

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
Historical Notes
Pastors 6-14, 1858-1884

6. CORNELIUS RIEMENSNYDER (1858-1859)

(The spelling in the Council minutes and in his East Pennsylvania Synod obituary is Reimensnyder, but in other places - for example, Mt. Morris Past and Present - it is Riemensnyder, which is more likely.)

Pastor Riemensnyder began his service in Mt. Morris on 15 April 1858 and resigned on 1 April 1859. After less than a year here, he returned to Pennsylvania, soon became a Lutheran leader and one of the best preachers in New York City.

Services seem to have been held on Saturday evening as well as Sunday morning. A dwelling was rented for the parsonage. The sexton, Calvin Potter, was paid \$25/year for his regular duties and extra pay for extra services. A Mr. Beard and S. Knodle succeeded him as sexton, and by November 1859 the pay had doubled to \$50/year.

At a special Saturday meeting of the Council (21 August 1858), "Brother Jacob Beard was present to receive brotherly admonition and reproof for unkind and unchristian (hatred) entertained and expressed against the Rev. G.A. Bowers of Oregon, but Brother Beard being entirely callous," the matter was deferred until Tuesday evening because the hour for divine service in the church had arrived. The next Tuesday he was charged with unjustly retaining a subscription (pledge or contribution) of \$2.50 made by Dr. B. G. Stephens for the support of Pastor Bowers. (The charge is underlined in the minutes and signed by Samuel Knodle. Direct quotes from the participants are given.) "A long time spent in patient admonition and brotherly counsel failed to convince and convict Mr. Beard of his unjust and unchristian course, and he ungentlemanly and undignifiedly resented all reproof and withdrew from the Council in a passion." The Council then, acting under a deep sense of their Christian duty, though painful to their feelings, unanimously excommunicated Jacob Beard from the church. Without explanation, Jacob Beard reappears as sexton and contributing member less than four months later. Perhaps the excommunication had its desired effect.

In September 1858, E.J. Ohr was lay delegate to the Synod of Northern Illinois meeting in Mendota. In late 1858, the Council was concerned about the church debt, amounting to \$313.91. Voluntary subscriptions (pledges or contributions) were sought from the members present at a special Saturday congregational meeting, and \$301 was subscribed (on the third try!). Members present and subscribing are listed: Thos. L. Potter (\$2), S. Knodle (\$6), C. Reimensnyder (\$6), George Knodle (\$6), David Rine, Sr. (\$40), Philip Sprecher (\$45), Sam'l Swingley (\$8), George Swingley (\$25), Dan'l Sprecher (\$65), E.J. Ohr (\$10), Wm. Schultz (\$40), Wm. Rine (\$20), George Sigler (\$8), Maria Hedrick (\$10), Cath. Newcomer (\$10).

Cornelius Riemensnyder spent 46 years in the ministry, 31 of them in the East Pennsylvania Synod. He was born on 25 December 1819 in Augusta County, Virginia, and he died on 1 April 1890 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania (age 70). He was the son of a Lutheran minister, George, and Mary

Christiana. His older brother, J.J. Riemensnyder, also was a Lutheran pastor. As a boy, Cornelius moved to Chillicothe, Ohio. He studied law and was admitted to the bar. He studied theology at Lane Seminary, in Cincinnati (where Dr. Lyman Beecher presided). In 1844 he entered the ministry and held pastorates in Westminster, MD, Valatie, NY, Somerset, OH, Mt. Morris, IL, Pikeland, PA, and Columbia, PA. He studied also at Yale College and Andover Theological Seminary, was an agent for the American Tract Society, and oversaw a private academy in Easton, PA. In 1864 he was missionary of the American Sunday School Union, in Lancaster, PA. He served for 26 years, was very efficient, traveled 100,000 miles, and organized several hundred Sunday Schools. In 1856 he married Henrietta J. Thurman at Columbus, OH; she was the sister of U.S. Senator A.O. Thurman. They had six children. A two-week paralysis led to his death. He is buried at Woodward Hill Cemetery, in Lancaster, PA. He was something of a poet. He wrote "The Sunday-School Guide, and (an?) Assistant in the Moral and Christian Education of the Young" (72 pages). He had a genial presence. "His manner was always pleasant and winning, his mind was well stored, and his words were marked by precision and instruction. His mingling throughout life with people of intelligence and prominence gave him an air of confidence, yet ever tempered to us by the grace of humility."

