

*News
from the
Evangelical
and Reformed Historical Society*



***Thanks to all who attended the ERHS
Annual Meeting on September 23, 2017.
Attendees enjoyed a keynote address on the
500th Anniversary of the Reformation
presented by the
Dr. Lee C. Barrett***

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New Year Greetings!

It is my privilege to communicate with you about some of the work of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society since the annual meeting in September. At the meeting of the Board of Directors, I outlined several issues and challenges which the Society faces: staffing, finances, communications, space and the future of the Society.

Perhaps first in importance is the future of the Society. How do we reinterpret the mission of the Society to attract a wider audience of historians of religion and culture, genealogists, and church leaders? Where do we see the Society in 3, 5, or 10 years?

Communications is a vital channel through which the resources and services of the Society are disseminated. The use of all types of social media is crucial as are personal contacts with individuals, churches, academic and religious organizations, and UCC Conferences and Associations.

The Society continues to receive important collections of church records, papers of important church figures, and additions to the denominational, synod and classis records. Space is becoming an issue. We also need to upgrade shelving and storage units to properly house the collections. Alison Mallin, the Society's office administrator, and Kathy Kuzmiak, our part-time archives processor, and I are working on plans for better utilizing the space we have and planning for future space needs. A grant of \$500 from First UCC Foundation of Hickory, North Carolina will provide for some experimental shelving, and we are exploring other grant opportunities.

All of these issues, and indeed the future of the Society, depend upon a solid financial foundation. Current income is at a critically low level which cannot sustain the work of the Society. To address the financial situation, the Board authorized the establishment of an endowment fund through United Church Funds. Conversations with them are underway. An endowment fund will enable the Development Committee under the leadership of Caroline Dunleavy, James Darnell and Keith Tussing, to develop a planned giving program and solicit major gifts from individuals. In addition, the committee is exploring possible grant opportunities and partnerships to support the important work of the Society.

To address these issues and challenges and carry on the work of the Society, the Board authorized the establishment of several committees. As already mentioned, the Development Committee is busily working. Two subcommittees, Communications and Membership, need additional members to become fully functioning. Rev. Jay Meier has volunteered to chair the Archives Committee and has recruited some volunteers, and is actively contacting churches in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina inquiring about their records and offering the services of the Society.

The Board encourages your participation in the work of the Society by volunteering to serve on one of the committees or sub-committees. Skills needed include interest in the history of the Evangelical and Reformed heritage, knowledge of the use of social media, knowledge of sources of finance and fund raising, connections with grant sources, skills in communications, knowledge of digitization, and of course, generous contributions toward the work of the Society. If you are willing to help in any of these areas please contact me (bergdom14@gmail.com) or Alison Mallin at the Society office (erhs@lancasterseminary.edu).

With all of us working together, we can address the issues and challenges the Society faces and make its resources and services relevant and useful. I look forward to hearing from you.

Peace,
Dick Berg, *President of the Board and Archivist*

Mayflower Descendants Meet in Hungarian Reformed church



Some fifty descendants of those English immigrants who arrived on these shores on the *Mayflower* gathered on November 19, 2017, at a church in Phoenixville, PA, that was founded by another group of immigrants almost 300 years later. The Society of Mayflower Descendants in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was celebrating their annual Divine Worship on the Sabbath Day in Commemoration of the First Harvest Festival in Plymouth Colony in 1621, under the leadership of their Elder, the Rev. Judith A. Meier, and the pastor of the host church, the Rev. Dr. F. Russell Mitman.

Speaking of the 102 Pilgrim immigrants, only 53 of whom survived the first winter and attended that first

celebration of thanksgiving, Dr. Mitman turned to the appointed words of Scripture from Deuteronomy, "When you have eaten your fill, and have built fine houses to live in, and your herds and flocks have multiplied... beware lest your heart

grow haughty, and you forget the Lord your God and you say to yourselves, 'My own power and the might of my own hand have won this wealth for me.' Those 53 survivors knew they were not self-made. They knew they had survived with the help of the native people who had welcomed them. And they knew their well-being was in God's hands.

