included hymns and music from around the world. The new Orff instruments, given in memory of Charles and Helen Renninger, were dedicated during the event.

On November 5, 2000, a Visionary Service was held. This worship service focused on the evangelical theme of “Reaching to the Future,” and marked the end of the anniversary celebration. The day began with the burying of the time capsule to be opened in 2050 (along with one buried in 1950) for the Three Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary. The Rev. Steven McKinley, Senior Pastor of House of Prayer Lutheran Church, Richfield, Minnesota, was the guest preacher at both services.



Exterior of the church with the Welcome Center addition - 2000

During the fifteen months of the Three Hundredth Anniversary Celebration, members of the Historical Research and Archives Committee prepared weekly bulletin inserts on the history of the congregation. The inserts contained stories and facts of historical interest from the earliest writings of Muhlenberg to the present time.

During the 10:15 a.m. service on November 5, 2000, The Rev. Susan P. Lynch was installed as Associate Pastor by The Rev. Dr. Roy Almquist, Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. Following this service, the congregational dinner was held at the Gilbertsville Fire Hall where the theme was "Stepping Into the Future." The Rev. Edgar M. Cooper, Pastor Emeritus, extended his own greetings and those from his wife, Jackie. Bishop Almquist brought congratulations from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and The Rev. Steven McKinley addressed those assembled.

On December 3, 2000, Rebecca (Swavely) Eisenhart, became the first daughter of the congregation to enter the Lutheran ministry. A lifelong member, she was baptized, confirmed, and married in the church. Her ordination marked the first time that a female was ordained in the New Hanover sanctuary.

Falkner Swamp Reformed United Church of Christ presented a handmade ceramic communion set to the New Hanover congregation at the services on February 25, 2001. This was in celebration of the recently celebrated three hundredth anniversary.

Bruce W. Tonkin, Director of Music Ministry, presented an organ recital commemorating the Fifteenth Anniversary of Installation of the Schantz Pipe Organ on May 6, 2001, at 6:00 p.m.

In May 2001 a special tombstone was placed in the cemetery in remembrance of unknown Revolutionary War soldiers who were buried in the cemetery. The memorial was donated by Donald Erb, a member of New Hanover Lutheran Church.

Tent Troupe, "America's Only Traveling Summer Tent Theatre," presented two performances at New Hanover on July 3, 2001. The youth from St. Luke Lutheran Church, Silver Spring, Maryland, presented an afternoon matinee entitled "Elephant Tales." A standing-room only crowd gathered to see the evening performance, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." Both performances were held under the 'big top' set up in the ballfield.

A new electronic carillon was installed in the bell tower in July 2001 by Schulmerich Carillons, Inc., of Sellersville, Pennsylvania, at a cost of \$11,300, a gift by Betty Renninger in memory of her parents, Charles J. and Helen Renninger. Also in their memory was given a floodlight to illuminate the front of the church given by Gladys Renninger and Scott and Yvonne Gabel.

Worship services on September 16, 2001, were tailored to meet the spiritual needs of the congregation following the September 11 terrorist attacks. With the world in a state of shock and disbelief, the scripture and hymns were chosen for their words of encouragement and comfort. A special offering was collected that



Soldiers in the field at the Revolutionary War Camp Re-enactment - 2000



Soldiers in the cemetery at the Revolutionary War Camp Re-enactment - 2000

day and several Sundays after to be donated to Lutheran Disaster Relief, with \$3,148.70 in total collected. On Monday, September 17, and Thursday, September 20, special prayer services were held in the church.

September 30, 2001, marked the retirement of Ruth Wirt who had served as Acolyte Coordinator for the past forty years. At the 10:15 a.m. service that day, Joanne Conrad, Chairperson of the Worship and Music Committee, presented a new candle snuffer to be used by future acolytes in her honor. The one hundred fifty boys and girls who served under Mrs. Wirt's training and supervision were invited to come to this special recognition, many of whom did. A fellowship hour was held after the service in her honor.

At a special congregational meeting held on September 30, 2001, the congregation voted 145 to 33 to approve a large-scale project in the sanctuary that would include the renovation of the pews, new pew cushions, new hymnal racks, refurbished kneelers, painting of the sanctuary woodwork, and cleaning of the carpet. The cost of the total project was not to exceed \$68,000.

On October 14, 2001, Director of Music Ministry, Bruce Tonkin, gave an organ recital in conjunction with a congregational hymn sing.

During the summer of 2002, the pews were removed and refurbished in the shop of Fredrick & Emily's, Inc., in Mount Joy, Pennsylvania. Worship services were held in the Fellowship Hall during the time that the renovations were taking place in the sanctuary.

The dedication of improvements to the sanctuary was held on Sunday, October 13, 2002, at the morning worship services. Also dedicated on this day was the recently installed carillon, *With One Voice* hymnal supplements, and the memorial prayer garden near the cemetery.

The newly revised "Worship Booklet" was used for the first time at services on November 25, 2001. This was the second booklet printed in the church office for use at the worship services. Bruce W. Tonkin, Director of Music Ministry, and Barbara Eisenhart, Administrative Assistant, worked on the project. This printing contained three worship settings, a Litany for the Reception of New Members, The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and hymns.

The Evangelism Committee organized a Mission Fair in the Fellowship Hall on March 10, 2002, after the worship services. Committees and organizations of New Hanover had displays which explained their mission and ministry opportunities. This was first of several Mission Fairs to be held over the years to help members learn about the many opportunities to become involved.

At commencement exercises held at Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, North Carolina, on May 11, 2002, The Rev. Edgar M. Cooper, Pastor Emeritus of New Hanover, received an Honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree. Pastor Cooper was a 1943 graduate of Lenoir-Rhyne. The commencement was attended by members of his family and friends from the New Hanover congregation.

On October 5, 2002, five members from New Hanover traveled to Brenton, West Virginia, to volunteer with the Appalachian Service Project (ASP), a non-profit organization that provides free home repairs to homeowners in that region. This effort was led by Pastor Susan Lynch and Scott Geiser. Other ASP trips would follow to Jackhorn, Kentucky (2005), West Virginia (2008), and Virginia (2009).

Other mission projects occurring during 2002 were workdays at Fellowship Farm, a local non-profit educational center in human relations for children and adults; making and supplying thirty quilts for ABC Quilts, a volunteer organization which made and distributed baby quilts to each American child under six years old who tested positive for the HIV/AIDS virus; working with Nativity Lutheran Church in Chester, Pennsylvania, to financially support their new playground project; sending cards, banners and ribbons to AON Corporation, one of the companies who lost many employees at the World Trade Center attack in 2001.

Beginning January 12, 2003, a third worship service was added to the Sunday morning schedule. The Living Faith Service, structured for families with young children and held in the Fellowship Hall, was introduced at 8:45 a.m. Each service focused on a scripture lesson, songs, a skit, and a simple message, along with participation opportunities for pre-school children. Services were conducted by volunteers along with Pastors Elliott and Lynch. The new worship service schedule included traditional worship at 7:30 a.m., Living Faith Service at 8:45 a.m., traditional worship at 10:30 a.m., Adult Sunday School at 8:45 a.m., and Children and Adult Classes at 9:30 a.m. The trial period for the new schedule continued from January 12 through May 4, 2003. Following two small group sessions to hear feedback, and lengthy discussion by the Congregation Council, the Council decided to continue with the schedule.

In 2003, construction of an underground sewer line by New Hanover Township took place across the church property running parallel to Swamp Pike. The Township compensated the church \$6,500 for granting this easement. These monies were added to the Trust Fund, with interest used to benefit the congregation in future needs.

The Rev. Dr. Edgar M. Cooper, Pastor Emeritus of New Hanover Lutheran Church, died on Friday, November 14, 2003. A funeral service took place on Monday, November 17, at St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Kings Mountain, North Carolina, followed by interment in the local cemetery. A memorial service for members and friends was held at New Hanover on Saturday, November 22, where The Rev. Roy Almquist, Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, extended greetings on behalf of the synod, and The Rev. Rebecca Eisenhart, daughter of the congregation and Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Jamison, Pennsylvania, delivered the meditation. The Adult Choir offered special musical tributes. A time of fellowship followed the service.