7. DANIEL SCHINDLER (1859-1860)

Daniel Schindler came to Mt. Morris from Springfield, Ohio. On 5 June 1859 he preached at the 10 AM and 7:30 PM services. The attendance was full, and all were "much edified and interested." So the congregation called him and offered a salary of \$500, house rent, and moving expenses. He assumed pastoral duties on 2 October 1859. The following year he was given three or four weeks "to recreate and visit friends in Ohio." Then suddenly the Minutes indicate, without further explanation, that on 28 October 1860 at the suggestion of the Council Schindler resigned "under very painful circumstances."

On 25 October 1859, the Constitution was amended to require the election of three elders and three deacons. Elected elders were Philip Sprecher (later chosen treasurer by the Council), George Knodle, and Samuel Knodle (later elected secretary). Elected deacons were Daniel Sprecher, William Schultz, and William Rine (whose term had not expired). In April 1860, the congregation requested election without previous nomination, and a new election was held. The results were the same, except that Alexander Hedrick replaced William Schultz as deacon and Daniel Sprecher rather than Philip Sprecher became treasurer. Philip Sprecher went as lay delegate to the Northern Illinois Synod meeting in Knoxville in 1860. The Council also considered building a parsonage at this time. S. Knodle was hired as sexton in 1859 @ \$50/yr. but was paid 25¢ per evening extra to set up for the Choir (spelled Quire) on Saturday evening. In April 1860 the Council began meeting the first Monday of each month, often in the pastor's study. Councilmen served staggered two-year terms and elected their own secretary and treasurer. Men sometimes appeared before Council to present claims of money due. The Minutes of 3 September 1860 conclude with this note: "The evil tendencies of members of Council thoughtlessly making public much of the business of the Council was alluded to, and the importance of being more careful as to how we talk of those things in public enjoined."

Weekly services were held Sunday morning. An occasional reference is made to a Saturday afternoon service. Wednesday evening prayer services were held weekly except in "the busy season." The first record of holy communion is given for 5 February and 6 May 1860. At the first, 88 are listed as present, 26 as absent, indicating a communing congregation of at least 114.

From his West Pennsylvania Synod obituary, we learn that Daniel Schindler, D.D., entered the ministry in 1858 at the age of 28 and held eight pastorates, ending in Hanover, PA. He is called a devout Christian man who possessed superior gifts of mind. He died on 25 June 1893 at the age of 63.

8. EPHRAIM MILLER (1861-1863)

Coming from Cedarville, Ephraim Miller, who had been the third Lutheran pastor in Mt. Morris (1851-1852, see above), returned in 1861. At this time he was also serving his second term (1859-1862) as president of the Synod of Northern Illinois. Following Schindler's resignation, Miller accepted the call to Mt. Morris on 24 January 1861 and assumed his pastoral duties here on March 10. The minutes of these years are occupied with settling personal disputes and getting bills paid.

A dispute arose between D. Sprecher and Elias J. Ohr. Ohr was accused of making unchristian remarks about members of the church and was asked to meet with the Council. At that meeting (8 February 1862) he told the Council they had no right to try his case as he did not consider himself a member, having forfeited his membership by violation of the IXth Article of the Constitution (which said membership required consent of Council and regular communing and contributing). He did not desire to be recognized as a member, and so he was declared to be no longer a member of the church, such fact to be announced after the service the following Sunday morning. Pastor Miller said he would ascertain on his pastoral visits who wanted to remain members and discharge their duties to the church.

Facing a debt of \$321.87 in October 1861, the assessment rule was adopted. Members were assessed according to the value of their real and personal property, based on the last assessment recorded in Oregon. They were to pay at least quarterly. But later it was left to the individual members to decide whether they would accept this plan or not. When the church debt remained the following May, Pastor Miller asked if the congregation wished him to continue as pastor. The Council responded by saying they had implicit confidence in Pastor Miller, his withdrawal would be detrimental to the spiritual interest of the church, they would increase their efforts in connection with the pastor in the upbuilding of the church, and they would increasingly pray for the pastor personally that his labors may be owned and blessed by God. The following month (June 28) the church completed the payment of his salary for the year. In October the minutes say the Council must make a greater effort to meet Rev. Miller's salary and the amount for incidental expenses. But on 28 February 1863 he submitted his resignation. The congregation asked him to stay three more months. He was "released from his labor here as pastor by the middle of May." The following December the congregation again extended the call to him, but he did not accept.

