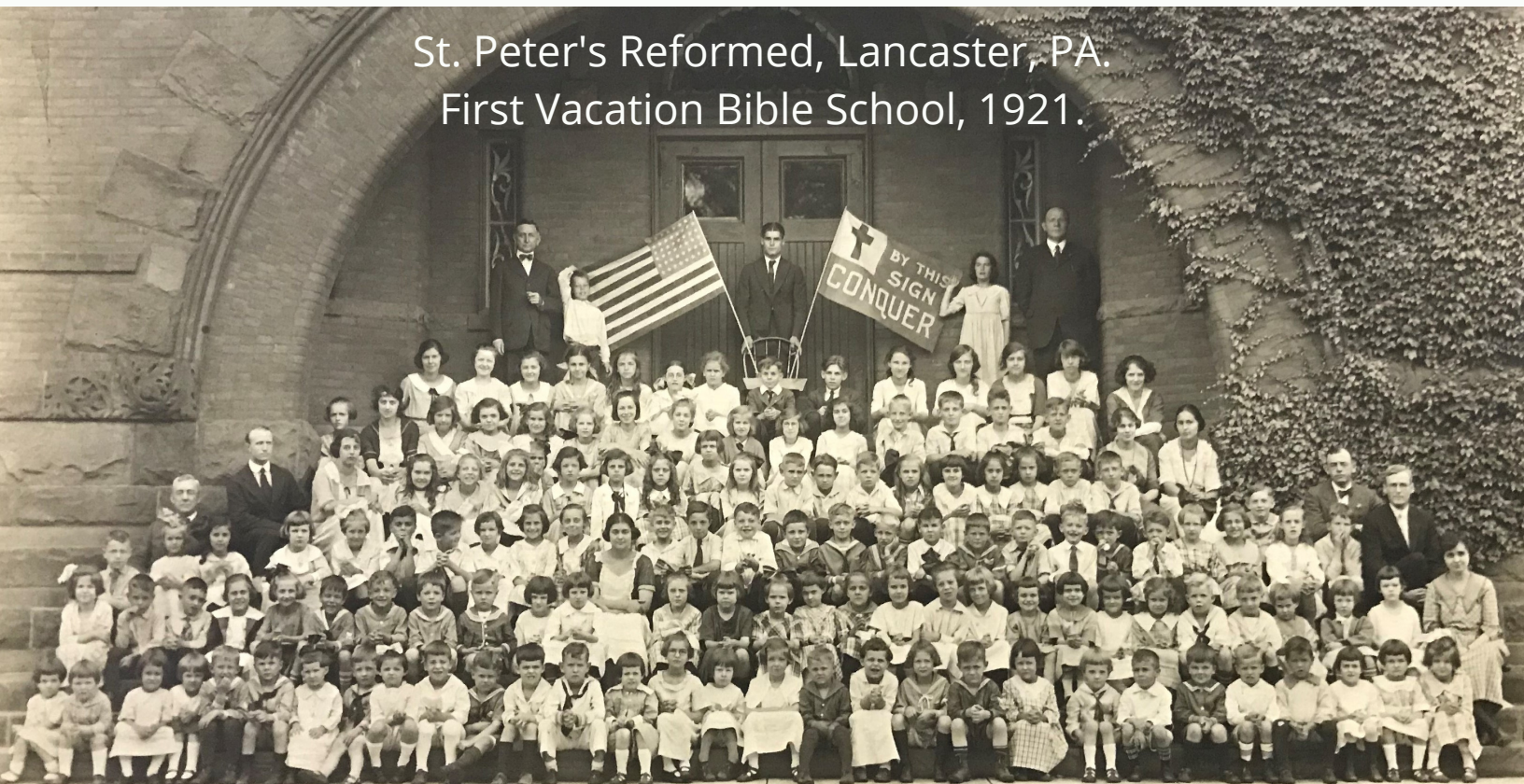


The Messenger

Newsletter of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society

St. Peter's Reformed, Lancaster, PA.
First Vacation Bible School, 1921.



Our New Format

You may notice that the format of our newsletter has changed a bit. The title, *The Messenger*, has a rich history in the former Evangelical and Reformed Church. *The Messenger of the Evangelical and Reformed Church* began on February 13, 1936 and continued *The Magazine of the German Reformed Church* (1827), the *Reformed Church Messenger* (1832), *Der Friedensbote* (1850), *The Messenger of Peace*, which later became *The Evangelical Herald* (1902), and the *Christian World* (1849). *The Outlook of Missions* (1909) of the former Reformed Church and *Our Work* (1910), the mission magazine of the Evangelical Synod was also absorbed by *The Messenger*. The final issue was published on September 23, 1958. Afterwards, the *United Church Herald* combined *The Messenger* and the *Advance*, the Congregational Christian Journal after the creation of the United Church of Christ.

The Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society first began publishing its own newsletter titled, *The Reporter*, in 1957 after the General Synod established the Society as the official historical agency of the entire denomination. The newsletter would later become the *News of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society* in 1977. We now look to our history to return to this unique tradition.

IN THIS ISSUE

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A History & Celebration

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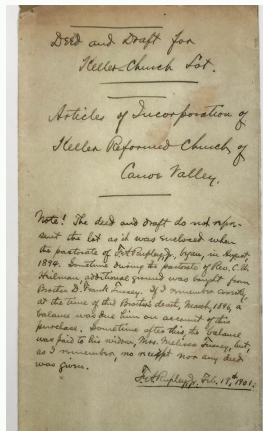
School's In!? Vacation Bible
School History

In Memoriam

News from the Archives

Keller Reformed Church: A History & Celebration

Around 1786, German families began to spill into the central and western wilds of Pennsylvania, bringing with them their Lutheran and Reformed traditions. As they developed the land and built their homes, their need for spiritual leadership was first satisfied by missionaries traveling through the region, delivering their sermons from barns and homes.



In 1798 ministerial student John Dietrich Aurandt, from Lewisburg, began traveling throughout Union, Huntingdon, Blair, and Cumberland Counties, eventually purchasing a farm at Yellow Springs in 1804. After being ordained in 1809, he preached regularly to congregations across the region until 1818 when he joined with Lutheran pastor Rev. John G. Schmick to build the Stone Church at Water Street. This Union church served the community until 1845 when the Reformed church began to centralize in three regions: Kellers (Canoe Valley), Sinking Valley, and Alexandria. The Keller Reformed Church was erected on land donated by John Keller. The cornerstone was laid on August 11, 1846 and the new church was dedicated on Sunday, January 22, 1847. The old Stone Church was dismantled.

For almost 80 years the "Pioneer Church" was an important part of the community but by 1926 membership had declined to a point that it was no longer sustainable. The congregation was dismissed and the last service was held on October 24, 1926 when 27 members and friends received their last Holy Communion in the church. Unlike many old churches, the building was not abandoned. A Board of Trustees was established to care for the property and the adjoining cemetery to preserve their history. The first annual Homecoming service was held in 1928.

Ninety-five years later, the Old Keller Church still stands as a shrine to the pioneer spirit and a testament to the dedication of The Keller Reformed Church & Cemetery Association which has worked tirelessly to maintain the church and grounds with repairs and improvements. The cemetery is the final resting place of many of Revolutionary War veterans and early settlers of the area and the church building is a fine example of architecture of the time.

The 175th Celebration of Keller Church will be held on Sunday, August 1, 2021 at 2:30 pm.

Keller Church is located east of Altoona, PA, south of US Route 22 on Fox Run Road at the Blair-Huntingdon County line.

The Probable, but Only Partial Register 1846-1847	
JOHN AURANDT	JOHN HYLE
ALEX. CAROUTHERS	A. M. ISENBERG
SAMUEL CRAWFORD	ELIZABETH ISENBERG
SUSAN DAVIS	ENOCH ISENBERG
M. DEAN	JOEL ISENBERG
DAVID DUNN	JOSEPH ISENBERG
MARY ANN DUNN	LYDIA ISENBERG
MOSES FOREMAN	SAMUEL ISENBERG
TOBIAS FOREMAN	JACOB KELLER, of M.
CATHERINE HAMER	JOHN KELLER
SUSAN HAMER	MARY KELLER, of J.
ABRAHAM HARNISH	MARY KELLER
(of Samuel)	MRS. KIEFFER
CHRISTIAN HARNISH	JAMES W. KINKEAD
(of Samuel)	JOHN KINKEAD
JOHN HARNISH	MARY KINKEAD
(of Samuel)	MARY KINKEAD, widow,
SUSAN HARNISH	JOSEPH MORE
(widow of Samuel)	BENJAMIN SPRENKLE
SUSAN HARNISH	FRANCES SPRENKLE
TOBIAS HARNISH	JOHN SPRENKLE
CATHERINE HOMMER	MARY SPRENKLE
DANIEL HOMMER	SUSAN SPRENKLE
JOHN HOMMER	DOROTHY TUSSEY
SUSAN HOMMER	MARY WALLACE

NOTE: To the foregoing, by all means, the name of JAMES B. CAROTHERS deserves to be added. Warrant for this statement is found on the inscribed fly-leaf of the Pulpit-Bible, where this name is appended to the full-page inscription, and, following the name, is the designation, "See'y. to Church." The date of that inscription is "August 22nd, 1847."