On Friday, April 2, 2004, Bishop Volney, Bishop of the Silesian Lutheran Church, his wife, Urszula, and Pastor Daniel Chlebek, pastor of Youth Ministry in the Lutheran Church of Silesia, and Bishop Roy Almquist of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, visited New Hanover. The following month, on Sunday,

May 9, 2004, Bishop Munga and Mr. Yohana Mnkanda from the Northeastern Diocese of Tanzania visited New Hanover. They attended the Living Faith and 10:30 a.m. worship services. Bishop Munga brought a hand-carved candle stick holder made of ebony and a synodical calendar filled with pictures of Tanzania as gifts to the congregation. He gave the Benediction at the worship services, blessing the congregation in both English and Swahili. The congregation contributed \$2,692 for the Tanzanian Fund for Education.

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Ordination for Pastor Richard H. Elliott was observed at the services on June 13, 2004. He was presented with a silver cross with garnet stones by the congregation. Pastor Susan Lynch read congratulatory letters from several area pastors and preached the sermon. A New Revised Standard Version Pulpit Bible was given as a gift to the congregation by Pastor Elliot's family in honor of the occasion.

In July 2004, Susan Sosnin began her internship at New Hanover as a part-time vicar while continuing part-time studies at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. She served in this capacity for two years and at the conclusion of her internship, a time of greeting and fellowship was held after the services on July 9. As a parting gift of appreciation and well wishes, the congregation presented her with two stoles.

A memorial stone placed in memory of The Rev. Dr. Edgar M. Cooper was dedicated on Sunday, October 17, 2004. It was erected in the church cemetery on the plot given to him by the congregation and procured with contributions to the Memorial Fund in his memory. The memorial serves as a lasting tribute to Pastor Cooper's forty-seven-year ministry to the congregation at New Hanover.

Members of the congregation worshiped as one body on Sunday, December 5, 2004, as Pastor Richard Elliott officiated at his final worship service. He was presented with a travel voucher as a gift from the congregation along with a box of 'blessings' written by the children of the congregation. A catered luncheon was held in the Fellowship Hall after the service in his honor. Under his leadership, the church staff was increased; emphasis on evangelism and Christian Education resulted in membership, worship, and Sunday School attendance increases; programs for children, youth and adults were expanded; and local missions and global outreach was increased.

Pastor LeRoy T. Ness began his service as Interim Pastor at New Hanover on January 12, 2005.

The electrical system in the Picnic Grove was upgraded in 2004 by Ronald Hedrick at a cost of \$8,000.

On Wednesday evening, July 27, 2005, the church steeple was struck by lightning. Thankfully, the fireball escaped outside the building and there was no fire or smoke. There was, however, damage to the organ, the carillon, the fire alarm system, telephones, and internet.



Vacation Bible School - 2025

In September 2005, a special collection was received to assist Heidelberg United Church of Christ, Schwenksville, Pennsylvania, whose building suffered damage from a fire in August. Remembering that the Heidelberg congregation was a friend to New Hanover after our fire in 1971, members contributed \$422.31 which was sent to help them recover from their loss.

A coalition of local churches, St. Columbkil's Roman Catholic Church, Boyertown; St. John's, Boyertown; St. Luke, Gilbertsville; and New Hanover joined together to provide support to a Meskhetian-Turk family for four months. This sponsorship was arranged through the Lutheran Children and Family Service, subcontracted by the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. The coalition integrated the family into the culture, education, English language, and helped with medical, education, finances, transportation, hospitality, employment, life-skills, and housing. Interpreters assisted with communication. The Lochin Zaynullayev family arrived in the United States in October 2005.

A new rank of pipes was added to the Schantz Pipe Organ in 2005. Patrick J. Murphy & Associates of Stowe, Pennsylvania, installed a Harmonic Flute at a cost \$10,450. It was paid for with undesignated Memorial Fund gifts and contributions given specifically for organ improvement. Dedication of the new stop took place during the services on October 9.

A poinsettia tree was donated to the church in December 2005. The "tree" consists of a metal frame in which are placed live poinsettias that, when filled, resembles a Christmas tree. Also given were monies to purchase poinsettias for many future Christmas seasons. This was a gift by John and Hazel LeVan who were married in the church on Christmas Day 1955.

At a special congregational meeting held on January 29, 2006, the congregation, by a vote of 252 to 15, voted to extend a call to The Rev. Thomas M. Lang as Senior Pastor of New Hanover Lutheran Church. Pastor Lang accepted the call and began his ministry on March 6, 2006. He was installed at a festival service of Holy Communion on April 23, 2006, at 4:00 p.m. by The Rev. Roy Almquist, Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. The Rev. Dean Bickel, pastor of Peace Lutheran Church, Perkasio, Pennsylvania, was the preacher. Liturgists were The Rev. Dr. Lawrence L. Hand, Assistant to the Bishop of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and The Rev. Susan K. Folks, Dean of the Upper Montgomery Conference and pastor of St. John Lutheran Church, Pottstown. More than 200 worshippers attended the service followed by a reception in the Fellowship Hall.

A lightning protection system was installed on the church building in April 2006 by Teates Lightning Protection at a cost of \$11,900. The addition of the protection system will help to protect the historic building from lightning in the future.

A brick patio was installed in the Picnic Grove linking the pavilion to the adjacent restrooms in the fall of 2006. By October 21, the 2,500-brick walkway and patio were completed. The dedication ceremony was held in the Picnic Grove on October 22 following the 10:15 a.m. worship service. Of the 2,500 bricks installed, 180 were sponsored and engraved with the names of the sponsor or their loved ones.



KFC (Kids For Christ) Praise Band - 2025
(front, l. to r.) Sadie Hubley, Maddie Hansley
(back, l. to r.) Alexa Moser, Maddie Artim, Sam Young
(missing: Genesis Garcia, Miller Quigley,
Alivia Singley and Landon Woods)



GRACE Praise Band - 2025
(front, l. to r.) Monique Becker, Bethlyn Bechtel, Nicole Ewing,
Lindsey Waltermeyer, Director; Donna Kehs
(back, l. to r.) Ronald Fegley, Joshua Young, Todd Rothermel

The coordination of the project was accomplished by church member Mark Levensgood as his Eagle Scout project.

Because Pastor Lang owned his own home at the time he was called, the church parsonage, built in 1947, was no longer needed by the congregation. At a special meeting held on October 29, 2006, the congregation, by a vote of 159-63, voted in favor of a subdivision and the sale of the parsonage.

During the 2005-06 school year, as part of the church's outreach mission project, the Third Grade Sunday School class "adopted" a soldier who was stationed in Iraq. Throughout the year the students corresponded with their soldier through emails and by sending him homemade cards, encouraging messages, and care packages. At the completion of his tour, the "adopted" soldier visited the Sunday School class and attended church.

A mission team travelled to Biloxi, Mississippi, in June 2006 to help to clean up and rebuild in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The team worked on two different houses doing a lot of finishing work.

One of the longest traditions of the congregation is the Great Swamp Picnic, held each summer on the fourth Saturday in August since before 1880. In its early years it was held in a grove located on Leidy Road before moving to its present location in the early 1900s when the congregation acquired the property on Swamp Picnic Road. A daytime affair, with attendance sometimes counted in the thousands, attendees gathered at their respective churches and walked in a procession behind a band engaged for the day. After a brief religious service and games for the children, families ate their own packed food, played games, and listened to the band. Over the years, the picnic has become a homecoming for many – a way of keeping in touch with family and friends. It has been held yearly, except during the 1941-45 war years, 1971 due to torrential rains, and in 2020, the year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The picnic was originally sponsored by the New Hanover Lutheran Sunday School and is now sponsored by the Swamp Picnic Committee.

During the fall of 2006, Dan Stauffer, a painting contractor from Boyertown, completed the painting of the storm panels on the church's stained-glass windows. The cost for this work was \$3,500.

In September of 2006, the Worship and Music Committee made a recommendation to the Council to purchase the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymnal. The Council unanimously voted to accept the recommendation. The hymnals were funded by a congregation sponsorship program and undesignated funds from the Memorial Fund. They were dedicated on January 7, 2007, and replaced the *Service Book and Hymnal* and other liturgies used by the congregation since 1957.

In January 2007, the congregation showed its appreciation to Joanne Conrad who had served as a member of the Living Faith Planning Team since its inception in 2002 and its pianist since 2004. She relinquished this role in December 2006. She was presented with an accompaniment edition of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

Deborah Brumbaugh, a daughter of the congregation, was ordained into the Lutheran ministry in Christ Chapel at Gettysburg College on June 8, 2007. A daughter of Dr. Robert and Anne Brumbaugh of Pottstown, Deborah was confirmed at New Hanover on June 10, 1973.

