

# Grace

## Evangelical

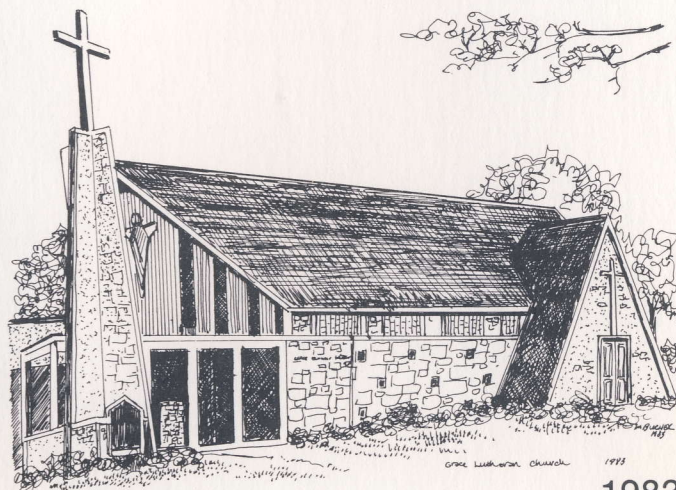
## Lutheran

## Church

1893 - 1983



1893



1983

*Ninety Years of Grace*



# BY THE GRACE OF GOD

## Notes on a Ninety Year History

In the twenty centuries of the Christian history, ninety years is not a particularly long time. Nevertheless, that is the extent of the history of Grace Church. And for these ninety years, we are thankful. Faithful to a solid Lutheran tradition and yet eager to be relevant to each new generation, Grace Church stands today as a congregation of 600 souls, fed by the Word of God and dedicated to be God's chosen instrument in the world. These "notes" are penned to help us appreciate the past that we may understand the present and enter with wisdom into the future.

### THE BEGINNING

Waynesboro in 1893 was a very small town. In fact, if it were not for Basic City, the other neighboring town across the river (since joined together politically), the population ninety years ago would hardly have been worth noting. Nevertheless, there were Lutherans living "in town" who desired services in town. Thus, the seed for Grace Church was sown and a clue to understanding our history is to see how the process of urbanization affected its growth.

Bethlehem Church at Ladd was served at the time by the Rev. J. E. Schenck as pastor. He correctly saw the future, heeded the request for services "in town" and - with ten charter members - on November 24, 1893, began the mission in Waynesboro. The services the first two years were held Sunday afternoons in a Baptist Church on Ohio Street. The next year property was purchased (for \$200!) at Eleventh and Wayne and construction was begun on a church building. Phillip Killian, a trustee of the parish, was the contractor and the cornerstone was laid on September 24, 1894. Only the basement was built and for six years this basement "chapel" was the place of meeting as Grace Church continued to be served by the pastors of Bethlehem congregation, the Revs.





E. A. Shenk  
The mother  
gave the  
and benches.  
a small organ.



and W. R. Brown.  
congregation  
first pulpit  
There was also



## FIRMLY PLANTED

A notable year for the congregation was 1901. That was the year the church building was completed and with the coming of the Rev. E.C. Cronk, Grace Church had its first full-time resident pastor. Sunday, April 7, 1901, was the day of dedication. The first infant baptised in the new church was Killian Henkel, still a faithful member of the parish. The congregation was a firm foothold in Waynesboro. Each new year brought new strength, although the growth was slow during the pastorates of the Revs.:



E a s t e r  
great day  
t o b e  
H a r o l d  
member of  
gaining a

Y. Von A. Riser  
(1903-06)



J. G. Graichen  
(1907-11)



J. F. Bruch and  
(1911-15)



E. L. Ritchie  
(1916-22)



Nevertheless, traditions were being established; loyalty to a Lutheran heritage and devotion to music in the service of the Gospel. In 1900, Grace Church became a mission of the Virginia Synod and its loyalty to this synod and its successors has not swerved.

Two items in the early history of the congregation should be noted about church music. For one, the church early had an organ. Indeed, Grace Church was the proud possessor of the first pipe organ in Waynesboro, made available in no small measure by the interest and gifts of Andrew Carnegie, the noted

American philanthropist, through the cooperation of Carl Barckhoff, an organ maker resident in Waynesboro. Likewise, Pastor Bruch, being a talented musician himself, directed a choir and organized an orchestra which was also a good part of the youth activity of the day.

Pastor Bruch and his family were the first ones to live in the parsonage built next to the church. The lot was purchased in 1907 and the house first occupied in 1912.

## AN IMPORTANT NOTE

It should be noted that laymen played a strong part in the leadership of the congregation from earliest days. Many of the names prominent in the first decades - Carr, East, Frye, Henkel, Keiser, Koiner, Moyer, Robertson, and Watson - still have relatives in the congregation. Other names, such as Ely, Freed, Landes and Reid, came a bit later, along with others still active in the parish life. Likewise, the talents of L. H. Helms, who made and carved the furnishings for the completed first church, should be noted. This tradition - of strong lay leadership and use of personal talents - has been evident through the years.