So, one follows along the historic trails of this Century Memorial, and, before leaving them, finds one's self strangely stirred by the reckonings it requires with the haunting figures "46" and "47."

The following are the names of the ministers and the dates they served in the Keller Reformed Church:	
Rev. Samuel H. Reid.....	1846 to 1852
Rev. Frederick A. Rupley.....	1852 to 1856
Rev. Joshua Riale.....	1857 to 1858
Rev. Josiah May.....	1858 to 1859
Rev. John G. Wolf.....	1859 to 1861
Rev. John W. Love.....	1862 to 1870
Rev. J. A. Peters.....	1871 to 1878
Rev. M. H. Sangaree.....	1878 to 1884
Rev. Calvin Hileman.....	1884 to 1893
Rev. F. A. Rupley, Jr.....	1894 to 1901
Rev. Howard Obold.....	1901 to 1910
Rev. Charles W. Levan.....	1911 to 1922
Rev. Arthur Barley.....	1922 to 1924
Rev. M. A. Keiffer.....	1926 to disbandment

TRUSTEES	
Charles A. Patterson, President.....	Williamsburg
Blair K. Hoover, Secretary.....	Williamsburg
Raymond H. Tussey, Treasurer.....	Altoona
C. Roy Keller.....	Williamsburg
H. C. McKillip.....	Holidaysburg
Erle A. Harnish.....	Alexandria, R. D.
Hays Black.....	Tyrone

STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVES

SCHOOL'S IN!?: VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL HISTORY by Kristin Phillips

Though they may not look quite the same, Vacation Bible Schools have endured for over 100 years. This writer fondly remembers the two weeks of summer when I happily walked to church every morning at 8:30 for Bible-themed lessons, art projects, snacks, and playtime with friends that did not attend the same school during the year as me. I am not alone.

During the month of July, school children across the US are usually deep in their summer vacations. For many that means unstructured days of play, screens, and endless snacking. Though this may sound like paradise to the kids, their parents may have different views. This is not just a modern problem.



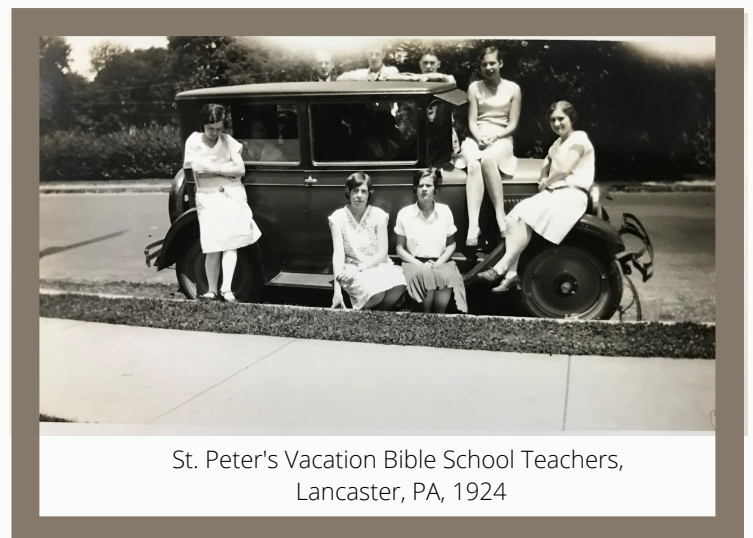
Vacation Bible School Junior department,
St. Andrew's Reformed, Lancaster, PA, 1961.



West End Community Vacation Church School class with teachers,
Lancaster, PA, 1930.

St. Peter's Reformed in Lancaster, PA opened its first Vacation Bible School in 1921 on the grounds of the Lancaster Theological Seminary to over 100 children from the community. Twenty-six congregations and over 10 denominations were represented as well as a few non-church member families. In 1930 the school's success was well documented in reports and teacher's diaries which are preserved in our archive. With a cost of \$272 (over \$4,000 in 2021 money) the school employed seven young teachers to lead what was then known as the West End Community Vacation Church School, co-sponsored jointly by St. Peter's and Bethany Presbyterian.

At the close of the 19th Century, Sunday school teachers decided to use the idle days of summer to expand their religious lessons beyond the reach of the weekend. Across the United States Vacation Bible Schools began to hold daily classes for up to five weeks in the middle of summer break for elementary school children. Unlike both public schools, with its more secular purpose, and Sunday school, which catered to the children of their congregations, these schools were open to all members of the community, concentrating on teaching its pupils the value of "living the [Christian] life in the School, rather than a description of whether they have learned the Ten Commandments or any other body of factual knowledge."



