

*News  
from the  
Evangelical  
and Reformed Historical Society*



## 2018 Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society Annual Meeting and Related Events in St. Louis, MO

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### **The German Church on the Western Frontier**

Come to the “Gateway to the West”, where the “E” side of the **E**vangelical and Reformed Church was born! Join us for two afternoons of presentations and site visits related to the history of the Evangelical Synod.

Activities will begin on Friday afternoon, September 21<sup>st</sup>, at Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Groves, MO.

The 2018 Annual Meeting of ERHS and two more presentations will be held on Saturday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, at St. Johns Evangelical United Church of Christ in Mehlville, MO. This church is at the spot where the Rev. Louis Nollau called together a group of local pastors to form the German Evangelical Church Society of the West in 1840!

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## DEAR FRIENDS,

In recent years the annual meeting of the Society has been held at Lancaster Theological Seminary, however, in the past we have met in other places which were significant in the history of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Some of these places were as close to Lancaster as Falkner Swamp, PA but others have included meetings in North Carolina, Wisconsin, Texas and Missouri. This year's annual meeting, to be held on September 21 and 22, will once again be held in St. Louis. Board members Joy Dressel, Lorin Cope and their committee have been hard at work planning a meeting that will focus on our Evangelical Synod heritage including tours of historic sites, a tour of the Evangelical Synod archives at Eden Seminary, two presentations on Evangelical Synod history, significance and continuing influence. The details and schedule of the meeting will be found elsewhere in this newsletter and on the Society's website. I encourage your attendance for the tours, presentations, and the annual business meeting of the Society. It promises to be an exciting and informative two days as we immerse ourselves in the Evangelical Synod half of our Evangelical and Reformed Church heritage. Come and join us!

As we are moving into summer (finally, as least here in the Cleveland area!), I am reminded of the change of seasons which has led me to reflect on changes in all areas of our lives, including changes in the E & R Historical Society. Of the many changes for the Society, one demands special mention, changes to the Board of Directors. Four members are rotating off the Board: Harold Holste, Dale Bennett, Fran Slingluff, and Cheryl Stoneback. These four have served the Society devotedly for many years and have provided wise counsel, generous financial support, and loyal service to and on behalf of the Society. We owe them our heartfelt thanks and gratitude for their service and their devotion to the Society and its mission. Personally, I also want to thank them for their warm and supportive friendship which I have enjoyed over the years. However, just because they have rotated off the Board, they are not off the hook in their support of the Society! Fran and Cheryl are working with Rev. Judith Meier and the Archives Committee, and I will be asking Harold and Dale to continue representing the Society in North Carolina. Many thanks to these four wonderful, generous people for their past work on the Board and their continuing support of the Society. They will be receiving certificates of appreciation during the annual meeting in September.

The Executive Committee of the Board is working to recruit individuals to fill vacancies on the Board. Rev. Chris Rankin, pastor of Trinity UCC in East Petersburg, PA, has been appointed by the Board to fill the unexpired term of Cheryl Stoneback. Chris has recently worked with the Penn Central Conference to have them include an annual contribution to the work of the Society and has volunteered to serve on the Development Committee. We welcome Chris to the Board and look forward to working with him. The Executive Committee is looking to fill the three remaining slots. To further the work and mission of the Society, we are looking for people who have an interest in the history of the church and have skills in the areas of fund raising, grant writing, financial acumen, use of media, Board development, and public relations. If any of you are interested in serving on the Board or have someone to recommend, please contact me by email ([bergdom14@gmail.com](mailto:bergdom14@gmail.com)). A strong, working Board is essential to the life and work of the Society.

A word of grateful thanks is also due to our office administrator, Alison Mallin, who began work almost a year ago and has done so much to not only keep the office running smoothly, but has also worked diligently toward eliminating the backlog of entering the inventories of collections into our PastPerfect system, reorganized space including the installation of proper archival shelving, improved the web site, handled all the research requests, worked with the public, recruited and trained volunteers, and so much more, including graciously

diving into all the work the president of the Board asks her to handle! Thank you, Alison! We are also grateful that our archives assistant, Kathy Kuzmiak, has returned to work after being out for three months following hip replacement surgery and physical therapy. Kathy has become an expert in organizing church records which continue coming into the collection. Welcome back, Kathy!