Mitman drew comparisons of the English Pilgrims with the "hearty souls" who founded Parkside United Church of Christ on December 1, 1900. They

had come from a part of Hungary that remained Protestant, "mainly in the Reformed wing of the 16th century Reformation that had come to Hungary as it did to Switzerland, the Netherlands, and parts of Germany and France." During the persecutions of the Counter-Reformation, in 1674 sixty-one Hungarian Reformed pastors were sold as slaves and chained to the oars of a galley ship in the Mediterranean. Religious descendants of those "non-conformers" remember them in a hymn which the

Mayflower Society members sang later in the service. Hungarian Reformed churches also place a star atop their steeples rather than a cross "in defiance of the power of the Counter-Reformation."

The founders of the host church, originally known as

“Phoenixville Magyar Reformatus Egyház,” or the Hungarian Reformed Church in Phoenixville, were welcomed by the booming iron and steel business that engaged them to do their dirty work. This group of immigrants encountered hateful xenophobia, some of it sparked by their difficult and unfamiliar language. The immigration restriction act of 1924 greatly curtailed the further pilgrimage of Hungarians to this country until the 1956 uprising of

Hungarians against Soviet domination. This congregation opened its arms to another generation of refugee immigrants. The allusion to the present-day refugee and immigration situation couldn’t be any more obvious.

The Good News, Mitman declared, was that “God has used minorities to do God’s work of reforming and transforming the world. It has happened in the past, and it will happen again. God isn’t finished yet.”

The archival collection of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society contains the stories of hundreds of thousands of immigrants, pilgrims, and refugees, those folks who came from Europe in the 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, and now even the 21st centuries seeking a better life under the protection of God’s hand.

*Submitted by the
Rev. Judith A. Meier*

In Memoriam

Rev. M. S. Jan Ports (1931-2017)

The Rev. Mr. Ports graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary. He was a minister in the United Church of Christ for more than 60 years, serving as the pastor at Jerusalem and St. Peter’s Churches, Glen Rock, PA; Bethany UCC, Woodlawn, MD; and Apples UCC in Thurmont, MD. He was also interim pastor at Protestant Community Church, Middle River, MD, and was named Pastor Emeritus at Apples UCC in 2014. In addition, Jan had his own Clinical Pastoral Counseling practice for more than 30 years.

Please contact ERHS at erhs@lancasterseminary.edu if you have news of Caravaners or ERHS members to report.



Professor Michitaka Suzuki, Director of the Institute for the study of Christianity and Culture and Professor of Art History from Sendai, Japan came to Lancaster to research the origins of the Tohoku Gakuin University in Sendai which was founded in 1886 by missionaries from the Reformed Church. He will return in the summer of 2018 to complete his research which is funded by a grant from the Japan Ministry of Education and Science



(photo: Group in Dietz) Enjoying a meal with the professor in Dietz Refectory were (from left) Nancy Payne, widow of former Lancaster Seminary Professor Dr. John Payne, Prof. Suzuki; Kit Gregory who was a missionary in Japan for nine years with her late husband, Paul Gregory (Class of 1944); Rev. Dr. Carolyn Call, executive director of Development & Communication; Betty and Bob Reiff, Class of '57 and Japan missionary from 1959-1963; President Carol Lytch; and Seminary President Emeritus Peter Schmiechen and Jan Schmiechen.

2017 CONTRIBUTIONS TO ERHS BEYOND MEMBERSHIP

JOHN B. PAYNE MEMORIAL FUND

THE REV. DONALD ELY

DR. ANNE THAYER

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MR. GARLAND GATES

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THE REV. HAROLD AND MRS. EUGENIA HOLSTE

THE REV. LAWRENCE BOLICK

MR. TIMOTHY DYKSTRA

THE REV. RICHARD TAYLOR

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO DONATED TO THE ERHS IN 2017!

\$5.00 - \$49.00

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The Rev. Dr. Deborah Clemens

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\$1,000.00 +

Pennsylvania Southeast Conference U.C.C.

Lancaster Association U.C.C.

TOTAL DONATIONS FOR 2017 \$10,726.77

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2017 \$3,225.00

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE ERHS

The ERHS Archives has had **71 in-person researchers** and **over 150 research requests** via snail mail and email this year. Research request forms are available on our website: www.erhs.info/home/research-services-permissions.

