

CELEBRATING OUR 160th ANNIVERSARY

*HOMECOMING WEEKEND
April 25 & 26, 2009*

1849



2009



In 160 years we have had only 8 pastors. This booklet shares their stories and the contributions they made and continue to make to Salem's congregation, the Catonsville community and the world around them.

Prior to 1849:

Some of the early German residents of the Catonsville area apparently attended services at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church after its founding in 1844. According to local tradition, a visit to the area by Father Carl Frederick Heyer of the Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania, a home and foreign missionary on leave from India, gave impetus to form a separate church. On September 30, 1849, Mr. Gustav W. Lurmann, a local resident, called a meeting to organize officially as a congregation and adopt a constitution.¹ As a result of this meeting, money for the purchase of land on which to build a church was advanced by Mr. Lurmann.

1849-1854:

Charles A. Brockman, Salem's first regular pastor, was already in place, serving Salem Church, prior to his ordination in 1851. Though he served a relatively brief tenure he was a part of the first 50 years of Salem's history. Pastor Brockman began his ministry at Salem with a reputed membership of 43 persons, a constitution and land for building a church.² The little gothic style church built with field stone was completed June 3, 1850 and dedicated June 16, 1850.

1849-1854:

The 280 pound bell was installed in the belfry and a hand pumped tracker pipe organ was brought over from Germany. A parsonage was erected and a cemetery adjoining the church was established. A new schoolhouse was built in 1850 and supported by the church until 1879 when it became a public school.³ Minutes from the annual congregational meetings were recorded in German and German was the language used exclusively until 1858. Pastor Brockman resigned in 1854.

1854-1901:

George W. Ebeling was Salem Church's second pastor. He was well versed in music and highly respected in the community. This period will see the beginning of the transition from German to English. Evening services in English were held under Salem's name in Library Hall on Frederick Road in Catonsville (approximately on the site of the present Bill's Music store).⁴ The new services at Library Hall were part of an effort to relocate more centrally in Catonsville, a move which culminated in the erection of a new church building at the corner of Frederick Road and Newburg Avenue, completed on October 15, 1903. At Pastor Ebeling's death (1901), all German services at Salem ceased.



The church celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1899 under Dr. Ebeling. Clearly, the shift to English, the move to the center of Catonsville and the death of Dr. Ebeling marked the ending of the very distinctive ethnic phase in the life of the Salem congregation.

1901-1910:



Dr. Martin Luther Enders' ministry began with the move to "New" Salem. This begins the next 50 years. Salem had now moved away from the "Old Country" language of German, which had been one source of its earlier strength. It has now taken its place as a mainstream Protestant church at the center of the life in the Catonsville. Catonsville was experiencing a major shift from rural to town status. Two areas of church life which appear to be indicative of the tone and character of

this second period in the church's history were 1) the physical and esthetic improvements to the church and 2) the important role assumed by the many church organizations, making the church a kind of "community center" for many of its members. Dr. Enders resigned in 1910.

1910-1947:

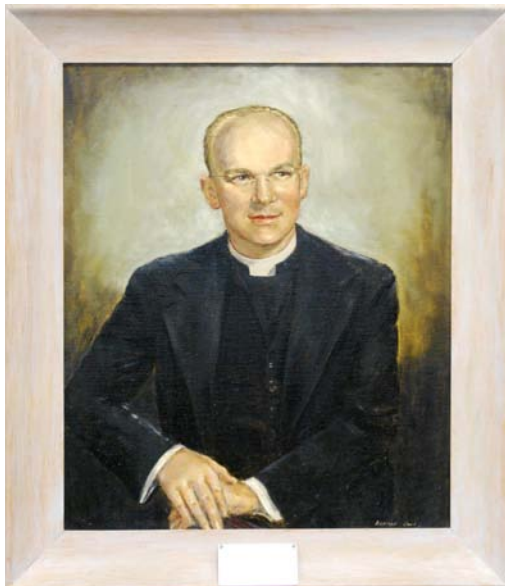
Dr. John Culler Bowers served Salem, continuing in the second 50 years. This period would see its sons go off to two world wars. In 1911, a parsonage and stable were built on a lot adjacent to the church. An addition to the Sunday School was built. In this period, auxiliary organizations flourished and played a dominant role in the church's life and work. The numerical growth of the congregation was steady throughout this period. Pastor Bowers looked back on this period with gratitude toward the



Sunday School and the auxiliary organizations that provided activities and opportunities for service for virtually all members of various age groups and "both sexes" who chose to make the church the center of their time and energy. Pastor Bowers, in one of his writings, noted in the early days of this period he did his pastoral work by horse and buggy or on horseback and in winter by sleigh.

1947-1960:

Wilbur V. Newby was well regarded as a pulpit preacher with a fine appreciation of music and liturgy. During this period, Salem celebrated its 100th anniversary. In this period and into the next, the congregation will be challenged to experiment and adapt to new settings of the liturgy and new forms of worship. The congregation will make a transition to a new worship book, the 1958 Service Book and Hymnal. The choir will play an important role in supporting the transition and teaching the congregation. As attendance at churches in the 1950's grew rapidly, Pastor Newby will preside over the congregation's peak period in numerical growth. The congregation will adopt a new constitution patterned after The Model Constitution of the United Lutheran Church in America. A new education wing will be dedicated in 1955. Richard L. Trudo served as assistant pastor from 1958-1960. Pastor Newby resigned in 1960.