Speaking of church records, we continue to receive the records of both closed and active churches. Since January we have received six to eight collections of church records from Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan and are working with a church in North Carolina. I have been contacting UCC Conference ministers to develop a program whereby the Society becomes a partner with them as they work with churches that are closing so that their records are preserved. We always appreciate word about closing churches and encourage you to contact Alison at the Society office if you hear of any. The Society will work with churches in sorting and organizing their records, and if they originated in the Reformed, Evangelical or E & R tradition, the Society is willing to accept their records along with a financial contribution to help with the associated costs of organizing, housing and maintaining them.

I am grateful for the work of the Board's Development Committee, Archives Committee and Program Committee. Elsewhere in the newsletter you will read reports of some of their activity. As I have said in the past, the Society cannot function without an active, committed Board and its committees and a growing number of volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering, there is a variety of projects waiting for you. Please contact Alison at the Society office.

Of course, it would not be a complete word from me if I didn't mention the financial need of the Society. The Development Committee is working diligently to cultivate individual donors, establish a planned giving program and an endowment fund, encourage bequests, seek out and prepare grant proposals. As I have mentioned many times, to insure the longevity of the Society, an endowment fund is vital. I am currently working with United Church Funds to establish one and earnestly encourage everyone to consider making a donation to it or include the Society in your planned giving. Our current income is largely from memberships, closing churches, and research fees. Such income is barely able to keep up with expenses which we work hard to hold to a minimum. If we are to realize the visions of the Board for the Society's future, more funding sources need to be found and cultivated. We ask for your prayerful consideration and help in aiding the finances of the Society.



Eden Theological Seminary in Webster Groves, MO.

**See you in St. Louis. Dick Berg, President**

# HOW CONFUSIONS HIDE EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED HISTORY

Richard H. Taylor (April, 2018)

Many of the contributions that the Evangelical and Reformed traditions have made to the development of Christianity and the history of America are often obscured and misunderstood by individuals and scholars exploring the past.

Some of this is because, as a united and uniting movement, we have twice changed our national name. People not in the know, do not relate our pasts to our present.

Recently I have been working on an historical directory of German Reformed churches. I have gone on line, talked to librarians and local church leaders to find information on living, merged, and extinct congregations. Here are a few common confusions on the Reformed side:

Often the records of Reformed churches have been cataloged as "Reform" churches. The same is true for cemeteries at former locations. They are listed as "Reform" cemeteries. Do a web search for "Reformed" and you will not find them. It is as if these were strict churches like reform schools, or involved in some moral reform movement like prohibition. Some do not know the name arose during the Reformation, when Calvin described his congregation as "the Church of Jesus Christ, Reformed according to the Word of God." We have been "reformed" and are always "reforming." This doesn't even touch on the times this error has led to a confusion with Reform Judaism.

"Reformed" also becomes confusing when people have read the land titles for a union church called, for example, the "Reformed and Evangelical Lutheran Church." Those who do not know the history of union churches sometimes will postulate that there was a faction in Lutheranism known as "Reformed Lutherans." I have seen more than one union church break up being described as one group being the "Evangelical Lutherans," and the other, the "Reformed Lutherans."

Land titles are a problem in more ways than one. Many English-speaking government clerks often did not understand what kind of a church their German-speaking neighbors were building. Often they knew the name of Luther and would put Lutheran on a deed. But Reformed seemed to make little impression. When questioning discovered that the deed seekers were more or less Calvinists and that they had a presbyterian polity, the title would be written for the "German Presbyterian Church," or a union title could be written for the "Lutheran and Presbyterian Church." This can be even more confusing because there actually were a few union churches that included English-speaking Presbyterians as well as German Lutherans or Reformed or both. But track down the standing of pastors serving the churches, or the community on the roll of a judicatory, and most of these hundreds of churches were clearly German Reformed, not Presbyterian. Now indeed, a ways into the nineteenth century the English-speaking Presbyterian denominations did start or receive German congregations, but by then the judicatories were usually strong enough to make sure the deeds were written correctly. But unfortunately, some courts later denied the Reformed Church the title to some of its older church lands because they were not the "Presbyterian" Church.

