

**GOOD SHEPHERD'S HISTORY  
AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE 'CHURCH'**

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# HISTORY OF ADVENT | ST. MARK'S | GOOD SHEPHERD

by Dr. Karl E. Moyer

## Local Lutheran Backgrounds

Organized Lutheranism in Lancaster began with the founding of Trinity Church in 1730 and her early involvement in establishing the Ministerium of Pennsylvania in 1745. However, by the Civil War, Pennsylvania Lutheran attitudes had coalesced into two dominant attitudes, the Ministerium and its eventual larger group the General Council (founded 1867) emphasizing historical Lutheranism, her liturgy and her doctrinal writings (Luther's two catechisms, the Augsburg Confession, etc.) By comparison, the General Synod (founded 1820) began to emphasize more personalized pietism with less regard for specifically Lutheran doctrines, worship or tradition. The two sides focused their best theological heads at Philadelphia ("Mt. Airy") and Gettysburg Seminaries respectively.

Mid-sized towns in Pennsylvania often had two Lutheran churches with different pastors, one aligned to each larger ecclesiastical body. Each congregation often shared her pastor with a small church in an adjoining town where similar divisions among Lutherans often existed. Sometimes the same two pastors even served the two congregations in the same two towns!

Thus, older Good Shepherd members will recall certain congregations in certain towns, including Lancaster, belonging to the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and others to Central Pennsylvania Synod and that the former tended to serve communion with wine, the latter with grape juice, pastors of the former wore clerical collars and robed in surplice and stole, the latter neckties and robed in black Geneva preaching gowns, etc.

On 26 May 1953 Central Pennsylvania Synod and the Ministerium of Pennsylvania agreed on territorial boundaries that did not cross each other, placing Lancaster churches in Central Pennsylvania Synod territory. (Trinity, Lancaster, held out for a year before joining the synod.) The distinction between former Ministerium and General Synod congregations began to blur gradually, though the perceptive observer can still find them. Curiously enough, while both Advent and St. Mark's congregations began as Ministerium members, the latter tended somewhat toward General Synod style under the pastorates of Albert Trumpeter and John Kammerer, so that by the time of their merger in 1971, the effect was like merging former Ministerium and General Synod congregations, much as happened in numerous other towns.

## Advent Church

Advent Church began as a Sunday School the result of informal discussions among Trinity Church teachers Mrs. Louise Anne, Richard McCaskey, D.D.S. and The Rev. John W. Hassler, retired pastor of Emmanuel Church, Lancaster. A meeting at the Anne home on 21 November 1897 prompted Dr. McCaskey to purchase a home at 17 Clark Street for Sunday School use, and the school began on 5 December, officially organizing the following Sunday. This spawned a formal church service on 6 February 1899, conducted by Pr. Charles Elvin Haupt of Grace Church, whose support to the new group included yielding such Grace members as the Shaars and the Dierolfs.

Formal organization of the new congregation came on 21 October 1899 with the name "Advent" because the initial effort had occurred in Advent season and because that season involved what these people were doing, i.e., looking east! Indeed, even in 1943 the church location still read "East Orange

Street, beyond Broad,” so far east of the city was the area. The first church council was installed at Trinity Church on Sunday evening, 27 November 1899, the first Sunday in Advent, and its initial meeting occurred the following Wednesday.

The young parish bought eleven lots at the only site Advent Church ever owned, eventually numbered 969 East Orange Street, a total of 220 feet frontage and 100 feet depth. Ground-breaking (28 July 1900) and cornerstone-laying (28 October 1900) led to dedication services on 27 November 1901, though only part of the basement was really finished enough for use. The nave came into use on 29 April 1903, with other parts of the building to remain unfinished for some years. During this time Pr. Hassler retired for a second time in 1901. The second pastor, Gomer B. Matthew, left in March 1905 under duress, the victim of antagonisms resulting from his stern insistence on parliamentary procedures his members did not understand.

