

THE HISTORY OF HUFF'S CHURCH

1760 - 2000

Huff's Church was founded as a Union Church. This year we are commemorating the 240th anniversary of the founding of the Lutheran Congregation and the United Church of Christ (Reformed) Congregation. We recognize that from the beginning, and continuing today, the erection and maintenance of the church buildings as well as all organized groups involve joint Lutheran-UCC participation. This has been a 240 year living example of ecumenism at work. With the help of God, this spirit will continue here at Huff's Church.

Pre-Church History

The earliest history of Huff's church is shrouded in the mists of time. Exact dates, names and events of the founding of our Congregations are not available, though were certainly there were Lutherans, Reformers and Mennonites meeting in the Huff's Church area by 1760, perhaps a bit earlier.

Previous Huff's Church Commemorative write-ups began with the Home Worship and Schoolhouse Eras. We are going to present some of the background history of the events, people, the Hereford area, and the Congregations as we attempt to give one an idea of conditions and life in the time our Congregations began in the Colonial America of 1760.

Pennsylvania German Immigration

A great American Immigration began in 1683. William Penn had, in 1681, become Proprietor of Pennsylvania, and he established as a priority, the settlement of the interior lands. Especially needed were farmers. Among those already in Pennsylvania in 1683, most preferred trading and commerce, or trapping and hunting to the arduous labor of farming. Indeed, Pennsylvania's frontier barely moved beyond Philadelphia in the Seventeenth Century. Penn, whose mother was German, was well acquainted with the industrious, pious and unfortunate people of the Rhine Valley.

The people of Germanic Europe were ideal candidates for Penn's Holy Experiment. The Palatinate, in particular, was noted as a garden spot of Europe, but almost incessant warfare had devastated the land, killed livestock, decimated the population and caused many of the survivors to be destitute. Also at this time, there were many religious factions in Germany, an outgrowth of the Protestant Reformation. There was no nation of Germany, rather a hodge-podge of states, cities and areas ... places like Baden, Wurtemberg, Pfaltz and Hanover, to mention a few. Each had a separate ruler and he made his own rules for religious tolerance, or intolerance, as many factions were persecuted, sometimes even unto death. Thus, when Penn extended the invitation, many thousands eagerly left their homeland and came to Pennsylvania, a land that offered religious freedom, economic opportunity and freedom from the constant military oppression of the European Political System. Many later went on to Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, Georgia and New York, but Pennsylvania was the colony that allowed the greatest degree of religious freedom in Colonial America. Remember that, in 1760, this was not yet the United States and that our ancestors were English subjects whether or not they came from Germany, England or anywhere else.

Hardships (of Passage)

Many of these Colonial Germans paid a heavy price for their freedom. To begin with, many paid the ultimate price. The crowded conditions, poor food, disease and general hardship on shipboard were too much for many. Among the survivors, many were penniless. Indeed, many had run out of money before they departed from Europe as the trip up the Rhine River was an ordeal in itself. Tax and toll collectors caused deliberate delays and extracted all they could before allowing passage. Yet these hardy people

THE HISTORY OF HUFF'S CHURCH

1760 - 2000

came, many stopping in England before the final, long passage to America. Once in America those with kind friends or relatives might begin anew, but for most it was a continuation of bad times. Those in debt were sold into servitude, usually seven years, but some served double terms to pay for the passage of a relative who did not live to pay his or her own way. Quickly though, they rolled up their sleeves and got busy. Many paid their debts and within their lifetimes became landowners. Certainly all left their children in a far better condition. Such was the background and fabric of the typical person of Huff's Church area of 1760.

After the American Revolution, many Pennsylvania Germans moved on from areas of original settlement. Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Kansas, California ... in fact, most states to our West were settled in part by secondary Pennsylvania German migrations. Most had huge families and were tied to the soil, so as lands opened they followed. Some genealogists state that 10-12% of all Americans can trace ancestry to Colonial Germans. Here in Pennsylvania the Germans amalgamated into the "Pennsylvania Dutch," offering a rich, identifiable cultural island in America. Huff's Church is in the heartland of Pennsylvania Dutch Country, and our church was founded by these hardy and industrious people. America in 2000 is, of course, far less provincial than in the past and Huff's has been a Church for all people as long as anyone can remember; nevertheless, even after 240 years, the descendants of these Colonial Germans remain very much a part of Huff's Church.

