

A HISTORY OF
THE FIRST REFORMED CHURCH

THE FIRST
EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH

THE TRINITY
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WOOSTER, OH

THE INTRODUCTION

The history of these two churches is a reflection of the development of the denomination almost from the beginning of the Reformed Church in Ohio. The Reformed Church began in 1819 with a small number of people who met for worship with the Lutheran Congregation and shared a pastor.

No organization is complete within its own environment. Every entity is influenced by the land, the people, the weather, the current events that surround it and has an impact upon its development. Since the congregation was made up of immigrants from Switzerland and Germany, they brought with them much of the culture of those countries. They were also a part of a new community that was just formed and the past and present traditions impinged upon their lives and the nature of the congregation. Out of these pioneer days with their struggle with the land as well as the efforts that were made to build a new community, came people who founded a great community.

This history reveals the struggle of man with his theology. Theology was an important part of the effort to understand the concepts of God. His heritage, his culture and the rapidly developing technology of his day added to his anxiety. The struggles were not all confined to the past culture but were always a part of the life of both of these congregations. The effort to grow as a congregation was always present. The nature of the people of the Reformed Church was to be patient, to trust others to do the right thing, to compromise rather than fight, to be as Christian as it was humanly possible. This denomination through the years was always interested in unity and oneness wherever possible. It was also this trait that led them into the various mergers that they helped form as a witness to the scripture "That we shall all be one".

The history that I have recorded here is the result of several years of reading Consistory minutes, monthly letters, Sunday bulletins, notes that people recorded through the years and visiting with the older members of both congregations to gather information about their experience or what they had learned from their parents. Since I was the pastor here for 15 years I had gathered a lot of this information from members no longer living. It was my goal and personal desire to get into printed form an accurate and authentic record of the history of this present congregation, so future pastors and lay people would have access to an accurate record of their history.

You will notice that this document is divided into years for the purpose of easily locating any part of the history. This may take away from the smoothness of the reading but I hope it will aid in its use.

It was my privilege to have served the First Reformed Church during the years when this congregation went through two national mergers with other denominations. Finally, the two churches in Wooster of the same denomination merged to become one.

It is my hope that every member of the congregation will read this history to become informed of the actions of the past and let those acts guide the decisions for the present and the future. Before we discard the past, we need to try to understand what were the circumstances that encouraged their actions.

The Rev. Leo A. Keil D.D.

CREDITS

The committee that was selected to work on this history and endorsed by the Consistory were: Edward and Helen Sherck, Howard and Evelyn Duell, Pauline Sheppard, Elinor Taylor and Leo and Marie Keil. Dr. Keil acted as chairman and did the writing of the script. The committee met regularly to point the direction the work should be going as well as working in the storeroom where the records were kept.

Out of this effort the storeroom was reorganized, turned into an Archive room and made as fire proof as possible. Almost every piece of historical material that was there was examined, gathered together and properly filed. The committee did all of that work. In addition to the written record, Dr. Keil copied the various pictures of the buildings used by these congregations and pictures of some of the members onto colored slides. This was done so that on special occasions the entire congregation could see and learn about the history through the visual medium. At least 300 slides were made but not all were used in the slide set.

It is the hope of this committee that the congregation will take seriously the keeping of important records and events so that the compilation of the history of the congregation will be a continuing act. In writing this history it is so evident that many of the acts of the congregation are not recorded and people, even though still living, do not remember what happened. It is so important for those who are responsible for the actions of the congregation to keep accurate records. We would also suggest that a plaque be placed on the wall of the Archive Room stating that if at any time in the future the congregation should be dissolved, all records should be turned over to Wayne County Public Library, Department of Genealogy, for safe keeping.

THE BEGINNING DAYS

The Ohio Setting.

Any history is a record of events of the lives of people and the forces that come to play upon those people of that day. Consequently, one cannot write a history of a Church without referring to the events of the day related to nature, politics, social mores and other people.

A Church is a very integral part of one's life. It governs what we believe and how we act. It determines character and relationships. It may be an unseen force in the community but it is there never-the-less. The influence is on the community as much as the community affects the church. When this congregation was organized the state of Ohio was 16 years old. The State was chartered in 1803 and the German Reformed Congregation was started in 1819.

The State of Ohio was cut out of the Northwest Territory. Wayne County reached all the way from the Cuyahoga River to Dover, then to Mt. Gilead and to Ft. Wayne, Indiana. The government for this area was in Detroit, Michigan. After Ohio was organized it was divided into counties. Among the early counties to be surveyed and opened for land holdings were Stark and Wayne. In the beginning there were no white people in the area, only Indians. In 1808, Stark County was organized and Wayne County was under its jurisdiction. On January 4th, 1812 the State Legislature set Wayne County apart from Stark.

By 1812 there were 300 people in 45 households listed in the census of that year. Of these, 22 were within a three-mile radius of Wooster. As soon as the land was open for settlement, there was a rush to buy the land. By 1813, 95% of the land near Wooster, to the south and southeast of Wooster, had been granted. By 1820 Wayne County population was nearly 12,000. The city of Wooster had a population of 467 people.

It was in this setting that the German Reformed immigrants came from Pennsylvania to make Wayne County their home. The Reformed People came from Germany in 1709 and settled in eastern Pennsylvania. The immigration from Germany was the result of bad times in Europe, especially the Thirty-Year War that had caused severe economic conditions causing great suffering. America did look like the promised land. The Germans coming from Pennsylvania were either Reformed or Lutheran in their protestant faith. Though their religion separated them in their faith in a very definite way, their language united them where it was beneficial to both groups. This was the basis upon which they united to build a church and call a pastor. Pastors were not easy to find at this time, for most of them were educated in Germany and not too many migrated to this country.

I want to tell you about the relationship that existed between the Lutherans and the Reformed people. Luther and Zwingli agreed on many points that pertained to the Reformation movement. At one point they differed and that was over the meaning and administering of the Holy Communion. That issue was never resolved. Luther stayed close to the Catholic position which implied that the bread and wine became in a miraculous way the very body and blood of Jesus Christ, while Zwingli believed that these elements were only symbols representing the life and death of Jesus. When I was in Seminary, we were told that in the past the Lutheran Seminarians and the Eden Seminarians would not walk on the same side of the street in St. Louis. This is why I am implying that though these two groups used the same building for worship in those early days it did not imply that they agreed with each other.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH IN WAYNE COUNTY

The Year 1815

Historians, through their research, have told us that our forefathers came to this part of Ohio from Pennsylvania in 1815. Language and religion brought most settlers together by their immigration. They needed friends and neighbors in those pioneer days, not only for companionship but for medical assistance, and extra hard tasks, such as building a barn. There was a certain comfort and security in being able to speak to others in their own native tongue.

After clearing off some land upon which they could grow crops and build a house in which to live, their next project was to build a church in which to worship. These people were people of faith. They had been strong in their faith in their former land and they wanted to keep that faith alive. Some of their letters that have been preserved in historical museums indicate that they were desperately in need of a pastor. If they were to have a true church they needed an Ordained person to administer the sacraments, perform a wedding and conduct funerals. In those days, this was something that lay people were not allowed to do. Ordination bestowed a title upon the person who had studied for the ministry. If children were not baptized would they get to heaven? If people died without officially joining a church were they saved? A church with a pastor was a most important part of their lives.

1815-1831

In August, 1819, Rev. Henry Sonnedecker, Reformed Minister from Washington, Pennsylvania made a missionary journey into Ohio. Missionaries at this time and place meant locating and organizing the Reformed people who had left Pennsylvania into a viable congregation. On August 1st, Rev. Sonnedecker preached the first sermon in the German language. They had not heard German spoken since they left Pennsylvania and the first sermon delivered by a Reformed minister in this community. Though he could not stay, he made good his word that he would return. He came back in November of that same year and on the 21st of that month preached to both the Lutherans and Reformed German-speaking people. From this experience the two groups agreed to call Rev. Sonnedecker to be the pastor of a Union Church which they called, "The German Lutheran and Reformed Church of Wooster and its Vicinity".

On January 23rd, 1820, Rev. Sonnedecker preached his first sermon to the new congregation. On July 16th the first communion was given. Twenty-five people communed. Like so many things in these pioneer days, some of the rules of the past needed to be bent in order to have what they wanted. This joint communion was one of them. The Congregation first met in a brick schoolhouse. We have no record of where this schoolhouse was located in Wooster. In the Fall of that same year, the congregation built a framed church and they called their church "Die Friedens Kirche" or "The Peace Church". As you will see later on this was not an appropriate name for the church.

1827-1831

For seven years Rev. Henry Sonnedecker ministered to both the Lutheran and Reformed Congregations. On May 27th, the Lutherans called the Rev. C. H. Weygandt to be their pastor. This meant that the two congregations would meet in the same building but at different times. It also meant that both of the congregations were growing, as new families of each faith were moving into the community.

On April 3rd, 1831, Rev. Sonnedecker resigned. We do not know why or where he went but often the ministers to these churches would go back to Pennsylvania, which was their home. Again, the scarcity of ministers is revealed by the fact that it took two years to find a successor to Rev. Sonnedecker. It is also true that the Reformed Church National Headquarters were located in Philadelphia, and it took time for all of this information to get back and forth.

1833-1835

Early in 1833, Rev. Charles Zwisler was called to be the pastor of the German Reformed Church of Wooster. It is apparent that the two congregations had grown to the place where it was decided they needed a new church. The plans were made and hopes grew for a new place to worship that they could call their own. They located a lot at the corner of South and West Henry Streets on which they built a brick building that would stand until 1974 during which time the name was changed to the Christ Evangelical Synod Church.

1835-1838

Building was not easy in those early days as often most of the material had to be formed by hand from trees cut from their farms before it could be used in construction. Their history records that they ran into a serious problem in the construction period. A heavy windstorm blew down the west wall because not all of the masonry work was completed before winter set in. Of course, another delay in the building process was due to the fact that the work was done by volunteers and the helpers had to fit this work into their schedule of planting, cultivating and harvesting. However, on June 16th, 1838, a service of dedication was held. Those taking part in the service were: Rev. Frantz of the Lutheran Synod, Rev. Abraham Keller of the Reformed Synod, Rev. Charles Zwisler and Mr. William Reiter, chairman of the Trustees. The lot on which the church was built was bought by Mr. George Bender and Mr. George Rainer at a cost of \$155.10. The Building Committee was Jacob Solte, Jacob Albright and William Reiter. The total cost of the project was \$4,131.74.

1840-1843

After the building was completed, Rev. Charles Zwisler resigned. In 1840, the Rev. A. L. Begeman was called to be the pastor of the Reformed Congregation. The records show that the Sunday School was growing rapidly. The Sunday School was a new concept for the Protestant Church and it was sweeping across the country and was reflected in the Peace Church as well. For this service both congregations met together for the Sunday School hour. It could be said that this was the beginning of giving the lay people of a congregation the opportunity to study the bible and to teach the doctrines of the Church. Up until this time, all of the teaching and preaching was done by the minister. Lay people could buy and read the bible, but until this time had little opportunity to discuss its meaning for their lives.

The acceptance of this movement is illustrated by the record reporting that they had 100 people at those first services. In Frieders Church, the Sunday School had begun on April 2nd, 1843 with Issac H. Reiter as the first Superintendent. From 1840 to 1843 Rev. Augustus Begeman served the Reformed Congregation, but the record reveal almost nothing of his ministry except the beginning of the Sunday School.

In 1841, it is recorded that the German of Wooster donated an organ to the Union Church believing it would be conducive to the growth and harmony of the church. The organ was dedicated on August 22nd, 1841. It is not clear who these Germans were. Were they Germans in the community that were not members of one or the other of these congregations?

1843-1845

All congregations seem to have their good season and poor ones. At this time the Rev. Begeman resigned and Rev. John Peter Mahnenschmidt was called to be their pastor but he only stayed one year. He came October 1st, 1843 and left September 29th, 1844. When things seem to be at their lowest a light often shines that puts new life into the congregation. This was the case with the calling of Rev. David Kaemmerer.

1845-1853

Ever so often a minister is called to a church that seems to be the leading of God. Father (as he was affectionately called) Kaemmerer was just such a man. He began his ministry in Wooster on January 19th, 1845. He arrived at a very important time in the life of this congregation. The congregation had grown. The spirit was high. He was faced with many serious problems in the days ahead but he was always equal to the challenge. He was liked and admired by all, and the congregation prospered once again. One of his challenges arose in 1853 when the Reformed Congregation called a meeting of the Union Church to discuss the dissolution of the Church. The Reformed Congregation offered to move to another location or buy out the Lutherans half of the building.

