

Highlights from the History of St Michael's

- The year 1728 is used as the birth date of St Michael's. However, the actual date is presumed earlier as St Michael's first pastor, the Rev. Anthony Jacob Henckel died in 1728. He served the fledgling congregation for an unknown period prior to his death.
- The Rev. Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg referred to as "the 'church father' of Lutheranism in the United States" (Gritsch, p. 175), served as Pastor of St Michael's Church from 1743-1745
- On October 1, 1752, "a black man," presumably a slave, was baptized at St Michael's. This may have marked the first act of integration in Lutheran history. How fitting for a congregation known for its diversity, inclusive of people no matter one's race, economic status, or sexual orientation
- During the war, British troops looted the parsonage, broke into St. Michael's sanctuary, and tore organ pipes from their mounting. The Redcoats ran down Germantown Avenue blowing the pipes to celebrate their victory.
- The current structure is the 3rd building on the site. The first sanctuary was built in 1746. By 1752, the sacristy, bell tower, and pipe organ were complete. The original sanctuary was razed and replaced in 1819. The Sunday School building was added in 1866.
- The coffee shop "Little Jimmies" now occupies the historic one-room Beggarstown School House built in 1740 and listed as part of the Colonial Germantown National Landmark Historic District.
- St Michael's historic cemetery contains the remains of at least 4 Revolutionary War soldiers who were killed in a British ambush in 1777 about 3 miles from the cemetery entrance.
- Worship services were conducted in German until 1845 when the new Pastor only spoke English. St. Thomas German Church formed to assuage members who protested the change.
- St Michael's is home to one of the earliest Women's Missionary Societies dedicated to assist "indigent young men" in preparing for ministry. More than 20 "sons" of the church became pastors. St Michael's followed this tradition until present, training interns from the Lutheran Theological Seminary of Philadelphia.
- St Michael's devoted itself to educating children, particularly children of lower income families or excluded by public schools. This area of ministry continued into recent times through its long-standing partnership with the Eleanor C. Emlen local public school.
- In its early days, St Michael's had strong ties to many area churches, founding some on them. For the past 6 years, St Michael's partnered with former sister church St Peter's, Lafayette Hill, along with Whole Foods, Inc. to provide weekly home cooked meals and fellowship through the Community Meal ministry.

History of St. Michael's Lutheran Church

The determination of the age of St. Michael's Church has been a difficult matter. In 1886, the 150th Anniversary was celebrated on November 14-17; at which time the Sunday School Building was dedicated. The presumption was that was that St. Michael's was founded in 1736; and Dr. C. W. Schaeffer, in the historical address, stated that the Rev. Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg had been the first pastor.

In 1905, on November 12th, was celebrated the 175th Anniversary. Since the previous celebration it had been found that the Rev. Anthony Jacob Henckel had been the first pastor; also there had been a stone church here as early as 1730. One difficulty was that it was not definitely known whether Pastor Henckel had died in 1728 or in 1732.

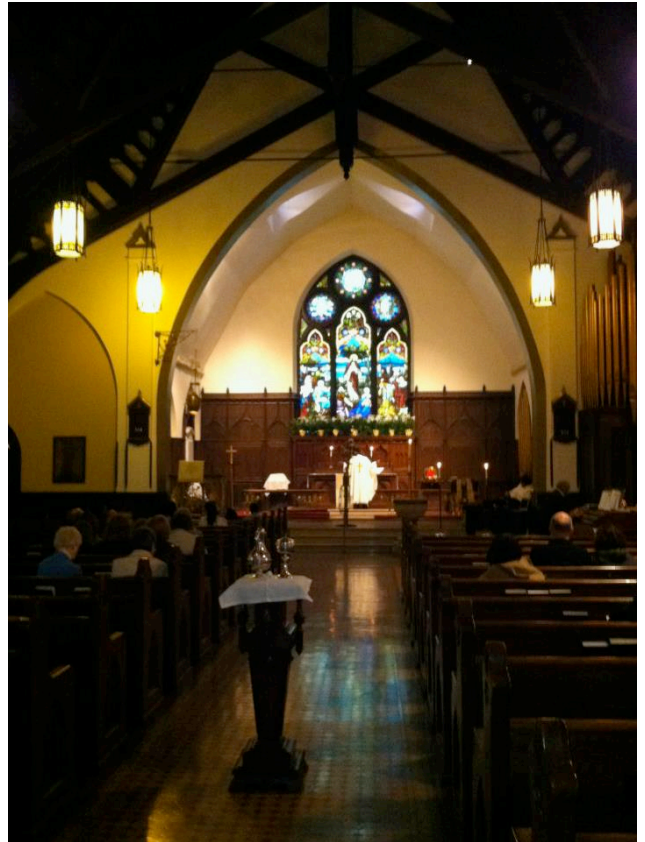
In the years that have elapsed since this last anniversary, the will of Pastor Henckel was found, which placed his death definitely in 1728; his grave was also found, in St. Michael's Cemetery. And we have come to the conclusion, as we set this year for the Bi-Centennial, that we have even yet not gone back to the very beginnings of the congregation; and that we are really marking the death of the first pastor who served here. We hope that some day we may be able to arrive at more accurate estimate of the real age of the Church.