Another confusion that you may be acquainted with connects to the phrase "Pennsylvania Dutch." Lowland Hollanders are often called Dutch, and even used that in their old denominational name, the "Protestant Dutch Reformed Church in America." But the Pennsylvanians were German, or "*Deutsche*," in their native language. Histories of communities in the west sometimes describe the arrival of the "Dutch from Pennsylvania" and never identify them as German. Histories of German Reformed congregations in regional books and sometimes cataloged records of them are described as the "Dutch Reformed Church." I suspect genealogists often approach the wrong denomination.

Similar difficulties arise on the Evangelical side.

Land titles here are also an issue. Some early Evangelical churches in the West often evolved out of union churches deciding to have one pastor to serve them on a basis similar to the merged Evangelical Church

in Germany. But the old land titles might still say Lutheran and Reformed, and that could lead some to say the Church was not Evangelical at all. On the other hand, since the partners in several of the Evangelical churches in Europe were predominantly Lutheran, many Evangelicals coming to America kept the word "Lutheran" in the Church name, causing local historians to always identify them as Lutheran rather than Evangelical congregations. I have actually seen articles that describe Reinhold Niebuhr as a "Lutheran theologian."

Much more common is the tendency to confuse the German meaning of "Evangelical," as generally an equivalent to "Protestant" (or based on the Good News of the scriptural message) with American evangelicalism and revivalism. The common description of "evangelicals" in the modern American press is a long way from the Evangelical Church of the Union.

Yet "evangelical" also gets into a confusing area among people who know they are talking about German churches. Jacob Albright was raised as a Lutheran in Pennsylvania, but came into contacts with Methodists and pietists. He founded a group, initially among German-speakers, that became known (in English) as the Evangelical Association that was closer to the American sense of the word than the European. From that beginning evolved parts of denominations such as the United Evangelical Church, the Evangelical United Brethren, and the Evangelical Congregational Church. Ask a person unacquainted with Church history if a local Evangelical Church in their community was of the Synod or Association type and they may have no idea.

On top of these confusions, prejudices against German-Americans during the First and Second World Wars often led to attacks on German background churches, some of which were centuries old. Many closed. Others changed their names or hid their heritage.

All this being true hides and obscures. Yet shall "tribulation, distress, or persecution," keep us from the telling our story? No. We are more than what has been said "through him who has loved us."

## **Studying Visual Culture at the Evangelical & Reformed Historical Society**

Alex L. Ames, Ph.D.

Very early in my graduate studies at the University of Delaware several years ago, as I began my research on the various German-Protestant religious traditions present in early Pennsylvania, I read a well-known article by Donald F. Durnbaugh titled "Pennsylvania's Crazy Quilt of German Religious Groups," which appeared in *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* in 2001.<sup>1</sup> In this article, Durnbaugh made an observation that struck me then, and has echoed in my mind ever since. He wrote: "It is a curious fact that although the 'church people' — Lutherans and Reformed — made up the bulk of German immigration in colonial America and since, public attention has tended to focus on the 'plain people' — those groups largely of Anabaptist and Pietist background." Durnbaugh pointed to several possible reasons for this. "In an increasingly homogenized world, those who see themselves as belonging to a colony of heaven, which sets its face in principle opposition to the world, will understandably stand out from the crowd and attract attention."<sup>2</sup>

As a graduate student at the Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library as well as the University of Delaware, my interest in Pennsylvania's German heritage was first piqued by the radical sectarian traditions for the reason that Durnbaugh described. The groups' separateness from the mainstream captured my attention and led first to a master's thesis and then a doctoral dissertation that focused heavily on the visual

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<sup>1</sup> Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Pennsylvania's Crazy Quilt of German Religious Groups," in "Pennsylvania Germans, Part One," special issue, *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 68, no. 1 (Winter, 2001): 8-30.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 9.



culture of Pietistic and sectarian groups. Throughout my work on these projects, however, I recalled Durnbaugh's excellent point that to focus on sectarian communities could mean overlooking the vast majority of the region's German-speaking population. When I traveled to the Evangelical & Reformed Historical Society for the first time last year to work on a project unrelated to my doctoral studies, I took advantage of my visit to think about how I could broaden the scope of my own scholarly research to include the visual culture of non-sectarian groups. Given the Historical Society's rich holdings, I soon realized just how rich my future, more expansive research opportunities in this area will be. One image in particular captured my attention during my initial visits to the Historical Society: a resplendent portrait of Martin Luther found in an eighteenth-century Bible, which is pictured here.