The three-year pastorate (1905-1908) of Charles J. Smith was followed by the first lengthy pastorate at Advent, that of Elmore L. Wessinger. The congregation grew during this time, purchased a parsonage across the street at 976 East Orange, organized a choir (1915) led by Prof. C. N. McHose, choirmaster at Trinity Church, yielded a first son to the ministry (Pr. Claude O. Dierolf) and purchased the Austin organ and revamped the choir area in 1927. Pr. Wessinger’s “retirement” in 1928 led, however, to considerable service to Zion, Marietta, continuing as late as World War II.

The “war to end all wars” left a great shortage of pastors in its wake, and Advent’s vacancy lasted for eight months, during which the parish called seminarian James Harrison of Philadelphia Seminary on 22 February 1929, contingent on his ordination. He began work at Advent in June of 1929, that disastrous year of financial instability, insisting nevertheless on stewardship via the offering plate as the basis of church funding, as over against commercial-oriented fundraising projects. In 1990 that prophetic principle continues to demand our admiration and profound respect, but it must have been little short of sheer bravery in 1929!

Yet physical improvements to the building occurred from time to time, culminating in a completed facility and renovated chancel in 1955. It was also the era of Harold Shaar, Samuel Harnish and A. Margaret Lantz as choir directors and Dale Hershey as organist, all longstanding, highly respected church musicians in Lancaster. Liturgical care and planning became a hallmark of Pr. Harrison's ministry, along with a gradually-increasing communion practice.

Seminarian R. Hart Beaver succeeded the twenty-nine-year Harrison pastorate in 1958 but demitted the ministry in favor of law school two years later. He has served his Lord and the church well in that calling, including long years as board member at Gettysburg Seminary. Seminarian John Kline came in 1960, succeeded by Pr. Theodore Schneider in 1965, a call that was to have far-reaching consequences in the life of Advent church and beyond.

### **St. Mark's Church**

Like Advent, St. Mark’s also began as a Sunday School. “The Dauphin Terrace Sunday School” opened 20 October 1901 with thirty-seven persons (sixteen adults and twenty-one children), organized by The Rev. Jacob Darmstaetter.

They quickly determined to build a “chapel,” as it continued to be known, and obtained a tract of ground at 545 Freiburg Street between Green and Dauphin, breaking ground on 9 June 1902, laying a cornerstone on 13 July and dedicating the first St. Mark’s building on 5 October 1902. (Freiburg Street

became Pershing Avenue on 6 February 1919 in typical anti-Germanic feeling following World War I.) Official organization as a congregation followed on 11 September 1902, with admission to the Ministerium of Pennsylvania on 3 April 1903. An early dispute caused Pr. Darmstaetter to resign. Some parishioners withdrew, forming Mt. Calvary Church and joining the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Both Trinity Church and the Home Mission Board of the General Council, of which the Pennsylvania Ministerium was a member, "mothered" the young parish, with particular support and guidance from Pr. Whitteker and Mr. C. A. FonDersmith of Trinity until St. Mark's became debt-free in 1916. Yet, early on, it became apparent that "The Little Church Around the Corner," as it was also known, would not serve a growing congregation, and by 1910 St. Mark's purchased land at South Ann and Chester Street, renamed East End Avenue before the new building was begun. They purchased the 628 East End Avenue parsonage in 1920, anticipating the new church building in that neighborhood. A string of short pastorates deterred the congregation's growth, however, and the nation's financial catastrophe of 1929 made things far worse. The need for money once elicited a stunning experience for the fledgling congregation: during a Sunday night service seven knights of the KKK, dressed in white robes with hoods and crimson crosses on their breasts, interrupted the service unannounced and placed an envelope containing \$25 on the Bible at the altar, one remaining at the door as a guard and all leaving without a word ever spoken, while the people sat in stunned silence!!