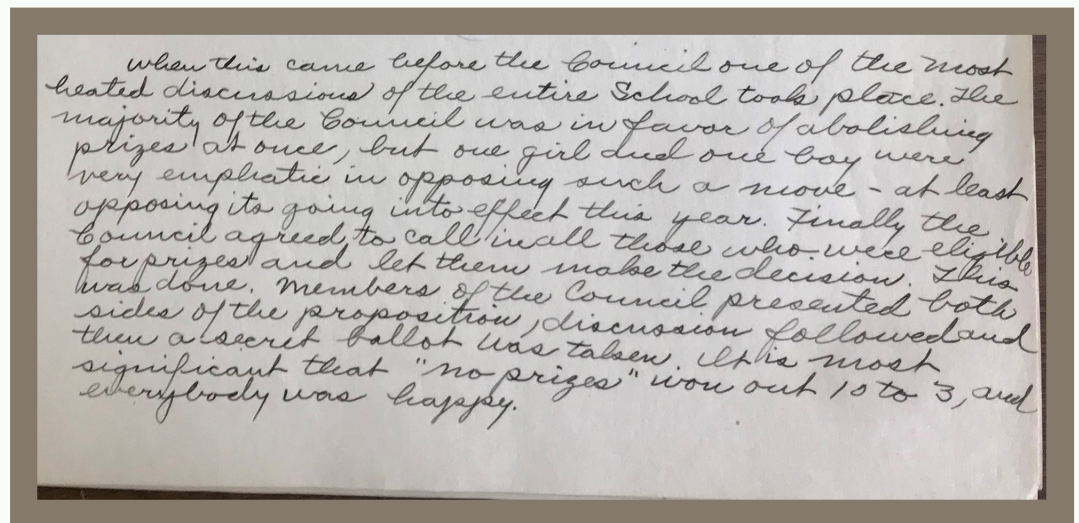
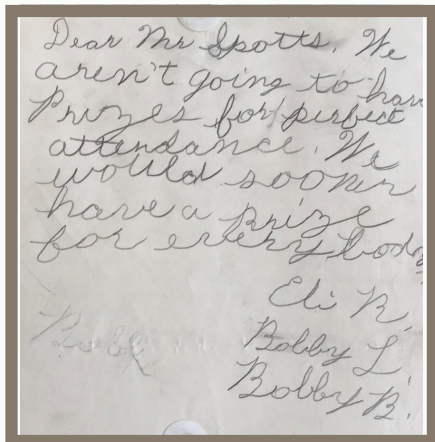
St. Peter's Vacation Bible School Teachers,
Lancaster, PA, 1924



The Golden Rule City, 1930.

Without the burden of standardization that restricted public schools, the teachers were free to develop a more student-led curriculum centering on good citizenship. The Junior department, the oldest group of students, were tasked with building and maintaining the Golden Rule City. They elected their own mayor and commissioners, organized themselves into groups according to vocation, voted on the rules of the city, and designed the worship services under the supervision of the teachers and pastor. The students engaged in discussions and voted on disagreements that arose such as deciding on whether or not to give prizes for perfect attendance."

To the disappointment of one girl who was hoping to take that prize, the "citizens" overwhelmingly voted against the prize in favor of a treat for the entire class. It seems that even at that young age, the children understood that such things as perfect attendance are not always within their control. Or maybe they were swayed by parental objections to prizes such as one mother who was quoted as saying that "he had enough junk around the house."



By the end of the 19th Century public education in the US outnumbered private institutions and were supplemented by religious institutions which took the education of future citizens seriously. A deep dive into the documents that have been preserved provides a fascinating picture into the education of Americans who became part of what is named the Greatest Generation. Vacation Bible Schools brought children from across the religious spectrum together to prepare for life in a way that more traditional secular or religious training could not do on their own. It provided a safe space for the children of working parents who needed a helping hand during the summer. It created a way for young teachers to hone their skills outside of the traditional classroom. For the E&R Church, it was also another way in which they left their mark on the greater community.

Sources for this story can be found in the ERHS Archives in church record groups 578 and 778. It is with the generous support of our donors that we are able to bring you stories like these. Please consider donating today on our website at www.erhistoricalsociety.org or use the enclosed envelope to mail a payment. We thank you for your generosity!

ORDINATION OF ELDERS IN THE REFORMED TRADITION

By Dr. Charles A. Maxfield

I believe the ordination of elders and deacons to be one of the special gifts of the Reformed Church to the United Church of Christ (UCC). Some ordained elders and deacons have told me that their ordination was a meaningful setting apart, that gave them a sense of being lay ministers. As our congregations decline in size, many congregations will be moving into sharing a pastor with other congregations or having part time pastors. Church leaders, such as elders and deacons, will need to “step up” and embrace an increased role in the leadership of the congregation.