Religions of Pennsylvania Germans

William Penn's first German Colonists were largely from the more persecuted sects. Quakers, Schwenkfelders, Dunkards, Mennonites and others who in Europe often had to move about to avoid jail or even death, came to Pennsylvania starting in 1683. It is interesting to note that one of these early Colonial Germans, Pastorius, offered the first public outcry against slavery. Penn's Colony was probably closer than any other to resemble the America that was to follow the Revolution.

After 1700 more and more immigrants arrived from groups which had a degree of religious acceptance in Europe. The great majority in this period were Protestants, but a few Catholic and Jews came too. Those who had religious tolerance in Europe were looking to continue their religion in America, but many wanted a chance at political and economic freedom too. Thus by 1710 and especially after 1725, the great majority of arrivals were either Lutherans or Reformed, with Lutherans being about half of all who professed a faith.

Colonial Lutherans

The Lutheran Church was introduced to Colonial America in 1638 in New Sweden, an area south of Philadelphia. This of course was before Penn and Pennsylvania. This Church flourished for a time but later, due largely due to lack of pastoral support from Sweden, the Church faltered and merged with the English Episcopalians.

With the growing numbers of German Lutherans after 1700, the Lutheran Church was re-introduced to America. Various congregations were founded starting with Falkner's Swamp, about 1702. Another early church that plays prominently in Colonial America was St. Michael's in Germantown. Many more quickly followed and most population centers such as Reading and Lancaster had Lutheran churches by about 1750. Two early Lutheran pastors deserve special mention, Rev. John Casper Stoever who helped found so many individual churches and Rev. Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg, who organized and strengthened

THE HISTORY OF HUFF'S CHURCH

1760 - 2000

The Church in so many ways. Pastor Muhlenberg's sons, also pastors, deserve mention as early Lutherans. Peter Muhlenberg served with distinction as a Revolutionary War general and later as a U.S. Congressman. His brother Frederick was leader of the Pennsylvania Legislature and called the state convention to ratify the U.S. Constitution. Later he was the first speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. The Muhlenbergs played a key role both in the establishment of the Lutheran Church in Colonial America and in the establishment of the United States as a nation.

Shortly after his arrival, Pastor Muhlenberg wrote of conditions in rural Pennsylvania. While he was not discussing the Huff's Church area in particular, he well might have been. About 1740 Lutheranism in America was in a sad way. Aside from the few established congregations in population centers, there were few ordained pastors and the scattering of the population across a wilderness made life difficult for the few who did serve. Pastor Muhlenberg described the typical Lutheran group of the 1740s as being without a church building, or if they did have a building it was of logs with a dirt floor and no pastor. Indians would attend some services.

One person most immigrant groups had in their midst was a schoolmaster, and it was he who usually preached and conducted pastoral acts in the absence of an ordained pastor. Sometimes an ordained pastor would visit periodically, though there were as few as 40 ordained pastors to serve all the areas settled by German Lutherans, and even in 1740s this included a large part of Pennsylvania and large areas of Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas and elsewhere. Only gradually did regular pastoral leadership emerge, and doubtlessly thousands of Lutherans went to other faiths, or simply gave up the faith. Despite all this adversity, Pastor Muhlenberg estimated that there were just 20,000 Lutherans in Pennsylvania in 1740, but by the end of the Revolution there were over 75,000. Indeed, we owe much to the early overworked heroes, but we also owe much to those unnamed who were strong enough to keep the faith alive in wilderness areas such as the Huff's Church area of 1760 and earlier.