You will note that those participating in these anniversary services are the Rev. Dr. F.A. Kaehler, The Rev. Dr. H.E. Jacobs, the Rev. Dr. Pfatteicher, and the Rev. Dr. Paulson. Two of these are former pastors; two, the Rev. Dr. Kaehler and the Rev. Dr. Jacobs, have participated in both the 150th and the 175th Anniversaries—we rejoiced in their presence for the 200th. The Rev. Dr. Pfatteicher is President of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, the Synod of which St. Michael's was one of the organizing congregations 180 years ago, of which body she has ever since been a member.

THE BEGINNINGS

The beginnings of St. Michaels Church are difficult to trace, as the record of the earliest days is no to be found. Julius Sachse, in two volumes, which go back to the sources of the various migrations, has made an analysis of the constituent elements of the settlement of Germantown; in them we find the roots of the Lutheran Church.

Francis Daniel Pastorius brought to Germantown thirteen families: presumably Quakers, but in reality mostly Mennonites, who soon separated themselves from the Quakers, and built their own Church. The second distinctly sectarian group arrived on June 24th, 1794, and was led by Bernhard Koester. They were Pietists, but clung to their Lutheranism, and to the evangelical doctrine. Arriving in Germantown, their immediate goal was the home of van Bebber, "the Mennonite", where they held a service of thanksgiving after the Lutheran form. Bernhard Koester, not a pastor, but a student of theology, at once began to hold services regularly in van Bebber's house, which was attended by the Germans of the locality, and also by many Quakers who missed the services and the sacraments of former association in the evangelical churches of their native lands. These meetings led to similar services in Philadelphia; and from them developed Old Christ Church, on Second Street above Market.



With the evangelical zeal, which led to such beginnings of the church, it is difficult to think of a long period without Lutheran Services in Germantown. We should expect that Koester's efforts had resulted in the gathering of a congregation here. The first actual record of such a group is found in the services held by Pastor Anthony Jacob Henckel, who died in 1728, and who is buried in St. Michael's Cemetery. Perhaps he served the group that had first been gathered by Koester and his associates. The first actual record we have is that of Pastor Henckel's death and burial; the period of his services and the condition of the congregation we do not know. He was buried in a portion of ground deeded to the Lutheran Church by Peter Shoemaker; of the deeds dated 1738, this portion is described in the deed as the second, not the first; so that we conclude that earlier deeds must have been passed by Shoemaker to the Church.

PASTOR ANTHONY JACOB HENCKEL

Of Pastor Anthony Jacob Henckel very little has been known until recently. We owe the facts of the following account to Mr. B. Burt Bark, Vice-President of the University of Washington, who is President of the Henckel Family Association. Anthony Jacob Henckel, son of George Henckel and Eulalia Dentzer, was born and baptized in Merenberg, in Palatinate. His baptismal record, on December 27th, 1668, has been found in the church at Merenberg. George Henckel, preceptor or schoolmaster, at Merenberg, was a graduate of the University at Giessen. His wife was the daughter of an assistant judge of Steinberg, and was descended from a family prominent in Hesse-Darmstadt; her grandfather had been a pastor, and three of her brothers were pastors. The father died in 1768.

Anthony Jacob Henckel was matriculated at Giessen on May 5, 1688. In 1692 he left the following record in his first parish: *The Churchbook of Eschelbronn. In the year 1692. His Highness, the nobly born Baron John Anton of the Feltz, together with his brother, Herr Philipp, has called me, Anthony Jacob Henckel, of Merenberg in Nassau, after the death of my predecessor, to the regular pastorate of Eschelbronn, and I was ordained here on the 28th of February by Herr John Christopher Wildius, Pastor of Hoffheim, after having been examined at Giessen University, and having the testimony thereof.*"

He served here until 1695; then at Daudenzell and Breitenbronn until 1714. The former of these places was in Darmstadt, the latter in the Palatinate. In 1714 he returned to Moenchzell, which had been a "filial" of his first pastorate. He came to America in 1717 with his entire family; and bought a farm at New Hanover, living there until his death in 1728.