Having been elected at the 2006 Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly, The Rev. Sue Lang and Brian Eisenhart, members of New Hanover, traveled to Chicago, Illinois, for the Tenth Biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The assembly was held at Navy Pier from August 6-11, 2007. They served as voting members from the SEPA Synod.

A Hobart industrial dishwasher was gifted to the church by the Stern Nester family and installed in the kitchen. It has helped the congregation to be more earth friendly as it greatly reduced the use of disposable cups, plates, and plasticware.

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Bishop, Claire Burkat, visited New Hanover on November 11, 2007, where she preached and presided over Holy Communion at both morning services.

At the worship services on November 25, 2007, a four-octave set of handchimes was dedicated in memory of Ralph and Lillian Freed. The gift was given by the Freed and Gallagher families and by contributions given to the Memorial Fund in memory of Ralph and Lillian. Played alone, or with the handbells, this addition will enhance the congregation's music ministry program for both children and adults.

On January 6, 2008, two members of the Altar Guild were recognized for their years of service: Sarah Bowman, for 32 years, and Ruth Wirt, for 50 years, both of whom relinquished their duties on the Guild in December 2007.

A new pictorial church directory was prepared in 2008. The directory was a useful tool for members to identify those members that they do not know and to feel better connected as a church family.

At the Annual Congregational Dinner held on February 17, 2008, R. Leland Wesner, Jr., Chairperson of the Historical Research and Archives Committee, presented Gertrude Gaukler with a bound copy of her work in reading and translating the tombstones in the oldest portion of the church cemetery. For nearly 10 years, Gertrude translated approximately 1,000 tombstones, many of them badly weathered, from German to English. She then typed the German writing and the English translation side-by-side and listed them by row and number as they are laid out in the cemetery. This work is now available for use by the numerous visitors who come to New Hanover each year tracing their genealogy and hoping to find a 'missing link' in their line of ancestors. Only two other known studies have been done on this oldest section of the cemetery: one in 1895, translated by Anita L. Eyster, and the other by Michael Snyder in 1975.

In 2006, the congregation supported the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod's companion synod, the Northeast Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania in the building of SEKUCo - Sebastian Kolowa University College in

Tanzania. Financial resources from New Hanover included the Vacation Bible School “Bricks for SEKUCo” campaign, the gift in honor of New Hanover Lutheran’s 2006 graduates, a portion of the 2006-07 Catechetical offerings, and a portion of New Hanover’s tithe from recently received undesignated bequests. Youth of the congregation also collected children’s books to be donated to the Irete Rainbow School, a school for children with disabilities located near the college.

Other contributions to the new school from our members included participation in renovation work, the creation of curriculum and the establishment of the Special Needs Education department. SEKUCo opened its doors on October 28, 2007, with a delegation from the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod in attendance for the opening ceremonies. Over 170 students were enrolled in the freshman class in the education department. Those students were to graduate in three years with degrees in regular and special education. The following year, New Hanover contributed Braille instructional materials that were purchased through donations by members. Seven additional sets were sent later.

Steeple repairs and painting were completed in August 2008 by Millard’s Carpentry of Barto, Pennsylvania, at a cost of \$18,800. They installed new molding, painted the steeple, and replaced the aluminum siding at the base.

Settlement was made on the sale of the church parsonage on November 21, 2008, after the congregation voted in October 2006 to subdivide and sell it. An offer to purchase the house at the price of \$309,000 was received and approved by the Congregation Council in August 2008. The proceeds from the sale were used to pay down the principal on the loan from the 1999 building project, to erect a digital sign along Swamp Pike, and as seed money for future capital projects.

Unity Sunday services were introduced in 2008 where one worship service was held at 9:00 a.m. and an intergenerational learning and fellowship hour began at 10:00 a.m. This provided an opportunity for the congregation to worship as one body and to reconnect with members who typically attend a different service.

The first Rejoicing Spirits worship service was held in October 2008. These services, held the fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m., provided an opportunity to reach out to people in the area who have physical or cognitive disabilities. In March 2009, the service moved to the third Sunday of the month.

A contingent of visitors from the Czech Republic visited Southeastern Pennsylvania in May 2009. Visiting New Hanover on May 18, they were given a tour of the church that included a historical commentary by R. Leland Wesner, Jr., and had lunch with the church staff and some members of the Council.

On June 14, 2009, Mark and Marcia Holman, ELCA Mission staff serving the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem, were treated to a potluck dinner at the church. Following dinner, the Holmans told stories of the extreme and bitter tension between Israelis and Palestinians as they each struggle to co-exist side by side. The Holmans presented New Hanover with a plate depicting the Lutheran



Confirmation Class - 2025

(l. to r.) Nicole Young, Director of Children, Family and Youth Ministry;
Hannah Waltermeyer, Ilana Bencsik, Pastor Scott Staub



Handbell Choir - 2025

(1st row, l. to r.) Donna Kehs, LuAnne Fowler, Marlene Hansley, Jean Moser,
Lynn Fegley, Vicki Dotterer, Brenda Hunsberger
(2nd row, l. to r.) Barbara Eisenhart, Director; Ben Fowler, Barbara Noecker,
Jayne McHugh, Carolyn Springer, Marsha Staub, Wayne Fowler, Thomas McHugh

Church of the Redeemer. Our congregation gave them Mission Service t-shirts along with prints and post cards of the building.

A Duo Piano Recital was presented in the Fellowship Hall on the afternoon of Sunday, November 8, 2009, by Bruce W. Tonkin, Joan Johnson, John Bednar, and Robin Ward. A free-will offering of more than \$1,000 was received and given to World Hunger.

The first Living Gifts Fair was hosted at New Hanover on November 14-15, 2009. The event provided an opportunity to purchase humanitarian gifts for the Christmas season, all benefiting people in need both locally and worldwide.

Pottstown Radio station 1370 WPAZ, known as Broadcast Lodge, announced in December 2009 that it was ceasing operations immediately. Area churches had been broadcasting their Sunday morning worship services on this station to the local community on a rotating basis for more than half a century. New Hanover broadcasted its first service in June 1956 and began participating in the rotation in 1967, broadcasting approximately 10 services per year. The radio station and the Sunday morning services were greatly missed by many in the community.

Members of the Congregation Council from 2000-2009 were: William Allen, III, Nathan Beaver, Mark Bowman, Jean Boyer, Rachel Clark, Joanne Conrad, Janet Deloplaine, William Eddinger, Brian Flack, Michael Fritz, Natalie Friz, Scott Geiser, Marlene Hansley, Ronald Hedrick, Daniel Johnson, Kathy Kane, Pamela Law, John LeVan, Jr., Greg Levengood, Rosalie Lisa, William Lowry, James Mack, Robert Malason, Karen Martin, Alana Mauger, Deborah McKinley, Randall Morrell, Daniel Moser, Bruce Moyer, Vicki Mutter, James Peters, Andrew Polywacz, Kerwin Reber, Scott Repa, Jeffrey Renninger, Gary Rohrbach, Duane Rosenberger, Todd Rothermel, Lance Schaeffer, Scot Smale, Andrea Swavely, Lynn Toub, Craig Truebenbach, Andrew Van Dyke, Daniel Van Dyke, Victor Warnquist, Florence Wingard, Donald Wirt, Gregory Wirt, Paul Yanisko, Sandy Zuchero.

At the services on February 21, 2010, the congregation presented a special bouquet of flowers to Vivian Speca who served as Director of the Kinder Choir (formerly the Cherub Choir) for the past eight years.

Over the course of the past several years, decreased membership contributions forced the Finance Committee to use undesignated invested funds in order to pay monthly expenses. Because of this, a Budget Task Force was created by the Council in the fall of 2009 to look at current and future budget issues including staffing and programmatic items. This Task Force held open meetings with the congregation in order to get their input, and after prayerful consideration, the Task Force determined that the congregation could no longer financially support the Associate Pastor position. Their recommendation was to eliminate the position from the budget.

With the passing of the 2010 General Fund Budget at the Congregational Meeting held on January 17, 2010, the congregation supported the decision to eliminate the Associate Pastor position. This meant that The Rev. Susan Lynch's call to New

Hanover Lutheran Church would be terminated. Following the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod's guideline for Termination of a Call, the Congregation Council regretfully accepted Pastor Lynch's resignation effective April 30, 2010, at its January meeting.