As soon as the meeting was adjourned, Father Kaemmerer called the Reformed Congregation into session to elect officers for the separate congregation. The congregation chose as their new name "The German Reformed Church of Wooster and Vicinity". Rev. Kaemmerer continued to serve as their minister and preached in the German language. It was no doubt Rev. Kaemmerer's popularity that cause the Reformed Congregation to ask for their own building as they needed more room for the congregation to grow. Being a separate congregation with their own building would be to their advantage.

In August of 1853, the Rev. Hiram Shawl was called to preach to the people in English. This was at the same time that Rev. David Kaemmerer was their pastor that preached in German. Rev. Shawl's pastorate only lasted for one year. I am sure that this was caused by several things. Preaching in English was only accepted by a few people at that time. All the people were using English but they insisted that their sermons be in German.

When I was growing up in Marion, Ohio we still had German services at least once a month until about 1926. You can understand how strongly they felt about this some 70 years before. I would also assume that Rev. Kaemmerer was so well liked that it was hard for Rev. Shawl to find comfort in the parish. Even though Rev. Kaemmerer insisted that the day had come when ministers were going to have to preach in English.

Rev. Kaemmerer continued on as pastor until April 1864 when he had to resign because of ill health. He returned to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

1864-1866

The records are not clear what happened to the congregation in those intervening years. It appears that the two congregations continued to worship in the same building even though they had asked to separate. Rev. Joshua Derr came to Wooster in April 1st, 1864 to serve the Reformed Congregation and now he preached in English. This ministry was plagued by some very nasty rough days that were directly related to the division of the joint property. Various meetings were held beginning in October 25th, 1864 when the German Reformed Congregation requested the Lutherans to divide the jointly held property. The Lutherans refused to accede to the proposition made to them. This led to taking the problem to the County Court for a decision.

This decision made history in the State of Ohio, as there were many such shared buildings in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Finally, the State Legislature passed a law to help resolve such conflicts. Under this act the Reformed Congregation made application for the division of the property. A Petition was granted; the property was appraised, but the Lutherans appealed to the Court of Appeals which delayed a decision for almost a year. The Court of Appeals confirmed the writ of the lower court whereupon the Lutherans by their attorneys, gave notice of an appeal to the Supreme Court of Ohio. They failed however to file the necessary bonds within 30 days. Therefore, it was never decided by the higher court. In the hope that the Lutherans would agree to a mutual compromise in order to save costs, the Reformed Congregation endeavored to induce the Lutherans to meet with them but again, to no avail. No further progress was made in the settlement of these difficulties until May 6, 1867 when a written compromise was offered which stated, "Either to give or take \$1,250 for the divided half of the church property". No friendly reply was made and the Reformed Congregation proposed that the property be sold at Sheriff sale. Even then, the sale was delayed until April 12th, 1860 when the German Lutherans purchased the Church property. The German Reformed congregation realized only \$1,137.50 from the sale of the property. (Copies of this Court Action are in the Trinity Church Files).

Almost all of these Union churches had problems. There were more than buildings or even money involved. It was a matter of faith and culture. Often times two faiths intermarried, so one would be Lutheran and the other Reformed. This divided loyalties and memories of the family. It was my privilege from 1938-1942 to serve a Union Church of Lutherans and Reformed people in my first parish near Dayton, Ohio. Even then there were irritations. The Reformed Congregation wanted to take out the pews in what was then a Sunday School room and put in chairs and tables for the children. When the Lutherans found out about it they said, "Half the pews are ours. You leave those in and take yours out". So, the Sunday School room had half pews and half tables. Human nature is very possessive, and once something is ours we do not give it up easily whether it be land or an idea.

After all this was settled, now the Reformed Congregation had to find another place to worship. The Trustees, under the direction of Rev. Derr purchased the school property belonging to Mrs. Pope known as Grove Female Seminary on North Market Street at the price of \$7,000.00. This was lost due to mismanagement in not making proper payments at the time set forth in the contract. They forfeited not only the property but lost in succeeding law suits and by the payment of interest due on the capital deposited in the bank on about \$700.00. Three hundred dollars was expended on the purchase of a new lot. One of the members said at this time, "Here we are left without a bible, pulpit, place of worship or organization".

1866

It is not clear when Rev. Derr left the parish but we do know that they were without a pastor in 1866 when Rev. David Kaemmerer returned from his illness. Not willing to let the Congregation flounder without leadership, he agreed to become their pastor once again. Evidently the congregation was in a state of disarray and confusion so Rev. Kaemmerer started to call on all of the members and invited them to come to a service in a room in the Courthouse that he had obtained. Later, other places of worship were used including the Zimmerman Building.

The congregation was discouraged and some even considered joining other churches in the community. To leave a church and join another church, especially if it was of another denomination, was looked upon as being disloyal to this denomination in which one was raised and to which your family belonged. It is significant to understand and to be aware of the blind loyalty to denominations people held in those early days. This attitude continued until the 1840's and 1850's, especially in the rural areas. This same kind of blind loyalty existed in the political parties as well. If one's family was Republican all the children would be Republicans. This attitude accounted for the growth of denominations from within the families. So those denominations whose family had the most children grew faster. This was one of the reasons the Catholic church encouraged their members to have large families. Ministers in those days rarely tried to persuade new families that came to town to change denominations. In this case, even without a building and without a pastor, it appears that the people had remained loyal to the church and denomination.

At the service on August 23rd when Rev. Kaemmerer preached his third sermon since he returned at the Courthouse, the old constitution was re-adopted. A resolution was passed to buy a lot on which to erect a church building. In a few days, \$2,400.00 was raised and a lot was purchased on which to build their next church. This lot was at the corner of North and Buckeye Streets where the building still stands and remains the main sanctuary of the present church.

THE NEW START IN A NEW PLACE

1870-1871

“Father: Kaemmerer having saved the congregation from extinction by building new faith and hope into the people, who had encouraged them to reorganize, buy a lot and start a building fund, again resigned. This time the congregation called Rev. James Reinhart of Columbiana, Ohio to be their pastor. He preached a trial sermon on Whit Sunday and a second sermon later, at which time he was extended a call. He accepted the invitation, promising to begin his ministry on September 1st, 1870. Two weeks before he was to move to Wooster, he took ill and died on August 19th. It is apparent in the records that the congregation was showing signs of despair. So many things had happened to them since the time of separation from the Lutherans. They lost their money. They had no place to worship. They were without a pastor for a long time and now when the sun began to shine again, illness and death had plagued their pastor.

Because “Father” Kaemmerer now lived in Wooster, he once again stepped forward to take the leadership of the congregation. On May 28th, 1871, still meeting in the Zimmerman Hall, the question before the congregation was “will the German Reformed Congregation of Wooster and its Vicinity build a new house of worship this summer”? The response was “yes” all but one. Now on the 12th day of August 1871, “In the name of and to the Glory of God” the cornerstone of the German Reformed Church was laid at an appropriate service. The German sermon was preached by the Rev. J. F. Deichman and the English sermon by Rev. J. Vogt. Dr. Vogt composed a poem for the occasion which was liberally distributed to the congregation for use in the service. This was the poem and used as a hymn.

CORNERSTONE HYMN

Thou art the true foundation-stone
Thou mighty Lord of Hosts,
And Zion trusts in Thee alone
And Thy Salvation boasts.
Elect and precious, tried and sure
From age to age the same.
The church shall rest on Thee secure
And Glories in Thy name.
Amid the wind, and rain, and flood
Their temple shall not fall
Its strength is in redeeming blood
And Thou art all in all.
Oh! Fill us with Thy light and love
And keep us to the last
That we with Thee may dwell above
When storms and floods are past.

For this service, “Father” Kaemmerer and Pastor Loci, wanted the children to be present but some of the parents thought they would take up too much space and would not be quiet. Father Kaemmerer said he would be responsible. The service began in the Presbyterian Church on North Street and the congregation marched to the lot on which the church would be built. The Presbyterian Church was then located on W. North Street where the present Justice Center stands.

1871 was a big year in the life of the German Reformed Congregation when they went from despair to rejoicing. The congregation voted to build a building. They laid the cornerstone on August 12th, but the construction was actually started on July 5th. On December 31st they dedicated their new building. It was only five months from the start of construction to the completed building. When these figures are set in the time frame when there was no electricity and all the wood needed to be shaped and prepared by hand, when all the brick had to be carried up to the scaffolding and when the only tools they had were hand tools, one cannot help but be impressed. Stop and look at the beams in the sanctuary, at the brick work and appreciate the design and the beauty they build into this structure. The building was designed by the architect and carpenter, D. Brown. William Robertson did the stone work. Joseph Hattinger and Mr. Seib did the brick work. The building was 70 feet by 40 feet, gothic in style and one story high with a high cathedral ceiling.

What a great day December 31st, 1871 was in the history of the German Reformed Church. The day of dedication, Father P. Herbruck preached the sermon in German. Mr. A. F. Zartman, a theological student at Heidelberg College in Tiffin Ohio preached the sermon in English. Dr. G. W. Williard, then President of Heidelberg College and later Pastor of the Memorial Church in Dayton Ohio helped with the finances. The record is not clear as to what this meant. When the church was completed the congregation was in debt \$6,000.00. Amazingly, \$3,000.00 was raised at this service. These people began a tradition that has existed to the present day. If the church decides to do something, everyone pitches in and the debt is soon wiped out. The local paper, "The Wooster Republican" wrote, "The musical part of the ceremony reflected great credit on the choir, which was one of the best in Wooster".

The following is copied from a history the Rev. Beck wrote when he was the pastor of the First Reformed Church in 1889-1897. "It will doubtless be an item of interest to note some of the expenditures for the new building. On September 19th, 1871, the Building Committee made a contract with Carter Brothers in Pittsburgh for colored, stained and ornamental glass for said church, to be completed and delivered by the later part of November for the sum of \$425.00. A contract was made with Gasche and Busch for fresco work to be finished about December 1st for the sum of \$230.00. The gas piping and fixtures, chandeliers, etc., were put in at a cost of \$275.00. The carpeting of the church cost \$325.00. The difference in prices will be noted between now and twenty-five years ago."

THIS IS A SUMMARY OF THE COST OF THE BUILDING.

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|---|-----------------|
| The entire cost of the building | \$12,221.73 |
| Church lot previously bought and paid for | <u>2,400.00</u> |
| Total original cost | 14,621.73 |
| Paid by subscription..... | \$6,611.00 |
| Collected on Dedication Day..... | 3,050.00 |
| Proceeds of concert..... | 225.00 |
| By fair and extra subscription..... | 408.76 |
| The price of the lot | <u>2,400.00</u> |
| Total | 12,694.76 |
| Indebtedness | 1,926.97 |
| The membership of the church at this time | 130 |
| The Sunday School membership | 50 |

1872-1877

The student from Heidelberg College who was one of the speakers at the Dedication Service, Mr. A. F. Zartman was called to be the next pastor of the German Reformed Church. He was Ordained and Installed on the same day, May 5th, 1872 in Wooster Ohio. His pastorate, like many others for this congregation was short as he had to resign on March 9th, 1874 because of ill health. Shortly after his resignation, he died of Tuberculosis. On October 4th, 1874, Rev. Henry Hilbish began his ministry here but for some unrecorded reason, he too had a short ministry, resigning on September 1st, 1876.

One can almost feel the frustration that existed in the congregation from having one minister after another. However, the problem is not over. Now Dr. J. H. Good recommended the Rev. Milton H. Groh as Rev. Hilbish's successor. After preaching as a supply minister for about two months, Rev. Groh was given a call to become the full-time pastor on January 16th, 1877. But again, his pastorate was the shortest of all as he resigned in the fall of the same year.

I would like to make some comments at this point as the author of this history to try and explain some of the issues that may have been at the bottom of their problems. This group of people survived a conflict with the other congregation, a legal battle over their property, ministers with health problems, or perhaps problems within the parish, that some of the ministers did not want to face.

There is little doubt in my mind that the language question was a part of the problem. As the writer of this history, I was a young man when my own home church struggled with the language issue. The older members still wanted German sermons preached and the young people didn't even know German. They resolved it by having one sermon a month in German. Even when I graduated from Seminary in 1938, there were churches asking for graduates that could preach in German. This issue divided families, it divided churches, and often it was a serious problem in the community. Would the community tolerate two languages? Perhaps this will help us understand why some ministers especially the young men just out of seminary stayed only a short time.