Now that I have at last finished my doctoral dissertation, I look forward to spending more time thinking about Reformed and Lutheran visual culture in Pennsylvania and beyond. My initial research trips to the Evangelical & Reformed Historical Society have helped me conceptualize my new avenue of research, and I look forward to many future visits!



Portrait of Martin Luther, with his wife depicted in a painting hanging on the wall. The image is found in a 1755 Nuremberg edition of the *Holy Bible*, ERHS BS 239 1755 c2. Photo by the author.

# 2018 Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society Annual Meeting and Related Events in St. Louis, MO

Non-members of ERHS are welcome to attend.

There's a lot to see and do in the St. Louis area. The Gateway Arch grounds and museum, including the Old Courthouse, were recently renovated and renamed the Gateway Arch National Park. Forest Park has a free zoo and three free museums, including the Missouri History Museum.

## ERHS 2018 Fall Event (September 21 – 22)

### Schedule

#### **Friday pre-meeting programming - Eden Theological Seminary visit and excursion to the newly opened Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being**

*Meet at the Press Building at Eden Theological Seminary, 475 East Lockwood Ave, Webster Groves, MO 63119. There is designated Visitor Parking on the east side of the Press Building and additional parking beyond that to the north. Do not park in areas designated as Webster University parking.*

12:00 – 1:00 Check-in/registration at the Press Building

12:15 – 1:15 Open house in archives with Scott Holl, Eden Archivist

1:15 – 1:45 Hear about the history of Eden Theological Seminary

2:00 Depart for the new Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being where we will hear about the history of the Deaconess Hospital/Deaconess Fund and Neighborhood Houses (recently rebranded as Unleashing Potential or “UP”). The missions of both organizations have evolved over the last 100+ years.

5:00 Estimated time to arrive back at Eden Seminary

A list of nearby recommended restaurants will be available.

**Saturday afternoon annual meeting with two presentations at St. Johns Evangelical United Church of Christ, location of the meetings for the formation of the “Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenverein des Westens” in 1840. The original building from the frontier church founded in 1838 no longer exists. We’ll be meeting in a 20<sup>th</sup> Century building with a sanctuary that dates back to 1922. Find the church at the northwest corner of the intersection of I-55 and S. Lindbergh Blvd. at 11333 St. Johns Church Rd, Mehlville, MO 63123.**

12:30 – 1:00 Check-in/registration

Opportunity to view some of St. John’s heritage displays before the meeting begins.

1:00 – 1:30 Business Meeting of the general membership and visitors

1:30 – 2:30 “The History of the Evangelical Synod” presented by Scott Holl, Eden Archivist and Manager of Genealogy and History at the St. Louis County Library

2:30 – 2:45 Refreshments and viewing of St. John’s heritage displays

2:45-4:00 “Theology and Mission in Historical Perspective”, a panel discussion, moderated by Rev. William Schwab. Panel participants include representatives from several of the social service institutions that were established by the Evangelical Synod and continue as part of the United Church of Christ today. Each organization has seen changes in its mission in over 100 years of its existence.

## Sunday

You are invited to attend worship at a local church on Sunday. Some suggestions will be provided.

Check the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society website (ERHS.info) for updates. For more information, contact Joy Dressel at [jdressel@charter.net](mailto:jdressel@charter.net) or 314-313-4040, or Lorin Cope at [buckeyeohio@hotmail.com](mailto:buckeyeohio@hotmail.com) or 330-903-7711, or the ERHS office at [erhs@lancasterseminary.edu](mailto:erhs@lancasterseminary.edu) or 717-290-8734.

## Advance Registration for the September 21 - 22 events

Registration is \$20 per person.