## THE MINISTRY OF CHARLES F. STECK

The pastorate of the Rev. Dr. Charles F. Steck, Sr., was notable in many respects. For one thing, it was and is the longest pastorate; 1923 through 1934. Its length and the experience of this veteran pastor brought a certain stability to the struggling congregation. During this time, the church building was remodeled and several traditions of worship - including the wearing of a pulpit robe and vestments by the choir and the use of varied colored paraments - were introduced. Likewise, during this time, the annual Vacation Church School was begun, strengthening an already strong tradition of Christian education among us. Dr. Steck came to Waynesboro from Washington in 1923 and spent the final years of his ministry here. During the early thirties - the





depression years - his health broke. His son, the Rev. C. F. Steck, Jr., living with his father, ministered here from 1934-36.



## ON TOWARD FIFTY YEARS

The process of urbanization and industrialization had continued over the years and Grace Church grew with the city. The Rev. Alfred R. Shumate was pastor from 1937



until leaving for the army chaplaincy in 1943. He was holding service at Grace Church when Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese. After Pastor Shumate's resignation Grace was without a regular pastor for a period of eight months. For a while seminarian K. Y. Huddle conducted services on Sunday morning. Later his brother, Lieutenant Paul Huddle, received his discharge from the army, having served as chaplain in that branch of the service, and served as supply pastor of Grace Church until a regular minister was called. In the summer of 1937, the church steeple was struck by lightning. The damage was so severe that it could be replaced only by a simple copper cross.

The golden anniversary of the parish was celebrated on November 25, 1943, with the Rev. J. R. Brokhoff of Roanoke as anniversary preacher. In fifty years the congregation had grown from 10 to 240 confirmed members, 40 of whom were in the armed forces this wartime.

## ANOTHER SEED IS SOWN

The Rev. Robert J. Schenck became pastor of the congregation on January 1, 1944. During his pastorate, the fact of inadequate facilities to carry on a growing parish program became increasingly evident. What to do? Remodel and expand on the present site? Or, move to a recently acquired triangular lot on Rosser Ave., south of Main Street? For lack of funds, little progress was made, but dreams were planted. Pastor Schenck's five-year pastorate was noteworthy for its service to the community: He served as chaplain to the prisoners of war at Sherando (who, out of gratitude to the church, gave a beautifully decorated altar used in the Sunday School



assembly hall) and as an instructor both at Fairfax Hall and the Fishburne Military School.

The dream of more adequate facilities lingered during the pastorate of the Rev. Charles T. Sardeson (1949-52)



and finally got off center early in the pastorate of the Rev. Richard A. Miller (1953-56).



The decision which had caused considerable controversy of whether to move to west Waynesboro or stay at the Eleventh and Wayne Avenue site was finally resolved: to move to Thirteenth

and Wayne. The building sites were exchanged and an additional \$6,000 paid for the new lot. Now plans moved forward and many committees began planning for new, adequate, and what would turn out to be outstanding, facilities for the growing congregation. The Wells Organization was engaged to help raise funds and Milton Grigg of Charlottesville was hired as architect. The site was blessed on Reformation Day 1954 and the preliminary plans accepted in September 1955. Ground was broken for the new building on May 26, 1957. The contemporary architecture would be true to traditional needs of church buildings, yet obviously relevant to modern man. This caused more than a few tongues to wag and eyebrows to be raised, but as construction continued - despite a tornado which felled the arches in December 1957 - the new building became an object of community pride.

Pastor Miller left Grace Church early in 1957. The Rev. James A. Rikard was supply pastor during the interim except the summer of 1957 when seminarian Robert L. Hock was resident. Dr. Rikard also supplied in former years. During this period, the congregation participated in the Lutheran Evangelism Mission and over the summer fifty new members were added to the parish roll.

## A SECOND CHURCH BUILDING IS DEDICATED

During the winter of 1958, Mr. Hock was called as the next pastor, arriving, following ordination, on June 15.



His first days as pastor were busy days. The cornerstone was laid on June 29 and the dedication of the new edifice took place on September 21, 1958. On September 7, the last service was held



in the old building, a simple, humble, yet strikingly beautiful House of God. For those nurtured within its walls, it will always be held in hallowed memory. The new building took some getting used to, but it became widely admired for its contemporary witness. Again, many of its features were devoutly created by members of the parish.

Early it became evident that additional space - particularly for Christian education - would be needed and plans were begun for the semicircular education wing which was planned from the beginning to be added to the east. The old church was sold in March 1962 for approximately \$40,000 and this paved the way for the additional construction. Ground was broken for it on May 20, 1962. Again, painting, drapery-making, etc., made it a family project and it was ready for formal dedication November 24, 1963. The Rev. V. A. Moyer, Jr. (now Bishop of the Virginia Synod) preached at the dedicatory service.

With the new facilities, Grace Church was frequently the scene of both church and community meetings. The 1964 Convention of the Virginia Synod was held in Grace Church. Here was another example of the fine lay leadership that has characterized the parish through the years. Pastor Hock had resigned at the close of 1963 and the pastorate was vacant at the time of the convention.