Hereford Area History

The settlement of Hereford Township followed the general settlement pattern of the Pennsylvania Germans. The eminent Berks historian Montgomery, writing in 1886, stated that Hereford Township was first surveyed and settled in 1732 by Schwenkfelders who, in general, arrived a few years before most Lutherans and Reformers. We also know that by 1734 the Hereford Furnace was operating. By 1759 there were 105 taxable citizens here, and if one allows for wives and children, there were perhaps 525 souls in the area at the time of our founding. Undoubtedly, there were Lutherans among these giving considerable support to the date 1760 as our founding date.

Now then, how was life here in Hereford area in 1760 as our congregation was born? In a word, difficult! This was frontier area, and three persons had been killed and a boy carried off just a few years earlier in a 1756 Indian raid. Imagine having no roads, electric, farm equipment, chain saws, and telephones, running water or even fuel, except hand cut wood. Clothing had to be made from hand woven fabric, and cut and sewn by hand. Add to that only primitive medicine with diseases such as diphtheria, tuberculosis and typhoid exacting an annual toll. Even childbirth killed many. Indeed, it required the help of God to survive in so hostile a setting, but survive and prosper they did.

Pre-Church Summary

We have presented but a small part of the history of the Pennsylvania German Immigration, the founding of the Lutheran Church in Colonial America, and we have attempted to give a small idea of the

THE HISTORY OF HUFF'S CHURCH

1760 - 2000

difficulties faced by our pioneer ancestors at the time of our Congregation's founding. We now leave the background history and turn to an era where we can be specific.

The Home Worship Period

Referring again to Pastor Muhlenberg's writings on conditions in rural Lutheran groups, we can rather safely assume that groups of Lutherans met in private settings, perhaps with a lay person such as a teacher in charge. This would likely have been the means of continuing the faith prior to 1760.

We are almost certain that congregational life began here at Huff's about 1760. Although we have no direct church records to prove this, and a check with synod reveals nothing further, contemporary history tradition and circumstance overwhelmingly lead us to this conclusion.

One of the strongest proofs indicating an early congregation is our old cemetery. Unfortunately the oldest tombs have field stone markers without inscription, but the fact that over 200 interments were made there before 1815 points to the fact that it would require a population of perhaps 1,000 to fill such an area in that time frame. That cemetery, though filled with our dead forefathers and silent as the grave, speaks volumes to us today.

Of the interments made in the old cemetery, two are of special interest, those of Johann Friedrich Huff, Sr. and his wife Susanna. Their stones were in High German and stated that Mr. Huff was born in Germany in 1734. The couple married in 1757 and had 14 children -- one of whom was Frederick Huff, Jr., after whom our church is named. Frederick Huff, Jr. is interred in the newer churchyard cemetery.

The School House Period (1760-1815)

While conditions and populations in rural areas did not always allow for the immediate erection of a church building, we do know that the early settlers always had a teacher in their midst, and the erection of a schoolhouse and education was an early priority in all areas settled by Pennsylvania Germans. Indeed, one of the primary functions of the early school tied into the church closely, and that is the necessity to know the German language. All services in this period were in High German, and this continued at Huff's through much of our history. Indeed, it was 1914 until English was first used, as and late as 1941 about one service in four was in German.

Enough history of the School House Period has come to us that we know we had two such schoolhouses. The original history of Huff's church is unique in that the people wore out two schoolhouses before they decided to build the first church. The second schoolhouse stood until about 1853 or 1854 and likely continued in use as a school until the Public School System was established.

During this School House Period the congregation probably continued to rely heavily on lay pastor-ship, though family Bibles, baptismal certificates and histories of neighboring congregations inform us that the Congregation did have some formal Pastoral support. Sources state that Rev. Jacob Friedrich Schertlein, Rev. Philip Jacob Michael, Rev. Daniel Lehman and Rev. Doerring, Rev. Wertman and Rev. Dechant served in this early period, though again exact dates are not available. Rev Dechant apparently was serving at the end of this era.

The School House Period of our church is concurrent with the American Revolutionary War Period and the years of our Nation's birth. The names John Gregory (d. 1835), Frederick Kerchner (d. 1828) and John

THE HISTORY OF HUFF'S CHURCH

1760 - 2000

Thompson (d. 1816) are some names we can find of Revolutionary War veterans in our cemetery. Undoubtedly there were others but time has faded their memories.