How did this practice of ordaining elders and deacons originate?

John Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, outlined four offices in the church which he derived from scripture: pastors, teachers, elders and deacons (book 4, chapter 3). Technically, the first three are all Elders, but the third, the ruling elder, is “charged with the censure of morals and the exercise of discipline.”[1] He went on, “the care of the poor was entrusted to the deacons.”[2]

This fourfold ministry was brought to America by persons of the Reformed faith. Elders and Deacons were lay persons, set apart for ministry in their congregation. Together with any pastors or teachers they composed the governing body of the congregation, the “Consistory.” Each pastoral charge was represented at classis and synod by the pastor and one elder.

Constitutional Provisions

The Reformed Church’s constitution, adopted in 1828, went into detail elucidating Calvin’s concept of the Eldership: “Article 18...They shall aid in visiting the sick, and contribute according to their ability to the instruction, improvement, and consolation of the members...and assist in the public worship of the church. All the duties of a minister of the word, except that of laboring in the word and doctrine, are incumbent also upon the elders.”[3] The following article explained the role of Deacons: “Article 19. The office of the deacons is to collect the alms and other contributions which are designed for the relief of the poor, or the necessities of the congregation; to distribute the alms willingly and conscientiously; and to provide for the support of the ministry of the gospel...”[4]

The Reformed Church constitution of 1908 described these offices more succinctly. The elder was “to assist and support the pastor in the spiritual affairs of the church.”[5] It stated some specifics, “Elders . . . shall maintain order in the house of God, shall aid in visiting the sick, and shall contribute according to their ability to the edification and consolation of all the members. They shall provide the elements for the Lord’s Supper and aid in their distribution...”[6]

[1] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, book 4, chapter 3, paragraph 8, trans. Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960, v. 2, p. 1061.

[2] Ibid., paragraph 9.

[3] German Reformed Church, *Constitution of the German Reformed Church in the United States of North America*. Philadelphia, C. Sherman & Co., Printers, 1834, pp. 594-95.

[4] Ibid., p. 595.

[5] Reformed Church in the United States, *Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States*. Cleveland, Ohio, Central Publishing house of the Reformed Church, 1932, p. 27.

[6] Ibid.

The duties of a deacon had become, "...to aid in securing the funds necessary for the support of the Church in its various activities, and to foster the principles of stewardship, thereby cultivating the spirit of liberality and cheerful giving. He is to attend to the temporal affairs of the congregation . . . and to look after the poor and needy in properly dispensing the charity of the Church." [7]

The elders and pastor(s) constituted a "Spiritual Council," which had the following duties: "...to watch over the members of the congregation, to guard the doctrine of Christ, and to maintain wholesome discipline. It alone has the power to admit members to full communion and to exclude any who may err from the faith or offend in morals...Meetings...shall be held for the examination of catechumens applying for confirmation.....The Spiritual council shall...furnish members of the congregation, in good and regular standing, with certificates of dismissal to another congregation..." [8]

This 1908 Constitution outlined the duties of elders and deacons as they had evolved. The role of deacons now focused on stewardship and finance. Elders had a more clearly defined role in preparing and serving communion, and in receiving and dismissing members.

The union of the Reformed Church with the Evangelical Synod brought together two churches with differing patterns of governance. The Plan of Union, adopted in 1932, made no mention of local church officers. [9] The Constitution, adopted in 1940, described Elders, Deacons, consistories and spiritual councils in language similar to the Reformed Church constitution. [10] One change was the use of the term "acting elders." Although none of the constitutions spoke of term limits, it had evidently become common to require officers to step down after completion of a specified number of terms. A person ordained an Elder, not currently serving, was still an Elder, just not an acting elder. Two changes that came about by not being stated explicitly: (1) There was now no prohibition on women holding any office in the church; (2) delegates to synod did not have to be elders.

With the formation of the United Church of Christ, the form of government of the local congregation was left totally to the congregation, with no mention of particular offices or duties. Many Reformed background churches adopted their own constitution and by-laws, continuing the practices of the former Reformed Church.

Ordination Service

John Calvin pointed to ordination by the laying on of hands as the pattern in the early church of setting apart ministers. He observed, "and surely it is useful for the dignity of the ministry to be commended to the people by this sort of sign, as also to warn the one ordained that he is no longer a law unto himself, but bound in servitude to God and the church." [11]

The Constitution of 1834 stated of elders and deacons, "Before they enter upon the duties of their offices, they are publicly and solemnly installed by prayer and imposition of hands." [12] Later constitutions used the phrase, "ordained to his office by prayer and the laying on of hands." [13]

[7] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[8] Ibid., p. 39.