### THE MINISTRY OF GEORGE E. HANDLEY

The Rev. George E. Handley, arrived in mid-September of 1964. During his ministry the lot to the south of the church was purchased in February 1965. Furnishings for the chapel and the library-parlor were added. Also as part of the congregation's desire to be of community service, the United Church Nursery - a cooperative project of Church Women United - is housed in our building, providing needed day care for 30 preschool children five days a week. The total value of the buildings and church site at this time was \$390,000. After serving ten faithful years, in 1974 he resigned to become Assistant to the President of the Virginia Synod.



### ITEMS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Mrs. Dorothea Keiser Franklin served many years as director of the children's choir and organist for the 8:30 A.M. service. She retired during Pastor Handley's ministry.



Mrs. Ruby East Boward was recognized for forty-six years of continuous service as organist and choir director and still serves as substitute organist at Grace and other area churches.

### THE LATEST CHAPTER

August 15, 1974, Robert J. Richards began his pastorate at Grace Church. His completion of a year's training at the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas, and the Master of Sacred Theology degree in counseling at Dubuque Seminary in Iowa led the members of Grace Church to believe that they had the leadership they needed.



September 25, 1976, the Rev. V. A. Moyer, Jr, a former member of Grace Church, who entered the ministry in 1939, was installed as President of the Virginia Synod. The service was held at the First Baptist Church since the seating capacity was greater than that of Grace Church. Dr. Robert J. Marshall, President of LCA, presided, and a reception followed in the fellowship hall of Grace Church.

Twenty years in the new Grace Church were celebrated September 17, 1978 at a 10:00 A.M. service, at which time a new dossier was dedicated. Slides of interesting happenings of twenty years ago, mainly of the building at various phases of construction, were shown and have been donated to Grace Church to become a part of its history.



November 19, 1978, the congregation celebrated the burning of the mortgage during the morning worship service. C. A. Marks, Jr., the only surviving signatory of the contract, ignited the document.



The story of these ninety years would not be seen alone in buildings. It is the life of the people of God who gather in the buildings for nurture and then scatter for witness that counts. Grace Church today stands in its anniversary heritage at the heart of Waynesboro, eager to pursue its witness and service in the Name of its Lord, Jesus Christ.



She's ageless and beautiful  
and so much more.  
She's there when we need her,  
whether rich or poor!  
She'll gather you in her arms  
and do whatever she can;  
She'll protect you and help you  
and forever take a stand!  
She asks little in return;  
she wants only loving care.  
She has so much love to give  
and plenty to spare!  
So sing out her good works  
with praises and song.  
She's ninety years old  
and she's still going strong!  
She belongs to us all  
and she's a sight to behold.  
She's a shepherd to her flock  
as she gathers us to her fold!  
We need her, we love her  
as she stands majestically in her place-  
She's our beloved Lutheran Church  
She's our beloved G R A C E !!

-Peggy M. Jones-  
1983

**TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY**



## A NOTE ABOUT THE LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS IN EAST AUGUSTA

Grace Church is the youngest of the six Lutheran congregations in this part of Augusta County. Trinity Church, which building still stands a few miles west of Crimora, was established in 1772 by German settlers who emigrated down the valley from Pennsylvania. Early known as Koiner's Church, this congregation is really the "Mother Church" of the Lutheran congregations in East Augusta. Although the history of the establishment of the other congregations was in no small measure affected by the doctrinal controversies which swept the church in the last century, most of the congregations and their present locations were dictated by geographical considerations: Zion Church, just north of Waynesboro, in 1821....Bethlehem Church, south of Waynesboro, in 1854....St. James Church to the west in 1881. By 1868 Trinity Church was affiliated with the Synodical Conference and the need for a sister congregation just north of the city resulted in the establishment in 1874 of Bethany congregation, not far from Zion Church, a Virginia Synod congregation. Bethany Church moved into Waynesboro in 1925.

## SONS AND DAUGHTER OF GRACE IN MINISTRY



V. A. Moyer, Jr., son of Mrs. V. A. Moyer, Sr., and the late V. A. Moyer, Sr., was born in Waynesboro, Virginia in 1920. He attended Roanoke College and Southern Seminary, is married and has one son. He served parishes in Danville, Mt. Jackson, Radford, Shenandoah and Winchester and is presently serving as Bishop of the Virginia Synod. He resides in Roanoke, Virginia.



Roger Kluttz, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Kluttz, was born in 1928 in Waynesboro, Virginia. He attended Roanoke College and Southern Seminary. He is married and has three sons. He served parishes in Bland, Abingdon, Rural Retreat and is presently pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Roanoke.



Janice Marie Ely Lowden, daughter of Mrs. Wesley (MaryE) Ely and the late Wesley R. Ely, was born in Waynesboro, Virginia, in 1956. She graduated from James Madison University and is presently attending the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettsburg, Pa., to obtain her Master of Divinity Degree. She is married and resides in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.