Yet, on 30 June 1930 the congregation voted in faith to overturn a recent decision against the long-planned building project, and on 13 July broke ground, laying a cornerstone on 28 September and dedicating the building on 13 June 1931. (Both cornerstones can be seen in our present hallway just outside the narthex door, as can Advent's of 1900.) For cost-saving, they moved and slightly rebuilt the organ from the Strand Theatre on Manor Street, no longer useful with the new-fangled sound films, and the chancel received rather spartan furnishings. The new, young Pr. Trumpeter inherited an enormous task at his installation on 19 March 1930, and it was to be a long indebtedness.

The "chapel" was eventually sold in 1939 to the newly-founded Boys Club of Lancaster, who leveled the sloping floor to make a gym floor and brought two small buildings from the defunct C.C.C. (Civil Conservation Corps) Camp (now the Kiwanis area of Lancaster County Park) to place between the church and Pershing Avenue. In 1973 the Boys Club sold it all to the present owner, the Spanish American Civic Association. One can still see parts of the original building at the rear of the property, though plans recently announced for renovations may further camouflage the original building.

Finally, on 22 June 1947 amidst great rejoicing the congregation burned its mortgage, and a newly-completed chancel was dedicated on 28 January 1951, the last significant capital improvement before St. Mark's left that location.

Repeated references to "choir" at St. Mark's seem to refer to a paid quartet, troubles in keeping personnel for the four positions and requests for volunteers to augment the quartet.

Pr. Trumpeter retired in ill health on 1 December 1957, and The Rev. John Kammerer came from Millheim, Pennsylvania on 1 June 1958 to become St. Mark's last pastor, leaving on 27 September 1970 for the Muddy Creek parish in northern Lancaster County. His departure fueled merger thoughts of greater intensity than ever.

## Merger

Uniting Advent and St. Mark's was not a new idea in 1971. The severe shortage of pastors in the decade after World War I caused Pr. E. P. Pfatteicher, president of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, to propose such a merger in 1928; but Advent, debt-free and not willing to help with St. Mark's long-awaited building on South Ann Street, turned thumbs down.

A more imminent impetus for merger came out of an invitation from St. Mark's council for cooperative efforts with Zion and St. Stephen's in the late 1960's, leading to the Southeast Lancaster Lutheran Coordinating Committee, three representatives of each church council: Russell Haus, Homer Moore and James Shuman from St. Mark's Fred Walzl, LeRoy ("Bud") Campbell and Frank Landis from Zion, and Harold Stumpf, Karl Moyer and Karl Romig from St. Stephen's. With all three parishes in decline, with pressure from the city against St. Mark's regarding building code violations, and with significant repairs soon to be needed to the 1931 building, St. Mark's moved toward greater and greater financial peril.

Meanwhile, Advent had determined to relocate, had approved a site at Pitney and Hempstead (later renamed Greenfield) Roads on 29 June 1969, and led by Lloyd Hurst, Robert Mable, Mel Shaub, Jack Cooper, Mark Eaby, Ralph Root and Robert Coble, among others, had begun plans to build. Realizing the financial realities, the tentative-at-best merger hopes with Zion and/or St. Stephen's with Pastor Kammerer's September 1970 resignation in hand and Advent's Pr. Schneider supplying St. Mark's as well as providing the two parishes a taste of what life could be like together, St. Mark's now approached Advent for merger talks. On 10 January 1971 the two congregations merged effective 30 May 1971. Mel Shaub became chairman of a newly-formed planning council for the new building, and on 21 May 1972 the parish adopted the name Good Shepherd. The building was dedicated on 28 October 1973 with The Rev. Arthur Yeagy, secretary of Central Pennsylvania Synod, as preacher and a recital on the new Zimmer pipe organ that night by Gere Hancock one of America's foremost concert organist.

The Advent building was sold to the First Apostolic Church in Jesus Christ, who in turn sold it to Keystone Towers for office condominiums. The St. Mark's building on South Ann Street was sold to Ray's Temple, who continue to maintain an active ministry there.