[9] Commission on Church Union of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America, *The Plan of Union*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1932.

[10] Evangelical and Reformed Church, *Constitution and By-laws of the Evangelical and Reformed Church*, [1941], pp. 9-10.

[11] Calvin, *Institutes*, book 4, chapter 3, paragraph 16, p. 1067.

[12] *Constitution*, 1834, p. 595.

[13] *Constitution*, 1932, p. 27.

The service for ordination of elders and deacons, in the *Book of Worship for the Reformed Church in the United States*, 1923 edition, runs for six pages. It begins with a lengthy address by the pastor, explaining, "Men may be chosen and called to their particular ministry by the voice of their fellow-men; but their ministry itself comes to them, not from earth, but from heaven. Not from the people they serve, but from God." [14]

Those being ordained were required to answer in the affirmative three questions, one of which called them to receive the Holy Scriptures as inspired by God, and to assent to the Apostles' Creed and the Heidelberg Catechism. At this point, those not previously ordained shall kneel. The minister shall ordain them by placing his right hand on the head of each in succession and saying: "Take thou the authority to execute the office of Elder [or Deacon] in the Church of God; which office I now solemnly commit unto thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The newly ordained then stand, and are installed into their office along with those who had been ordained at another time.

Discussion in the Church Paper

The weekly church paper, the *Reformed Church Messenger*, occasionally carried articles promoting the eldership. A 1911 article stated, "the eldership is the source of great spiritual force if properly developed," and encouraged elder training. [15] A 1914 article reviewed the ordination service in use at the time, emphasizing the word spiritual (italicized several times in the article) and declared, "Thanks be to God, that we have in most of our churches one or more elders who earnestly strive to reach this ideal...Unfortunately they are not the rule." [16] Articles consistently repeated the themes that the elder is needed to assist the pastor in spiritual matters, and too many elders do not take their job as seriously as they should.

A 1933 article encouraged elders to lead weekly prayer meetings, in addition to the meeting led by the pastor. [17] A 1934 article summarized the responsibilities of the elder:

1. to understand the church's work, not in abstract statements or creeds, but in terms of everyday living.
2. To live the Christian doctrines according to our best understandings of them;
3. To be tolerant of the ideas of others in their application to Christian living. [18]

This article went on to urge elders to read the church paper; that is, to keep informed of the work of the denomination.

Conclusions

The ordination of elders and deacons, as outlined by John Calvin and executed by Reformed churches around the world, has proven to be important to many persons and congregations. As stated in the 1911 article, "the eldership is the source of great spiritual force if properly developed," Our churches need this spiritual power now.

[14] Reformed Church in the United States, *Book of Worship for the Reformed Church in the United States*, 1923, p. 194.

[15] "The Eldership," *Reformed Church Messenger*, 10 August 1911, p. 4.

[16] Philip Vollmer, "The Duty of the Elder in Spiritual Matters," *Reformed Church Messenger*, 20 July 1914, pp. 5-6.

[17] William L. Jacoby, "The Elder and the Prayer Meeting," *Reformed Church Messenger*, 27 April 1933, pp. 2, 23.

[18] J. Frank Meyer, "The Eldership Today," *Reformed Church Messenger*, 19 July 1934, pp. 6-7.

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. Ralph Quellhorst **(April 12, 1937 - June 23, 2020)**

Ralph Clarence Raymond Quellhorst was born Aug. 12, 1937, in rural New Bremen, Ohio, halfway between Cincinnati and Toledo. He graduated from high school in New Bremen in 1955, earned a B.A. from Heidelberg University, Tiffin, Ohio, in 1959 and a divinity degree from Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Mo., in 1962. He also received a D.Min. in 1976 from Eden.

Called as pastor of Emmanuel UCC in Bluffton, Ohio, he was ordained in 1962 and served in that place until 1967. The rest of his career was in service to the wider UCC as:

- Associate for Leadership Development with the Ohio (now Heartland) Conference and Association Minister of its Northwest Ohio Association, from 1967 to 1975
- Associate, Office for Church Life and Leadership (a forerunner of today's Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization Team), New York City, from 1975 to 1982
- Conference Minister, Indiana-Kentucky Conference, Indianapolis, from 1982 to 1992
- Conference Minister, Ohio Conference, Columbus, from 1992 to until his retirement in 2003

Along the way he also served on church-wide bodies such as the Executive Council and the Council of Conference Ministers and taught courses as an adjunct professor at Ohio Northern University, Eden, and New York Theological Seminary.