On April 25, 2010, the congregation honored Pastor Lynch for her years of ministry. At 10:30 a.m., one worship service was held where she preached her last sermon to members and friends numbering more than 300. At the close of the service, Pastor Lynch was presented with a monetary gift and a memory book filled with photos and expressions of appreciation from members of all ages. A lunch reception in her honor followed the service. During the luncheon, a photo presentation depicting her nearly ten years of ministry at New Hanover Lutheran was shown and later presented to her as a gift.

After leaving New Hanover, Pastor Susan, in time, became pastor of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Coatesville, Pennsylvania. It was during this pastorate that she died on May 27, 2022.

Memorial Fund monies were used in 2010 to purchase a piano for the balcony in memory of Kenneth Jacob, Sr., Angie Truebenbach, and Woodrow Freed. Acolyte albs were given in memory of Alvin "Gabby" Renninger. These gifts were dedicated at the services on May 9, 2010.

Administrative Assistant, Barbara Eisenhart, announced her resignation in May 2014. The congregation had an opportunity to say "thank you" for her 32 years as Administrative Assistant during the services on July 18 where she was given a monetary gift, cards, and notes. A luncheon followed the 10:15 a.m. service in the Fellowship Hall. She was replaced by Susan Gutshall who began her duties as Office Manager on June 10, 2010.

Later that summer, Bruce W. Tonkin, A.I.M., gave his notice of resignation as Director of Music Ministry and played his last service on September 5. Under him, the Kinder Choir and Matins Choir were formed and several musicals were presented by the children's choirs. Mr. Tonkin also presented several organ recitals and one piano recital. The congregation hosted a luncheon in Bruce's honor on Sunday, September 5, following the 10:15 a.m. service, and was grateful for his dedicated ministry.

The year 2010 was marked as the year the congregation was debt free, with the final payment made on the mortgage from the 1999 building program.

New Hanover's first GRACE worship service was held on Sunday, January 9, 2011, at 10:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. GRACE is an acronym for "Gift Received at Christ's Expense." Members gathered together to experience God's word in an informal, upbeat atmosphere. Volunteers of the congregation participated in the GRACE band which led the music. This service replaced the traditional 10:15 a.m. service on the second Sunday of every month.

The Ascension of Our Lord (Ascension Day) is a major festival on the Christian liturgical calendar and holds as much significance in the Christian faith as do

Christmas and Easter. It falls on the fortieth day after Easter, always a Thursday. Historically, Christians observed the day in prayer, reflection, and attending religious services. The significance of the day is reinforced by the many church buildings that feature a painting of the Ascension, such as the one above New Hanover's chancel. It was painted in 1904 by Fred Igle of Reading. New Hanover held a service every year on Ascension Day. Over the years, schools and businesses no longer honored its importance and, gradually, Ascension Day services were phased out of churches due to lack of interest and attendance. As a result, the last Ascension Day service held at New Hanover was in 2010.

Following Bruce Tonkin's resignation, Lincoln Noecker served as the Interim Director of Music Ministry until the hiring of Rachel Scheible-Yost in February 2011. She resigned in November of that same year. At that time, Mr. Noecker resumed the interim Organist position. Joanne Reigner was hired as the Interim Junior Choir Director, Adult Choir rehearsal accompanist, and interim pianist at the Living Faith Service. Her duties began on November 30, 2011. Volunteers directed the Cherub, Youth, Adult, and Handbell Choirs to maintain the music program during the search process for a new Director of Music Ministry.

A new summer schedule was instituted in 2011: 7:30 and 9:15 a.m. with Children's Church held during a portion of the 9:15 a.m. service. Sunday School was paused until September.

A Garden Table was set up in the Welcome Center where those who grew their own food could share their "fruits" with others in the congregation. There was also a basket for donations to be given to World Hunger.

An exhibit at the Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College chronicled the family of The Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. Portraits of family members as well as numerous historic documents, furniture, and personal and religious items were on display. Included in the display was a flagon, dating from the year 1750, on loan from New Hanover. Rev. Muhlenberg served New Hanover from 1742-1761 and used this flagon to pour communion wine. It was also likely carried into the current sanctuary at the time of the current building's dedication on November 6, 1768.

A recital commemorating the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Installation of the Schantz Pipe Organ was held on All Saints Sunday, November 6, 2011, at 3:00 p.m. by Adam F. Dieffenbach. Mr. Dieffenbach is a descendant of Christian Dieffenbach, who built the first pipe organ installed in our present sanctuary. The concert was projected onto a large screen in the front of the sanctuary so all could see. A reception in the Fellowship Hall followed the concert.

A celebration of The Rev. Dr. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's 300th birthday was held on February 12, 2012. Claire S. Burkat, Bishop of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA, was the preacher for the day. Dr. Karl Kruger, Librarian and Associate Professor of the History of Christianity at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, was the Assisting Pastor. The liturgy used was an adaptation of that known as "The Muhlenberg Liturgy" or "The Church Agenda of 1748," which was the first official liturgy adopted by Lutherans in North



Camp Falckner - 2025

America. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg chaired the committee that prepared this liturgy. The Annual Congregational Dinner followed the services with Dr. Kruger providing a special presentation on the life of Muhlenberg.

In March 2012, the sanctuary lighting fixtures were fitted with new incandescent lamps, replacing the specialized ones used in the fixtures since their installation in 1969. The Property Committee, with the assistance of electrical engineer Charles E. Snyder, Jr., completed the work for less than \$100.00. Mr. Snyder's grandfather, John W. Snyder, was the electrical contractor for New Hanover's Parish House in 1950. Snyder's wife, Judy, is a descendant of Peter Steltz, whose name is etched in the stone of New Hanover's present sanctuary, indicating that he was among those who constructed the building in 1767. Because of his connections to the congregation, Mr. Snyder donated his services to the sanctuary lighting project.

A digital sign, installed along Swamp Pike in April 2011, was dedicated at the services on March 25, 2012. A stone retaining wall and plantings were placed around the sign as part of member Ethan Hauser's Eagle Scout project.

In May, the National Penn Bank donated to the congregation the Revolutionary War encampment painting which had been on display at the bank since 1964. The large mural, painted by George "Bucky" Walters of Spring City, shows the arrival of wounded soldiers at New Hanover, a temporary hospital, in the fall of 1777. It is permanently on display in the Welcome Center.

Thomas Dressler was hired as the Director of Music Ministry in August of 2012 and resigned the following month. Joanne Reigner was hired as the Cherub and Junior Choir Director in August 2012 and continued in this capacity until May 2013.

After twelve years, the Living Faith Service was discontinued in August 2012 due to difficulty finding volunteers to plan and lead the service. With the loss of this service, the following month, the service times returned to their original times of 7:45 and 10:15 a.m. During the 10:15 service, W.O.W. (Worship Our Way) was instituted September 16 where children in pre-kindergarten through second grade were invited to leave the sanctuary for their own special worship focusing more on spiritual development through child friendly messages, song, and prayer.

A new pictorial directory was prepared in 2012.

Deborah Matthews was hired as the Director of Music Ministry on May 26, 2013, Prior to her hiring, Mr. Lincoln Noecker again served as the interim musician since the previous September.

A Fiftieth Anniversary service for Camp Falckner was held in the picnic grove in August 2013. Adults who attended Camp Falckner in their youth spoke of their camping experiences.

A traveling exhibition of The Rev. Dr. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg came to New Hanover in March 2014. As part of the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the Francke Foundation of Halle, Germany,

produced a series of twenty large panels depicting scenes from his life, which were set up in the Welcome Center.

By a vote of 130 to 7, the congregation approved the resurfacing of the parking lot and other exterior improvements at a special meeting held on May 18, 2014. Over the summer the following new work was installed: underground piping to remove rain water from the north-facing roofs of the church, underground electrical service, concrete well enclosure, parking lot lighting, and concrete sidewalks. Glenn Bealer of Boyertown performed the excavation work in conjunction with electrician Ronald Hedrick. The two oak trees, planted in 1983, were also removed and their wood used to create benches in memory of Beatrice M. Smale, who served 40 years as Superintendent in the Sunday School Nursery, and The Rev. Dr. Edgar M. Cooper, pastor of the congregation from 1945 to 1992.

On Sunday, June 29, 2014, Pastor Miriam Schmidt was a guest presenter during the Sunday School hour where she presented a look at life in Slovakia where she serves as a missionary. This event was sponsored by New Hanover's Mission Services/Social Ministry Committee.

Gluten-free communion wafers were first made available in June 2014 for those communicants who are gluten intolerant.

On November 2, 2014, All Saint's Sunday, a new processional cross, given in memory of George R. Weaver, Sr., was dedicated at the 10:15 a.m. service.