Pastor Henckel's ministry in America was far-reaching rather than intensive. He seems to have served the scattered Lutherans in many places, as occasion arose, but without leaving definite record of this service in the scattered congregations. There is a tradition that his authority, as a foreigner, to perform the marriage ceremony, was questioned and that he was put in jail in Philadelphia, pending decision; the family tells of silverware given as bail for him. The question was submitted by the Colonial Council, but there is no record of any decision returned. His ministry in Germantown is definite enough that we may say that he undoubtedly the first pastor of the congregation here. He died in the home of one of the members, in Springfield, on August 12, 1728, following a fall from his horse while traveling between Germantown and his home at New Hanover. Two of the witnesses to his will appear in the very earliest documents of the congregation as members of the Church Council; and we surmise that they were already members of such a body in 1728.

After Pastor Henckel's death, there was a period where records again are lacking. Possibly, before Henckel's time, the Falckners—who were members of Koester's group—followed up Koester's early efforts. It is more than probably that the Swedish pastors also rendered service from time to time. Definitely we find the Rev. John Dylander serving the Germantown congregation in 1737, and dedicating a stone church, which, according to Acrelius, had been erected in 1730.

We hold also a letter from the governor, dated 1738, in which permission is granted for the solicitation of money in the Province for the completion of a church, possibly the same mentioned by Acrelius. Pastor Dylander died in 1741, and is buried in the aisle of Gloria Dei Church.

Following the death of Pastor Dylander, Germantown was served by Valentine Kraft. The work did not flourish in this time; and Pastor Brunnholtz reports that the congregation was very small at that time of Muhlenberg's arrival in 1742.

The congregation in Germantown had no part in the call for help in answer to which Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg came to Philadelphia. However, shortly after his arrival this group asked him to give them part of his time; and early in 1743 he preached for the first time to them, and assumed the pastorate, preaching, however, only on week-days, on account of having no other time for them. When Peter Brunnholtz arrived as Muhlenberg's assistant in 1745, Germantown and Philadelphia were put in his care. He was followed in 1751 by Pastor J.F. Handschuh, who came from Lancaster, and served the congregation for about two years. This period of the pastorate of Muhlenberg and his associates seems to have been one of more or less disturbance. At first great success crowned their work; and the congregation grew so rapidly that in 1746 it was necessary to enlarge the church. A tablet erected at the time of this work is today in the gable of one of the vestibules of the new church. There seems to have been some dissatisfaction with the way in which Muhlenberg personally conducted all the affairs of the congregation, with all finances in the hands of the Pastor, and with little or no freedom in the work of the congregation left to the members. A second element of disturbance we think to find in the fact that some distrust of the Halle Pietism lurked in the minds of the Palatinates and Hessians who made up the greater part of this community; for their neighbors who opposed the building of the church were pietists and mystics who had the encouragement of Halle and to a measure owed their so-called Quakerism to Halle. This is to be traced in the objection to the Halle pastors and the demand for the use of the liturgy of Hesse-Darmstadt which are found in some of the early documents of the congregation. Under Pastor Handschuh this disturbance came to an open break, when the little group which clung to the United Ministerium went out and rented a house, in which they held services for some years. The majority of the congregation shortly after called John C. Andreae to the pastorate; but his death within a bit more than a year brought to a close an unfavorable relationship. A certain Pastor Funk followed; and then Ph. H. Rapp, who was another of the stamp of Andreae. Meanwhile Pastor J. Nicholas Kurtz had been called by the smaller group; in 1762 they received the use of the church on Sunday afternoons, by order of the Court; and the two parts of the congregation came together again, calling the Rev. John Ludwig Voigt in 1764.

The Ministerium of Pennsylvania had been organized in 1748. St. Michael's had been represented by the Pastor and four laymen, and had in 1752 entertained the Ministerium, at the time of the dedication of the enlarged church building.

THE PARISH OF ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH

The pastors of St. Michael's Church have served at various periods a field which is surprising in its extent. We find that their services extended to groups of people in Rising Sun, Nicetown, Bristol, Chestnut Hill, Barren Hill, Manayunk, Roxborough, Frankfort, Upper Dublin, Whitemarsh, Whitpain (Center Square). The result of this work has been the participation of the congregation in the establishment of a number of other congregations; and also the sharing of pastoral oversight with other congregations.