In May 1862, all the Council members resigned and an entire new Council was elected. The elders were Jacob Lilly, Elias Baker, and Elias Malone. The deacons were Alexander Hedrick, John Startzman (soon replaced by B.T. Hedrick), and Daniel Sprecher. Brother Upton Miller served as sexton in 1861 at a salary of \$50/year. In 1862 Councilman B.T. Hedrick was authorized to employ a sexton at no more than 50-cents per Sunday. In December 1861, Jacob Lilly, from Paynes Point (where Miller also served as pastor), joined the Mt. Morris congregation and was immediately elected an elder. New members in April 1863 included Margaret Ell, Sebastian Ell, Cath. Margaret Ell, and Thomas W. and Elizabeth Withers. Two communions were held each year from 1861-1863. In October 1863, Brother Stroh (founding pastor) chaired the congregational meeting. In search of a pastor, Brothers Sharitts, Easterday, and Ephraim Miller were called...unsuccessfully. On 1 May 1864, Brother Rufus Smith, of Janesville, was called.

9. RUFUS SMITH (1864-1866)

On May 1, Pastor Rufus Smith, from Janesville, agreed to take his call to Mt. Morris under advisement. On September 26, a congregational meeting was held at which the congregation entered into a new covenant with God and each other at the start of his pastorate. The congregation admitted that in the past they had not "come up to the high and holy requirements of our blessed Redeemer" (to be separate from the world, to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, to shine as a light in the world, to be a living epistle known and read by all). And so they resolved:

"1) That we will enter into a new Covenant with God and each other, that `He shall be our God, and we will be his people.'

2) We in God's holy fear solemnly covenant and agree that as God shall give us grace we will in our families, in the prayer meeting, in the congregation, and under all circumstances in the world, both by precept and example, prove that we are the Lord's witnesses and followers of the meek and loving Jesus.

3) That each one of us hereby agrees that if we should prove unfaithful to the above covenants, with a disposition to remain inactive in God's cause, we will request our names to be taken from the Church Book, as God has `blotted them out of His book on high' (Rev. 3:5), that we may occupy our true position before the world."

This Covenant of 1864 was signed by 37 members: R. Smith, Dan'l Sprecher, J. Lilly, Sam'l Knodle, Sam'l S.(?) Miller, Fayette Hedrick, Elizabeth Stroh, Rebecca Potter, Sarah Newcomer, Maza Dick, Elizabeth Withers, Louiza Miller, Ann McCleary, Ellen Knodle, John Jones, Laura Jones, Amelia Sharer, Mary Swingley, Anna Rine, Elizabeth Cook, John L. Shook, Kessiah R. Shook, Elizabeth McCoy, Henry Wertz, Wm. Rine, Lucretia E. Knodle, James Miller, Benj. T. Hedrick, Caroline Miller, Maria Hedrick, Mary M. Baker, Caroline Thomas, Elizabeth Allen, Eliza C. Rine, David Rine, Elias Baker, and John Startzman.

On 26 April 1865, a congregational meeting elected elders (Daniel Sprecher, Jacob Lilly, Elias Malone) and deacons (Samuel Knodle, Jacob Sharer, Elias Baker), and it unanimously re-elected Rufus Smith "to continue with us so long as pastor and the congregation can work together for good." Before the installation of the Council (composed of the elders and the deacons), however, one died, one withdrew from the church,

and two chose not to serve. And so on July 29, the congregation decided to dispense with elders for a time and have only deacons. Henry Wertz, Levi Snyder, and Daniel Sprecher were elected deacons for two years.

The minutes do not refer to it, but on 29 April 1865 the congregation purchased its first parsonage at a cost of \$900. The building still stands at 203 East Center Street, near Clark. (Picture in Diamond Jubilee booklet, p.5).