As an example of this issue in this particular church, it is recorded that the Consistory at its regular meeting on December 27th, 1877, tried to settle the issue once and for all. I quote Rev. Beck again, "By a Consistorial action of four votes to one, it was decided to make the church English in her pulpit and administration." This resulted in considerable feelings and the taking of sides. It really meant that they were back to two groups within one church again, each claiming to have the rights to the property. After consultation and due consideration by the German Brethren in the church, a report was made to a congregational meeting held on January 4th, 1878 as follows:

First: That the Germans would not take the property and assume the responsibility of the debt.

Second: That they would accede to the proposition that those who were in favor of an English Congregation should take the church and assume the payment of the debt on said church.

This was finally arranged and agreed to by the mutual signing of articles of agreement, and the legal transfer of all rights and claims to the church property to the English, - with the provision, "That nothing, in this contract contained shall be so construed as to prevent any member of said German Party from becoming a member of said English organization, and in that case such member or members so uniting with said English organization, shall be entitled to all the rights and immunities of the other members thereof, and be liable for the indebtedness assumed as aforesaid, equally with the other members of said

English organization". Though finally separated, fraternal greetings were mutually exchanged, of which due record has been made.

Left without a church home again, the German brethren were searching for a building in which they could hold services of worship. They were without debt and could turn once more to Father Kaemmerer. The old vacated Lutheran Church that stood on North Market Street, on the lot occupied by W.D. Taylor was obtained as their place of worship. Where this church was on North Market no one seems to know. Quoting from the history Dr. Beck wrote, he said "Be it said in honor of Father Kaemmerer, that after his retirement from the active service, as long as health and strength would permit, his interest, prayers, and presence were given to the English Reformed Church of Wooster in whose success he manifestly delighted."

Though these remarks belong in a later day, I want to include them here for most all of the foregoing history is a tribute to Rev. David Kaemmerer. He was one of the most successful ministers in the history of this congregation. We in this present day need to remember his contribution and pay honor to his name. "Father Kaemmerer died on May 1st, 1893 at the age of 90 years, 7 months and 12 days and is buried in the Wooster Cemetery in Lot #978, Section Y. His grave is plainly marked. It should be noted here the great grandson of Father Kaemmerer is living today in Cleveland, Ohio. His name is Rev. Robert C. Hull, PO Box 96373, Cleveland OH 44101, Phone 216-281-5516. Rev. Hull was present and spoke to the congregation in Fellowship Hall at the 170th Anniversary celebration that was held on October 3rd, 1989.

1878

It was at a Consistory meeting on January 17th, 1878 that the separation of the German speaking people and the English-speaking people was reviewed. All was in order, but to reduce the confusion that existed, Mr. J. B. Childs proposed a resolution that reads as follows: Resolved that this congregation shall hereafter be known and recognized by the title, "The English Reformed Church of Wooster", R. W. Laubach seconded the resolution.

WHY ENGLISH REFORMED CHURCH?

The use of the word English in the Church Title was inserted to distinguish this congregation from the German Congregation. This title confirmed the name was changed to First Reformed Church since the language question was no longer relevant. In the official records located in the Archives of Trinity Church, is a copy of the first Constitution of the English Reformed Church.

The Consistory had much work to do at this time as they still needed a pastor. On January 22nd, 1878 they extended a call to the Rev. I. J. Bacher. The debt of the church was about \$500.00. He was able to get the debt paid off during his pastorate. However, his pastorate was also short because of ill health which caused him to resign on September 1st, 1892. He was followed by Rev. J. S. Stoner but I found no record of his ministry.

Following Rev. Stoner's ministry, the Rev. R. C. Hartman began his ministry in Wooster on April 15th, 1883. His pastorate continued until September 23rd, 1888.

During his pastorate, improvements were made on the church building. A new roof was put on and a new ceiling was added at a cost of \$1200.00. I must assume that this was the ceiling that was removed in 1957 to restore the beautiful ceiling that was originally placed there. The original was like the Sanctuary is now but was lowered in 1888 in order to save fuel and to improve the acoustics.

It appears that the first Women's Organization was started during Rev. Hartman's ministry. Looking back, we can perceive the great contribution the women made to this congregation. The first meeting of the Women's Aid and Missionary Society was held January 23rd, 1888. The first officers of this organization were, Emma D. Miller, President; Louisa Dausman, Vice President; Emma Roth, Secretary and Flora Hesler, Treasurer.

1889-1898

Following the resignation of Rev. Hartman, the Church called Rev. E. M. Beck who began his ministry in April 1889. During Rev. Beck's ministry, a number of new programs were started. A youth meeting and a Junior Society of Christian Endeavor were organized. The Christian Endeavor Organization became very strong across the country with all kinds of rallies and conferences for the youth. As far as I know, it no longer exists.

The older members of the present church may remember when the parsonage stood where the Christian Education building now stands. In 1892 the parsonage was built for a cost of \$1,560.00. In 1896 the Church Building was again repaired. New windows were installed, a carpet was laid and some other smaller items at a cost of \$685.33. The parsonage was an eight-room house with a pantry, bathroom and closets with a cellar under the two rear rooms. Included in the price was a well, a cistern, an added porch, coal house and fence. The committee to raise the funds and build the parsonage consisted of John Stevens Jr., and John S. Schultz plus the pastor. The contractor was Milford L. Snyder whose bid was \$1,335.00.

1896

It hardly seems possible that the Church needed more repairs, but at this time the windows needed some repairs, the outside needed painting, the bricks needed to be repointed and the pews needed varnishing. This was an effort to make the church look like new again.

1998-1905

Following Rev. Beck's ministry was the Rev. S. E. Neikirk who began on April 1st, 1898. Some interesting and important events happened during Rev. Neikirk's ministry. On April 5th, 1900, the bell which still rings from the tower was presented to the church by Susan Fisher. A major renovation of the Church took place in 1903 when the building was remodeled. This opened the north wall and added a large room which was used for Sunday School classes. Doors could be opened so it could be used for an overflow on Sunday morning. This meant that the pulpit was moved from the north end of the sanctuary to the south end along with the choir loft and organ. Now the entrance to the church was behind the pulpit and visitors were often startled to find they were entering the church behind the minister. A new entrance was made into the sanctuary where the new addition and the Sanctuary meet at what is now the rear of the church. The floor of the sanctuary was sloped toward the pulpit, and two aisles led from the rear to the chancel.

This arrangement was called the Akron plan, which was the popular church architecture for the turn of the century. The center pulpit with circular pews did not fit in a rectangular sanctuary. New churches that were built at this time were most often square and the pulpit was in a corner with circular pews going entirely from one side to the other with a choir loft to the side. This was a terrible design for a church. It was not worshipful as there was no place for an unobstructed view of the altar and it was difficult to preach there.

At this time the congregation bought a tractor organ which was used until it was replaced in 1948. Mr. Don Wimer was the organist. The young men of the church had to pump the organ to fill a bag with air to feed the pipes. The keys operated valves which let the air through. The reed action keys were not easy to play. Men were most often organist at this time due to the difficulty operating the organ.

On December 12, 1903, the remodeled church was dedicated. Dr. Charles Miller who was President of Heidelberg College preached the sermon of the day.

1906-1920

Rev. Neikirk resigned September 1, 1906. Following his resignation, the Church called the Rev. Frederick Comer to be their pastor. He stayed until August 1, 1910. During this ministry the parsonage was remodeled.

In November of this same year, 1910, on November 20th, Rev. E. E. Young began his ministry and served until 1919. During those years the church celebrated its centennial. In two evening services, Rev. E. E. Young and Rev. E. M. Beck a former pastor now of North Canton, spoke to the congregation.

A pastor that the congregation remembered for his pastoral care and concern for the people was Rev. F. S. Zaugg. He began his ministry at the Reformed Church on January 15th, 1920. While he was pastor, a Boy Scout Troop was organized and this lasted for many years. The duplex offering envelope was introduced and electric lights were installed. It is hard to believe that it took this long to put electric lights in the church. Rev. Zaugg resigned on January 13th, 1927 on exactly the same day seven years later.

1927-1941

Rev. Eugene Youngen came to Wooster to begin his ministry here on March 15th, 1927. At this time in the history of the First Reformed Church, many new programs were started that have lasted until today. The Woman's Organization is still strong, the Sunday School is still active though different in its concept. At this time classes like Entra Nous, Filiag Regis, B. B., (BeBusy) were begun and their names are still familiar to many of the congregation. One of the significant changes that took place at this time was the purchase of a new Communion Set and on Easter Sunday in 1928 the congregation took communion in the pews for the first time. Those who did not live through these years will not understand how difficult it was to get congregations to give up going to the altar for communion instead of receiving it in the pew. A part of the problem was caused by tradition of leaving the pew and going to the altar and receiving the elements from the pastor. The change was necessary because the congregations were getting larger and there was a growing feeling this was in keeping with the scriptures.

An aside is found in a book written by Mr. Cooper entitled, "Zwingli". Zwingli was a Roman Catholic priest service in Zurich, Switzerland. He broke away from the Catholic church for a number of reasons he considered were not in harmony with the Scriptures. When he served Communion for the first time as a protestant, he took the elements from the altar and brought them down to the people in the pew.

Rev. Youngen proposed a new Christian Education Building west of the sanctuary. On May 1st, 1929 the congregation voted for a major remodeling program. A financial campaign under the leadership of John C. Schultz culminated on July 17th with \$50,000.00 pledged. All was ready to begin but in October of that year the Great Depression started. The building program was postponed. The church however did purchase the D. Nice property for \$6,500.00 on April 2nd 1932 as a site for a new parsonage. In this building the beginners and primary departments were housed for the next three years.

It was in the year 1934 that the two Denominations, the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America, merged into the Evangelical and Reformed Church. There was not one each of these two Denominations in Wooster and they each retained their separate identities until the year 1954. It was at this time (1934)) that the Evangelical Church took the name of Christ Church.

In 1936, the depression was waning and the congregation took the new look at the proposal to build a Christian Education building. On May 13th the congregation voted to proceed with the construction. This action brought on more changes. Now the church bought the Walter Weck home on 515 N. buckeye Street as their new parsonage for \$6,000. With a bid of \$35,000 for the construction of the new building, the corner stone was laid on November 1, 1936. The building was completed and dedicated on June 6, 1937. The sanctuary was remodeled and it was dedicated on the same day. When the building was finished there was still a debt of \$10,000 but during the year this debt was reduced to \$3,000. Rev. Youngen concluded one of the longer ministries at Trinity Church when he resigned on September 30, 1941 after having served First Church for 14 years.

About 1960, after Rev. Youngen retired from his parish in Indiana, he and his wife returned to Wooster. They returned with a hearty welcome from both the people and the pastor. In 1964, Rev. Youngen died of a heart attack. He was missed even in his retirement role.

THE WAR YEARS

1942-1946

On February 1, 1942 Rev. August H. Elshoff was installed as Pastor of First Evangelical and Reformed church. The merger of these two Denominations took place in 1941, and most congregations were busy trying to discover all of the new ideas that were being proposed. On March 15th, the New Woman's Guild was formed. At this meeting Mrs. Anna Zaugg was elected president, Mrs. J. R. Weimer, Vice President, Mrs. Clarence Garver, Secretary and Mrs. Don Griffin, Treasurer. This new Woman's Organization became a very strong factor in the future of first Church as many of the women accepted new challenges and accomplished much in the field of Overseas Missions.

On March 22nd, new hymnals were written, published and dedicated for the new church. Those hymnals were well liked by the congregations and were used until the new merger with the Congregational Christian Church took place. Mrs. Victoria Elshoff organized a junior choir late in 1942. In 1943 the Ladies Aid Society and the Zwinglian Missionary Society were merged into a Service Society of the Women's Guild. On April 4th of the same year, the Centennial of the Sunday School was observed and Dr. Clarence Josephson, President of Heidelberg College, was the speaker. A New Pulpit Bible was presented to the church by the young people's department of the Sunday School. A new Communion Set was presented to the congregation by the Filea Regas and the Entre Nous classes.

Another one of the impressive events of Rev. Elshoff's ministry was the burning of the mortgage on the Christian Education building. A \$3,000-dollar debt remained when Rev. Elshott came and now was oversubscribed by \$1,000.

Rev. Elshoff served his church in the wider ministry by serving on the Board of Trustees of the Mission House College; as a Trustee of the Dunkirk Conference Grounds and as Chairman of the Committee on Higher Education of the South East Ohio Synod. In 1944, he was elected delegate to the General Synod in York, Pennsylvania.