Thus St. Peter's Church, Barren Hill, founded in 1752, was not directly a growth from St. Michael's, but may have been indirectly due to disturbances in St. Michael's Church. From 1762 to 1835 both were served by one pastor, and the association was broken only by the increasing demands in St. Michael's Church. St. John's Center Square, known as Whitpain, was founded in 1769, and was served by Pastor J. F. Schmidt in its early years. Upper Dublin, Roxborough, and Frankfort appear in Pastor Schmidt's Diary as calling for his services. Zion Church, Whitemarsh, was part of the parish in 1835.

From the closing years of the eighteenth century there had been a growing demand for English services; opposed, as was too often the case, by the older members of the congregation. Evening services were held in the English language; and in 1836 insistence in the demand came to a head in resolutions presented by the Church Council at the annual meeting of the congregation, calling for English services. The congregation refused to adopt the resolutions; practically all of the members of the Church Council resigned, and withdrew to form the “English Lutheran Church of Germantown”. Eleven of the thirteen who thus withdrew appear as members of the first Church Council of Trinity Church. The bitterness of feeling which resulted from this action was not lessened when Trinity Church became a member of the East Pennsylvania Synod of the General Synod. For many years it was believed that the secession had been due to other causes; but the minutes of St. Michael’s show this account to have been the actual state. It is interesting to note that within five years the very resolutions which occasioned this split were adopted by St. Michael’s congregation. The struggle between German and English came to an end with the calling of a pastor in 1846 who was unable to preach in German; German services were held intermittently, with increasing infrequency; and about 1860 St. Thomas’ German Church was organized, into which those members desiring German services entered, with all good will and harmony.

Other congregations in which St. Michael’s has had a part are Christ Church, Chest Hill, organized in 1860; Ascension, which took a number of St. Michael’s members upon its organization in 1896; and Church of the Advocate was organized in the home of members of St. Michael’s in 1903.

PASTORS WHO SERVED THE CONGREGATION

The Rev. Anthony Jacob Hencke	Died 1728	The Rev. John Dylander	1737-1741
The Rev. Valentine Kraft	1741-1742	The Rev. Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg	1743-1745
The Rev. Peter Brunnholtz	1745-1751	The Rev. John Frederick Handschuh	1751-1753
The Rev. John C. Andraea	1753-1754	The Rev. Mr. Funk	1754-1757
The Rev. Ph. H. Rapp	1757-1765	The Rev. Jacon van Buskirk	1765-1769
The Rev. John Frederick Schmidt	1769-1786	The Rev. John Frederick Weinland	1786-1789
The Rev. Frederick D. Schaeffer	1789-1812	The Rev. John C. Baker	1812-1827
The Rev. Benjamin Keller	1817-1835	The Rev. John W. Richards	1836-1845
The Rev. S. Mosheim Schmucker	1846-1848	The Rev. Charles W. Schaeffer	1849-1875
The Rev. Frederick A. Kaehler	1874-1884	The Rev. John P. Deck	1884-1889
The Rev. Paul G. Klingler	1890-1891	The Rev. S.A. Ziegenfuss	1892-1910
The Rev. Stephen M. Paulson	1911-1921	The Rev. Stephen M. Paulson	1911-1921
The Rev. W. Karl Hemsath	1922-1952	The Rev. Leon N. Zahn	1953-1957
The Rev. Dr. Charles P. Sigel	1972-1978	The Rev. Michael L. Cobbler	1979-1982
The Rev. Janet S. Peterman	1982 -2006	The Rev. Arvid Anderson	1989-1990
The Rev. Harvey Davis	1990-1992	The Rev. Violet Little	1992-2006
The Rev. Andrena Ingram	2007-2016		

There were also over 12 seminary interns who were mentored by the congregation in preparation for ordination in the Lutheran Church.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Sunday School Movement in America, like its pattern in England, was originally an undertaking to educate the children of very poor people, in special schools for the purpose; presumably at a time when they were not at work. This work was begun in the last decade of the eighteenth century. During the decade from 1810-1820, the effort was first made to change these schools to operate within the Church, and to make the instruction religious in character. Inasmuch as St. Michael's Sunday School was inaugurated by the congregation in 1817, it stands among the oldest schools in America.

