

History of St. John's Kimmel Church



The present building is the third place of worship for the Lutheran and Reformed people of the area. The first was the log school house, the second building was on the opposite side of the road.

Many of the first settlers of the area are buried in the church cemetery.

The log school house was erected in 1816. The first minister to hold services there was Rev. George Eyster, a Lutheran minister. He organized a congregation of the following members: Peter Ziegenfus, Jacob Ziegenfus, Peter Zerby, John Kimmel, Charles Marwine, George Kessler, John Dietrich, George St. Clair, Michael Bolich, Henry Bolich, John Yarnall, Jesse Yarnall, Gideon Market, and Michael Madeary.

Pastor Eyster served the congregation for the first 10 years.

In 1850 while the Rev. John Felty was pastor the present building was erected.

On April 15, 1894 an agreement between the Lutheran members and the Reformed members was written.

Joint Agreement  
Between the  
Lutheran and Reformed Congregations  
of St. John's Church  
Barry Township, Pa.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

We, the members of the Lutheran and Reformed Congregations of Barry Township, Schuylkill County, State of Pennsylvania, having agreed to build a union church for the use of public worship by these two denominations, and having this day (April 15, 1894), laid the cornerstone for the same, do hereby adopt the following Articles for the guidance of the same, to wit:

## Article I

This church shall be a Lutheran (United Lutheran Church in America), and Reformed, (Evangelical and Reformed Church) Church, under the name of St. John's, and both denominations shall have equal rights.

## Article II

All business of mutual interest shall be transacted by the joint Council - Consistory at its regular annual meeting or at a special meeting. Each members of the joint Council-Consistory shall be entitled to one vote. The number of votes on each side, however, shall not exceed the number of members on the small Council or Consistory.

## Article IV

Regular meetings of the joint Council-Consistory shall be held at least once a year. When but one meeting is held it shall be on the first Sunday afternoon in January. Special meetings may be called by the President whenever deeded necessary. A quorum shall consist of three members from both the Council and the Consistory.

## Article V

The janitor shall be elected by the joint Council-Consistory at its regular annual meeting.

## Article VI

All business pertaining to the cemetery shall be transacted by a Cemetery Board. This board shall consist of six members, three Lutheran and three reformed, elected by the joint Council and Consistory from their number. This Board is responsible to the joint Council-Consistory and shall make an annual written report to the same. Both Pastors shall be ex-officio members of this board. The members of this board are to be elected annually.

## Article VII

Amendments may be made to these Articles of Agreement by a majority vote of the members of these congregations, said amendments to be read to the congregations at least

two weeks before voted on.

On Jan. 22, 1896 a special meeting of the church was called to discuss funerals. It was decided to charge everyone using the church for such a cause a fee of \$3.00 (dollars). This fee is to be paid to the janitor who will in turn give it to the treasurer. It was also decided that no corpse should be brought into the church.

The council of St. John's Lutheran Church held a meeting on Jan. 3, 1898 at the home of L. W. Hoch with Rev. Charles Kershner presiding. The church building was taken into consideration, in as much as snow and rain drifted through the roof and had already done considerable damage to the ceilings. The council concluded that the best they could do was to lay a floor over the ceiling. Brother C. W. Hoch was instructed to procur material to effect the same.

At the council meeting of March 25, 1898 it was decided to pay the debt on the church, which amounted to \$300.00 plus a year's interest. Treasurer C. W. Hoch stated there was only \$262 in the treasury. A donation of \$50.00 from the Ladies Aid Society was made. This was still \$2.00 less than would be needed to pay the note. It was stated that the Sunday School would give \$25.00 to help pay for the note. It was also decided to buy a book to keep track of all the people who helped pay for the new church building. Also in the book would be pages to credit yearly the amount the members pay to support the congregation. This book would be the property of the church and would be kept in the church.

On April 9, 1899 the following were elected to the council:

- Deacons - S. P. Snyder, John M. Koons
- Elders - Henry Dengler, Elias Mattern
- Trustee - 2 years - W. E. Hoch
- 3 years - L. W. Hoch

These council men will serve until the last service in February 1900.

At the May 30th church meeting in 1903 the following were appointed:

Lewis Kimmel to ring the bell and make the fires  
Miss M. Kimmel to sweep and keep the church clean  
Miss Nellie Patten was elected organist.