The next recorded minutes are from a congregational meeting on 25 November 1866, which was chaired by N.J. Stroh. At this time both Council and Pastor (Smith) had withdrawn from the church, and so the congregation was without official leadership. They agreed to elect and install a new Council, consisting of two elders (Benjamin Hedrick and Elias Baker, who was later elected secretary) and four deacons (Elias Malone, who was later elected chairman, David Felker, Wm. Rine, Frederick Witman). Sixteen months later, under Pastor Whitehill, this action was declared unconstitutional and unjust and was redressed.

There is no record of communions in 1864-1866. It could be that little of the significant activity of these years made it into the record book.

10. R.B. WHITEHILL (1867-1869)

Pastor Whitehill preached in Mt. Morris on 6 October 1867, and after the service a congregational meeting called him to become pastor. Three weeks later (27 October 1867) he assumed the pastoral duties. One communion is recorded for 1867 (December 22), two for 1868 (April and November), and one for 1869 (December 18).

A congregational meeting on 21 March 1868 declared the suspensions and the dropping of elders under Pastor Smith unconstitutional. It was regarded as a scheme in direct opposition to the interest of the Lutheran Church. Christian sympathy was extended to those affected/suspended with the hope that they would again share the privileges of membership of which they had been unjustly deprived. A week later (March 29) a new Council was elected - elders: Elias Malone (secretary) and B.J. Hedrick (treasurer); deacons: Wm. Rine, David Felker, F. Witman, Benj. Row. These officers were installed after the service on April 26.

On 23 May 1868 the times of service were changed to 10 AM and 6 PM, and monthly collections for incidental expenses, which started monthly on 9 November 1867, were now made weekly. On 18 October 1868 the congregation noted that Pastor Whitehill "presented his account for the past year which was considerable (sic) in advance of his salary," and they adjusted (moved up) the date of the start of his second year. Five months later, on 14 March 1869, Whitehill resigned after the morning service (effective the next day), and the congregation accepted his resignation - reason unstated.

11. A.C. FRICK (1869-1871)

A.C. Frick led the divine service on 21 November 1869 and thus began his pastoral duties. On 18 December 1869 the Lutheran Church of Adaline

(sic) was received into this charge. Its Council applied to unite with Mt. Morris in forming one pastoral charge and being supplied with preaching by the same pastor, and the Mt. Morris Church Council invited the Adaline congregation "to labor together in harmony and love in the work of building up the Church of Christ." This arrangement continued for six years (until November 1875 or 1 December 1875), when Adaline united with the Lutheran Church in Forreston.

In March 1870, a new Council was elected: Benjamin T. Hedrick and Elias Malone as elders; Benjamin Row, David Felker, Samuel Lookabaugh, Franklin Miller, and Frederick Witman as deacons. These were installed in April. The Council went to alternating (staggered) two-year terms, and monthly meetings were set for the last Saturday.

In June 1870 the Council decided to seek aid "in supporting our minister" from the Home Missionary Society; Brothers Stroh and Frick were asked to draw up the memorial to the Home Missionary Society. (It isn't known whether this attempt was successful.) A salary of \$400 or more was promised, but only \$372 was pledged/subscribed. In August 1870, a joint meeting of Mt. Morris and Adaline at Adaline (four were present from Adaline, six from Mt. Morris plus Pastor Frick) agreed to retain Frick for the coming year and to pay a salary of \$600 (\$410 from Mt. Morris and \$190 from Adaline). In September the congregation unanimously elected Frick for a second year beginning in November. In November Frick was appointed to get pledges/subscriptions to pay off the debt for incidental expenses, and by late January nearly enough money was pledged.

On 26 August 1871 a joint Mt. Morris-Adaline meeting was held in Mt. Morris (three from Adaline and six from Mt. Morris plus Pastor Frick were present). It was noted that the pastor's salary was in arrears for the past quarter to a considerable amount; all diligence was to be used to make it up. However, adequate support for the coming year could not be found, and it was thought best to have a change of pastors. Frick was asked to resign at the end of the year, and he did, requesting that the salary be paid up by then. In November, Council found itself \$50 short of paying the salary, but it was all pledged and so was to be collected as soon as possible. It was thought best to obtain a minister as soon as possible. Luther L. Lipe, of Sterling, was not engaged at that time, and the Council decided to write to him. On 10 December 1871, Frick led his last service in Mt. Morris; after the service the congregation called Luther L. Lipe to be its new pastor.