Its activities have always shown a keen missionary zeal. In the earlier days this was evinced in branch Sunday Schools in Chestnut Hill, Nicetown, Rising Sun, and other points, conducted by the teachers of St. Michael's. In 1844 a "Juvenile Missionary Education Society" was organized in the Sunday School—a very early attempt at a children's missionary society. In late years this spirit has found its outlet in regular and substantial gifts for the various missions of the United Lutheran Church, gathered through monthly offerings for this purpose; and in missionary programs prepared by the children in the School.

The Home Department has been in existence for more than twenty-six years. The late Superintendent, Miss E. F. Broom; the present Superintendent, Mrs. A. W. Ormiston, and the Treasurer, Miss A. A. Shingle, have all been active in this department since its inception.

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

St. Michael's lays claim to one of the earliest Women's Missionary Societies, in the "Female Domestic Missionary and Education Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Michael's, Germantown". The first meeting for its consideration was composed of members of the congregation of both sexes, and was called on December 25th, 1833. The constitution was adopted and organization effected on January 11, 1834. Its object "shall be to assist indigent young men in preparing for the ministry in one or the other of the Theological Seminaries in our connexion; and to aid in supporting missionaries in different sections of the Lutheran Church". The Board of Directors at first consisted of twenty-eight members. It is of interest to note that this society solicited funds in the district "lying between the three mile stone below the Rising Sun Village and the ten mile stone at Chestnut Hill, and extending as far East and West of the Germantown main street as may suit the convenience of the Directors." The districts include Bechtel's, Roxborough, Bristol, Abington, and Springfield. The first beneficiary of the Society was Mr. Sayford, a student at Gettysburg; the second was Mr. Jacob C. Duy, also at Gettysburg, who had resigned his membership and secretarial office in St. Michael's Church Council to enter upon his preparation for the ministry. The Society became an auxiliary of the "Parent Education Society" and of the Missionary Society organized by the Pennsylvania Synod in 1836. The work of this Society ceased in about 1852.

The successor to the above Society was the Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society, organized in 1881. It carries on an active work of education within the membership of the congregation, and of aid for the various mission interests of the Lutheran Church outside the congregation. It has been of the Philadelphia Conference Society since its organization, and among the societies composing this body. The Young Women's Missionary Society is the younger women of the congregation, many of whom are in the Senior Society by business or home of the educational line.

For the past two years there has also been children of the congregation from seven to fourteen years of age. This is far from being the first undertaking of the kind. We believe that the "Juvenile Missionary and Education Society" mentioned above will stand as one of the pioneers of its kind; it has been followed by a number of junior societies, from time to time. The three societies have done much to foster the missionary spirit in the Sunday School.

THE CEMETERY

A large portion of the graveyard at St. Michael's Church, Germantown, dates back to the time of the first church on the site (the current building is the third). Colonial churches of that day preferred to bury their deceased around the sanctuary, so that the souls of the departed would continue to influence the affairs of the living. Bodies were often placed in the ground with their feet at the eastern end, and face at the western end. In that manner, when the morning of Resurrection day came, they would arise to face the sun of that glorious day.

St. Michael's cemetery contains remains from the early 1700's to the mid 20th century. Although about 80% of the stones are now unreadable due to the effects of age, acid rain, and vandalism, the earliest legible stone is that of Mary Elizabeth Hinkle, who died in the year 1742.



With St. Michael's having been one of the earliest German-speaking congregations in Pennsylvania; many of the earlier graves have German epitaphs. Unfortunately, the vast majority of records of the earlier burials have been lost or destroyed over the years. This makes the location of specific graves very difficult, in most instances.

However, there are a few graves of Revolutionary War dead that have been well-identified. Near the entrance walkway to the graveyard is a monument to 4 Revolutionary War soldiers, who were killed by a British patrol in an ambush in 1777, about three miles from this site. They were buried locally at that time, and their graves lost to memory for many years. In the early 19th century, the graves were rediscovered, and marked by a large vertical stone (now present at the monument site). In 1926, the remains were re-interred at St. Michael's, among great pomp and patriotic celebration all along Germantown Avenue. The stone and plaque stand at the site of the re-interment.

Further down the walkway, and to the left of the sidewalk, you will find the flat table gravestone of Christopher Ludwig. Mr. Ludwig was a resident of Germantown, a baker whom George Washington befriended at the time of the Battle of Germantown in the fall of 1777. Ludwig was a master baker of gingerbread, which seemed to one of Washington's favorite treats. General Washington asked Ludwig (an ardent Patriot) if he would consent to becoming the Baker-General of the Continental Army, in charge of baking bread for the officers and soldiers. He consented, and thus became a part of the war effort for the Americans. He was personally responsible for causing a great many Hessians (German mercenaries) to forsake their cause and become American citizens after the war. Ludwig was also well-known for his generosity, and he funded many charities for orphan children with his estate money.