New Archival Shelving

In October the ERHS received a grant of \$500 from the Salisbury Community Foundation to help purchase new steel shelving to replace some of the library shelves. The current shelves are inadequate for storing the large archival boxes. The funds were made possible through the generosity of the First United Church of Christ –Salisbury Foundation, Salisbury NC.



Hopefully we will be able to purchase additional shelving in order to make room for more records.

Recently Cataloged Collections

Collections cataloged at ERHS in 2017 and now available to researchers include:

- 2nd Reformed Church (Reading PA) 8 boxes of church records and artifacts.
- Zion Reformed Church (Reading PA) 3 boxes of church records and photographs
- 1st United Church of Christ (Royersford PA) 1 box church records 1891-2002
- Black Creek Charge (Coshocton and Holmes Counties, OH)
- Manuscript Collections of; Herman Ahrens, Ulrich Zwingli, Erston Marshall Butterfield, Eldon E. Ehrhart, Gabriel Fackre, Frederick L. Fagley, Robert T. Fauth, Joseph N. Carr, Robert K. Nace, Beatrice W. McConnell, Ann D. Lutz, Nathan A. Keyes, Paul S. Osumi, Roy R. Schmid, Jean Schmidt, Richard H. Whitney

Academic Research Projects;

- Alex Ames –Dissertation: The Letter and the Spirit: Calligraphy, Manuscripts, and Popular Piety in German Pennsylvania, ca 1750-1850
- Patrick Donmoyer- Powwowing in Pennsylvania: Braucherei and the Ritual of Everyday Life

Accessions

The archives received several important collections in 2017:

- St. Luke's UCC, North Wales, PA 12 boxes of materials
- A plate from West Side Evangelical and Reformed Church Cleveland OH 1853-1953
- Materials from Wabash Regional Women's Guild 1950's and Southeast Ohio Synod
- History of St. Paul's UCC, LaPorte, IN CD-ROM discs, congregational records
- First United Church of Christ (Reading, PA) church records 1743 to current
- Kreutz Creek, Camphill, PA materials and Canadochly materials
- New Jerusalem Reformed Church (New Jerusalem, PA) church records 1917-1987 Oley Charge and Union Church (reformed and Lutheran)
- Materials from Rev. Frederick A. Rupley Sr. and Jr.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Save the Date: Annual Meeting of the ERHS, September 22, 2018.

WISH LIST

- The Society is looking for the donation of three four-drawer legal size file cabinets. If you or someone or a business you know is getting rid of any such file cabinets, please contact Alison at the ERHS office.
- Upright or canister vacuum cleaner.

FIND ERHS ONLINE

Check out our new updated website! The ERHS website is: www.erhs.info.

Follow us on Facebook: Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society

Have you seen Tumblr? It is primarily a visual site, and we have a page there too where we show some of the items from the ERHS archives: www.erarchives.tumblr.com. You do not have to have a Tumblr account to see the page, but you can create an account if you want to "follow" us.

We are located on the second floor of the Philip Schaff Library, on the campus of the Lancaster Theological Seminary, 555 West James Street, Lancaster, PA 17603.

ERHS is open to the public Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday 9 am – 3 pm.
Please call or email in advance of your visit so that we may better assist you.
717-290-8734 • erhs@lancasterseminary.edu

THE ARCHIVES AT EDEN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The archives are located on the lower level of the S.D. Press Education Center on the Eden Theological Seminary campus, 475 Lockwood Ave., Webster Grove, MO 63119. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.eden.edu/s/1645/index.aspx?sid=1645&gid=1&pgid=547>

Scott Holl, the archivist, is currently available Monday and Thursday, 8:30 am – noon.

Access to the archives is by appointment only.

314-252-3141 • sholl@eden.edu

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

- Have you used the archives to research your family genealogy?
- Did you participate in the Caravan movement or attend one of the church camps?
- Is there a pioneering E&R figure that you'd love to learn about?

Let us know! We'd like to feature more content from our members that celebrates and explores the heritage of our organization. Articles, interviews, essays, and photographs are all welcome.