Holy communion was held once (December 18) in 1869, twice in 1870 (May, October), and twice in 1871 (January and June).

12. LUTHER L. LIPE (1871-1879) - picture in Diamond Jubilee Booklet

Luther Lipe was born in Montgomery, Illinois on 17 October 1845 and was educated at Gettysburg College and Seminary, in Pennsylvania. In 1871, at the age of 26, he was ordained by the Synod of Northern Illinois at Galesburg and came directly to Mt. Morris, where he was pastor for eight years, the longest pastorate (7 years and 7 months) to this time. (He was to return for six more years, 1897-1903.) After Frick's last Sunday service on 10 December 1871, Lipe was chosen to be pastor. And on December 31, he preached here and consented to be pastor for one year. He stayed longer, and from 1875 to 1877 he also served as president of

the Synod of Northern Illinois. On 6 November 1872 he married Flora Stager; they had two children, John and Olive.

Troubles with the Adaline connection developed during these years. At a joint meeting in September 1872 (five were present from Mt. Morris, only one from Adaline), Lipe said his salary was "entirely too small to support him." The Councils were not prepared to discuss the matter and adjourned until two weeks later, when no one from Adaline showed up. Deacon Lookabaugh was appointed to visit Adaline, but in February the matter was still not settled. In May 1875 the pastor was owed \$274 from 1873 and 1874. In July it was decided to contact each member and ask them to give according to their ability to pay off church debts. But at the end of the year, \$296.82 remained due the pastor. However, the previous month, in November 1875, the Lutheran Church in Adaline withdrew from the Mt. Morris charge/connection to unite with the Forreston Church, and there was unanimous consent to this action. Adaline had been served by the Mt. Morris pastor since 18 December 1869. With the Adaline Congregation gone, the Mt. Morris Church in December asked Lipe to serve as pastor for another year with the understanding he be paid \$600/year (to be paid quarterly) and he preach two weekly sermons (Sunday morning and evening).

There are no minutes from December 1875 to July 1880, and during this time a new church was built. In 1872 a fence was built between the old church and the parsonage, and in 1873 a new roof was put on the old church and the two chimneys were reduced to one. But on 6 May 1877, the decision was made to build a new church at the corner of Seminary and Main Streets. The lot was donated by the Honorable Robert R. Hitt, secretary at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, in response to a letter from Mrs. Harriet Middour. The date of the warranty deed (no. 74295), sent from Paris, France, and filed for record on 14 October 1878 with E.K. Light, Recorder, is 24 September 1878 and reads as follows:

"The Grantors Robert R. Hitt and Sallie R. Hitt his wife of the County of Ogle and State of Illinois, for and in consideration of one dollar in hand paid, convey and warrant to Elias Malone, Samuel Lookabaugh, William Rine, Samuel Middour, John F. Witman and Oliver H. Swingley - Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mt. Morris in the County of Ogle and State of Illinois and their successors in office, the following described real estate, being part of a lot, peice (sic) or parcel of land known as the "Seminary Square" commencing at a point sixty-six (66) feet South of the South East corner of block 5 (5) of the Original Plat of the Town of Mt. Morris, running thence South sixty three and one half (63½) feet, thence West one hundred and twenty (120) feet, thence North sixty three and one half (63½) feet, thence East one hundred and twenty (120) feet to the place of beginning situated in the County of Ogle and State of Illinois, hereby releasing and waiving all rights under and by virtue of the Homestead Exemption laws of this state.

"Be it remembered that on the 24th day of September A.D. 1878 in the city of Paris, Republic of France, at the Legation of the United States, No. 95 rue de Chaillot, before me Edward F. Noyes, minister of the United States in France, duly authorized as such to take acknowledgement & proof of the execution of deeds and other instruments of writing under seal to be used & recorded in the State of Illinois, personally appeared Robert R. Hitt and Sallie R. Hitt, his wife, who are personally known to me to be the real persons whose names are subscribed to the foregoing deed as having executed the same, & acknowledged that they executed the same for the purposes & uses therein expressed. And the said Sallie R. Hitt wife of said Robert R. Hitt, being of lawful age, & having been by me,

separate and apart from her said husband examined, & the contents of said deed fully made known & explained to her, acknowledged that she had executed the same & relinquished her dower to the land and tenements therein mentioned voluntarily & without compulsion of her husband."