The choirs from New Hanover partnered with those from Christ Lutheran, Niantic, on Sunday, November 25, 2014, for a hymn festival. It included hymns, anthems, and reflections for the entire church year.

On Sunday, December 7, 2014, Pastor Russ Gates from the State Correctional Institute at Graterford provided a special presentation on the prayer partnership that our members have been participating in with the inmates housed there. As part of the program, the inmates are exchanging prayer requests with church members and our members are likewise encouraged to send prayer requests to the inmates.

From the money raised at the 2014 Sunday School Christmas program, New Hanover sponsored two gift packages which were sent to dogs and their masters serving in the military. Brewscuits, a small local company, which makes homemade dog biscuits, has made its mission to reach out to military dogs and those who work with them, as well as to dogs recuperating in military hospitals due to wounds received while serving. The packages were personalized with cards signed by our members.

The Rev. Bradley Burke, Executive Director of Lutheran Charities, preached at both services on March 22, 2015, and hosted an informational forum on the ministries of Lutheran Charities during the Sunday School hour. Lutheran Charities is an advocacy and support network for the numerous Lutheran social service agencies and institutions in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Bear Creek Camp Sunday was held on April 26, 2015, where Associate Director Pete Smith, preached at both services and led some camp “exercises” during the 9:00 a.m. Sunday School hour. He shared of the many camping opportunities year-round for all ages offered at Bear Creek, which is operated by the ELCA near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

New green paraments for the altar, lectern, and pulpit were dedicated in memory of Philip and Myrtle Bechtel during the services on June 7, 2015.

After a year of ground settling had occurred, the church parking lot was resurfaced in July 2015, completing the project that had been started a year ago. The congregation’s giving toward this effort was far beyond what was anticipated: the total cost was \$125,000.28 and it was paid for in less than less than 2 years.

A new piece of artwork was hung in the Welcome Center at the beginning of 2016, which depicts the church being used as a hospital for colonial soldiers wounded at the battles of Brandywine and Paoli in the fall of 1777. Created by Abner Zook of Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania, in 1973, it was donated to the congregation by the estate of Jackie Cooper, wife of The Rev. Dr. Edgar Cooper, who pastored this congregation from 1945-1992. Another of Zook’s creations is on display across from this one depicting the annual Blessing of the Fields service.

On Thursday, February 11, 2016, Robin Brown, Associate Director of Congregational Support of the ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal visited New Hanover to personally thank the congregation for being one of just 100+ congregations across the United States who contributed up to and beyond \$10,000 to the World Hunger Program in 2015. She shared how our offerings work to feed and sustain the hungry both in this country and around the world.

On May 1, 2016, the Boyertown Area Senior High Show Choir, along with New Hanover’s choirs, presented special music during 10:15 a.m. Church Music Sunday worship service.

The 2010s were not the easiest time for New Hanover’s pastor or people. After several attempts over the years to improve communication and nurture healthy relationships between the church staff, Council, and congregation, The Rev. Thomas Lang submitted his resignation as pastor to the Council in April 2016. It was mutually agreed upon by the pastor and Council that he resign so that our respective ministries could move forward. This decision came after working closely with and being helped considerably by the Office of the Bishop of Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. Pastor Lang’s last service was Sunday, May 22, 2016, followed by a reception held in the Fellowship Hall in his honor.

The Rev. John Berntsen was assigned by the synod to serve as the Bridge Pastor through the end of August until The Rev. Wayne Shelor could join the staff in September as New Hanover’s third interim pastor in one hundred years. He served the congregation until February 25, 2018.



Sanctuary at Christmas - 2017

In late November 2016, Deborah Matthews, Director of Music, announced her resignation and was honored for her service at a fellowship hour on December 4. Supply organists filled the time until Priscilla Landis began serving as the Director of Music on May 21, 2017.

The Muhlenberg Scholarship Fund was established in 2016 as a means to support our members entering the ministry.

The congregation-sponsored Cub Scout Pack turned 65 years old on September 30, 2016. The very first Cubmaster for Troop 367 was New Hanover member Eber Biehl. He was honored at the November 2016 pack meeting with a plaque.

Thomas and Barbara Faust announced their retirement as sextons effective at the end of 2016, after 20 years of service. A celebration in their honor was held in the Fellowship Hall on December 18, 2016. Mr. Faust continued in a limited role as the maintenance consultant, a position he holds to this day. Mr. Ronald Hedrick was appointed sexton and served until James and Catherine Trotter were hired in early 2018.

Several changes in the church staff took place in 2017 beginning in January when Barbara Eisenhart was hired as the Handbell Choir Director. Maria Boyer resigned April 30 from her position as Bookkeeper, a position she held since September 2013. She was replaced by Joan Comtois. Richard Thomas was welcomed as the new GRACE Worship music leader, participating in his first service on Sunday, October 8, 2017.

The Rev. Thomas Kadel from Food for the Poor was the guest preacher at services on Sunday, February 26, 2017. New Hanover has supported this organization for several years through periodic benevolence offerings.

Memorial gifts were dedicated in memory of Chester and Helen Moser on Sunday, May 28, 2017, including an electronic keyboard for the GRACE Worship Service, a historical display case for Pastor Edgar Cooper's anniversary scrapbook, a communion chalice, and a Christ candle. Undesignated Memorial Fund monies in 2017 also made possible the installation of a new stove in the kitchen.

The congregation held a "Luther Fest" pig roast to celebrate Martin Luther and the Five Hundredth Anniversary of the Reformation on October 22, 2017, in the picnic grove.

The Rev. Paul H. Howells, Interim Pastor (1992-93) and Pastor of Ministry Development (1995-99), passed away on January 23, 2018, the day before his eighty-ninth birthday. He is buried in the New Hanover cemetery, the third known pastor to be buried there.

The Rev. Wayne Shelor's final Sunday as the interim pastor was February 25, 2018. Until a new pastor could be called, several supply pastors led worship until The Rev. Susie Folks was sent by the Synod to be the Bridge Pastor from April 8 through October 14, 2018.

Each Wednesday in January 2018 members of New Hanover helped to feed the homeless at Zion's United Church of Christ, Pottstown, through the Ministries on Main Street program – an organization devoted to helping the underserved in the Pottstown community.

New Hanover's Handbell, Cherub, and Junior Choirs took "music on the move" to two local senior living facilities - Frederick Living and Amity Place - on Sunday, March 4, 2018, to offer musical selections for the residents. Based on the seasons of the church year, the choirs presented a forty-five-minute program of music throughout the church year. A similar program was offered at Amity Place and Walnut Woods in Spring 2019.

In March, the church's three octaves of handbells were refurbished and two additional handbell tables were purchased along with new storage cases for the bells. The tables and refurbishing were financially supported by Allan and Sue Care with use of Memorial Fund monies given in honor of their parents. Shortly thereafter, church member Monique Becker hand-made new table covers for all of the handbell tables.

The Martin Luther/Silver Springs School Gospel Choir sang during the 10:15 a.m. worship service on April 22, 2018. This private school provides a comprehensive program for students who need emotional and behavioral attention. New Hanover has supported this organization for several years through periodic benevolence offerings.

The church office suite was renovated during the summer months of 2018, with all spaces being repainted and recarpeted as well as the pastor and administrator offices receiving raised panel moldings. The air conditioning system for the suite was replaced and new furniture purchased for the administrator's office with monies from the Memorial Fund.

Other property improvements in 2018 were the replacement of the lighting fixtures in the Welcome Center from fluorescent to LED (September), the sealing of the parking lot by Stern Nester Paving and the restriping of the parking lot lines by Schiavo Line Striping (both in October).

On September 16, 2018, the congregation worshiped in one assembly at 9:00 a.m. as the pastoral candidate preached and conducted the service. After the service, at a special congregational meeting, the congregation voted to extend a call to The Rev. Scott A. Staub. He began his service on October 17 and the congregation welcomed Pastor Scott and his wife, Marsha, at services on October 21, 2018.

Pastor Scott was installed, as was Deacon Carol Detweiler, at a Service of Installation on December 2, 2018, at 3:00 p.m. by The Rev. Chris McKinstry, Dean of the Upper Montgomery Conference of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA. The Rev. Wayne A. Matthias-Long, pastor of Reformation Lutheran Church, Media, Pennsylvania, was the preacher, and The Rev. Dr. William S. Maxon, Senior Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Allentown, Pennsylvania, was the liturgist.