In order to guarantee a spot on the transportation to the Deaconess Center on **Friday**, registration is **required by 09/12/18**.

Advance registration for Saturday is appreciated, but not required.

Mail the completed registration form with a check made payable to ERHS 555 West James St. Lancaster, PA 17603

You may register via email [erhs@lancasterseminary.edu](mailto:erhs@lancasterseminary.edu) and pay via credit card at the registration table on Friday.

A registration fee of \$20 will cover the combination of the Friday afternoon and Saturday afternoon programming.

## Registration Form

In order to guarantee a spot on the transportation to the Deaconess Center on Friday, registration is **required by 09/12/18**. Advance registration for Saturday is requested, but not required.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration is \$20 per person.

Please indicate the number of people you are registering.

\_\_\_ Plan to attend the events of both Friday and Saturday.

\_\_\_ Plan to attend only the Friday pre-meeting event (at Eden Seminary and Deaconess Center).

\_\_\_ Plan to attend only the Saturday annual meeting and presentations (at St. John's Evangelical UCC).

Please mail with a check made payable to: ERHS 555 West James St. Lancaster, PA 17603



## CHURCH CELEBRATIONS

The following churches are celebrating large anniversaries this year. These are churches of the Missouri Mid-South Conference of the UCC who had previously been Evangelical and Reformed churches and are celebrating anniversaries of 125 years or more.

- 125<sup>th</sup> St. John's UCC, Chesterfield, MO (their anniversary was actually last year, but they postponed the celebration until this year.)  
Trinity UCC, St. Louis, MO  
Emmaus Homes, Marthasville, MO – This was originally an institution established to care for people with epilepsy and developmental disabilities in a beautiful, rural setting. Now it consists of smaller group homes in various communities in St. Charles County and St. Louis County.
- 150<sup>th</sup> Zion, Florissant, MO  
St. Martin, High Ridge, MO  
St. John, St. Charles, MO
- 175<sup>th</sup> St. James (Tilsit), Jackson, MO  
St. John's (Mantels), Washington, MO  
St. Peters, Ferguson, MO

## NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE ERHS

### New Volunteers

Tim and Jean Brown are volunteers who are helping to process some of the materials ERHS has received. Tim is a retired pastor who spent 39 years serving churches in the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Jean has served as a Bible study leader and organist and in children's ministry.

Delano Brown (no relation to Tim and Jean) is a Franklin & Marshall student who has offered to help out for the summer.

Rev. Homer Royer who has recently retired and is currently Interim Pastor at Church of the Good Shepherd in Alburdis, PA, is helping to organize, catalog and process the collections of Carl Bade, Herman Ahrens, and Ed Schlingman

### Bulletin Insert for the Support of the Society

As part of the celebration of the 175th Anniversary of Church of the Good Shepherd United Church of Christ in Alburdis, PA, the congregation has included the Evangelical & Reformed Historical Society in their Special Offering plan for 2018. In preparation for the offering in September, the leadership is working with the society to prepare a Sunday bulletin insert for use in worship. This idea is available for other interested congregations who may wish to support the valuable work of the society. Feel free to create one which specifically refers to the history of your local church, or contact (the society office/ Rev. Homer Royer Interim Pastor at Church of the God Shepherd) for more information.

## New Archival Shelving

The ERHS was able to purchase new steel shelving with a grant of \$500 from the Salisbury Community Foundation and a \$1,000 donation from Rev. John R. Weiler. The grant was made possible through the generosity of the First United Church of Christ – Salisbury Foundation, Salisbury, NC.

## Recently Acquired Collections

Trinity United Church of Christ, Coplay, PA  
Grace United Church of Christ, York, PA  
Trinity United Church of Christ, Leesport, PA  
Faith Trinity United Church of Christ, Warren, MI  
Williard United Church of Christ, Akron, OH

## FIND ERHS ONLINE

**Check out our new updated website!** The ERHS website is: [www.erhs.info](http://www.erhs.info).

**Follow us on Facebook:** Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society

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, Tuesday, and Wednesday 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:erhs@lancasterseminary.edu).

## 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

[erhs@lancasterseminary.edu](mailto:erhs@lancasterseminary.edu)

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