The merger takes on added significance when one recalls that the Trumpeter and Kammerer pastorates moved St. Mark's toward a General Synod style and attitude despite her Ministerium affiliation up to 1953. Eucharistic frequency increased markedly at Advent but not at St. Mark's, and liturgical life grew increasingly formal and ritualistic at Advent under Prs. Harrison, Kline and Schneider, who had come to Lancaster from the same Millheim parish previously served by Pr. Kammerer! Communion was served at St. Mark's with common cup up to 1930, when the Trumpeter pastorate introduced individual communion glasses.

Enormous credit goes to Pr. Schneider for not merely helping two congregations say goodbye to former buildings and identities but for helping two parishes of rather different style meld together into the vibrant parish called Good Shepherd. For that service alone, not to mention his untiring and outstanding service to the former Lancaster District and Central Pennsylvania Synod, Susquehanna University had good reason to confer on him the degree Doctor of Divinity *honoris causa* on 19 May 1985.

The untimely death of Robert Coble, first treasurer of the newly-formed parish, in 1973, provoked contributions by family and friends for the statue of the Good Shepherd that graces the front of our building, and in April 1974 Alois Lidauer arrived from Salzburg, Austria with a plaster model of the work he would carve over the next three months. The finished work was hoisted into position on 12 June

1974, set on four blocks of dry ice above the pedestal so the supporting straps underneath the statue could be retrieved, and as the dry ice evaporated, the statue settled into place. The Coble family retained and still treasures the plaster model.

Pr. Schneider, continuing student of such Lutheran documents as the Augsburg Confession and keenly aware of theological issues of the church and her mission, helped Good Shepherd to move gradually but surely toward an evangelical catholic stance in liturgy and doctrine. Thus, for example, the central axis of the nave, the center aisle, features font and table at either end, emphasizing the two sacraments in a heightened parish sacramental life. His concern for and appreciation of music as the handmaid of theology, as Luther put it, led to an acoustical and spatial environment wherein organ, choir and instruments can function with maximum effectiveness. His strongly Christo-centric preaching, constantly disciplined by classical Lutheran theology, found God's word expounded in lively and challenging fashion. *Deo gratias* for pastors such as he — and for ours at present as well.

Pr. Schneider's call to the troubled St. Luke, Silver Spring, Maryland, helped Good Shepherd to crystalize numerous issues. The church council took the lead by instructing the call committee to seek out a pastor willing to help move the parish toward weekly eucharist for each worshipper. When The Rev. Gerald Spice began serving as Good Shepherd's second pastor on 1 March 1987, we gradually discovered that experience during the pastoral vacancy and early into the next pastorate helped solidify principles and trends of theology, liturgy and churchmanship already in motion, as well as leading toward yet further implications.

Christian education flourished as never before, and the constant influx of young families began to stretch the building far beyond its capacity. The arrival of Pr. Timothy Bettger on 1 November 1987 led to further growth merely exacerbated the facilities problem, and the gradual festering of space needs led to a congregational vote on 8 January 1989 to enlarge office, educational, music, sacristy and recreational space and to add a chapel. Amidst the Lancaster County building boom and a fairly busy construction trade, bids came in at higher figures than deemed acceptable, and on 16 April 1989 the congregation approved a reduced proposal, eliminating the chapel, though leaving space for its later addition, and trimming various other costs. It is this enlarged building we dedicate this month.

The resignation of Good Shepherd's Director of Music in January 1989, effective 31 July 1989, prompted careful consideration of budget and ministry issues, and on 22 February 1989 the church council voted to seek a third full-time staff member with chief responsibility for all aspects of music in the parish. Mr. Scott Weidler began service on 1 August 1989, fortified by the council's designation as "cantor," the "chief singer" of the parish, and was formally installed as such by the dean of the Lancaster Conference, the first such designee in Lancaster or Lower Susquehanna Synod. Our enlarged, improved facilities do not come any too soon to support the growing music ministry among us.