The First Church Period

A better day dawned when the congregations grew strong enough to erect their first Church in 1815. In a sense this was really their second house of worship, for they had also preaching services in their school house. During this period records were kept, which are still well preserved.

An account of the corner-stone laying of the first Church and the Articles of Agreement then drawn up are still available. This document ends with the words: "Done in Hereford Township the 30th of May 1814." Signed only by Rev. Jacob William Dechant, although the paper speaks as though the pastors and the Building Committee had all signed it. We learned however, from other reliable sources that the following were the Building Committee: David Rauch, Conrad Fegely, Jacob Gehris and Jacob Frey. The Trustees of the congregations then were: Conrad Fegely and Jacob Gehris, to whom the deed was made on December 30, 1818, more than four years after the cornerstone was laid.

Frederick Huff, Jr. and Barbara (Fink) his wife, for five shillings sold 1 acre and 104 perches. This was a part of a large tract of 339 acres and 133 perches which Jacob Bower, Esq., High Sheriff conveyed August 10, 1789 to Henry Hoffman, who with his wife Elizabeth by assignment conveyed the same to Frederick Huff on February 2, 1790. This must have been the John Frederick Huff, Sr., for the Indenture goes on to state that he in turn sold on January 27 1812 of this large tract, 7 acres and 36 perches, together with other lands to his son, Frederick Huff, party to our deed. Although "5 shillings" are mentioned to make the deed legal, it was really a donation.

Mr. William A. Huff, of Greensburg, PA, a brother's grandson of the donor of the church lands, traced up the genealogical tables of the Huffs, and he finds that they came from Germany and that they belonged to the knighthood and nobility of that country. "It is noted in the Vienna Tables of Genealogy, as the generation which was famous among the Bavarian knighthood and nobility." This benefaction, the Huff gift to Hereford people, baptized the Hereford congregations, as it were, with a new name, the name of Huff. Hence we have the two names of which we may be equally and justly proud. The one name is English and the other German--a justification for being bilingual.

This benefaction and the presence and activity of this family gave name to the Huff village, to the Huff Church and to the community. Let us follow this generous example for the good of humanity. The Church of 1814 and 1815 was of stone, square in appearance, with square windows of small panes, high, with three galleries and other characteristics of the old-time church. It had a "wine-glass pulpit" with a sounding board over it. This Church, having been repaired several times, remained in use until 1881. In 1865, the pipe organ was introduced.

The following is a description of one of the methods used to pay the mortgage on the first church, a lottery. This was held about 1827 with Samuel Gregory as manager of the affair.

Expenses

Cost of selling 2,186 tickets (6-1/2 cents each) = \$142.09

Berks County Share = \$61.14

Prizes awarded = \$2,385.00

THE HISTORY OF HUFF'S CHURCH

1760 - 2000

Total Expenses = \$2,588.23

Income

*2,186 tickets sold @ \$1.50 each = \$3,279.00

Less expenses and prizes = \$2,588.23

Total Income = \$690.77

*Ticket #1341 appeared altered from \$25 to \$75, and was settled for \$25.

George Rohrbach sold 1,166 tickets and John Rush sold 1,019 tickets, with 331 remaining unsold. Prizes ranged from \$3 to \$393.60, with John Jackson winning the largest prize of \$393.60. These figures appear small, but when we consider that a man worked for \$5-10 a week (farm hands for much less), the amounts are large, and the \$690.77 profit was equivalent to perhaps \$40,000 in terms of today's money.

History of Huff's Union Church Buildings **The Second Church Period (1881-1985)**

On June 5, 1881 the large marble corner-stone was laid for our present church. The old corner-stone of May 30, 1814 was placed underneath. The first church was razed in 1881, and with the stones of the same foundation the new church was built on the same location. The superstructure was built of bricks which were manufactured by a Macungie brick works. All the interior woodworker was made by a Reading Planing Mill. The proportions of the church are 90 by 60 feet.