The congregation celebrated the Two Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary of the Church Building Dedication at the services on All Saints' Sunday, November 4, 2018. The

liturgy used was an adaptation of that known as “The Muhlenberg Liturgy” or “The Church Agenda of 1748,” which was the first official liturgy adopted by Lutherans in North America. Two hymns with ties to the congregation were also incorporated: “*Rise, Ye Children of Salvation,*” whose tune was commissioned for the dedicatory recital of the Schantz Organ in 1986 and whose text was written by Justus Falckner, the first Lutheran pastor ordained in the North America colonies and the brother of Daniel Falckner, the founder of the New Hanover Congregation in 1700, and “*God, Whose Word Like Seed Was Planted,*” the hymn commissioned for the Three Hundredth Anniversary of the congregation, composed by Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr., and Paul Bouman in 1999.

In the late 2010s, the Fellowship Committee of New Hanover began providing meals to shut-ins and other members who needed food due to a loss of job, a recent hospital stay, long-term illness, disability, etc. Meals were prepared in the church kitchen by volunteers who oversaw the meal preparations, cooking, packaging, and distribution. The program eventually became known as the Loaves and Fishes Food Ministry.

The following items were purchased in 2019 using undesignated contributions to the Memorial Fund: a refrigerator and freezer for the kitchen, items for the nursery, additional handbells and a digital piano. The piano was dedicated on May 19 and was given in memory of Allan and Sue Care’s parents and in honor of Allan’s mother.

In December 2019, the Handbell Choir performed at the worship service for Knights Templar of Pennsylvania in West Reading.

The congregation adopted a new Mission Statement: “*The mission of New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church is to utilize the dedication of our church family, the strengths of our programs, the resources of our facilities, and history of our congregation to serve as a beacon of worship, welcome, peace, and support for our community*” and a new Vision Statement: “*The vision of New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church is to love our neighbors as ourselves, and live and serve as an example of God’s Grace for our community and our world*” in 2019.

Boyertown Area Senior High Show Choir presented a variety of choral works during the 10:15 a.m. service on May 5, 2019.

Several projects were completed in 2019 which addressed some of the aging infrastructure and security needs of the building. They were the covering of exterior wood fascia around the Fellowship Hall with aluminum, upgrading the Fellowship Hall audio system; replacement of all fire detection devices; improved directional signage; and the re-keying of the entire facility.

A Mental Health and Addiction Peer Support Program was approved by the Council in late 2019. Ryan Schweiger, a certified peer and recovery specialist, began providing services at the church on January 26, 2020. New Hanover is the only faith-based location for a Peer Support Recovery ministry in the area. The program



Fresh out of the oven



Packaged and ready to be delivered



Loaves and Fishes Food Ministry



The Garden of Hope - 2022

continued through 2024 and was supplanted with two Narcotics Anonymous groups who each use classroom space for their weekly meetings.

Members of the Council from 2010-2019 were: William Allen, Janene Anzulewicz, Nathan Beaver, Monique Becker, Janet Deloplaine, Barbara Dunn, Sheila Eddinger, William Eddinger, Steven Eisenhart, Robin Fatzinger, Raymond Feick, Ruth Fisher, Patricia Fryer, Scott Geiser, Nevada Grant, Patrick Green, James Gross, Jr., Martin Hauser, Ronald Hedrick, Amy Hoffman, Kathy Kane, Donna Kehs, Thomas Kehs, Pamela Law, William Lowry, James Mack, Vicki Mutter, Andrew Polywacz, Charles Rhoads, Barbara Repa, Scott Repa, Gary Rohrbach, Todd Rothermel, Lance Schaeffer, Sally Sugita, Craig Truebenbach, Andrew Van Dyke, Joyce Webber, Steven Weidner, Donald Wirt, John Zuchero, Sandra Zuchero.

The Rev. LeRoy T. Ness, Interim Pastor from January 2005 to February 2006, passed away at his home in New Canaan, Connecticut, on February 20, 2020. He was eighty-five years old.

At the Annual Congregational Meeting on February 23, 2020, Montgomery County's plan to repair the bridge on Lutheran Road was reviewed and explained. It required that the congregation sell the right-of-way on its property to the County for the sum of \$5,000 in order for work to proceed on the bridge. This was approved unanimously.

On March 13, 2020, the United States and the world were struck by the Coronavirus Pandemic, also known as COVID-19. On that date, the United States government ordered the closure of all schools and non-essential businesses, including churches in an attempt to slow the spread of the virus. The only businesses permitted to remain open were those deemed as essential for life, such as grocery stores, drug stores, gas stations, and any store that sold food. People were told to stay in their houses and not to go anywhere unless it was a necessity. When one left the house, it was mandated to wear a mask.

At New Hanover worship and non-essential activities were suspended on March 13, 2020. A COVID-19 Action Team was quickly formed to devise a way to keep ministry happening in a safe environment for staff and volunteers who were in the building. The Loaves and Fishes Food and Peer Support Recovery Ministries continued due to an even greater need for these because of the pandemic.

From March 15 to May 24, 2020, worship services were pre-recorded and made available through social media and the church's website. An Audio/Video team was formed to provide this vital role to make streaming possible. Amy Marazas was added to the church staff as videographer contractor. Worship was held outside (in the parking lot from May 31 to July 4, in the picnic grove from July 11 to September 27, and again in the parking lot from October 4 to 25) with the congregation in their cars, listening to the service broadcast on the radio by an FM transmitter. Offerings were either dropped in a bin as worshipers left the parking lot, mailed to the church, or slid through the mail slot at the Fellowship Hall entrance. November 1 was the first service in the sanctuary since March, but the

following week saw a return to pre-recorded services due to a rise in COVID-19 cases. The Christmas Eve service was held in the parking lot with a live nativity and live animals. Our historic building, accented with two lighted Christmas trees and numerous sidewalk luminaries, made a beautiful backdrop for the service. All of these services were recorded and posted on social media in hopes of fulfilling the spiritual need of those who watched and worshiped from their homes.

Learning programs were adapted to abide by the COVID-19 restrictions. Confirmation class was held virtually and resulted with six young people being confirmed on May 31, the Day of Pentecost, during the parking lot service. Vacation Bible School was also held virtually for five Wednesdays in June.

During the summer, the Boy Scouts, Cub Pack, Peer Support Recovery Ministry, the NA group, and many committees utilized the fresh air and open space that the picnic grove provided. In July, Camp Falckner was modified from its usual format to be a day-time only camp.

The senior gift bag project was developed during the pandemic shut down in an effort to keep in touch with our senior members. Containing word searches, hidden picture puzzles, reading material, coloring pages, word scrambles, snack and toiletry items, and more, volunteers assembled the bags and delivered them to the door step of approximately 50 senior members.

Director of Music Ministry, Priscilla Landis, resigned effective June 28, 2020, and was acknowledged by the Council at the service held in the parking lot on that day. The Adult, Children's, and Handbell Choirs also presented farewell gifts. Those in attendance gave a final drive-by wave at the close of the service for her exceptional service to New Hanover. Brian Tracey and Lauren Flack fulfilled the responsibilities of the music program from July to August.

Because of the on-going pandemic, the Loaves and Fishes Food Ministry rapidly expanded and, in September 2020, the Council voted to hire member Chris Fatzinger to oversee the growing program. Funded solely through donations and grants, the program continues to produce and distribute "heat and serve" meals throughout Montgomery, Berks, and Chester Counties.

During the COVID-19 shut down, the Property Committee took advantage of this time when there was limited building usage and access. Items installed were an electronic code lock system for the door under the portico, spray foam insulation in the attic above the pantry, and two LED parking lot lighting fixtures.

The existing single boiler was replaced with two new oil-fired Peerless boilers during the week of October 26, 2020, by I. T. Landes of Harleysville, at a cost of \$45,000.00. Also installed was a 50-gallon electric water heater. Prior to the boiler installation, the asbestos pipe insulation in the boiler room, basement storage room and pantry attic was removed by ACM Associates, Inc., of Allentown at a cost of

\$2,750.00. Fiberglass insulation was provided around all of the piping at the conclusion of the project.

The year 2021 began as the year 2020 ended, and with the church doors closed due to the pandemic, worship services continued to be pre-recorded and made available on Sunday mornings to be viewed online.