The cornerstone was laid on 30 September 1877, Pastor Detweiler of Polo preaching in the Seminary Chapel. On 10 November 1878, the new church was dedicated. The sermon that day was given by the Rev. Dr. Prof. Samuel Sprecher, of Springfield, Ohio. (Picture in Diamond Jubilee Booklet, p.6) The total cost, with furnishings, was \$7,087.74. Nearly half (\$3,465) was raised before dedication, and nearly half of the remainder (\$1,800) was subscribed/pledged on dedication day. It took four years (to 29 June 1882) to pay off the costs. The following year, in 1879, the old church was sold to the Christian Church for \$900, and they were still using it in 1922.

The Ogle County Democrat in its 4 October 1877 issue reported the laying of the cornerstone as follows:

The cornerstone of the new Lutheran Church was laid last Sunday afternoon. A most excellent discourse was delivered by Rev. J.S. Detweiler, in the Seminary Chapel, after which the audience adjourned to the site of the new building to witness the laying of the stone on the walls. There were deposited in the stone a Bible, Book of Worship, Lutheran Catechism, several church papers together with a copy each of the Chicago Tribune and Ogle County Democrat and a detailed statement of the beginning and progress of the undertaking.

Presumably these papers had deteriorated beyond preservation when the cornerstone was opened at the time of the cornerstone-laying of the new church on Brayton Road. (This information was found in the 1952 building committee records.)

Also during Lipe's first pastorate the envelope system was adopted (on 29 March 1873). In mid-1875 the Council decided to hold monthly meetings on the first Monday. The following are listed as Council members in 1872: Benjamin Hedrick, Samuel Lookabaugh, Upton Miller, Frederick Witman, and Elias Malone. In 1873 Samuel Middour and Newton Stonebraker are listed.

Lipe resigned as pastor in Mt. Morris in the first week of August 1879. From 1879 to 1885 he was pastor of St. Paul, in Dixon, in what they call "the musical period" of their church. Lipe was a good song leader, and the congregational singing showed marked improvement. Dixon noted also steady growth in church and Sunday School under Lipe. He left Dixon in 1885 to undertake a difficult mission in Lincoln, Nebraska, but returned in 1898 to help celebrate the Golden Jubilee of St. Paul. After serving six years in Nebraska, Lipe came to Sharon, Wisconsin (part of the Synod of Northern Illinois) in September 1891. And in 1897 he returned to Mt. Morris for six years (see below). During these years he served also as a deeply interested and active member of the Board of Trustees of Carthage College. He died on 13 May 1925 at the age of 79 and is likely buried in Sharon, Wisconsin.

13. J.W. HENDERSON (1879-1881)

Pastor J.W. Henderson served as pastor in Dixon from 1877 to 1890 and probably resided there. From 1879 to 1881 he served as pastor also in

Mt. Morris. He was called as pastor on 12 October 1879. After a nearly five-year pause, the Record book resumes on 8 July 1880, with A.R. Long as secretary. The Council resolved to hold regular monthly meetings on the second Monday. The members of the Council were Lookabaugh, S. Middour, O.H. Swingley, Stonebraker, and A.R. Long. What appears to be the start of committees took place the same year: Lookabaugh and Middour comprised a finance committee, Swingley and Stonebraker a supply committee...and Long was to look after the comfort of the church and the duty of janitor. In January 1881, B. Withers was employed as sexton @ \$6/mo. On 23 November 1880 the minutes record a 3/4-page resolution mourning the death of Councilman John F. Whitman. His death left an elder vacancy, which Father Stroh was nominated to fill in January (1881). Holy communion was held once in 1880 (October) and twice in 1881 (August, December). The number of communicant members listed for 1880-1886 was 126. In August 1880 an envelope system was again adopted (having been earlier adopted under Lipe on 29 March 1873).

An interesting note appears under the date of 8 August 1880: "The ladies of the church several weeks ago conceived the idea of having an excursion to Chicago for the purpose of raising money to paint the church. It was held August 24th and the amount of \$125 realized."