It is important to remind ourselves, that those were the years when we were engaged in World War II. These were most difficult years for families, individuals and churches. Sacrifices were demanded of every person. Rationing of most products caused people to raise gardens for the first time. Organizations could not get supplies. People were waiting in ration lines for most anything one needed. Every family was touched by the war by either having a family member or a close friend or relative killed or wounded in the conflict. Even if you escaped such tragedy there was the constant tension that it could happen. Just living with the stress of uncertain days made life difficult. Those were demanding years upon a minister to try and bring comfort and peace when there was no peace. It was the worst of times.

After the war was over, Rev. Elshoff resigned to accept a call to a parish in Tillamook, Oregon. From there he went on to serve churches in Gresha, Oregon and Wannalua Church of Hana, Maui, Hawaii. He died in March of 1973 and was buried in New Knoxville, Ohio.

THE GROWTH YEARS FOR FIRST CHURCH AND THE MERGER OF CHRIST AND FIRST CHURCHES

1948 - 1963

(Since I am the author of this history and it is necessary that I write about my ministry at First/Trinity Church, I am aware that this section will be longer than others. That is due to several things. I had the longest ministry in the churches history but the main factor was that many important events took place while I was the minister, namely the merger of the two churches, the building of a new Church School addition, remodeling the Sanctuary, call of Assistant Pastors and continued growth. Another factor was that as the author of this history, I was here when these things happened and I can report details that otherwise would get lost. I feel it is important for every church to have a historian that records the events of each year so that all the facts are retained. I am committed to write the facts about each ministry regardless of who the minister was at the time. I have researched the records for all the years of the history of Trinity Church, including my own so that the facts I report are accurate).

On January 25, 1948, Rev. Leo A. Keil preached a trial sermon and was called to be the next pastor of First Evangelical and Reformed Church. He had been the pastor of David's Evangelical and Reformed Church in Canal Winchester, Ohio. He began his ministry on April 1st, the week after Easter. Before arriving in Wooster, the Consistory decided to sell the present parsonage and purchase a new one. Since there was not sufficient time to do this before Rev. Keil and his family arrived, the church rented a house on Emerick Street until the new parsonage was ready. This was approximately two months. The members of Consistory and especially their wives were most helpful with this second move.

The congregation Rev. Keil found in Wooster was one that was progressive and most willing to cooperate and work for the church. It was a congregation that had good leadership in previous ministers as well as in the laity. There was an apparent readiness to move on when he arrived.

Even before he arrived, but after the trial sermon, the Consistory decided to go ahead with some outside renovations of the building. This included a better termination of the tower, renewing the woodwork and glass on the tower, cleaning and waterproofing the bricks, removing the shelter over the main steps and painting the woodwork.

It had been Rev. Keil's policy when he began a new ministry to put all other matters aside except emergencies so both he and his wife Marie could call morning, afternoon and evening until all of the members of the church were visited.

A custom that had been carried over from the past was the publishing of the names of the members and how much they contributed to the church. Rev. Keil suggested this was archaic and was unpopular with the congregation. The Consistory acted to discontinue this practice. The telephone system was different than now. Our number was 1549K. This called for personal operators to place your call.

The new parsonage was located at 2021 Cleveland Road. This was an innovation from the past, as most churches still had the parsonage next to or close to the church. The congregation numbered of 639 members and was one of the larger churches in the denomination. Many churches of this size had a second staff person. Thus, without the second person, it was of utmost importance to locate a capable secretary. Mrs. Dean Weimer was suggested and she was hired. Mrs. Weimer had been the secretary to

Congressman John McSweeney in Washington. She was more than a secretary, she performed a ministry to the congregation. Her knowledge of the membership of the church along with a keen sensitivity added to her good secretarial skills. She was an excellent asset to the ministry.

The day called for a number of new additions to the program of the church. One of those was regular Fellowship/Family Nights with excellent programs. This concept caught on rapidly and soon the Fellowship Hall was full. It furnished social contacts for the families that otherwise were non-existent. We also called upon Zeke Alcock to take movies of the congregation as they left the church on World Wide Communion Sunday. Communion was a most spiritual and special occasion and the congregation felt an obligation to be present every time communion was observed. Consequently, the best attendance was on Communion Sundays. The movies that Mr. Alcock took became good drawing cards for the family nights. Elinor Taylor agreed to be the Editor for "Flashes from First" which added the spice we needed to get our message read.

A blow came late in the year when Mrs. Weimer was asked by Congressman McSweeney to go back to Washington after he had just been re-elected to Congress. This was a great opportunity for Mrs. Weimer as she had fond memories of her earlier days in Washington. At that time the church reached out to Arvella Shellenberger for the secretarial position and she too made a great contribution to the church.

Plans were now in the making to remodel the interior of the church as well as the exterior. The Consistory also voted to purchase a new Baldwin Organ to take place of the old Tractor Organ that had been in the church since about 1903. When the old organ was removed, Mr. Don Weimer resigned as organist. We were fortunate at this time to have Mrs. Richard Buss in the congregation who was an accomplished pianist. We encouraged her to be the organist. She agreed and did her job well. Later, we asked her sister in law Mrs. Roger Buss to direct the choir. She was a graduate of the Juilliard School of Music. First Church was known at this time as having one of the best choirs in Wooster thanks to these two ladies.

Mr. Edward Sherck was given the contract to do the remodeling to begin the following year during the winter months. Mr. Sherck, a member of the church, was a building contractor and recognized as one of the best in the community. Remodeling was to include a new altar, reredos, chancel, choir stalls, pulpit, lectern, and baptismal font. New doors to the vestibule behind the altar were included in the contract.

1949

First Church was now being recognized as one of the several leading Churches in the community. The congregation was aware of this and inspired them to work hard in the church. The remodeling was moving along well in the sanctuary, though at times it created an inconvenience.

The Men's Brotherhood was organized and it soon filled the Fellowship Hall with me and their sons. The programs were inspiring, the food prepared by the women of the church was excellent, and for a number of years this was a great addition to the program at First Church. Harry Alcock took colored 16mm pictures of the congregation again as they left the church on World Wide Communion Sunday. An attendance record was set this Easter. College Students were recruited to help in the choir, as well as with the Youth program. The pledging on Kingdom Roll call Sunday was 95%.

First Church sent a delegation to the National Lakeside Conference on Christian Education. Adrian and Ruth Miller, Albert and Arvella Shellenberger, Genny Grape, Florence Garver, Pauline Sheppard and Rev. and Mrs. Leo A. Keil attended. This was the year of the General Synod meeting of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and Adrian Miller was elected a delegate by the South East Ohio Synod. The vote was 81-10 in favor of merging with the Congregational – Christian Church. This was the beginning of the eventual merger of the two denominations. Rev. Keil directed one of the Youth Camps at Dunkirk, New York where a number of our young people attended each summer.

Mr. Sherck and Rev. Keil drew the basic design for the cancel, but Mr. Sherck was responsible for the Pulpit, Lectern, Altar and Baptismal Font and their construction. The Baptismal Font was given to the church in honor of Rev. Phaon Snyder. He was a minister in the Reformed Church for many years. He was the father of Dr. Claude Snyder who was the Secretary for the Town and Country Work of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Phaon was also the father of Ruth Snyder who served in China before the missionaries were forced to leave. Later she went to Japan to work in the music department there. Two granddaughters of Rev. Phaon Snyder are members of Trinity Church who are Mrs. Winifred Bell and Mrs. Betty Eicher.

It is worthy to note that most of the work that was done by Mr. Sherck was retained at the time of the remodeling of the Sanctuary in 1957, with the exception of the reredos and cross that hangs back of the altar. The choir loft was built for a divided chancel. This was done to give the altar its proper place in the center of the chancel. The altar represents the presence of God in the sanctuary. Eventually the choir shifted to one side of the chancel and the other side was used for the organ and the choir director.

The Service of Dedication was held on November 13, 1949. Dr. E. M. Beck, Pastor of the North Canton Zion Church was the speaker for the service.

1950

During this year the emphasis was placed on using and improving what we had. The Church School at First Church was excellent. There was a very strong program for children and youth and also a very good adult program with five classes. The young adult group was very active. Not only did they have an outstanding attendance on Sunday morning, but they had a very active community-oriented program and social life for themselves. It was around this time that someone wrote that the Sunday School was the most wasted hour of the week. This was not true at First Church. Issues of current events were considered with implications of what these events would mean to us as Christians and to the society as a whole. These classes were not a second church service. The discussions were intelligent, with large lay participation. The bible was lifted up as the source of truth and morality and these truths were carried into the work place. These classes kept the line of communication open between the pastor and the congregation. They provided social contacts for new members and a place for friends to meet and retain their contacts.

The Mar-Sing Class was a good example. This class was formed on December 18, 1939. The first session was held at Pauline Sheppard's home. After a few meetings they felt they needed funds so dues were set at five cents.

In 1943, one of the war years, there was need for recycled metal to build armament needed by the Armed Forces. The class took on the task of collecting cans, washing them and shipping them to collecting places. In the summer they planted an acre of land and a Victory Garden. Each person was responsible for a different kind of vegetable. One night in July they picked 20 bushels of beans. The older ladies of the church helped with the canning. The food was then taken to the Upper Sandusky Home for the Aged and to the Fort Wayne, Indiana Children's Home. This is a report of their efforts:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 303 quarts of beans | 56 quarts of vegetable soup |
| 85 quarts of beets | 28 quarts of corn |
| 95 quarts of sauerkraut | 73 quarts of catsup |
| 923 quarts of tomatoes | Total 1636 quarts of food. |

Some people taught the same class for years, others for a shorter period. Some of the adult teachers were: Clarence Garver, Adrian Miller, Lewis Maddocks, Robert Grape, Mrs. Nel Boigegrain, Mrs. Lola Hauenstein and Sid Bucher. Eilen Catliff served as Superintendent of the children's department and others who taught children for a long time were, Helen Oyler and Florence Garver. There were many others. Another class for the Young Married was started and called the Koinina Class.

1951

During this year, John McSweeney was not re-elected to the House, consequently Mrs. Weimer came back to Wooster and later returned to her position as Secretary for first Church. Mr. and Mrs. Albert Shellenberger were planning to move to Lima, Ohio so the position was open for Mrs. Weimer to return. For a shorter period in this transition, Mrs. Rita Strauss served as secretary.

Another interesting and worthwhile project was undertaken to assist Jimmy Hanger with his musical training. Jimmy came from a family that was unable to provide him with music lessons. He had a fine voice for a young person. Grace Sherck spearheaded the effort to enlist the help of the Kiwanis and Odd Fellows to provide funds for his training. He sang in the choir under the direction of Helen Buss. Ruth Snyder was also instrumental in guiding him in his future. He was accepted into the Columbus Boys' Choir for his training and his schooling.

It is important that First Church and now Trinity not lose sight of the great contribution that Harvey Kamp made to his church. Harvey was a stationary engineer and became the Janitor of the Church for a number of years. He could do anything around the church. He knew how to care for the coal-fired boiler furnace and repaired it as needed. In those days, firing the furnace was a chore. It meant starting a fire in the boiler, watching it so it didn't get too hot or go out, seeing that the water level was maintained, shovel lots of coal onto the fire and clean out the ashes to be hauled away. In addition to all this, he cleaned all of the church, painted walls, scrubbed the floors and locked and unlocked the doors as needed. On his retirement the church gave him a farewell party. Few churches have the privilege of having a Harvey Kamp as their caretaker.

In 1950 the ministers in Evangelical and Reformed Churches in Orrville, Wadsworth and Wooster planned a weekend camping experience for their young people to be held a Turkey Foot Lake near Akron. For several years this turned out to be a real drawing card for these young people. Even thirty-five years later some people are still talking about those camping experiences. The ministers of those churches at that time were: Manfred Stoercher of Orrville, Robert Mathes of Wadsworth and Leo Keil of Wooster.

It was popular for churches to invite some of the great preachers of that time to come and spend several days in Wooster. Rev. Elmer Humrickhausen, a minister of the Evangelical and Reformed Church in Indianapolis and Dr. John Biegeleisen of Eden Seminary were two of the speakers. Dr. Biegeleisen was a converted Jew and was one of Rev. Keil's professors. His Jewish background made him an excellent professor of the New Testament as he could fill in what Jesus' life was like. These men were inspirational leaders for our Evangelistic effort.

1952

As a means of improving the organization at First Church, the Consistory initiated a new program called the Church Cabinet. This was an effort to give more representation to a larger segment of the congregation by having each one of the organizations represented. This would provide a way for the issues of the congregation to be considered and referred to the Consistory for action.

First Church was constantly searching for ways to put more emphasis on the spiritual. In order to accomplish this goal, a home altar was proposed. On that Altar was a Triptych which was designed with a picture of The Church on the right panel and a picture of Jesus on the left panel and a Cross in the center. The family was to set this up on a table in their home along with a bible, a candle, the Lenten Coin Folder and the Lenten Devotional Guide. The money collected from these folders was used for scholarships for those who would enter the ministry.