In January 2021, the congregation partnered with Trellis for Tomorrow, a non-profit organization in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, dedicated to the establishment of community gardens, to install a 75 foot by 75 foot garden on the church property. At a cost of \$14,200 borrowed from recently received undesignated bequest funds, the Trellis team oversaw the design and installation of the garden as well as provided instruction and guidance to a group of our members for the care of it and its crops. Named “The Garden of Hope,” this ministry provides fresh organic vegetables to various community organizations.

At services in February 2021, fair linens and corporals for the altar were dedicated in honor of Ruth Wirt and in memory of loved ones.

In May of 2021, M. A. Yeakel of Allentown installed air conditioning in the Multi-Purpose Room for the first time since its construction in 1956 using the existing equipment salvaged from the office suite in 2018. The cost was \$11,000.00.

At the same time, M. A. Yeakel also installed three electric, ducted heating and air conditioning systems in the 1999 education wing, replacing the existing thru-wall units. The cost was \$64,000.00. Concrete pads for the outdoor equipment were provided by Drumheller Construction of Pottstown at a cost of \$1,000.00.

On July 4, 2021, worship returned to the sanctuary with a single worship service at 9:00 a.m. where each congregant was masked. These services grew in time from an average of 50 in July to well over 100 by year’s end. In this single service the pre-pandemic worship styles of traditional and praise music were blended into one. When fall came, Christian Education programming was once again held indoors.

Two feet of water entered the basement during the rains associated with Hurricane Ida in early September 2021, causing damage to the boilers and water heater. The insurance reimbursement of \$6,000 covered the necessary repairs to the boilers and replacement of the water heater after the \$1,000 deductible was paid.

Several changes occurred within the staff in 2021. Deacon Carol Detweiler transferred from her position as Director of Christian Education to the newly-created position of Director of Senior Faith Formation. Nicole (Nikki) Young was hired to fill another new position, Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry. Praise Band Leader, Richard Thomas, resigned with his last Sunday being October 3 where he was honored for his service at a fellowship hour following worship.



Exterior of the church - 2025

A “Living History Cemetery Tour” was held in October 2021 where actors, wearing period clothing, portrayed individuals who had been buried in the church cemetery. Speaking in the first person, facts were shared about their lives and their connections to each other and the church. The tour was open to the public and experienced a good attendance. Another tour was held in October of the following year, where a different group of deceased were featured.

Additional property surrounding the former parsonage was sold to the present owners, at their request, for \$6,600.00 following a vote of approval by the congregation on December 12, 2021. The owners assumed all of the costs related to the sale, including the engineering and township fees.

The two-year search for a Director of Music Ministry concluded at the end of 2021 with the hiring of Patricia Nyce who began her work on January 16, 2022. James and Catherine Trotter resigned as sextons December 31, 2021. They were replaced with a cleaning service.

By a unanimous approval of the Council in April 2022, the Endowment Fund Committee engaged the services of Cornerstone Advisors Asset Management of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to aid in effectively investing monies in the fund for the annual benefit of the congregation. An Endowment Fund Contributors’ Plaque was purchased the following year and hung in the Welcome Center to acknowledge the many bequests, both large and small, that have been willed to the congregation since the first was received in 1973.

Handbells in memory of Megan Weaver and two tables and accessories were purchased through the Memorial Fund and dedicated on Sunday, March 27, 2022, during the worship service. An electronic drum set and two handbell cases were dedicated in memory of Nancy Moser, along with the upper fifth octave of handbells in memory of Charles and Catharine Renninger, on December 18, 2022.

Property improvements occurring over the summer months included the painting of all the exterior wood trim on the church building by JDS Painting, Harleysville, at a cost of \$16,200; replacement of louver in the east gable wall by Amercor Construction, Telford, at a cost of \$3,000; and the replacement of the carpet in the Welcome Center, Lounge, and Volunteer Office by Gary’s Carpet Depot at a cost of \$7,850.00.

In October 2022, over 100 native trees and shrubs were planted at various locations on the church property as part of a reforestation project designed to protect and enhance wetland habitat in the Minister Creek Watershed. It was made possible by the Tree Vitalize Watersheds Grant program and managed by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, with funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Growing Greener program. With guidance from a DEP member, over 30 members, friends and scouts from New Hanover did all of the planting.

Kevin Tracey, a son of the congregation, was ordained on July 16, 2022, at New Hanover by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Bishop, Patricia Davenport. Pastor Jenn Casey, Dean of the Delaware Conference, preached and presided. A lifelong member, Kevin was baptized and confirmed in the church.

New Hanover entered into a capital campaign in 2022. Future large-scale projects included in the campaign were repainting of the bell tower, replacement of the sanctuary flooring, replacement of all shingled roofs, and maintenance and enlargement of the organ. The congregation partnered with Kirby-Smith Associates to help to increase financial support for these projects and a total of \$357,150.00 was pledged over the course of the next three years.

Member, Jennifer Boyer, was hired as an independent cleaning contractor and began her work on January 1, 2023. Deacon Carol Detweiler, Director of Senior Faith Formation, resigned her position on January 31, 2023. Member, Lindsey Waltermeyer, joined the church staff on July 6, 2023, as the GRACE Band leader.

Two original windows in the 1950 Parish House and sixteen in the 1956 Parish House Annex were replaced in May by Eckroth Remodeling at a cost of \$11,200. In addition to installing these energy efficient, divided-lite vinyl replacement windows, the contractor also capped the exterior frames and sills with aluminum.

A large project was completed in the sanctuary over the summer of 2023 that included the installation of a new audio, video, and lighting control system. To accommodate the controls for these systems, a new counter and view window were installed in the Narthex and the entire sanctuary was rewired to meet the current electrical code. T. L. Conrad of Boyertown performed the electrical work and Fitch Electronics of Pottstown designed and installed the audio system. The entire project was completed at a cost of \$93,044.00.

In early 2023, the idea of a church-run early learning center was suggested to the Council as a way to generate income for the church and to meet the needs of the surrounding growing community. With the nod of approval, a committee was formed to plan and investigate this new ministry opportunity.

The following items were purchased in 2023 with gifts given to the Memorial Fund: Endowment Fund contributors' plaque, benches for the cemetery in memory of Larry Gallagher, furniture for church nursery in memory of Thursa Rhoads.

New white paraments for the altar, lectern, and pulpit were dedicated in memory of Ruth Wirt on January 14, 2024.

The constitution was revised to bring it into accordance with the current ELCA adopted model, with the first ratification approved by the congregation at the December 10, 2023, congregational meeting by a vote of 72 to 1. After review and approval by the Synod, the congregation approved the second and final ratification with a vote of 65 to 1 at the annual congregational meeting on February 11, 2024.

The Garden of Hope was expanded to twice its size (10,000 sq. ft.) in early 2024 to include new plantings such as strawberries, blueberries, and apple and pear trees. Since its installation in 2021, it has produced 16,246 pounds of produce.

As the congregation's Three Hundred Twenty-fifth Anniversary approached, a committee was formed in August 2024 to begin planning a sixteen-month celebration. A series of commemorative events began the following month with a kick-off service held on September 29 and a display of historical photos in the Welcome Center. A "Living History Cemetery Tour" was held in October and a new display was featured in the Welcome Center in November. On November 3, All Saints Sunday, the liturgy used was an adaptation of that known as "The Muhlenberg Liturgy" or "The Church Agenda of 1748," which was the first official liturgy adopted by Lutherans in North America. The Boyertown Area Senior High Show Choir also presented musical selections.

The catechism program was expanded to include the youth from St. James, Pottstown; St. James, Limerick; St. Luke, Gilbertsville; and St. Luke, Obelisk in the fall of 2024.