Just to the left of Ludwig's table stone, you will see a flat, modern stone with the name of James Witherspoon upon it.

The son of the first President of Princeton University, Major Witherspoon died from wounds sustained at the Battle of Germantown in October of 1777.

It is also well documented that British soldiers broke into the original St. Michael's sanctuary at that time, and tore organ pipes free from their mounting. The Redcoats then ran down the Avenue, blowing on the pipes in celebration of their victory.



PROPERTY AND BUILDINGS

The property belonging to St. Michael's Church was bought in five parcels, at different times. Of the earliest deeds, several seem to be missing from both Archives and Court Records. The oldest, dated April 5, 1737, is a lease for a strip two perches (thirty-five feet) wide, extending from "the Great Road leading towards Plymouth forty perches (six hundred sixty feet) eastward." The third deed, also a lease, dated April 30, 1741, is for a piece of land adjacent to the one before described, extending north two perches and five feet, to a cartroad. This cartroad, later Church Street, is now East Phil-Ellena Street. This piece, however, must have been the older in the possession of the Church, as Pastor Henckel was buried in it. The third parcel, purchased in 1752, but already is the possession of the Church, contained a stone house and half a well, and was fifty feet wide in front. This purchase brought the property of the Church to approximately 130×1000 feet, bit over four acres, extending to what is now Musgrave Street. In 1803 was purchased a fourth tract, lying parallel to the above lots next adjacent toward the South, sixty-eight feet wide on the front, and , and containing a stone dwelling. The portion from Nash (Ross) Street to Musgrave Street was sold some sixty years later; and in 1868 a lot was purchased to fill out the corner at Nash and Springer Streets. The cemetery space extended as was necessary from time to time within the bounds of this property. In the opinion of men qualified to judge, this property is one of the most valuable pieces, both for nature and extent, of any properties held by the Lutheran congregations of Philadelphia. This we owe to the foresight of the fathers.

As we have seen, the first Church building had been erected about 1730; possibly some kind of Church had preceded, in the days of Pastor Henckel. This first stone Church was evidently not completed until later, as Pastor Dylander in 1738 collected funds in Philadelphia and New York to pay for its completion. In 1746 this building was enlarged, the work being completed and the building dedicated at the time of the meeting of the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1752. This building stood until 1819, when it was replaced by a new church. Meanwhile the church had been occupied by the British troops, immediately after the Battle of Germantown, and somewhat marred by them.

The first building had stood at the very front of the property, where is the present entrance to cemetery and church. The new building was placed back in the property, at practically the site of the present building. At its rear was the church school, which for some years at a later period, was rented by the Board of Education to accommodate the pupils which the public school could not house.

In 1886 was built the Sunday School building, at that time a model for its purpose. In 1897 it was deemed desirable to erect a new church; the corner-stone was laid on September 6, 1896, and the church was dedicated on May 16, 1897.

The parsonage was built in 1855. There had been a parsonage before that time, probably a house which had been bought with the ground upon which it stood. At the time of the Revolution, Pastor Schmidt occupied what is now known as the Billmyer House, at Upsal Street, according to Pastor Schmidt's Biography, written by his son.

Authorized to serve three Lutheran congregations in southeastern Pennsylvania, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg embarked from London in 1742. One year later, he began to preach for the first time at St. Michael's; but the demands of his time were so great, that he was able to preach in Germantown only on week days. In order to alleviate the problem, an assistant was sent to Muhlenberg so that the Lutherans in the then separate and distinct communities of Philadelphia and Germantown could be served by one pastor.

This assistant was Peter Brunnholtz, who, because of physical frailty, in 1745 began serving only Philadelphia and Germantown. By 1746 regular services could be held on alternate Sundays, and the church of seventy members strong- began to flourish. Extended that same year, by thirty feet in length and sixty feet in width, the building was readied for the laying of the cornerstone. The marble tablet commemorating the dedication was saved and installed in the west wall gable of the south narthex in the present building. Translated, its Latin inscription reads as follows:

“Under the guidance of the Most High, this church Has been build and dedicated for the use of the congregation, maintaining the doctrines and principles of the unaltered Augsburg Confession, in the year of our Lord 1746, being the twentieth of the reign of George the Second, King of Great Britain and Ireland.”