1961- 1976:

G. Paul Lottich's ministry, the beginning of the next 50 years at Salem, has been characterized by his frank call to the church to develop new forms of ministry. In this period, The Lutheran Church in America (LCA) would provide fresh new teaching materials for the Sunday School, seeking to employ newer teaching techniques that would present the lessons in more relevant ways.⁶ The catechetical program would undergo similar re-evaluation. His report on the "State of the Parish" to the



congregational meeting on February 7, 1966 would conclude with this: "In all areas of parish life, it is necessary for us to examine the traditional forms we have been using, ever seeking new and venturesome methods of serving Christ in today's world." In 1969, at a congregational meeting, Pastor Lottich would call attention to rapidly changing Catonsville: "The Catonsville area is changing. Families are moving out of this area into the outer periphery. Of the people moving into Catonsville, many of them are young people who plan to live here only a short time. They seem to be reluctant to sink roots into the community and tend to avoid involvement." This period would see social ministry change and grow: Salem would open a paid kindergarten and be receptive to community projects, such as Meals on Wheels, day care and after school tutoring.⁷ Significant attention would be given to race relations. This period would see women serving on the Church Council and lay assistants authorized to serve in the communion services on a regular basis. Communion would be offered to those in fifth grade. Folk music would be introduced. This period would see youth move into what we know as Youth Ministry.

As the area changed, so did the character and the needs of the congregation. Many members were coming from relatively long distances and their need for the church to be the center of their activities lessened. Many of the auxiliary organizations ceased. Pastor Lottich resigned in 1976.

1977-present:

G. Edward Whetstone, Salem's seventh pastor, will be known as a good pastor—a spiritual leader and a healer—as well as a good administrator. In his first years of ministry at Salem, the congregation would heal from the brokenness of the previous decade, with all its challenges to church and society, especially in urban areas. Families rooted in the congregation's long history would unite with newer members committed to our ministry to the community. Pastor Whetstone has said, "I felt fortunate to come to a congregation with such a beautiful sanctuary, ample facilities, rich music and a strong commitment to social action. I was eager to maintain and build upon those strengths. Then came years of building confidence and courage for wider ministry."



The congregation would be challenged with greater financial goals for ministry, mission and capital improvement, enabling greater service and faithfulness. In this period, the staff would increase with part-time lay ministers and Salem would undergo a major renovation, facilitating another period of growth in Salem's history. In this period, study and social groups would grow. "The most recent years," says Pastor Whetstone, "have brought the wonderful satisfaction of my new partnership in ministry with Pastor David Asendorf, and the manner in which this has advanced our ability to shepherd the congregation and our ministries, and to serve beyond our congregation in the community and wider church." At this writing, Salem will celebrate 160 years of ministry.

A high value upon congregational harmony stands out in this period. This period knows a strong commitment to the wider Church (Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, as well as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) embracing a deeper commitment and exposure to global ministry. We would see sponsorship of more refugees. Each year 20-25% of our offerings would be committed for ministries beyond Salem. Communion would be offered weekly and the age for first communion would be lowered. Salem would participate in a cluster confirmation program with other Lutheran churches. The use of a portion of our bequest fund would be committed to mission and ministry in our region and in the world.

"I have always deeply loved this congregation. I have always been grateful for the congregation's love, forgiveness and affirmation for me. Surely we could have been more faithful, and there is so much yet that needs doing. But I believe it is God's love enfolding us all which enables us to serve him as faithfully as we do."

2007-present:

David Asendorf will serve as pastor with Pastor Whetstone with great joy at a time when Salem is a vibrant, caring Christian community, and a healthy congregation with many strengths. In this period, Salem will reach far outside itself while remaining committed within. Pastor Asendorf will be pleased to further strengthen this praying congregation, a people that prays for each other and for people all across the world -- a kind and respectful congregation – a welcoming congregation. Pastors Asendorf



and Whetstone will shepherd together to maintain the strengths that began with the first cornerstone, attentive to God's call to make the world a more loving, more just and more peaceful place to live. Pastor Asendorf has said, "I give thanks that God has called me to the ministry of Word and Sacrament at Salem Church, and I hope one day that I will join the august body of my beloved predecessors."

1 and 2. W. Edward Orser, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, 125 Years of Christian Ministry, 1849-1974 (Catonsville, Maryland 1974), p.3

3. W. Edward Orser, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, 125 Years of Christian Ministry, 1849-1974 (Catonsville, Maryland 1974), p. 5

4. W. Edward Orser, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, 125 Years of Christian Ministry, 1849-1974 (Catonsville, Maryland 1974), p. 5. At this writing, Wilson's Hardward is no longer in the area.

5. W. Edward Orser, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, 125 Years of Christian Ministry, 1849-1974 (Catonsville, Maryland 1974), p. 8

6. W. Edward Orser, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, 125 Years of Christian Ministry, 1849-1974 (Catonsville, Maryland 1974), p. 8

7. W. Edward Orser, Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, 125 Years of Christian Ministry, 1849-1974 (Catonsville, Maryland 1974), p. 14