The names of personnel responsible for the newly-enlarged building appear elsewhere in the current dedication documents, but one name stands above all others. To Mel Shaub, chair of the building project, go unending honor and gratitude for this second offering of himself in innumerable ways to the success of this project. We all stand greatly in his debt.

## GOOD SHEPHERD PARISH . . . A MARK OF THE CHURCH (*a little something for a time capsule*)

by Dr. Winthrop P. Wilcox, Jr.

I suspect that booklets composed for dedication services of church buildings are glanced at quickly once, then placed in the bottom of desk drawers to become archival for the *next* dedication! Dr. Moyer has admirably recounted the history of Good Shepherd Church in Lancaster. What I have in mind is to review the definition of *church* as we currently understand it, place Good Shepherd within that definition and make some observations and predictions about the state of the church as it looks to the beginning of the Third Millennium Anno Domini. Please, don't wait for the next dedication — reread this booklet on New Year's Eve, 1999, and see for yourself what Good Shepherd has done, and how the church will have changed!

### What is THE CHURCH?

Perhaps the German word for it, *Kirche*, is apt here, for it reflects the Greek word *kyriakon* "the house which is of the Lord," *Kyrios*.) The Lord God has called out (*ekklesia*) and called together (synagogue) a people (*laos*) from the world's chaotic, crowded (*ochlos*) nothingness. From Exodus to Revelation, the story of the church develops — from a rebellious rabble to a wondrous multitude gathered before the face of the Lord God. But there is more.

The reality of the People of God exists in the faithful, mysterious promise of God that points *beyond* history, even in the midst of the church's daily living *within* history. This reality is both visible and invisible. And it must not be forgotten that as Good Shepherd *parish* we exist also as resident aliens (*paroikos*), dispersed in a society that knows us not, and increasingly, doesn't even speak our language any more. Parish is not so much a geographical term as a political one. We are God's people in Lancaster, but not God's *whole* people. We are strangers in a strange land, called out, washed, fed, energized and sent back out as Christ's body into a world that still knows *Him* not! And if the parish-church is not actively opposed in America any more, it is, even worse, ignored.

### What are the MARKS OF THE CHURCH?

As the Lutheran tradition understands the church, there are six criteria. Four were hammered out by the antignostic Fathers in the fourth century *Nicene Creed*...

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church

and the other two are listed in the *Augsburg Confession* (VII)...

The church is the assembly of saints among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.

The church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic; it is grounded in the preached Word, baptism, and the eucharist. There is great mystery here! At once, these six marks of the church convey its eternal nature, and its everyday life.

### How is the church ONE?

The now and future church is in unity with itself as it is one in the Body of Christ. It is to be living sacraments of Christ's promise to the world, even as the Holy Eucharist unifies and feeds it for all the

ages. *Can Good Shepherd show in visible ways the unity of the risen Lord and all for whom He died?*

### **How is the church HOLY?**

The church is called apart, set aside from the world to be God's own possession, for the sake of the world. *How can Good Shepherd, the forgiven unjust, bring God's justice to the world?*

### **How is the church CATHOLIC?**

The church's horizon, its goal in history, must always be *kata holos*, towards the complete whole of God's will for His creation. True catholicity has no other denominational name than Christian. *How can Good Shepherd, 'with all the company of Heaven' (LBW) proclaim Christ to the world and 'to a people yet unborn?' (Psalm 22)*

### **How is the church APOSTOLIC?**

The 'apostolic thing' was, and still is, *apostolos*, being *sent out* with the impetus of the Holy Spirit, in a compelling 'trajectory' of Christ's mystic breath. *How can Good Shepherd 'live in the absolute future which has already arrived in Jesus Christ?'*

### **How is the church constituted by WORD AND SACRAMENT?**

The previous four criteria of the church may often be hidden to the church and to the world, but the reformers added two more that are not so hidden: the audible Word of God spoken through a human mouth into human ears, the visible Body of Christ chewed as bread and swallowed as wine, and the wetness of Grace in the baptismal waters. Where there is the Word and the sacraments, there is the church! There are the saints! There is the source of faith and faithfulness! *How can Good Shepherd keep the Word and sacraments central in our life together?*

The ELCA constitution also speaks about the church (C3.02):

The church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the church, and the universal church exists in and through congregations. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers both from the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

*How will Good Shepherd parish enliven these words in Lancaster over the next twenty years? Before the roof needs replaced again!*

Perhaps it would be helpful to catalogue some predictions, hopes and visions for Good Shepherd according to the six marks of the church just discussed.