Clara Louise "Lolly" Wehrli **(1927 - 2021)**

Born in 1927, Lolly met her husband Gene in 1944 when he was an Eden Seminary student at Samuel UCC. Lolly's father, John Flucke, was a pastor there, and Lolly was a young Sunday school teacher. Lolly and Gene married in 1947. They moved to St. Louis in 1960, when Gene joined the Eden faculty; he served as president of the seminary from 1986-1993. While Gene was the academic leader of Eden, Lolly was credited with serving as surrogate mother of many of the students.

Lolly and Gene joined Peace UCC (formerly Evangelical UCC) in Webster Groves, Mo. They each played an active role in the congregation. Throughout her life, Lolly was relentless in her work for justice and racial equity. She sometimes chided others for lack of participation in conference-wide and faith-based community activities, once addressing the church council about the importance of representation at conference gatherings.



Rev. Dr. Donald R. Buckthal **(1924 - 2021)**

Rev. Dr. Donald Buckthal was born on December 26, 1924 in Freelandville, IN and passed away on May 28, 2021 in Carmel, IN. He first graduated from Elmhurst College and later received a master of divinity degree from Eden Theological Seminary and a D. Min. from Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis.

From 1948 - 1956 Rev. Buckthal pastored St. Peter's and Trinity United Church of Christ in Lamar and Fulda, Indiana. From 1956 - 1970 he pastored Lynnhurst UCC in Louisville, KY.

Rev. Buckthal also served as the Associate Conference Minister for the Indiana - Kentucky Conference UCC from 1970 until he retired in 1991.

Memorial gifts in Rev. Buckthal's honor may be made to Eden Theological Seminary.

If you know someone who should be honored in our newsletters, please contact us at **info@erhistoricalsociety.org** or call **(717) 290-8734**.

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVES



Visitors are starting to return to the archives!

Rev. Homer Royer and members of New Goshenhoppen Church came for a tour and to see their church records and records of former pastors. Rev. Robert Lescalette, a Lutheran Minister from Barners Reformed and Lutheran Church has been in several times doing research on his church history. Many others came in to work on their family genealogy or to bring in donations to the archives. Although the Lancaster Seminary Library remains closed until August 1st, the Society is open Monday through Thursday. If you would like to visit, call 717-290-8734 or email info@erhistoricalsociety.org.

Recent Acquisitions

- Zion UCC , Reading, PA. (1881-2010). Photo albums, membership cards, and other materials. Donated by Karen Gunther.
- Rev. Curtis A. Sandrock pastoral records, biographical information, and correspondence. Donated by Michael Burke.
- Materials from various women's groups in Michigan and Indiana, Camp Talahi in Michigan, and records of Holy Trinity Church in Jackson, MI. Donated by Rev. Marguerite Allen.
- Christ Church Temple, PA,. Church record group donated by Christ Church, Temple, PA.
- Memorial Bulletin of Rev. Alfred M. Rahn, Confirmation Certificate, Arndt's Union Church. Theodore F. Frace, 1917. Confirmation Certificate of Mary Schick 1842, St. Paul's Union Church (Indianland [Cherryville], PA),. Donated by Lutheran Archives Center.
- St. James, Sheppton, PA. Church record group donated by Penn Northeast Conference.
- Robert J. Urffur sermons and card file. Donated by Penn Northeast Conference.
- Various church files of churches that have closed or withdrawn from the Penn Northeast Conference. Donated by the Penn Northeast Conference.
- Rev. Dr. Richard A. Cheek sermons (1965-1995). Donated by Johnny Wagoner.
- St. Luke's Reformed Church, Lancaster, PA. Church Plate, 4 Hymnals, Memorabilia; Brochures, Awards, Certificates and Baptism Book, Writings by Helen Susan Newcomer. Donated by Susan Hafner.
- Zion Church, New Providence, PA. Various artifacts, photographs, news clippings, memorial books, church record book (1951-2012). Donated by Zion Church, New Providence, PA.

Recent Acquisitions cont.d.

- Evangelical Friedens Church, Denver, CO. Church records, membership lists, correspondence. Donated by the Rocky Mountain Conference.
- St. Paul's Church, Loveland, CO. Church record books. Donated by the Rocky Mountain Conference.
- Frieden's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Globeville, CO. Congregational Minutes (1927-1942). Donated by the Rocky Mountain Conference.
- Papers, correspondence, meeting minutes, and Reports (1955-1962). Donated by the Rocky Mountain Conference.
- St. Thomas Community Church, Engelwood, CO, reports. Donated by the Rocky Mountain Conference.
- Hope Reformed Church and Immanuel Church, Ft. Collins, CO correspondence. Donated by Rocky Mountain Conference UCC.

ERHS would like to go GREEN!