Also, a new Women's Guild Circle was started called the La Four Circle. It was made up of the young married women of the church. In order for these women to attend, an older lady would babysit the children. This was the fourth circle in the Women's Guild.

One of the most debated issues during this year was whether to bring small children to the worship service. Some thought the children needed to attend and learn to sit still and be quiet, others felt that it was too much to ask of the children and took away from the parent's attention who were at worship. First Church tried to supply a compromise by providing what was called "A Cry Room". One of the rooms in the balcony was used for this purpose. It was closed in with a glass front so that the parents could see what was going on in the Sanctuary as well as hear the sermon through the PA System. This was only moderately successful. It was abandoned when the Sanctuary was remodeled. Under the leadership of Jesse Moore, the Heidelberg Class raised the money to accomplish this project.

It is good to know something about the youth of this day. On January 5, 1952, Roy Wells and Donna Shellenberger helped Wooster High School win the first Individual Events Tournament in the Eastern Ohio District. The youth at First Church were leaders in our schools. An event that was carried out several times were lengthy trips to some of the institutions of our Church as well as to give them travel experience. This year the trip included a stop at the United Church Homes in Upper Sandusky; Heidelberg College, Tiffin; Fort Wayne Children's Home in Fort Wayne Indiana; and Eden Seminary, Webster Groves, MO. These were great trips for the youth of the church.

Late in the year, Miss Ruth Snyder left for Japan to become a part of the Mission there. She was sponsored by the Board of World Ministries of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

1953

In 1953 a Youth Choir was started by Miss Grace Reef as director. She had a great way with youth and they worked hard to make this choir the best in town. They did more than just sing. Each year they would put on a concert. One of these concerts was based on the music of Rogers and Hammerstein. They developed a good reputation and sang for other organizations in town. The Children's Choir was under the direction of Phyllis Miracle. Phyllis was a High School student and had an outstanding voice. She led these children into outstanding performance. At Christmas and Easter all three choirs took part in the worship service.

The congregation was always appreciative of the fine music we had at every level in First Church, so each year the congregation gave an appreciation dinner to honor the choir.

1954

Nineteen fifty-four started out as an ordinary year doing the regular things any church would do, planning for the special days and holding regular committee meetings. The congregation had grown, the Sanctuary was getting too small, the church school classrooms were not big enough. The Consistory appointed a committee to study the possibilities for the expansion of our facilities.

New problems arose in our community. The Polio Epidemic which had every parent anxious as to where their children were and what they were doing. We avoided crowds. We washed every bit of fruit. We tried to stay healthy. Summer was the worst time and almost every year someone we knew would come down with this dreaded disease.

The youth choir presented their spring concert. "The Dulca man" by Catherine Blanton. Reginal Helfrich, the Secretary for Church World Service was our speaker for Spiritual Life Emphasis. He was a dynamic speaker that one could listen to for hours. He spoke of his visits to the trouble spots all over the world and reported extreme conditions of poverty. He always drew a large crowd where-ever he spoke.

THE MERGER OF FIRST CHURCH AND CHRIST CHURCH

Then in June, the unexpected happened. The Rev. Milton Jones, pastor of Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church in Wooster resigned. Before he did this, and not to anyone's knowledge at First church, he encouraged his people to consider seriously merging with First Church to give unity to our ministry in Wooster.

Rev. Jones resigned on June 7th. On June 13th, the congregation accepted his resignation to become effective on September 7th. The Consistory at Christ Church held meetings shortly after he announced his resignation, and the matter was brought to the congregation several times for discussion and decision.

This was a most difficult decision to make for Christ Church. It meant leaving a building they had worshipped in since 1838. This building carried many memories in its walls. Many of the present congregation were baptized, confirmed and married there. The other side of the story was that they were a small congregation of approximately 200 members. They had a very old building that needed repairs. They considered selling the church and moving to another part of town. That proposal was discarded because of the lack of leadership and funds. After all facts were considered and debated the congregation agreed to vote to stay or merge.

At this time, one of the members of Christ Church Consistory spoke to Carl Butdorf, President of First Church Consistory about the possibility of a merger. Many proposals of merger had been made in the past by First Church but Christ Church was never ready. Here again it was necessary for First Church Consistory to look at all the issues. We were a church with 850 members and were looking for expanded space. How could we absorb another 200 members? Yet, First Church remembered that they had proposed this idea in the past and now that Christ Church seemed ready, First Church should not turn them down. If the merger took place it would make a congregation of 1050 members. First Church authorized Mr. Butdorf to extend an invitation to Christ Church to merge with First Church. The details were outlined in general but would be worked out after the affirmative vote by a joint meeting of the two Consistories.

Christ Church acted upon this letter at a Congregational meeting on July 11th. Mr. Raymond Hagerman, President of Christ Church Consistory, appointed the following people to a committee to consider the proposal and make a report to the congregation. The committee consisted of Walter Schott, chairman, Fred Shilbey, Howard Duell, Charles Laper, Harry Ackerman, Harlan Kestner, Genevieve Ackerman, Paul Schmid and Mrs. Otto Lawrence. The meeting to receive the report and take a vote was scheduled for August 29th. When this date was set for a vote at Christ Church, First Church called for a special meeting on the same day to vote on the same issue. The vote at First Church was YES by a large majority and the vote at Christ Church was 54 for and 29 opposed, with 3 abstaining. As was originally proposed, both Consistories were to meet together to draw up the terms of agreement by September 10th.

This was at the same time our youth had planned to go to St. Louis. Consequently none of the youth or Rev. and Mrs. Keil were in church on this Sunday. On the way home, they stopped at a pay phone and called home to learn what the vote was.

The entire merger proceeding went so well that almost none of us could believe it. The joint Consistory met that very week and worked out all the details of the merger to the satisfaction of both groups and set the merger Sunday for September 26th. This date surprised Rev. Keil as he had expected more time to prepare for this special occasion. There was a lot that had to be done in a few short days. It was necessary to find a speaker for the service, prepare special bulletins and make sure that both congregations were recognized.

Merger Sunday was a big day in the history of both congregations. This had been contemplated by both churches, since the merger of the two denominations and now it was to be a reality. The attendance was good that Sunday morning. We had Bela Vasady, Professor of New Testament at Lancaster Seminary, Lancaster Pennsylvania as the speaker. He was Hungarian by birth and was an ideal person to address these two congregations who had different histories. His sermon topic was, "Our Two-Fold Call, Unity and Mission". The service was inspirational and set the mood for a successful merger. There now remained the time for evaluation by each person who attended this historic occasion. Would it supply their needs and meet the promises that were made? Not all members of Christ Church attended this service. Those who voted no for the merger still had doubts about its validity.

This created a lot of urgent work for Rev. and Mrs. Keil for the next week. They set out on Monday morning to call on all the people who were not at the merger service. Then, to what extent possible, all the members of Christ Church. Most of the people called on were surprised at the turnout for the service, and the optimistic reports they had from their own friends and members. Almost all of those that did not come for the Merger Sunday were present the next Sunday.

In the end there was only one family from Christ Church that did not join the merger. The lady had been a Lutheran and she wanted to go back to her former church. Rev. and Mrs. Keil promised each and every member a personal place in this new congregation. Each congregation regardless of size would have an equal say in the planning for the future.

This was actually carried out at every level. At the first Joint Meeting of the Consistory they had to call a new pastor. This was a new congregation. Rev. Keil as pastor, had to resign and let the Consistory choose and call a new pastor. Rev. Keil was asked to accept the call to this new Congregation at the same salary he was getting from First Church. This action demanded that Rev. Keil would need to be installed again. He was one of the few ministers who were installed in the same church twice in his ministry. The Consistory decided no one would lose his or her place in the church. The new Consistory would be made up of both Consistories and would be reduced by attrition.

In a few months it was time to write the yearly report for the Annual meeting of the congregation. You can imagine the material that needed to be included in this report. Let me quote what Rev. Keil had to say in that yearly report. "So far this merger has been the finest demonstration of practical Christianity I have ever seen. Even though there was room for many selfish differences, only Christian love and understanding was evident from individual relationships through every organization and to the Consistory itself. I can only boast of your fine spirit, and trust that I shall always be able to do so."

There was immediate evidence that there was a need for more space and a committee was appointed to discover how the space we had could best be used for our present needs. An effort was made to locate a Christian Education Director but those we had interest in were not interested in us. One day Rev. Keil remembered that Donna Shellenberger Silver was not returning to Ohio State. He suggested to her that we could use her to help with the Youth work as well as other areas in the church. She could assist the Women's Guild and the teachers in the Sunday School. Donna was a tremendous help, being willing to do whatever needed to be done.

In nineteen fifty-four, a new congregation of 1050 members was born. The new congregation now took its place among the largest congregations in Wooster and the Denomination. The success of this merger was watched and admired by the Christian Community of Wooster as well as the churches of South East Ohio Synod. First Church had already gone to two morning services to accommodate the crowds. Now with the merger with Christ Church, the two services at 8:15a and 10:30a with the Church School in between were imperative. On one Sunday there were 571 in Church and some people did not stay because every seat was taken.

1955

1955 was a new year with a new congregation with new dreams, new hopes and new beginnings. Early in the year there was a Congregational Meeting and one of the main items was to select a new name for the new Congregation. Efforts had been made to have organizations and individuals make suggestions of appropriate names. When the discussion was over and the vote taken, "Trinity" was the name chosen. We will now be known as the Trinity Evangelical and Reformed Church. The new name gave the church a new identity and actually a new place in the Synod.

Along with the merger came the necessity for rethinking the role of the church. How to join two traditions together so that both congregation could find continuation of their past and at the same time do the things that were needed to carry on the program for the new and larger congregation into the future.

An example of the kind of spirit and cooperation that prevailed was the Sauerkraut Supper that Christ Church had for 50 years. It had become a community tradition. The cost at that time was \$1.25 a plate. The kraut was made by the Laper family. Mrs. O. M. Lawrence and Mrs. Clarence Matz were in charge of the kitchen. Walter Shott and Albert Miller cut the hams. The people of Christ church thought they ought not try to hold the supper anymore since there was a whole new group of people to work with. However, the people of First Church said, "No way, you have always held this supper and we will help you do it again this year". (In 1993, the supper was still being held. This was evidence of the final success to the merger.)

One of the ventures of the Denomination was a youth program called the "Cube System". The idea was to divide the youth into small groups of 10 or 12 young people. Then a couple would be assigned to a group. They would teach the group on Sunday morning and would entertain the group in the hosts home in the evening. This would give the hosts total contact with the youth to develop loyalty to each other. Donna Shellenberger guided this program and the teachers were Mr. and Mrs. Paul Fisher and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ash. For a few years this program proved very successful. Like most programs for youth, they only last a short while. In Paul Fisher's group, Bill Musselman was one of the youth who became a basketball coach of some fame. He coached the Cleveland Cavs for a while.

From the beginning of the new congregation, Rev. Keil, Donna Shellenberger and Mrs. Dean Weimer carried on the work of the congregation in reorganizing the Church. Rev. Keil had to make more calls on sick people and have more committee meetings due to the larger congregation and the planning for the future. For these reasons, the Consistory agreed that it was time to hire someone to help the ministry in the person of a Youth Worker and Pastoral Assistant.

This was not an easy task and most of the work was left up to the pastor. This was mainly because the two would need to work together. Finally, after a long search, we located Rev. Daniel Horn who had been out of Seminary for a year. He was working at a church in Akron but was ready for a move. Rev. Horn was born in Dover, Ohio; went to Heidelberg College and Eden Seminary. He preached his trial sermon on November 13th and was installed on November 27th.

Dan came at a time when First Church was making a lot of decisions and things were changing rapidly. The Consistory had been working hard on how to increase the capacity of the church. Nothing would answer the problem but a new section on the Education Building and a remodeling of the Sanctuary. Nothing much could be done until we knew how much money we would have to work with on this project. The first thought was that the Church would act on its own to raise the funds and took some action in that direction. After talking to people who were in the Fundraising business, the Consistory decided to let an outside organization help with the fundraising project. The H. P. Demand Company out of Chicago accepted the job. The building program was to cost about \$300,000.00. Our goal for the fund raising was \$175,000.00 and the campaign collected \$176,868.00 in cash on three-year pledges. There were 394 pledges and 300 people worked on the project. It is important to put these figures in this history as others in the past have quoted the cost of the program to be \$175,000.00 when in reality we spent \$330,000.00 +. The plus is for those things that were added after the building was completed.