On November 7, 1881 the basement (first floor) was dedicated. The preacher was Rev N.S. Strassberger. On May 13-14, 1883 the completed new church was dedicated. Preachers for the services were the Rev. L. Groh, Dr. H.A. Keyser, Rev. Augustus L. Dechant and Rev. G.F. Spieker. Three thousand people were present for the two day service dedication.

The Sanctuary is on the second floor, high in ceiling, with wide galleries on three sides. The old Krauss organ and choir loft are opposite the pulpit at the east end. The basement is divided into several departments -- a large Sunday School room, one for the Nursery department and one for the meetings of council officers. The church has a fine steeple, which houses a bell weighing 2,200 pounds. It was made in April 1883 by McNeeley and Company, West Troy, N.Y. The entire cost of the building was estimated at \$20,000. The Rev. Eli Keller, D.D. made a note to the effect that about \$3,000 of gratuitous labor was bestowed.

A bronze plaque with the names of the 1881 Building Committee is in the upper vestibule. Committee members were John Rush, John Geisinger, Charles N. Gery and Samuel Bittenbender. John Rush was a farmer and a miller, he owned the old Crum farm. John Geisinger was a farmer and a shoemaker, he owned the Elton Bechtel and Beckner farms. Charles Gery was a store keeper in Seisholtzville and operated hotels in both Harlem (formerly Perryville) and Seisholtzville. He also served as postmaster at Seisholtzville. Samuel Bittenbender had the farm just on the Hereford side of Seisholtzville, but he became the wealthiest of any of the members of the building committee because on his property was the Bittenbender Iron Mine at Seisholtzville. In the 1890s he donated \$3,000 in gold to the Church to pay off the remaining debt of the 1881 Church building.

THE HISTORY OF HUFF'S CHURCH

1760 - 2000

The Krauss pipe organ is Huff's most prized antique possession. It was built in 1852 by John and Andrew Krauss of Palm, Pennsylvania, at a cost of about \$950. Their home is still standing on Route 29 near the American Legion post. The organ was installed in the first church and upon completion of the present edifice it was placed in the rear gallery of the second floor sanctuary. The organ has two manuals, sixteen stop knobs and a thirteen note pedal-board which is unusual. It was restored by Thomas Eader of Ellicott Maryland at a cost of \$4,500. Rededication services were held on October 13, 1974.

In 1953 the interior of the church and Sunday School rooms were renovated and painted by Charles Calbi of Bethlehem. The Chancel was enlarged, the old spindles of the Altar rail were used and matching spindles made to complete the Altar railing. The chancel was changed from a pulpit centered one to an altar-centered one, with the antiphonal choir stalls, floors were sanded and refinished, new carpet installed, hallways and doors refinished, ceiling coated with plaster all for a cost of \$20,000. The walls and ceilings of the church were beautifully frescoed and embellished by oil paintings of the Lord's Supper and Jesus in the Temple at the age of 12. In the pulpit recess is an oil painting of the Ascension. In 1954 two stained glass windows were installed in the pulpit recess. The north window depicts Christ knocking at the door, and the south window depicts the Good Shepherd. Rededication services were conducted on April 4, 1954 with the Rev. Dr. Henry H. Bagger as guest speaker. Various interior improvements have been made since then to maintain our historic church. On November 29, 1981 the congregations celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the present church building. The guest speaker was Judge Forrest Schaefer, Jr., President Judge of the Courts of Common Pleas of Berks County. Judge Schaeffer is a former member of the U.C.C. congregation.

In 1940 the Rohrbach Memorial Chapel was erected in memory of William F. and Amanda Y. Rohrbach by son David Rohrbach. It was presented to the joint congregations. Equipment for this building was donated by the Ladies Aid Society, the Sunday School, the Young People's Society, the Church Council and other individuals. Since then many improvements have been made to upgrade this fine facility. The building is presently used for Sunday School classes, meeting space for various church organizations, church suppers, and the auditorium is used for the highly popular annual Pennsylvania Dutch plays. The Chapel is also the location for the yearly Rohrbach Family Association reunion. In 1979 the Rohrbach Historical marker, previously located on the Gus and Anna Bales farm, was relocated on the Chapel lawn.