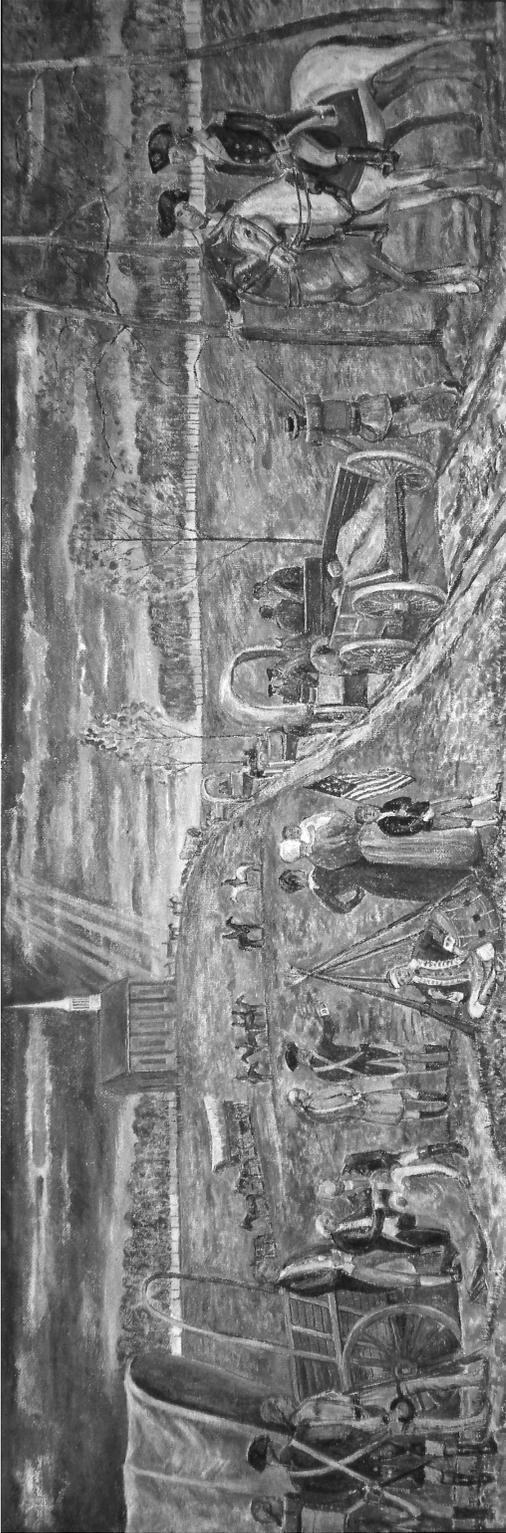
After a year of planning, the Early Learning Center Committee made a recommendation to the Council that a loan be secured in the amount of \$680,000 for building renovations, staff salaries, and start-up costs. At the congregational meeting on December 8, 2024, a vote of 84 to 8 gave the green light to the secure the loan and move forward with the project.

By the end of 2024, the Loaves and Fishes Food Ministry provided over 200,000 meals since its inception just a few years earlier. It has also provided monthly luncheons to various homeless individuals and Veteran's organizations.

Events during the beginning of the anniversary year included a "Cheers to Us" gathering on January 26, 2025, a historical presentation by R. Leland Wesner, Jr., during the Congregational Dinner on February 23, the return of the Fastnacht Social and Talent Show on March 2, and Children's Day on March 16. More historical displays followed in the Welcome Center, and the weekly Moments in Time bulletin inserts continued.

The anniversary guest preacher series included The Revs. Richard Elliott and Wayne Shelor, former pastors; former Student Assistant, The Rev. Dr. Carl Filer; The Revs. Kevin Tracey and David Pflieger, sons of the congregation; and Seminarian and daughter of the congregation, Nicole Young.

An online store was set up where members could purchase clothing and other items with the Three Hundred Twenty-fifth Anniversary logo and other logos of New Hanover's church groups. Other anniversary souvenirs included pens, church history coloring books, two kinds of key chains, and a backpack.



Mural depicting the church as a hospital during the Revolutionary War

Scan the QR Code to hear the narration describing the mural >



The May anniversary event was the Gathering of Daughters and Fashion Show on May 4. After a tea party luncheon of finger sandwiches, quiches, tea, and pastries, sixteen members modeled nearly 70 fashions dating from the 1700-1900s.

A school board was formed in early 2025 and immediately set out to hire staff and begin the tasks necessary to prepare for the early learning center's opening, one of those being to choose a name. Miss Jena Marinelli was hired in January of 2025 as the director of the New Hanover Sunshine Early Learning Center. She was installed at the May 18, 2025, worship service.

Building renovations for the Sunshine Learning Center, which began in late January 2025 and progressed into the summer, included the addition of three handicap accessible toilet rooms, the removal of several existing walls to create larger classrooms, and new finishes throughout. Plans were prepared by Richard Kapusta & Company Architects, Engineers and Planners of Telford. H. Mininger and Son, also of Telford, was the general contractor who completed the renovations for a cost of \$491,032.00.

Nineteen people toured Historic Trappe on July 22 where they visited the Dewees Tavern and toured The Henry Muhlenburg House and The Speaker's House. Following lunch at the Trappe Tavern, the group joined the campers from Camp Falckner and listened to a presentation at the Old Trappe Church.

The Great Swamp Picnic on August 23 saw the return of the fish pond for children. Placemats showcasing programming at New Hanover were used at place settings and the Picnic Committee provided Three Hundred Twenty-fifth Anniversary pins for everyone in attendance.

The Fellowship Committee planned an Old-fashioned Picnic for Move-up Day, September 7, with picnic foods, root beer floats, and a cake walk. The Anniversary Committee provided guessing games and prizes and placemats.

A Living History Cemetery Tour was held on Saturday, September 27, for church members and the community. A narration, written and recorded by The Rev. Edgar Cooper in 1964 to accompany the Revolutionary War painting on display in the Welcome Center, was incorporated and made available for visitors by QR code at the tour.

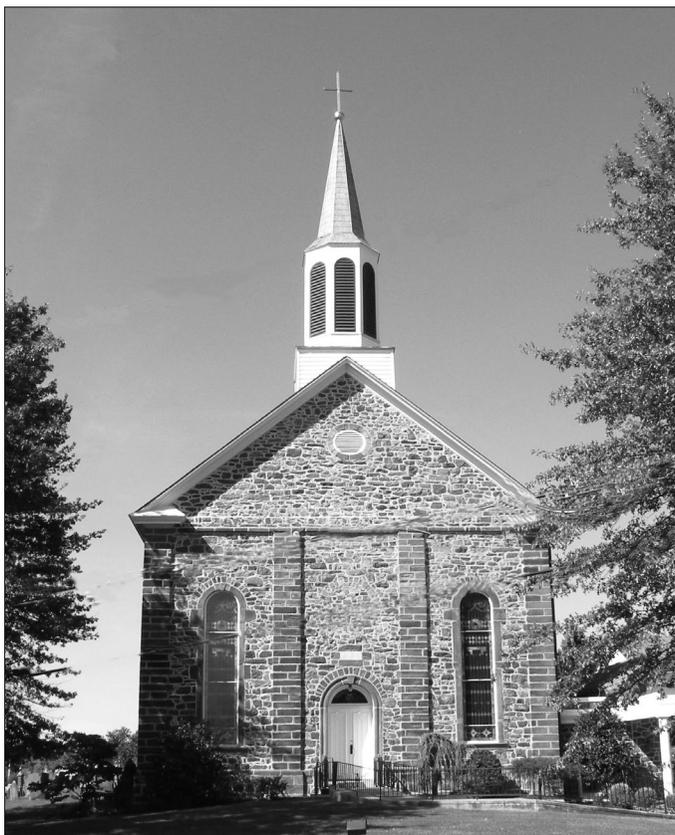
Planned for November 2 is a Festival Service of Holy Communion with Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Bishop, The Rev. Bryan Penman, preaching. A dinner for guests and members of the congregation will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

The preaching series in October, November and December is scheduled to include The Rev. Dr. Carl Filer, The Rev. Dr. Timothy Wengert, The Rev. Dr. Karl Krueger, Deacon Carol Detweiler, The Rev. Thomas Lang, and The Rev. Rebecca Knox.

On December 28, 2025, with profound gratitude and abiding affection, the congregation will say farewell to The Rev. Scott A. Staub as he retires and begins a new chapter in his life. May God bless him in this new season of rest and renewal.

Members of the Council from 2000 – 2025 were: Adam Becker, Edward Becker, Monique Becker, Steven Eisenhart, Robin Fatzinger, Scott Geiser, Nevada Grant, James Gross, Jr., D. Martin Hauser, Emma Hauser, Amy Hoffman, James Mack, Vicki Mutter, Yvonne Peto, Barbara Repa, Todd Rothermel, Sally Sugita, Andrew Van Dyke, Nancy White, Donald Wirt, Jeffrey Wise, Nicole Young.

As we bring this extraordinary Three Hundred Twenty-fifth Anniversary celebration to a close, we do so with hearts full of gratitude and hope. This milestone is not just a marker of time—it is a testament to the enduring faith, love, and resilience of our church community. From humble beginnings to generations of worship, service, and fellowship, we honor the legacy of those who came before us and embrace the calling to carry it forward. May the spirit that has sustained us for over three centuries continue to guide us into the future, as we walk together in faith, united in purpose, and ever open to the grace of God.



Exterior of the church - 2025