1956

With the finance campaign over it was now time to set in motion the organization that would supervise the construction. The Consistory appointed a number of committees. The first was to hire an Architect. Mr. Donald C. F. Miller was chosen because he had successfully worked with Churches. The Board for Homeland Ministries had used him in several places. He soon provided the committees with elevations of the new structure inside and out. This became a major project as almost every part of the building needed to be invaded and changed. The plans were accepted and a date was set for the groundbreaking. A new development arose when the Second Baptist Church became interested in buying the Christ Church Property. This was a congregation of black people who were all well liked in the community. The price for the former church and parsonage was a most reasonable \$20,000.00. Because the Minister and the people of Second Baptist Church were so well liked, the community got behind the project and helped the congregation buy the property. Rev. Freeman was the pastor at the time. The congregation was most pleased, as now they had a different and better church than they had before. The people of the congregation were grateful that the community would be so helpful.

When Dan and Jewel Horn came to First Church, it was necessary to locate housing for them. In the beginning the Consistory located a house on Bowman Street which was across from the High School. This was not the best house or location for a parsonage. One day, Edward Sherck said to Rev. Keil, "How would you like to own your own home?" Mrs. Sherck knew Rev. Keil had been thinking about and looking for a house that he could afford to buy so he knew the answer. His proposal was that Rev. Keil find a house to buy and let the Horn's live in the parsonage. This sounded like a great idea and the Keils were off and looking for a house. After a lot of looking and finding nothing that they could afford or would have, Mr. Sherck proposed that he build a house for Rev. and Mrs. Keil. This he did and the Keil's new address was: 2013 Robinhood Drive. This concept of the pastor owning his own home was an entirely new idea in most areas of the church at this time. It worked out fine for Wooster. The church allowed the Keil's \$100-month housing allowance. The Keil's put a lot of time and effort into building their house themselves and of course cut the cost considerably.

1957

It seemed like a long time from the decision to expand the Church and Church School facilities to the time when ground would be broken to begin building. That date was March 31, 1957. Part of the delay was due to a strike in the steel industry. The contractor for the building was the Freeman Construction Company of Wooster. Mr. Robert Freeman, President of the company was a very active member of the congregation and a member of Consistory. He gave the entire program his personal attention. On Monday after the ground breaking, the power shovel moved in and the building was on the way.

This meant immediate changes within the building. The church offices were in the front of the Christian Education Building so they had to be evacuated and moved to Rev. Keil's basement where Mrs. Weimer worked for the next year.

On June 23rd the cornerstone was laid and a time capsule was enclosed which contained; a Directory of the Church, a copy of the Daily Record, a Bible, the Architect's drawing for the new construction, an issue of Trinity Topics, the Order of Service for the Merger and the Ground Breaking.

Now it was time for the various committees that were appointed to make decisions for the interior of the Church, to give these to the Contractor so he could get all of the supplies ordered. The Christian Education Building was built first so that it could be used for Worship Services while the Sanctuary was remodeled.

While we were worshipping in the Fellowship Hall, the city observed its 150th Anniversary. It was an occasion worth noting. The entire community got into the mood of the celebration. The men were wearing beards, ladies dressed in Turn of the Century clothes. Louie Carter Sr., one of the members and a business man in town, drove to church that morning with his family in a horse and buggy and tied the horse to a parking meter in front of the church. We celebrated Easter, held Confirmation and served Communion in the Fellowship Hall.

The Consistory voted to replace the Electric Organ with a Schantz Pipe Organ but this was not in the budget for the new building. Mr. Fred Shibley was named chairman of the Organ Committee to determine with the Organ Company what we needed. D. E. Bierly, Ed Lytle and Mary Monyer made sizeable gifts to this fund so the organ would be ready to install at the proper stage of construction.

The Uniting General Synod met in Cleveland, Ohio where it voted on the merger between the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Church. The vote was favorable. Mr. Adrian Miller and Rev. Leo A. Keil were delegates to this meeting of the Uniting Synod from Southeast Ohio Synod.

At this time the Communist invaded Hungary and a number of people in Hungary came to this country as refugees. Two young men came to Wooster to be aided by our Congregation until further arrangements could be made for them. The church provided housing, food, clothes and work for these two men for the next year. Later they found friends in the Cleveland area and moved there to be with people of their own origin.

Under Rev. Daniel Horn's leadership, the Youth Program at Trinity was very active. Rev. Horn was very loyal to the denomination and encouraged the Youth interested in the Synodical work. Eugene Keil was elected president of the Synodical group and Don Miller as Vice President. The next year Don Miller became president and was one of three to attend the National Youth Conference of the Congregational Church. Christian Education was very important in most churches and Trinity was a leader in this field. Mrs. Ellen Catliff headed the Children's Program. The Adult Program had at least five very active classes.

Trinity was one of the first churches to introduce the idea of a sponsor family for all new members that joined the church. It was their responsibility to bring prospective members to church, acquaint them with the building and the membership, take them to various group meetings and to stand with them on the Sunday they joined the Church. This program made the transition from stranger to member much easier.

1958

The building was completed. We moved back into a new, lovely, beautiful Sanctuary. The architecture was just right, now that the false ceiling was removed to reveal the beautiful beams supporting the roof and providing a high and vaulted appearance. One needed to have worshipped in this Sanctuary with the low ceiling to appreciate how much this added to the beauty and worshipful atmosphere. A new reredos with its dorsal curtains on traverse rods made in convenient to change them to coincide with the church year. They gave a colorful background to the gold leaf cross hanging over the altar. The

Sanctuary was painted in an ecclesiastical lavender giving the entire Sanctuary an inviting worshipful appearance. This elicited compliments from the members and the community when they saw it for the first time.

The Men's Brotherhood did something different this year. They invited the congregation to hold their annual picnic at the new Temples Hills Camp. This camp enabled our young people to attend without traveling to Dunkirk, New York.

In June, the congregation found time to help the Keil's celebrate their 20th Wedding Anniversary and Rev. Keil's 20th Anniversary of his Ordination. The Consistory purchased 42 new choir robes for the Chancel Choir. The first communion service was held in the new Sanctuary on the first Sunday of October which was World Wide Communion Sunday.

It was time for the Dedication of all the new facilities for which the congregation had planned for many months. An entire week was set aside to give recognition to all who helped to achieve these goals, to dedicate each new area of the building to the worship and glory of God.

Sunday, November 2nd, 1957 – the first service was held. It was called the Service of Remembrance. The speaker was Dr. Everett Babcock, then minister of the Ohio Conference, Congregational Christian Church. This service reminded us of the role our church played in the Reformation and the place we now fill in the new merger.

Tuesday, November 4th – This was COMMUNITY NIGHT. This was a time to recognize that Trinity had a place in the religious community of Wooster. The Rev. Robert Tuck, pastor of the Disciples of Christ Church in Wooster was the speaker.

Wednesday, November 5th – This was HOMECOMING AND FAMILY NIGHT. This was an informal service to give former members and guests an opportunity to see what had been accomplished as well as fellowship with members and friends. Former ministers and sons of daughters of the congregation shared the speaking time.

Thursday, November 6th – THE DEDICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BUILDING. Rev. Daniel Horn wrote a play for the youth to present. It was entitled, "What is the American Way of Life?" and was directed by Judy Baer.

Sunday Morning, November 9th – THE DEDICATION OF THE SANCTUARY AND THE REMODELING OF THE ENTIRE CHURCH. The choir in their new robes and the congregation with an air of expectation awaited the first sounds of the new organ. Dr. Sheldon Mackey, Secretary for the Evangelical and Reformed Church was the speaker for this occasion. His subject was "There is Power in this Place". It was a time for rejoicing.

Sunday Evening, November 9th – THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW SCHANTZ ORGAN. Mr. Bruce Schantz explained how the organ was built and how it operates. Mr. John Schantz was the guest organist for the Organ recital. (Copies of these services are found in the Historical Files)

It was a sad day when Mrs. Weimer fell in Fellowship Hall and broke her hip. This was during the Christmas season. It was a crucial time to lose a secretary, so the Consistory asked Marie Keil to take the position of secretary until such time as a permanent secretary could be found. Marie had secretarial experience and knew the congregation well. This was no time to break in a new secretary with Christmas at hand, and the New Year with all the yearly reports to be printed and prepared for the Annual Meeting. Rev. Keil expressed deep regrets for Mrs. Weimer's accident and wanted the congregation to know what an important contribution she made to the ministry of Trinity Church during these many years she helped him in a variety of ways.

Realizing that so often when the Church followed the calendar year, the committees were interrupted in January with changing of personal it was suggested that the church year begin June 1st instead of January 1st. This was agreed upon and gave the committees the summer to plan for the fall without interruption in the middle of the year.

1959

This year was called the year of Transition. The former years were needed for merging two congregations, then reorganization and finally constructing a new building and remodeling part of the old. It was to be a year when the emphasis was on the spiritual growth of the individual and congregation.

A new Church School Class was organized and called the Koinonia Class. It was started for the new young married couples joining the church. The Heidelberg Class was no longer filling this role. The confirmation class took a trip to the Museums around University Circle in Cleveland. The Junior Choir put on one of its outstanding Spring Concerts by using Rogers and Hammerstein music. This included selections from Oklahoma, The King and I, Pipe Dreams, The State Fair and Carousel. All were in costume. What wonderful music this group produced through the years.

The scholarship fund raised over \$1,000.00 and all of it was used to help Judy Baer, Judy Amstutz and Eugene Keil prepare for Christian Service.

Something different happened this year when our Radio Broadcast was scheduled to coincide with World Wide Communion Sunday. It was planned that one of the Consistory or former Consistory members would be with each one of our shut-in members. After the elements were consecrated at the church they went to the members home and served them communion along with the congregation during the broadcast.

Another historical event was the meeting of General Synod in Oberlin, Ohio to finish the merger plans that were begun in Cleveland two years before. Don Miller was a Fraternal Delegate.

Unusual things do happen. The Women's Guild learned that Mrs. Frank Leisy's mother had made a deposit in one of our banks in the name of a Sunday School Class and had forgotten about it. It was now worth about \$500.00 and was used to buy a new piano for the church.

Trinity Church regretted deeply that Rev. and Mrs. Daniel Horn resigned to move to an Assistant position in Coral Gables, Florida. The congregation was most disappointed to lose both of these leaders. Jewel was a big help in Church School as well as a soloist in the choir.

In December, the Congregation voted on a recommendation for a replacement for Rev. Horn. The committee recommended a student from Oberlin Seminary, Mr. Charles Kline. Mr. Kline started work at Trinity in February. He commuted from Oberlin until June when he and his family moved to Wooster. He was born in Cleveland, went to Heidelberg College and Oberlin Seminary. He and his wife, Lois, had two daughters named Sally and Susan.

At the same time, the Consistory recommended Miss Elizabeth Hurst to replace Mrs. Agnes Weimer as Church Secretary. She too became a most helpful person in the office.

1960

We need to read what Rev. Keil wrote at the close of the year to the Congregation. It is copied here to preserve it for the record. "To the members of Trinity Church. We have come nearer to accomplishing our goals for 1960 than at any time in the last decade. The goal that we set for ourselves last year and the year before was to revitalize and deepen the spiritual life of Trinity Church. This is the kind of goal that is hard to measure. Yet we do know that some things happened that tell us we met the goal. The story is written in the life and spirit and activities of the congregation.

The most evident sign of this accomplishment was demonstrated in the self-study program that was begun last June and was completed in November. We learned a lot of things about ourselves. We reworked our districts and found that our congregation was about evenly distributed both in the city and in the county. We found we had a good percentage of our congregation actively engaged in the activities of the church. We discovered one-third of our wives held jobs outside the home. About 400 of the 1200 members are below 20 or above 60 years of age. We also found that our church has grown faster than our city."

Pastor Keil went on to point out that another area in which we made great advances was in the area of Stewardship, which Dr. Lewis Maddocks headed up for the Consistory. "When Dr. Maddocks was asked to conduct this self-study program it led into a Stewardship and Christian Enlistment program and through this effort you arose to your greatest heights. This program raised \$72,000.00 in pledges toward a budget of \$80,000.00.

Rev. Kline moved to Wooster in February and was ordained in June. After his ordination he began his full time Assistant work at Trinity Church.

In this day the "Fisherman Club" was popular. It was a group of men who were committed to making calls on visitors or people we knew had moved into the community. The purpose was to invite them to visit, or if they had done that to become members of Trinity Church. Actually, to sell them Trinity as their new Church Home. They would meet at Rev. Keil's home, get their assignments, make the two calls and return to the Keil's for coffee and cookies and make a report of their findings. In most all cases they were well received and new members came into the church through this process.