Amount of balance in the treasury on this date is \$257.90.

The council met on Jan. 28, 1905 to make out a statement of the members in good standing and to present the report to the congregation at the next service. The number of members in good standing as of the above date are 110. These members will be enrolled in the church book. It was decided to give each member a card for the year with his or her dues specified on the card. The balance of \$5.25 is due on the pastor's salary of \$120. On March 4, 1905 the balance in the treasury was \$11.61.

It was agreed to pay Harvey Kimmel fifteen dollars to ring the bell and make the fire, and ten dollars to Kate Kimmel to be janitress.

At the June 9, 1906 Congregational Meeting, it was decided to sell the old organ to John Newmaster for the high bid of \$11.00. A total of \$98.06 will be paid for the new organ and for the freight. \$3.15 will be paid to C. W. Koch for fire insurance tax on the church. The two west end rows in the cemetery will be sold as single lots for gravesites at a fee of \$5 for a lot 5' x 10'.

On Nov. 13, 1907 the contract to paint the church was given to Peter Reichwine. The church will be given 2 coats of white paint and the roof will be fixed and given 1 coat of graphite paint. The doors will be oak finish. The fee for this work will be \$100. Five collectors were appointed to collect money to repair the church inside, the chimney, the fence around the cemetery, and to get a new furnace for the church.

On May 13, 1915 a joint meeting of the Council and Consistory was held. Claud Kimmel was elected General Treasurer and was given the sum of \$34.32 which is the treasury balance. On motion by H. E. Hoch and John A. Walter each congregation will pay into the general treasury 45¢ per member per year. The membership of the Luth-

eran side is 125; the membership of the Reformed side is 38.

On motion of M.T. Snyder and H. E. Hoch on Jan. 23, 1916 the Sunday School was given permission to build a refreshment stand in the picnic grove.

At the Dec. 29, 1918 meeting Harry Wedde was appointed Janitor for the year 1919 at a salary of \$35. It was decided to pay the organist a salary of \$50 for a year for all services.

At the council meeting of June 6, 1927 it was decided to double the money paid into the general treasury since there is only a balance of \$1.23. Harry Wedde was elected janitor at a salary of \$60 per year and Anna Hinkel and Elsie Kimmel to clean the church. The Officers elected for the year are: Pres., Henry Derr, Sec., C. S. Maurer, and Treas., John Snyder.

Sept. 15, 1927, Mr. Strohecker and Felix Leshner were appointed to meet with Mr. Laur of Gordon in regard to painting the church steeple. John Walter made a motion to assess every member one dollar to pay for the painting of the steeple.

At the joint Council meeting of Sept. 23, 1927 Earl Kimmel made the motion to pay Raymond Haas the sum of \$275 to paint the outside of the church 2 coats, and the steeple 2 coats; the roof one coat.

On June 5, 1933 by a rising vote of the joint Council permission was given to a group called the Combs Trio to give a concert at the church providing the music is either classical or religious. One-third of the proceeds will be given to the joint Council. The group is from the Combs Conservatory of Music.

Rev. Naftzinger, Rev. Moyer, Mr. Bush, George Strohecker, Edward Hinkle, Harry Bush, Edward Bush, Claude Kimmel, John Smith, Earl Kimmel, Robert Ludwig, Elmer Swinehart, C. S. Maurer, George Snyder, Mrs. George Snyder, and Henry Derr were present at this joint meeting of July 31, 1933.

It was decided to sow seed on the cemetery on the 7th of August. Also decided to was to inform the Lu-

theran choir that they may place their robing cabinet in the church. Receipts of the Combs Trio concert contributed to the church were in the amount of \$1.66, making a treasury balance of \$41.26.

A special meeting was called on August 13, 1934 to discuss the possibility of excavating the basement and improving the building. Church Council members present were: George Snyder, Albert Hepler, Harold Wedde, Earl Kimmel, John Smith, Harold Kimmel, R. C. Ludwig, Henry Derr, Rev. Moyer, Rev. Naftzinger, George Strohecker, Paul Kimmel, Edward Bush and Edward Hinkel. They were joined by members of the Sunday School: Leo Smeltz, J. Bush, Mrs. Albert Hepler, Mrs. Harold Wedde, Mrs. Mabel Hepler, Miss A. Maurer, Miss Alma Wedde, Mrs. Luther Shuey, Mrs. Erma Ludwig, Miss Elsie Ebert. Leo Smeltz presented the necessity of having more room for Sunday School. A committee was formed to draw up plans for the alterations.