On 31 January 1881, Monday afternoon (1 PM) in the Lecture Room of the church, a congregational meeting was held to consider three questions:

- 1) Shall we insure the church? A vote of 16-1 said Yes, for \$3,000.
- 2) Shall we continue Rev. Henderson as our pastor? A ballot vote of 16-6 said No.
- 3) Shall we sell the Parsonage to pay the church debts? A vote of 14-3 said Yes, if we can get \$1,400 for it. There was an indebtedness of \$1,841, mostly from the new church. In August 1881 the Parsonage was sold for \$1,100.

In March 1881, Henderson ended his service at Mt. Morris.

From an East Pennsylvania Synod obituary (photo on p.52), we learn the following about J.W. Henderson. He was born (firstborn child) on 30 April 1839 in Lewistown, Pennsylvania. He identified with the church in his youth and felt called to preach the gospel. He graduated from Wittenberg Seminary, in Springfield, Ohio. While a student there, he enlisted for six months in the 16th Regiment of the Ohio Infantry. He was ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. His first charge was at Butler, Indiana, where he built a church. He delighted in mission work, built several churches, and labored in struggling congregations. From 1877 to 1890 he was pastor in Dixon, Illinois. Then he returned to Pennsylvania, where he built three churches. For 16 years he served at Clearfield, Philipsburg, Mt. Carbon, and Kimberton, and in 1905 he retired to Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. On 21 February 1912 he died, leaving a widow (Letitia J. Hare, from Carey, Ohio), six sons, and four daughters. His warm interest in all reform movements is noted. He was devoted to the work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and kept in close touch with the Grand Army of the Republic. Never weary of well doing, he was "known as a consistent, lovable Christian gentleman. He was wholly given up in the service of the Master. His faith was broad and catholic, and his trust in God implicit."

14. H. MAX LENTZ (1881-1884)

Pastor Lentz came to Mt. Morris from Gettysburg, PA, in 1881. Beginning July 3, he preached "on trial" for four Sundays for \$60. On the third Sunday (Pastor Stroh presiding), the congregation called him to be its pastor (the vote was at first 38-2, then it was made unanimous), and he began his services as pastor on July 25 or July 31 (both dates are recorded). His salary was \$600/year, payable monthly. At first he lived not in the parsonage but in a hotel room at Webb's Hotel, and the Council held at least several of its meetings there. In August 1881, the parsonage was sold for \$1,100, though this is not reported in the minutes of the Council or the congregation (only that the deed was to be "procured" to Mr. Plate). Two years later, on 20 June 1883, Pastor Lentz married M.S. Long (Second Record Book, p. 50).

One major event of this time was a Jubilee Service (on Thursday, 29 June 1882) to celebrate the freedom of the congregation from debt. On 14 February 1882, the church's indebtedness stood at \$2,346.58. Part of that was to be met from the sale of the parsonage (\$1,112, including interest). Pastor Lentz and Mr. Lookabaugh were instructed to procure subscriptions/pledges for the church debt, and they reported \$1,150 (and eventually more) subscribed. For the June 29 service, the Rev. Dr. H.C. Haithcox, pastor from Lena, who was also president of the Synod of Northern Illinois, preached "an excellent discourse" from Romans 8:21-22 and earlier (3 PM) presided at a congregation meeting, where the freedom from debt was reported and the pastor was granted a month's vacation. (Haithcox was paid \$6 for his expenses that day.) A supper in the church basement between these two events was attended by about 100 people.

Earlier that year, on 8 January 1882, at the request of the Council, Lentz preached a historical sermon, which was recorded in the church record book and from which some of the preceding facts are taken.

The next fall, on 20-25 September 1882, the 32nd annual Synod convention was held in Mt. Morris. Haithcox was again elected Synod president. There was, it is noted, fine weather, a pleasant time, and much fine hospitality.

On 12 July 1883, the Woman's Home and Foreign Mission Society (of Mt. Morris) was organized by Mrs. L.L. Sieber, of Polo. The officers included the pastor's wife as president and Mrs. Ellen Pile as vice president. This was the first missionary society organized, but the records show that by this time a Ladies' Mite Society, the first women's auxiliary, had been in existence for a number of years and had raised about \$800 for church purposes and cheerfully gave up one weekly meeting per month for the benefit of the Mission(ary) Society. (The Ladies' Mite Society was succeeded by the Ladies' Aid Society, organized on 8 October 1918, which made calls to shut-ins and made quilts and comforters.)