These had been stress years for Rev. Keil. When some health problems surfaced the doctor suggested that it was imperative that he take some time off to relax. The Consistory concurred and he was given a month's leave of absence.

Another most important program was initiated at this time. We called it a survey. The Consistory appointed three committees to examine who we were and where we were going. One to study our finances, one to study our membership, and one to look at the potential for growth. Each committee was divided into three sections, the past, present and future. A very unusual thing happened when these committees made their report. All three sections that were reporting on the future, recommended that Trinity Church consider starting a satellite Church. Only a few years ago we put two churches together and now we are recommending that we split again into two. The reason back of this suggestion was that Trinity was getting too big and we did not know each other very well anymore.

This proposal was submitted to the congregation for a vote and the decision was made to call in people who work in the area of starting churches to get their opinion. The result of all of this was that a representative of the Board for Homeland Ministries was invited and did come. He spent an afternoon with Rev. Keil and Rev. Kline looking over the community. The pastors pointed out our history, the sociological factors involved and the interest of the committee. When the committee met with the Representative of the Board that same evening, he suggested a location for the new church. This was less than two miles from Trinity and was surrounded by other churches and settled with people who still held their membership in downtown churches. This raised questions and we asked for another person's opinion. We called on a representative of the new conference and his opinion concurred with many of the committee that it was not a good location and probably not a good idea at this time. At this point the motion to table was taken off the table and the idea dropped for the time being.

1961

One of Rev. Keil's philosophies was that every third year the church needs to slack off from a heavy program emphasis and give the congregation a chance to rest. This was one of those years. We had hit the program angle agreed and now the people needed to feel free from heavy committee responsibility.

In spite of this goal, southeast Ohio Synod was invited to meet at Trinity. They wanted to come to see our new church and we wanted them to come. This took extra planning to accommodate all of the groups that needed space to meet, as well as housing and meals.

This was also the year when General Synod was going to meet at Oberlin again to put the final touches on the merger. Adrian Miller and Rev. Keil were delegated again and voted on the final act of merger. The two denominations met as separate bodies and each accepted the plan of union and the constitution. This put the new Denomination into action.

This was the day of the small groups. We had two operating at Trinity and they were not only fun but they created some positive effects for the individual and the congregation. It was also the day for Prayer Groups and these too were well attended. It was felt that the prayer groups were extremely helpful. A history of the Church ought to include some of the activities of the youth as well as adults. Our young people accomplished a lot this year. Several were invited to the National Honor Society. They were Seniors Kay Buss, Mardon Erbland, Lois Specht; Juniors were Richard Ash Jr and Sally Parrett. We almost always had winners in the Speech Contest in State and National.

During Rev. Keil's ministry he often suggested a theme for the year as a focus around which the programming would develop. Some years this worked better than others. For 1962 the suggested theme was "The Gathered Fellowship of The Concerned".

This theme had many aspects. One of them was the action of Consistory to deal with the problem of people being nominated for the Consistory and not being elected several times. To counter this problem, the Consistory passed a motion that allowed them to appoint two people each year. This accomplished another purpose and that was to bring people on the Consistory with special talents that were needed. It never was a problem to get people to accept the nomination. It was a high honor to be elected, especially as an elder whose special function was to oversee the spiritual life of the congregation. These people were ordained into their office for life. This gave the office a sense of dignity and usefulness that is lacking without it.

With the new denomination now in place, the ministers could no longer be a member of Synod but had to join the local church. So, Rev. Keil and Rev. Kline were taken into the membership of Trinity Church. This had its positive and negative sides.

The scholarship committee announce that this year there were only two recipients, and Eugene Keil withdrew since his work had provided the means to help him through college.

Rev. Keil announced to the Consistory one evening that he received notice from Heidelberg College that they were going to bestow upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. The most important part of the announcement was that it was due to "Outstanding Service in the Parish Ministry". This was the first degree given in this category. It was not only an honor for him, but an honor for Trinity Church where he was serving at the time. The congregation in recognition of this honor, purchased a new robe with the doctor stripes on the sleeve. Several of the congregation attended the graduation service at Heidelberg not only to see Rev. Keil get his honorary degree, but to see his son Eugene graduate at the same time. Eugene was entering Eden Seminary that fall.

One special gift to the church this year was a set of chimes for the new organ. They were given by the John Grassbaugh Family. John was chairman of the Building and Property Committee when Rev. Keil came to First Church. John was elected Mayor of Wooster earlier, and while he was mayor, President Truman visited Wooster. He had the honor of riding to the Baptist Church in the same car. Our pastor, as President of the Council of Churches was at the train station to greet President Truman and welcome him to Wooster.

1963

Rev. Kline planned a trip to Shannondale Mission in the Ozarks Mountains for the summer of 1963. Along the way they stopped to visit other denominational institutions. The youth thought highly of Rev. Kline and they were especially pleased with the trip to the Ozarks.

It seemed that in spite of having two ministers. There were still some areas that were not being covered as well as they should be. Rev. Layman Cady was hired to do Pastoral Calling. He was with us for only a few months when he decided to go back to the Orient, where he had served as a missionary before retiring.

Each year seemed to bring new needs to light and often our youth responded to these calls to service. Jack Whapam went to Michigan to a work camp for the summer months. About this same time, Mary Ann Keil, found out about the work the Presbyterians were doing in the ghetto and she volunteered to work in Cincinnati for a summer. This program developed over the years and Mary Ann went back for a second and third summer.

June 12th was the 25th Wedding Anniversary for the Keil's and the 25th year of Ordination for Rev. Keil. The congregation recognized both of these anniversaries on a Sunday morning and afternoon. Some of Rev. Keil's close friends were invited to participate in the Sunday Morning Service.

Almost at the same time, Rev. Kline announced his resignation to the Consistory to take effect on July 23rd. Again, the congregation had grown to like the Kline's very much and regretted deeply when they departed. But we knew that young ministers need to acquire their own church.

When the wall began to crack it went the whole way. Just about a month after Rev. Kline's resignation, Rev. Keil informed the Consistory that a committee from the new Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ has asked him to join the staff in Columbus to be the Director of Program. After having served this same church for 15 years it was not easy for him or the congregation to have this relationship terminated. Rev. Keil said in his departure that he felt that 15 years was long enough and that the congregation should have the privilege and opportunity to have a different type of ministry. A most meaningful farewell was held on October 23rd. It is never easy to say good-bye.

Though it is out of sequence, Rev. and Mrs. Keil were away from Wooster serving the Ohio Conference and the National Offices for 10 years. In 1973 they returned to Wooster. Rev. Keil was Director of Tours for the denomination now and the Stewardship Council moved his office to the AAA Office in Wooster about the 1st of August, 1973.

THE INTERIM MINISTRY OF REV. EUGENE YOUNGEN

At his time of retirement, Rev. Eugene Youngen, a former minister of First Church, returned to Wooster with his wife to live among his former members and friends. Their friends were glad to see them return to Wooster, including Dr. Keil who told Rev. Youngen that there was no place he couldn't go and no one upon whom he couldn't call. The older people and the shut-ins were delighted to see him.

When Dr. Keil resigned in November of 1963, it left Trinity Church without a pastor. Rev. Kline had also resigned. There were a lot of things that needed to be done, such as teaching two confirmation classes of 20 students each. It was only natural that Trinity congregation would like for him to preach and take over some of these duties. His work here was a full-time ministry. He was not a young person as he had been living in Wooster for several years.

At Easter time in 1964, Rev. Youngen had a heart attack and had to take time off to rest and recuperate. Since it was Easter time and there was a confirmation class to confirm the congregation called on Dr. Keil to come back for these special services. Dr. Keil had spent one year with the class and part of the other year, so he was familiar with the church and the students.

He also returned to perform a wedding for Harry Alcock and Mrs. Marilla B. Grant. Later Eugene and May Youngen moved to Fairhaven in Upper Sandusky where they would get complete care.

The Consistory reported that on Easter Sunday there were 1055 people in church. They also reported that the estate of Ann Conrad Mackinze left a gift of \$2,000.00 to the endowment fund. A stained-glass window was given as a memorial to Mr. B.E. Bierly from his estate. The particular window was not designated. Mrs. George Lahm gave the church two of the Stained-Glass Windows in the chapel in memory of her husband, George Lahm. These windows are ones that depict Moses and the Modern Man. Mr. Lahm was a former Consistory man and Jeweler in Wooster for many years.

THE MINISTRY OF DR. PAUL SCHLUETER

On February 23rd, 1964, Dr. Paul Schlueter preached a trial sermon. He was accepted and agreed to begin his ministry at Trinity on June 1st. Rev. Schlueter was serving the congregation in Belleville, Illinois before coming to Wooster. He had served churches in Dayton, Ohio; Louisville, Kentucky and St. Mary's, Ohio.

In September of 1965, word was received that Mrs. August Elshoff had died. The Women's Guild started a fund in memory of Mrs. Elshoff which was given to the Upper Sandusky Home. One hundred dollars was raised.

During Dr. Schlueter's ministry, the church became more open to the public than of faithful service as Caretaker for the Church. Mrs. Nell Boige grain gave the funds to light the tower so it would be visible at night. A new Hammond Organ was purchased for the chapel to take the place of the Baldwin Organ that was moved up from the Sanctuary when the new pipe organ was installed. It was always hard to find someone to take over the Librarian's position in the church but for a number of years, Mrs. Hubert Vanderhof kept the library in good shape. She resigned because her husband, who worked for the railroad, was moved back to New York.

On June 26th, Rev. A. Eugene Keil was ordained into the Christian ministry after having received a BA degree from Heidelberg College and his BD degree from Eden Seminary. He also spent one year as a Student Intern in the Evangelical and Reformed Church, State College, Pennsylvania. His father preached the Ordination sermon. Eugene became the pastor of the Valley City Congregation. Later, he was Campus Minister at Bowling Green University. Currently he is a full time Interim Minister. Eugene became the second son of the congregation to go into full time ministry from Trinity Church. Dr. Claude Snyder was the first, being ordained about 1918.

In November, the Rev. Glenn Rettig was installed as Minister of Christian Education and Youth Work. He came from Port Washington, Ohio. He served Trinity Church in this capacity until after Dr. Schlueter resigned. He was called to the Lake Fork Church in Atwood, Illinois where he served until his retirement when he and his wife moved back to Ohio in the Xenia area.

1967

Trinity church continued on its path to offer services to the community by inviting the Wee Care Head Start School to meet in the church. They continued to use the church for this purpose until 1977.

Rev. Glenn Rettig was chosen by the Ohio Conference to lead a Youth Tour to England. He and Debbie Sherck represented Trinity Church on the tour. Ray Leisy was the Rotary Club Choice for a Student Exchange program to Rugby, England.

In the summer of this year, the family of Dr. Claude Snyder held a 50th Ordination Service for him in Germantown, Ohio where he had preached for a number of years. As was indicated before, he was the only son of this congregation until Eugene Keil was ordained in 1966.

The consistory reported that on Easter Sunday there were 1055 people in church. They also reported that the estate of Ann Conrad Mackinze left a gift of \$2,000.00 to the endowment fund. A stained-glass window was given as a memorial to Mr. B. E. Bierly from his estate. The particular window was not designated. Mrs. George Lahm gave the church two of the Stained Glass Windows in the chapel in memory of her husband, George Lahm. These windows are ones that depict Moses and the Modern Man. Mr. Lahm was a former Consistory man and Jeweler in Wooster for many years.

The Bulletin Board that stands at the corner of Buckeye and North Streets was given by Mrs. Ewing Woodward in memory of her husband Ewing. Mr. Woodward was a member of the church a number of times and was on the Consistory when Rev. Keil came as pastor. He was a willing worker around the church. Miss Carlye Bupp, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Bupp was honored by being selected as Student Nurse of Ohio. She was the only nurse from Massillon City Hospital to be so honored.

1969

This was a big year for Trinity Church. It was the Sesquicentennial Year. Trinity Church began in 1819. As this history reports there were many long and hard years of struggle to get the Reformed Congregation on its feet and growing. It was the same with Christ Church that came through the same tradition, including merging and separation. Finally, in 1964 these two churches were united again and could celebrate this occasion together.

The congregation planned for a five-month celebration of their history with 10 speakers invited to take part in the worship services, beginning in June and ending in November. Quite appropriately, the first speaker in June was Rev. Robert Hull, who is the direct descendent of Father Kaemmerer, one of the first minister of the Reformed Church.