### **ONENESS**

There will be increasing unity of the Synod Bishops with their people. The manifestation of Lutheran unity in the ELCA will shift to the Synods. Authority for national or international Lutheranism will be increasingly exercised by a House of Bishops *and* a House of Theologians (teachers of the church), both in collegiality with the people. The Synod Bishop will be more truly episcopal, preaching, teaching, admonishing, and presiding at the eucharist regularly throughout the Synod. One or two parishes will be appointed each year from which the Bishop's ministry will emanate.



With increasing frequency, there will be work and worship experience with Roman Catholic and Episcopal parishes. By the year 2000, eucharist will be shared, albeit infrequently. There will be more episcopal dialogue, and perhaps a common liturgy, Vespers. The winds that brought sweeping political change in 1989 will bring equally sweeping religious changes by 1999.

### **HOLINESS**

As immigration of ethnic Lutherans to the United States declines, our birth rates approach less than zero growth, and state churches in Europe approach disarray in the midst of economic and political turmoil, the total number of Lutherans in the world will decrease. There may be a smaller people of God, but it will be closer together and closer to its Lord in faith and missioned sentness. For the church to be real salt and leaven to the world, faithful smallness will suffice!

Good Shepherd will continue to plan, think, and speak biblically. We will worship more frequently and witness to our separatedness in society. We may have a radio ministry of preaching and music. We will take our faith into the synapses of our daily lives. Teaching of our youth will be central. We will be more visible in our faithfulness!

### **CATHOLICITY**

We will frequently contact and will help support Lutheran parishes in other countries; we might even support a foreign Lutheran seminarian. There will be increasing interdependence of parishes in our Synod. The word *parish* will lose much of its neighborhood character.

### **APOSTOLICITY**

We will advertise more, and may support a local pre-seminary student. We will develop a day care program that may issue into a day school. By 2010, the Synod will have decided to form a Lutheran secondary school, or a widely used after-school educational program. Evangelism will be a part of our life. More people will do part-time, even certified full-time lay ministry. In an American society that will be beset by economic disruptions, stewardship of time and talents will increase.

### **WORD AND SACRAMENTS**

The Service of Word and Sacrament will be normative in all Synod parishes, even as the LBW is in its second edition! Good Shepherd will call a seminarian as Vicar, will have at least a part-time Youth and Education Director, and will have a private secretary for the pastors! We will build a chapel, celebrate Morning and Evening Prayer daily, and obtain a real church bell! Private confessions will increase. Stations of the cross will be installed. The Holy Scriptures will be for us a lens with which to view the sweeping changes of history soon to come. We will live and worship as faithful Christians, in the Reformation traditions, but in free, ever new ways.

Our new building, we dedicate today is securely constructed, and grounded on a cornerstone inscribed with the monogram of Jesus Christ; it contains the name cards of hundreds of Lutheran Christians who helped dedicate the original Good Shepherd Parish Church. But long after this and any subsequent buildings are dust, and this booklet is in some quaint museum of Lutheranism, the church called out by Christ will exist. Christ promised us in Matthew 28:20, 'I am with you always...' The Greek literally reads, I (with you) AM. The very name of the Father, the Lord of Hosts, surrounds us in unfailing promise.

The most famous slogan of the Lutheran Reformation is apt here — may it remain on our lips and in our hearts, but not on our cannons and sword blades!

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