A special meeting was called on Feb. 14, 1937 to open sealed bids for the remodeling work. Boyd Bush of the Building Committee read the bids. Herman Miller got the job for a bid of \$925.90. Rev. Moyer was appointed to ask the Sunday School to give \$100 toward the alterations.

At the joint Council meeting of March 4, 1937 it was decided to have a stairway at the front of the church. J. M. Klase was given a contract to repair the church windows at a charge of \$165.00

George Strohecker presided at a special joint Council meeting in May, 1937. A motion to pay \$750 of the basement bill and the rest as soon as possible was made by E. Bush and R. Ludwig. It was decided to purchase electricity from the P.P. & L Co. with the bill being divided equally between the two congregations. Boyd Bush and Gomer Merwine made a motion to hold rededication services July 11 to the 14th and the offering to be divided equally between the two congregations.

On June 2, 1938 George Snyder and Daniel Green were appointed to make a chest for the altar covers.

1940 brought about difficulties with janitor and the

duties of the same. A special Council meeting was called to order on April 2 to set up guide lines for the janitor.

- Item 1: Keep building as near to 68° as possible
- Item 2: Keep paper/other rubbish out of cellar
- Item 3: Keep ashes out of cellar
- Item 4: Janitor must ring bell at funerals
- Item 5: Price for use of church for non-members for funerals
- Item 6: See that altar covers be placed on altar after services
- Item 8: Keep building/baptismal font clean
- Item 9: Put new candles in holders when necessary
- Item 10: If any minor repairs are needed the janitor will see that they are done

In 1944 the shrubbery was planted around the church in honor of the boys in the service.

In 1947 the congregation elected George Snyder, Henry Derr, Andrew Zerby, Norman Leshner, Elmer Schweinhart, Albert Hepler, Hiram Green, Robert Hepler, Robert Ludwig, Earl Kimmel, Earl Merwine, Allen Merwine, and A. Derr to the Council of the Lutheran Church.

St. John's Womens' Missionary unit was the highest per capita giving of Thank Offering in the United Lutheran Church in America. This occurred in 1946 when A. H. Beam was pastor.

For a number of years St. John's Lutheran Church was united with Friedens Lutheran Church in Hegins. The jointure was formed on March 2, 1912 and named the Pine Valley Parish.

In the fall of 1959 The Twin Valley Parish was formed with St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Lavelle. St. Peter's had formerly been tied with St. James Lutheran Church, Ashland.

In June, 1969 The Twin Valley Parish was dissolved and a new congregation was formed consisting of Good Shepherd, Ashland; St. John's, Ashland, RD; St. Paul's, Gordon; St. Peter's, Lavelle; Zion, Girardville. At the time of the jointure most of these



churches felt they could not support pastors of their own any more since the escalation of the cost of living progressing so rapidly.

The new congregation is now known as Christ's United Lutheran Church.

Pastors of the Church:

George Epster	1816-1826
John Schultz	1826-1831
John Felty	1831-1844
A. Bergner	1844-1860
J. Weber (Supply)	1857
Daniel Sanner	1860-1865
Henry Weiksel	1874-1893
J. Ritter	1894
Charles Kirschner	1895-1900
A. H. Klick	1900-1912
George Kirsch	1912-
M. W. Krause	1914-1918
Leir Yengst	1918-1923
Allen Appel	1923
A. Lichty, Jr.	1924-1933
C. Moyer	1933-1938
Charles Brodell	1938-1946
Andrew Beam	1946
Steven Schullery	1947-1949
Kenneth Sharp	1950-1953
Frederick Erb	1954-1958
Lars B. Staaby	1961-1966
Supply Pastors	1966-1969
Robert Hughes	1969-1972
D. Henderschedt	1970-1973
Charles Mertz	1971-
Mark Fritch	1973-1979 Jan 13