In 1941 the farm buildings and the land more distant from the church were sold to William S. Frederick. Some acres adjacent to the new cemetery and east of the church were retained for a picnic area, now known as the Memorial Park. In 1943 buildings were purchased for the Park, including the band shell. Improvements have included new modern bathroom facilities and a refreshment stand. The park is also used for annual picnics and other fund-raising activities. It is also available for private family reunions.

In 1958 the School House, erected in 1878, was purchased from the Hereford Township School Board for \$2,650, which also included the bell. The Ladies Aid Society paid for this purchase. Prior to 1982 the building was used as a Scout and community center. On October 10, 1982 the refurbished schoolhouse was rededicated as the Huff's Church Schoolhouse, The Dr. Charles and Catherine Fox Memorial. A marble stone bearing this inscription was placed on the front wall. The cost of the reconstruction of the building was \$32,332 with the primary labor provided by church members. Reconstruction materials for the building cost \$26,837 which was paid through a memorial fund established in the names of Dr. Charles and Catherine Fox. The repair of the steeple and the replacement of furnishings which cost

THE HISTORY OF HUFF'S CHURCH

1760 - 2000

approximately \$6,700 were sponsored as memorial gifts by members and friends of the congregations. The building is presently used as offices for the Pastor and the Secretary, church officials meeting space and the instruction of catechumens.

History of Huff's Union Church Organizations

The Sunday School organized in 1855 observed its 100th Anniversary on December 4, 1955. One of their most interesting activity is the annual Pennsylvania Dutch Sunday School service held every May. The Sunday School also sponsors the annual Vacation Bible School. The Young People's Christian Society was organized about 1915. The Ladies Aid Society organized in April 1935, celebrated its 50th Anniversary on April 28, 1985 with a tea, and publishing a 50th Anniversary Cookbook. Jennie Winzer was the first President of this organization, and was present for the 50th Anniversary Celebration. During its fifty year history, the Ladies Aid has been the most successful church organization in terms of loyal service and fund-raising activities. The Park Board was organized in June 1946. It consists of 5 members representing various Church organizations responsible for maintaining the Memorial Park. The Cemetery Board's responsibility is to maintain the Old Cemetery, the Benfield Cemetery and the Rauch-Hertzog Cemetery. Both congregations support an active Scouting program. The Troops consist of Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Girl Scout Brownies, Juniors, Cadets and Seniors. In 1975 the first Pennsylvania Dutch Play by Die Huffa Karrich Deitsche Leit was performed, and has continued yearly ever since. These plays have become very successful and draw thousands of people to their performances. Funds from these plays have been used to make many Church campus improvements.

Huff's Union Church Today

Huff's Lutheran congregation lives in a union church relationship with Huff's United Church of Christ congregation. Together they share a church building, a chapel, a schoolhouse, a picnic grove, and several cemeteries. Offices are located in the schoolhouse. Fellowship gatherings, dinners, plays, and education events are provided in the chapel. Worship services, Sunday School activities and choir rehearsals are held in the church. Worship services are held jointly every Sunday. In addition to ministering to its own members, the congregations join with other congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and the Lutheran Church in America to...

- Train pastors and church workers at the Philadelphia Seminary,
- Provide a Christian base for higher education at Muhlenberg College,
- Serve persons in distress through five Lutheran Social Ministry agencies and institutions,
- Serve God in harmony with other denominations through Ecumenical events,
- Provide Christian camping experiences through Bear Creek Camp, and,
- Provide warm, caring homes for the elderly through facilities at Hazleton and Topton.