The consecration of the building was delayed, however, until 1752, while pews were placed and, in 1750, a sacristy added. In addition, the bell tower was erected and a pipe organ installed.

Meanwhile, church membership increased greatly, influenced by the large number of Germans immigrating to America,. However, it also brought dissension and disruption of harmony, and the true spirituality of the members was often at a low ebb. Bad health and disillusionment over the contention caused Brunnholtz to resign in 1751.

From Lancaster in that same year came John Frederick Handschuh. On October 1 of the next year, the consecration took place; and Dr. Muhlenberg preached the sermon. During the ceremony a black person who had been instructed by the pastor was baptized. This may have been a “first” in Lutheran history and the beginning of integration, within the church.

Hanschuh was at odds with Muhlenberg, and fell into disgrace with the church of Philadelphia. In January 1752 disruption broke out and two factions formed. One hundred thirty of the members wished to leave the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. This dissenting party eventually weakened, and at the Ministerium meeting in 1762, over one hundred families asked for a pastor and regular services once again in Germantown. On April 17, 1763, Pastor Muhlenberg preached, and petitioners who had been given a key to use the church alternately with the dissenters could now use the graveyard as well. After ten long years of dissension and bad feeling, the work of the church resumed. By July 12, 1765, when John Ludwig Voight was elected pastor by both groups, the church was reunited.

For the next four years, the church was under the able leadership of Jacob van Buskirk. Buskirk was succeeded in July 1769, for a period of seventeen years, by Johann Frederick Schmidt, whose ministry covered the whole period of the American Revolution. Because he was staunchly allied with the continental cause, he had to escape during the battle of Germantown. The parsonage, at Germantown Avenue and Upsal Street, was looted by the British and he lost most of his possessions. Soldiers also entered the church and destroyed pews and the organ. As a reminder of these days, a number of rolls of money issued by the Continental Congress is still in possession of the church. In addition, Christopher Ludwick and Major Ludwick and Major Witherspon, prominent figures of Revolutionary days, are buried in the cemetery.



Pastor Schmidt faithfully served the members of St. Michael's during and after the war, endearing himself to the people and through his ministry, and enabling the congregation to increase in numbers and influence. By 1785, it was ready to be incorporated by an Act of Assembly of the state.

For three years, from 1786, the pastor was John Frederick Weinland. Then, from 1790, for twenty-two years, the pulpit was filled by Frederick David Schaeffer. English services were in demand more than ever before, especially for the younger members, so services were occasionally held in English. Schaeffer was succeeded by John C. Baker, who was well-liked and did a fine job. On January 1, 1813, it was voted that the service would be conducted in English on alternate Sundays. In 1817, the Sunday School was organized, and plans were made for a new church building. The cornerstone was laid on March 25, 1819 *AND THE ORIGINAL CHURCH RAZED*. There was no bell tower on the new church because the bells were accidentally broken as they were being removed from the old tower. By this time, two-thirds of the services were now held in English.

Baker was followed by Benjamin Keller. In 1855, several years after Keller's departure from St. Michael's, this pastor organized St. Thomas Church.

Dissension cropped up again. Language and polity were two points of argument. This resulted in founding of Trinity Church at Queen Lane and Germantown Avenue. Dr. Richards, the new pastor, easily built up the congregation. He left in late 1845 and was replaced by S. Manheim Schmucker, a most intelligent and well-educated man, who, however could not speak German. It was at this point that St. Thomas came into being. With Schmucker's resignation in 1848, the pulpit was to remain empty until 1849, when Dr. C. W. Schaeffer answered the call. During his service, the present parsonage, now used for an office and meeting rooms was built, in 1855.

Schaeffer was succeeded by Pastor F. A. Kaehler; and in 1884, Kaehler, by John P. Deck, who occupied the pulpit for the next five years. In June, 1866 the cornerstone for the present Sunday school building was laid. While still a student, Paul Gerhardt Klingler was called to become pastor upon his ordination, June 3, 1890; but discouraged by the heavy responsibility, he left one year later.

In January of 1892, S.A. Ziegenfuss started as pastor. A new building had been contemplated for some years; by May 16, 1897, it became a reality, although the bell and clock were not added to the tower until 1902.

Ziegenfuss's pastorate lasted until 1910. In 1911 Stephen M. Paulson became pastor and served ten years. He was succeeded by W. K. Hemsath, who held the pastorate for thirty years, at which time he retired. Hemsath became emeritus in 1952, and died one year later.