If you would like to contribute something to the newsletter or the website, please contact the office by phone 717-290-8734 or email erhs@lancasterseminary.edu.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the society is:

- to stimulate and cultivate interest in the history and heritage of the Reformed Church in the United States, the Evangelical Synod of North America, and the Evangelical and Reformed Church;
- to collect, organize, preserve, and make accessible the records of these denominations as well as records of local churches, church officials, missionaries and pastors; and
- to cooperate with other religious and academic organizations for the cultivation and preservation of church history.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

The Historical Society of the German Reformed Church was founded in 1863 at the time of the tercentenary celebration of the Heidelberg Catechism.

In 1934 upon the merger of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America, the society became the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society.

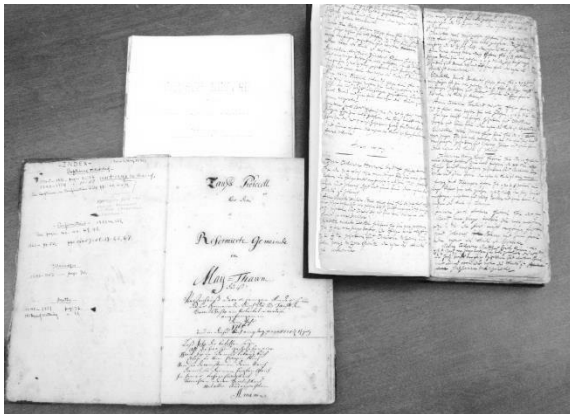
In 1967, when the Philip Schaff Library was built at Lancaster Theological Seminary, the Society was invited by the Seminary's trustees to transfer its collection from the Fackenthal Library of Franklin and Marshall College to the Omwake room on the second floor of the library.

ARCHIVAL HOLDINGS

The ERHS collection includes the denominational records of the Reformed Church (1725-1934) and the Evangelical and Reformed Church (1934-1962), their boards, commissions, committees, regional synods, and area classes. The records of the Evangelical Synod of North America are housed at Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Missouri.

Additional holdings include:

- personal papers of church officials and leaders, personal papers and pastoral records of ministers and missionaries;
- records of nearly 800 churches including baptisms, marriages, and deaths, and transcriptions of records;
- artifacts from mission fields, early church pewter and silver, Pennsylvania German Frakturs, and broadsides;
- Current and rare books and periodicals related to the Reformed Church, Evangelical Synod and E & R Church, Reformed theology, liturgy, hymnology, and history.



LOCAL CHURCH RECORDS

Church records are vital to the life of every congregation. The ERHS encourages local churches to preserve their records and provides a repository for records of local churches with roots in the *Reformed Church in the United States*, the *Evangelical Synod*, and the *Evangelical and Reformed Church*.

The Society suggests maintaining an inventory of church records and requests that a copy of the inventory be sent to the ERHS. For help please see the “Guide to Arrangement and Description of Local Church Records” on the Society’s web site.

SERVICES

- Access to the resources of the Society is available free to its members and to former Reformed Church, Evangelical Synod and Evangelical and Reformed churches.
- Research and help for local churches celebrating anniversaries or wanting information about their history.
- Fee-based research services and reproduction services are available.
 - Non-members are required to pay a daily visit fee.
- Consultations with local churches about how to organize and preserve their records

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND MEMBERSHIP

ERHS depends upon financial support from individual and church memberships, contributions, inheritance or legacy gifts, and investment income. Membership in the ERHS is open to all who are interested in preserving our heritage.

Your support of the Society through giving and membership helps assure the continuation of its mission. Membership includes:

- Free access to ERHS archives for historical and genealogical research
- Newsletters
- Invitation to Annual Meeting and lecture

ERHS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership Categories:

- ☐ Individual - \$35
- ☐ Student - \$25
- ☐ Institution (churches) - \$60
- ☐ Sponsor - \$150 or more

I would like to make an additional donation to ERHS for \$_____

This is a:

- ☐ New Membership
- ☐ Membership Renewal
- ☐ Lifetime Member Gift

My/our donation is in honor/memory of:

NAME

ADDRESS

EMAIL

PHONE

- ☐ I would like to receive the e-newsletter.
- ☐ I would like to discuss a legacy gift.

Please clip and mail with check payable to ERHS to:

E & R Historical Society
555 W. James Street
Lancaster, PA 17603



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