The speaker on July 6th was the Rev. August S. Elshoff of Portland, Oregon. The records do not reveal much about the day. However, Miss Judy Amstutz, a recipient of the Scholarship Fund who was the Associate Dean of Students at Michigan State University addressed the combined Adult Classes on July 13th at 9:15 a.m. She was followed by Miss Karen Baer, also a Scholarship Fund recipient who was serving as Director of Christian Education at the Sylvania United Church of Christ in Sylvania, Ohio. She addressed the combined Adult Class on July 20th.

Also, on July 20th, the Rev. Daniel Horn, Assistant Pastor during Dr. Keil's ministry preached at morning service. He was then serving as a United Campus Minister at Bowling Green University in Bowling Green, Ohio. He was ordained in this sanctuary three years before.

On September 7th, Rev. Charles Kline was invited to speak at both services. He was an Assistant Minister during Dr. Keil's ministry. He was a pastor of the Strongsville United Church of Christ in Strongsville, Ohio. He was followed by Rev. Eugene Youngen who was serving the small church at Reedsburg, Ohio.

On Reformation Sunday, October 26th, Dr. Leo A. Keil, former pastor of Trinity Church, spoke at both services. He was now Director of Program for the new Ohio Conference of the United Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio.

The final speaker for the series was Dr. Ben Herbster, then President of the United Church of Christ, who spoke to the congregation on November 23rd. This concluded the celebration of 150 years of ministry to the Wooster Community.

1970

In predicable fashion, Trinity Church again invited another Community Service to be located at the Church. This time it was the Adult Basic Education Program which met in the Choir room. Another innovative move was a camping experience at the Tempeld Hills Camp for the young people from both Trinity and the Second Baptist Churches. Second Baptist is a black congregation in Wooster and this was an effort to break down the prejudices and barriers that exist between black and white. For many years, Trinity Church was known as a liberal congregation and now during these days it was appropriate to make a statement about how Trinity Felt about this issue.

One incident helps to prove the point of the position of Trinity Church. During Dr. Keil's ministry, the church announcements carried the message that there would be Baptism of Children at the Sunday Service. Just before service began, one of the ushers came to find Dr. Keil and said there is a visiting family who wanted their child baptized. Dr. Keil went out to the congregation and found a black couple who asked to have their child baptized. They were asked all the right questions and were told that when the parents were invited to bring their children forward, they too should come with their child. Dr. Keil did not know them and they were almost transients but they were Christian people. After the service, Dr. Keil wondered what kind of comments or questions he would get from the congregation. Only one question was asked, "Who was the visiting couple that had their baby baptized"? This was a most encouraging response which warmed the heart of Dr. Keil.

1971

The records did not reveal much in the way of events that were noteworthy except the congregation had a special meeting to honor William Catliff for the 20 years he served the congregation as Financial Secretary and Treasurer. He was given a set of luggage and lots of praise. Bill Catliff served his church in a number of ways. He was a musician, a story teller, a faithful member and a willing worker at any task that needed to be done.

It was during this year that Trinity lost two very important people in the life of the Congregation. One was Rev. Eugene Youngen and the other was Rev. Paul Schlueter's wife, Anne. Anne was a guiding and driving force for Rev. Schlueter. Her death brought great grief to Dr. Schlueter that affected his ministry.

1972

The congregation was much aware of Rev. Schlueter's grief and decided to send him to the Holy Land and India as a way of helping him adjust to the loss of his wife. He not only enjoyed his experience but used his information to help others understand the conditions that existed in those countries.

There was another youth tour conducted by the Ohio Conference by the Commission of Camps and Conferences. Five youth from Trinity Church went on this tour. They were: Carol Westlake, Don Rettig, Gene Turner, Marcia Anderson and Pat Duell.

1973

It has been 20 years since Trinity Church was remodeled and the Choir did not have new robes in all this time. The consistory decided the time had come for the choir to have new robes. This added greatly to the color and worshipfulness of the Sanctuary.

**THE MINISTERS WHO SERVED TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
THE CONGREGATION BEGAN IN WOOSTER IN 1815**

The Church of Peace

Henry Sonnedecker 1819-1831

The German Lutheran & Reformed Church

Charles Swisler 1833-1839

A.L. Begeman 1840-1843

J.P. Mahnenschmidt 1843-1844

David Kammerer 1845-1864

Hiram Shawl 1853-1854 Associate

Joshua Derr 1864-1866

English Reformed Church

David Kammerer 1866-1871 Died May 1st, 1893

Amos Zartman 1872-1874

Henry Hillbish 1874-1876

Milton Groh 1877-1877

Bacher 1878-1882

Stoner 1882-1882

R.C. Hartman 1883-1888

E.M. Beck 1889-1897

S.E. Neikirk 1898-1906

Frederick Cromer 1906-1910

E.E. Young 1910-1919

Frederick Zaugg 1920-1927

Eugene Youngen 1924-1941

A.H. Elshoff 1942-1946

Trinity United Church of Christ

Leo A. Keil D.D. 1948-1963

Daniel Horn – Asst. 1955-1958

Charles Kline – Asst. 1959-1963

Paul Schlueter D.D. 1964-1975

Glen Rettig – Asst. 1966-1975

C. Ronald Wilson 1976-1987

Richard Wierwille – Asst. 1977-1979

Diane Lockwood – Asst. 1980-1984

Leslie Mollin 1985-1987

Martha Boyer 1987-1988

Interim Minister

John Clausing 1986-1988

Armin Bizer 1988-

Ministers of Christ Church

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| Martens | |
| E. Cromenwett | |
| G. Dillman | 1969-1985 |
| Kreep | |
| William Schaeffer | |
| J.F. Tetzner | 1887 |
| J.D. Kierterle | 1888 |
| Mallick | 1890 |
| G. Schaeffer | 1893 |
| G.L. Heck | 1897 |
| F.H. Kraft | 1899 |
| F.H. Graeper | 1903 |
| Herbert Brodt | 1907 |
| Joseph Reinicke | 1911 |
| Henry Doerres | 1920 |
| Arthur Jurgens | 1925 |
| Paul Schmidt | 1930 |
| Milton Jones | 1952 |

The Wooster Reformed Church

The history of the (German) Reformed Church at Wooster, Wayne County, Ohio, dates back to 1819. Some families of the Reformed faith settled at and about Wooster even before this. In the summer of 1819, the Rev. Henry Sonnedecker, residing in Washington County, PA, made a missionary tour through the counties of Jefferson, Tuscarawas, Wayne and Richland in Ohio, at Wooster, on the 1st day of August. This was the first sermon ever preached here by a minister of the Reformed Church and the occasion was one of interest and encouragement. At the close of the services he was strongly entreated to settle in this community and organize a Reformed congregation. On the 4th of January, 1820, he with his family settled at Wooster and on the 23rd of that month, preached his introductory sermon to an attentive congregation in a schoolhouse. As the Lutherans had united in the organization (being one portion of the old-fashioned "Union Church"), and as yet had no pastor of their own, they mutually contributed to the support of Rev. Henry Sonnedecker, who served both interests. He continued pastor of the united congregation for seven years, when the Lutherans called Rev. G. H. Weygandt, who preached his introductory sermon on May 27, 1827, and continued his pastorate for a period of thirteen years. The first communion of the Lord's Supper under the ministry of Rev. Mr. Sonnedecker here, was celebrated on the 16th of July in 1820, when twenty-five persons communed, of whom ten had been received by confirmation on the previous day.

At first, preaching or public worship was held in a school-house, or at private dwelling, but during the summer and fall of 1820, a one-story frame house of worship was erected, conjointly by the Reformed church and Lutherans, and dedicated in the fall of the same year, under the name, "Die Friedens' Kirche.". Rev. H. Sonnedecker closed his pastorate on the 3rd day of April in 1831. During his ministry here, he baptized 246 children and received 50 members into communion with the church. He was much beloved by his congregation, and the day on which he preached his farewell sermon was a solemn and memorable one. The congregation, after being vacant for nearly two years, called the Rev. Charles Zwisler in the early part of 1833, who served it for nearly seven years, closing his ministry here in the latter part of 1839. During his pastorate movements were started looking toward the erection of a new church. With this end in view, in 1833, George Bender and George Reiner purchased out lot No. 23 in the town of Wooster, for \$155. This lot contained nearly 2 ½ acres. September 28th, 1833, a graveyard was laid out. On the 17th day of December in 1833, the united congregation was incorporated, by a charter obtained from the Ohio Legislature, under the name of "The German Lutheran and Reformed Church in Wooster and its Vicinity." On the 8th of August in 1834, the lot was purchased by the Trustees for the use of the united congregation.

The building of a new brick church on the lot was set in motion in the spring of 1836. The Trustees elected to carry into effect the wishes of the congregation, in this respect, were William Reiter, Jacob Solt and Jacob Albright. The erection of the church commenced in early summer, and the corner stone was laid in the beginning of September, 1836. The sermons preached upon the occasion were by Rev. Peter Herbruck (Reformed), and Rev. Emanuel Greenwald (Lutheran).

In 1837-1838 the church building was completed. The total cost of the house was \$4,131.74. The church was dedicated during the annual meeting of the Reformed Synod of Ohio, on Saturday, June 16th, 1838. About 30 ministers, besides a large congregation, were present. The sermons on the occasion were preached by Rev. D. Krantz (Lutheran), in German from Mark xi 17, and by Rev. Abraham Keller (Reformed), in English from Psalm xxciv.

In the spring of 1840, the Rev. Charles Zwisler was succeeded in the pastorate by the Rev. Augustus W. Begeman, who served the Reformed congregation for a period of three years. February 1843, the Union Sunday School was organized with Isaac H. Reiter as Superintendent, and the school went in to practical operation on April 2nd, 1843 with about 100 scholars.

The successor of Rev. Begeman was the Rev. John Peter Mahuenschmidt, who having been elected by the congregation as pastor, September 2nd preached his introductory sermon on October 1st, 1843. After a ministry of one year he resigned.

He was succeeded by Rev. David Kammerer who was elected by the congregation as pastor, November 30th, 1844, and preached his first sermon.

Evangelical Lutheran Christ Church

Rev. D. Henkel, a missionary, preached the doctrines of this church in Wooster as early as 1815. Rev. John Stauck succeeded him in 1816, and for the first time administered the Lord's Supper, when Mrs. McIntyre, Mrs. Anspach and Mrs. Ihrig were received into the church by the rite of confirmation. In 1820 the German Reformed denomination united with this church and erected a house of worship. This was a small frame building, which, converted into a swelling, still stands on the original lot, immediately adjacent to and north of School-house No. 4.

Union churches in those days were, it seems, quite popular amongst the early settlers, not specially because of affinity in the faiths between the opposites – Lutheranism and Zwinglo-Calvinism – but because of personal preference and attachments between neighbors of like nationality, language and like need of mutual assistance.

Rev. H. Sonnedecker was among the early Reformed preachers. This unionistic latitudinarianism relation, as one minister designated it to us, lasted seven years. In 1827, Rev. G. H. Weygandt, of Washington County, PA became pastor and a second church (joint also) was erected – a brick structure, which still stands on out lot No. 23, and was dedicated on June 16th, 1838, Rev. E. Greenwald preaching in the Lutheran interest. The graveyard, meantime, had been laid in 1833 on a part of the church grounds, the first person buried in it being Elizabeth Weister, step-daughter of George Reiner. Rev. Weygandt remained pastor until 1840, preaching only in German. Rev. S.S. Kline was his successor, and alternated every two weeks in preaching German and English, the Reformed occupying the church on the intermediate Sunday.

Nativism, however soon made itself felt. The European Germans who, during the pastorate of Rev. Weygandt, had settled in Wooster, felt themselves slighted, and withdrew, organizing a distinctive church on North Buckeye Street, with a Rev. Konradi as preacher, occupying a room on the street in which religious services were held. This organization lasted but two years, when the members returned to the old church, bringing with them a pipe organ with four stops. Rev. Kline was succeeded by Rev. Benjamin Pope, who labored in both languages, but owing to

declining health resigned the charge in 1856-1857. The congregation was now without a pastor until 1861, when Rev. J. C. Schultze received and accepted a call. In May 1853, a distinctively Lutheran constitution had been adopted by the congregation.

In the spring of 1867 Rev. Schulze took leave of the congregation, and Rev. D. Martens became his successor in July of that year, and during the period of his ministerial service the dissolution of partnership between the two congregations in the joint possession of the church occurred. In September, 1869, Rev. Martiens resigned, and on April 1, 1870, Rev. E. Cronenwett assumed charge of this field of labor.

Rev. George Dillman is the present pastor, and is a young man of ability and popularity, and an excellent German and English scholar.