On 26 September 1882 it was reported that the church had been or was to be painted for \$130 plus a \$5 bonus to the painter. This work was finished in November. In March 1883 the congregation was soliciting funds for a church in Chicago. In June 1883 there was a problem in raising/paying the pastor's salary, and the pastor was granted a week's absence. In July, the congregation voted to build a new parsonage when \$1,000 had been subscribed for that purpose. The following year (July 1883) the Pastor and Mr. Lookabaugh were asked to raise \$1,000 to build a new parsonage.

But on 27 January 1884, amid difficulty with delinquent members, Pastor Lentz offered his resignation in order to take charge of a mission in Eureka, Kansas. The congregation reluctantly accepted the resignation on February 10, and it was effective on February 25 (though some records say March 25). A pastoral vacancy of sixteen months (February 1884 to June 1885) followed. For several months in 1884 following Lentz's leaving, Dr. E.H. Bartholomew, president of Carthage College, served as supply pastor; he provided two weekly services and was paid \$5 for one service, \$7 for two. This arrangement continued until June, when the college year ended. Then the congregation was without preaching for some time. At one point, Pastor Sieber, of Polo, and Pastor Remsberg, of Oregon, assisted with special services. For a while, perhaps in late 1884 and early 1885, there were no services. For one month in 1885, the Rev. W. Eichelberger, from Capon Springs, VA, preached. He preached for one month, ending on Easter Sunday, when the congregation had a communion service and fifteen members were added to the church. In May 1884 the congregation was seeking a young pastor from Gettysburg Seminary (apparently at the suggestion of Bartholomew), and eventually E.S. Hoffman came, however not from Gettysburg but from Wittenberg Seminary. Pastor Lentz was a member of the Virginia Synod when he died on 9 September 1902.

In August 1881, (J.B. or H.E./A.E.?) Canode, Sr., was elected deacon. The same month the "field of labor" was divided into four departments each to be canvassed by a deacon. During this time the Sunday School was permitted to use the church audience room for a Christmas service. In March 1882, A.R. Long was elected elder, and S. Middour and J.G. Miller were elected deacons for two years. In March 1883, F.W. Tice and S. Lookabaugh were elected elders, but Tice soon joined J.E. McCoy, H.E. (A.E.?) Canode, and E.W. Byers as deacons. In March 1884, Dr. D. Newcomer was elected elder and J.E. McCoy and Jacob G. Miller deacons.

Prior to 1881, the church record book lists 70 communicants. In 1881-2, there were one adult baptism, three confirmations, five additions from Lutheran churches, two from other denominations, one restoration, four losses by death, seven Sunday School teachers, 40 students (called scholars), and ten catechumens...and 78 communicants. The budget included the following: Synodical treasury, \$5; Home Missions, \$14; Foreign Missions, \$14; Beneficiary Education, \$10.50; Church Extension, \$7; Local Objects, \$1,300; and General Benevolence, \$5.

In 1882-3, there were one adult baptism, three additions from Lutheran churches, one loss by letter or removal, seven Sunday School teachers, 40 scholars/students, and eight catechumens...and 81 communicants. The budget included: Synodical Treasury, \$15; Home Missions, \$16; Foreign Missions, \$20; Beneficiary Education, \$20; Church Extension, \$22; Local Objects, \$250; and General Benevolence, \$13.50.

Holy communion was celebrated three or four times per year (1880 = 1, 1881 = 2, 1882 = 3, 1883 = 4, 1884 = 2, 1885 = 3, 1886 = 2). Prior to this, holy communion is listed only once or twice a year, sometimes none is listed, only in 1875 is it listed three times.

The 5th annual convention of Synod's Woman's Missionary Society is listed here - perhaps it was in 1883 when the local society was organized.

NOTE: These historical notes, covering the first 150 years of Trinity's history, were made in 1995-1996 by Pastor Phil Schroeder from the church's records and minutes and earlier historical accounts. Other potential sources that have not been thoroughly studied are the monthly newsletters and the weekly service folders. These, of course, are not available for the early years, and for the latter years primarily the minutes and the annual reports were studied carefully. It is requested that no extensive printed use be made of these notes or their information without the courtesy of a review by their author.