Then Leon Zahn became spiritual leader. He served from April of 1953 until 1957, when he resigned to return to inner mission work. After the ministry, a call was extended to Kurt E. B. Molzhan, then pastor of our daughter congregation, St. Thomas. At the time he accepted the call, a merger was effected between the two congregations, and we were once again a bilingual church.

On October 10, 1965 Ulrich Martin Keemss was installed as assistant pastor. Pastor Molzahn became emeritus in June of 1966; and upon his retirement, Pastor Keemss was called as senior pastor. His ministry continued until May of 1971.

On April 2, 1972 Dr. Charles P. Siegel began his ministry here. A great scholar, teacher, preacher, having compassionate interest in people, Charles Sigel started a period of new community relationships and new dedication to service by the church members. No history of this church would be complete without mention of his wife, Lois Sigel, who selflessly and tirelessly gave of herself, not only to the church, but to the community as well.

For the 250th anniversary, the interior of the church was beautifully painted by a committee led by the pastor, who himself did most of the work. It was thus with great sadness and deep feeling of loss that we learned that the Sigels would be leaving. Pastor Siegel's last sermon was preached on June 25, 1978.

THE COMMUNITY MEAL

St. Peter's Lutheran Church and St. Michael's launched the community meal June 12, 2010 with "*Holy Hot Dogs*"! The menu was very simple, consisting of hot dogs, chips, salads, fresh fruit, cookies and a drink. We knew we wanted to provide community meals but weren't really sure how to do it. St. Peter's Social Ministry leader, Ellen Daneke said laughing. "We just got a handful of volunteers together and with food donated by church members, bread donated by Amoroso's and lots of prayers, we served our first meal to about 10 people." As of October 11, 2013 the Community meal has served over 11,000 persons. Holy Hotdogs became "*Holy Hot Dish*", in October, changing the menu to hot casseroles. This joint ministry eventually become known as "The Community Meal." Thanks to weekly food donations from Whole Foods in Plymouth Meeting, this joint ministry served pasta, casseroles, soups, vegetables, salads and desserts. Daneke continues, "We are so grateful to Whole Foods for helping us to provide healthy, hearty, tasty food." In addition, Thrivent Financial provided matching funds to be used in the congregation's community outreach. The American Bible Co. donated 150 Bibles that are available to the visitors to the community meals. St. Michael's Pastor Andrena Ingram said that, "Without local support from the community, we would not be able to provide meals for our community. 'The Community Meal' is so much more than just giving people food: we offer faith, fellowship and friendship. We have people who come in for a variety of reasons, other than hungering for physical food."

With profound sense of gratitude for the guidance of the Holy Spirit through its long and varied history, the congregation celebrates over 285 years of serving the Germantown neighborhood of Philadelphia and surrounding communities.



MEMBERS OF ST. MICHAEL'S CONGREGATION
WHO HAVE ENTERED THE MINISTRY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Rev. David F. Schaeffer, 1787-1815.

The Rev. Frederick Solomon Schaeffer, 1790-1815.

The Rev. F. Christian Schaeffer, 1792-1831.

The Rev. Charles F. Schaeffer, 1807-1879.

These four were the sons of the Rev. F.D. Schaeffer, who was pastor of St. Michael's from 1792 to 1812.

The Rev. George Heilig.

The Rev. Daniel Heilig.

The Rev. William Heilig, 1813-1888.

The sons of Mr. Adam Heilig, of this congregation.

The Rev. Jacob C. Duy.

The Rev. Jlhun Unruh, 1820-1888.

The Rev. M.H. Richards, 1841-1898.

Son of the Rev. J. W. Richards, pastor from 1836 to 1845.

The Rev. Charles W. Schaeffer, 1813-1896.

Son of the Rev. F. Solomon Schaeffer, stepson of the Rev. Benjamin Keller, pastor from 1827 to 1835. This pastorate brought Mr. Schaeffer into the congregation, where his grandfather had served, at the age for confirmation and for his early education.

The Rev. W. Ashmead Schaeffer, 1846-1907.

The son of Rev. C. W. Schaeffer.

The Rev. Ernest T. Kretschmann, 1866-1897.

The Rev. Theo. W. Kretschmann, 1868-

Professor in the Susquehanna Theological Seminary.

The Rev. Charles W. Jefferis, 1864-Pastor of St. John's Church, Pen Argyl, PA.

The Rev. Linda Manson - Mission Developer, Living Gospel Ministries