Local institutions and agencies that receive support from Huff's include:

- Good Shepherd Home in Allentown
- The Lutheran Home in Topton
- Lutheran Inner Mission of Berks & Schuylkill Counties
- Kutztown University Campus Ministry
- Pottstown Hospital Chaplaincy Program
- Boyertown Multi-Service Agency
- Concern Children's Service at Fleetwood

THE HISTORY OF HUFF'S CHURCH

1760 - 2000

The work of the congregations is governed by an elected Church Council. That work is delegated to committees in the following areas: worship, stewardship, education, family life, and social ministry. The Union Council oversees the cooperative efforts of both the Lutheran congregation and the United Church of Christ congregation. The Body of Christ is composed of many members and a vast variety of gifts. This is evident in the large number of organizations that make up our ministry.

THE WORSHIP COMMITTEE works within the realm of the Union Church. It designs worship services, plans special celebrations, recommends improvements to the music program, and oversees the work of the various choirs.

THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE prepares budgets, recommends distribution of benevolence funds, provides stewardship education, and recommends the areas in which time, talent, and money should be spent.

THE FAMILY LIFE COMMITTEE assumes responsibility for the planning and providing of fellowship opportunities. Fellowship events include covered-dish luncheons, cake and coffee socials, etc.

THE LADIES AID SOCIETY is an organization of the Union Church. It provides opportunities for persons to contribute their time and talent through fund-raising activities. Suppers, bake sales, and picnics in the park are some of the activities utilized. All funds are used for the ministries of the congregations. The Society celebrated its 65th Anniversary in 2000.

THE SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL is the educational arm of the congregations. Its basic function is to teach the Good News of God's love and to share that news with others beyond our congregations. In addition to providing Christian education every Sunday morning, it sponsors a Summer Vacation Church School, an annual Pennsylvania Dutch Sunday School program, money for Church World Service, and gifts for various other mission projects.

THE CHOIR PROGRAM includes the following groups: Cherub, Junior, Senior, Handbell and Handchime choirs. Their ministries of music are shared here at Huff's and in neighboring congregations and institutions. They perform in workshops, at district worship events, and at community celebrations.

THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH PLAYERS seek to perpetuate the heritage of our German ancestors by providing plays in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect. These plays are presented annually, in the fall of the year. On occasion they are also presented in neighboring churches and on local radio stations. In recent years, as many as 2,000 people have attended these plays.

THE PASSION PLAYERS re-enact the Lord's Supper during Holy Week. Visitors from neighboring parishes are always in attendance on these occasions. The Passion Players have also performed in neighboring churches.

THE LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE assumes responsibility for planning short, medium, and long range goals for improvement of the physical facilities, to be placed before the congregation for consideration.

THE HISTORY OF HUFF'S CHURCH

1760 - 2000

THE PARK BOARD is responsible for the overseeing of the picnic grove facilities. Since fellowship is an important part of our life, the Board plays an important role in the total life of the congregations.

THE CEMETERY BOARD oversees the operation and maintenance of the three cemeteries...the Churchyard, the Benfield Cemetery, and the Rauch-Hertzog Cemetery.

THE ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE's task is to help the Lutheran and United Church of Christ congregations to maintain, improve, and strengthen their Christian ties. Following the directives of both national church bodies, the Committee's efforts are directed toward greater unity in all areas of our lives at Huff's. God intends the Church to be one, and has provided a source for that unity in Jesus Christ.

"There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all." -- Ephesians 4:4-6

THE SENIOR CITIZENS organization of Huff's Church is a vital part of our ministry. During its life it has provided opportunities for fellowship, enrichment, and travel. Meetings are held twice a month, and membership is open to all senior citizens of the community.

THE SCOUTING PROGRAMS are part of the resources used to reach out to the young people of the community. The total program includes units for boys and girls of different ages. By working side-by-side with these programs that teach a child to take care of himself or herself, we add the Christian note of taking care of one another. Individual and family-oriented programs and experiences are offered which nurture and support the Christian faith.

This list does not include the names of all the groups through which ministry is performed at Huff's. Others, whose responsibilities are inherent in their names, include the Altar Guild, the Memorial Committee, the Property Committee, the Library Committee, the Youth Group, and others.

We express thanks to all who are involved in the ministry of Huff's Church!