The Society would like to go GREEN In an effort to help our environment and streamline our communication efforts and we would like to hear from you. Please let us know how you would like to continue receiving updates and newsletters by responding to us not later than August 31, 2021. In your response, please let us know your name, communication preference, and best contact information. You can do this in any of the following ways:

1. Call us at (717) 290-8734.
2. Email us at info@erhistoricalsociety.org.
3. Use the enclosed giving envelope to drop us a note.
4. Complete the online survey found on our website at www.erhistoricalsociety.org.

Please note, even if the Society chooses to go GREEN, a print version of all communications will be sent to those who prefer this option. We will always continue to stay in touch!

Our History is Your History.

Do you have a question about the Evangelical and Reformed Church or its predecessor denominations?

Are you researching your family or your own congregation's history?

Does your church have an anniversary celebration coming up?

ERHS is here for you!

Contact us at **info@erhistoricalsociety.org** to learn how we can help.

Are you on our email list? Don't miss our monthly e-news blasts with up to date information and historical articles from the Society. Visit our website at **www.erhistoricalsociety.org** to sign up now!



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Progress and Change at ERHS

President's Letter

It is hard to believe that we are more than half way through the year and will soon be preparing for the season of fall. As we prepare for the changing of the season I would like to look back on the progress and change that has been happening at the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society. There are many great things happening and I am grateful for the generous support of our donors and volunteers. In addition, we are fortunate to have talented staff members that carry out the day-to-day duties to keep us moving forward. The ERHS Board of Directors has also been meeting regularly to take care of the "business" of the Society and to prepare for an exciting program at our Annual Meeting on October 16, 2021 from 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM EDT. Please mark this date and time on your calendar and keep an eye on your email for more information in the coming months.

One of the greatest accomplishments of the Society is that we have formulated and approved our first strategic plan. This plan will guide the Society through the remaining months of 2021 and through the 2022 calendar year. Furthermore, our strategic plan has helped us receive the Platinum Seal of Transparency through Guidestar. According to their website, "GuideStar is the world's largest source of information on nonprofit organizations. We gather and provide access to the most comprehensive, up-to-date, and accurate nonprofit information available. Our mission is to revolutionize philanthropy by providing information that advances transparency, enables users to make better decisions, and encourages charitable giving." ERHS is proud to have received this highest honor!



The Society continues to connect with local churches, educational institutions, and other organizations that have a connection to the former Evangelical and Reformed Church. It is through these connections and relationships that we are able to continue our mission in an effort to preserve the past while preparing for the future. In the past seven months we have brought in a record number of historical materials that is now available to researchers, scholars, and genealogists. We are also exploring additional ways to make our microfilm collection available in a digital format and through the digitization of the various Synod, District, and Classis records that are currently only available on site. The Society is also exploring a partnership with FamilySearch in an effort to make our church record collections available to all.

At the May 3, 2021 Board of Directors meeting, the Board authorized the Facilities Task Force to engage in an exploration of merging the collections housed at Lancaster and Eden Theological Seminaries and to identify possible geographical locations between both sites. Realizing that this news might bring some confusion and anxiety, I would like to clarify the purpose of this task force:

- The Facilities Task Force was established in November 2020 and held its first meeting on December 8, 2020. This task force was established because the Society has run out of physical space and this issue is negatively impacting our ability to grow and expand. The task force was not created because of the combination of Moravian University and Seminary with Lancaster Theological Seminary.
- The Society is currently unable to obtain additional space at Lancaster Theological Seminary. Given that Moravian University and Seminary and Lancaster Theological Seminary are just beginning to combine it is unclear if additional space may be made available to the Society.

Please know that no action or determination has been made at this time and that the task force is only beginning to explore options. As options begin to come forward, we will continue to inform our donors and stakeholders so that we may gather feedback and input. It is our hope that if any possible change in site or geographic location does occur, our goal remains to allow the Society to only strengthen its mission and vision and outreach to all interested individuals.

Please continue to stay up to date on all that is happening at ERHS by following us on Facebook **@erhistoricalsoc**, on our Instagram page **@erhistoricalsociety**, and on our website at **www.erhistoricalsociety.org**. If you have not done so, please sign up for our electronic e-news on our website. We look forward to staying connected and sharing all of the exciting activities and events that the Society has to offer.

All the best,



Scott Meyer-Kukan
President, Board of Directors

Preserve the Past to Prepare for the Future

Planned Giving



There are many ways you can share your love of Evangelical and Reformed history. However, few opportunities offer the same comfort and sense of pride as contributing to the long-term security of a favorite organization like the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society.

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If you would like to make a lasting gift to ERHS, or if you have questions on how your generosity can help, please call **(717) 290-8734** or email **info@erhistoricalsociety.org**.