

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING

Continued...

PATRONS

Eleanor Weidemoyer - In Memory of Arthur Weidemoyer and Richard Seltzer
Wilson and Victoria Yerck

SPONSORS

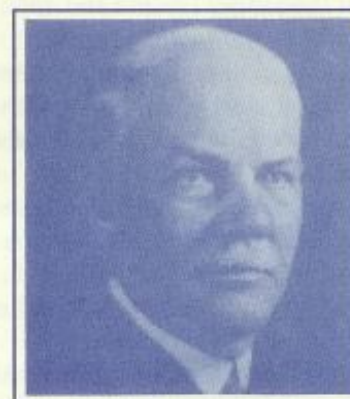
Anonymous
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Brown
Rhoda Buehrle
Daniel Coll
William and Kathryn Cressman
Esther Eisbrenner - In Memory of William Eisbrenner, Catherine Stevenbach, and Gertrude Stump
Elaine Ewashko and the Girls - In Memory of John G. Ewashko
Ken and Pauline Gahman - In Memory of George Epler, and In Honor of Pearl Epler
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Gerhart - In Memory of Our Parents
Henry Gutekunst - In Memory of Dorothy A. Gutekunst, Mr. and Mrs. William Sturm, and Mr. and Mrs. John Busch
Carol King - In Memory of Alfred King
Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Moore - In Memory of James Class and Irvin Moore
Roxanne Nogradi
John and Nancy Patton - In Memory of Our Parents
Muriel Stull - In Memory of Earl Stull
Margaret and Alyce Stieger - In Memory of Our Parents
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Thomas
Richard and Marcella Trauger
Pearl Wenhold - In Memory of Richard H. Wenhold
The Wolfinger Family - In Memory of Emma and Harvey Clymer
Fred and Pauline Yoder

CONTRIBUTORS

Anonymous
Anonymous
Steve and Debbie Coll, Matthew and Jessica
Dorris Francis
Rosell and Arlene Leister
Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Thomas
Phyllis Wood

PASTORS OF THE CONGREGATION

1859 to 1873	The Reverend Ferdinand Berkemeyer
1862 to 1873	The Reverend Frederick Walz
1873 to 1876	The Reverend Samuel A. Ziegenfuss
1877 to 1888	The Reverend James L. Becker
1889 to 1941	The Reverend John H. Waidelich
1942 to 1944	The Reverend Ralph S. Kerstetter
1945 to 1950	The Reverend Robert E. Horne
1950 to 1962	The Reverend Elwood W. Reitz
1963 to 1968	The Reverend Laurence G. Horn
1968 to 1989	The Reverend William E. Dennis
1969 to 1970	The Reverend Robert B. Woodside
1970 to 1972	The Reverend Walter Messick
1990 to date	The Reverend Richard H. Summy



The Reverend
John H. Waidelich

CHRONOLOGY

- 1859 First service conducted in the old school house (21-23 Walnut Street) by the Reverend Ferdinand Berkemeyer.
- 1868 Land purchased for a cemetery and church.
- 1869 Organization of St. Michael's Congregation, organized by the Reverends Ferdinand Berkemeyer and Frederick Walz.
- 1869 Charter granted to St. Michael's on September 13.
- 1870 Laying of cornerstone for church by the Reverends Berkemeyer and Walz (Lutheran) and the Reverend Fisher (Reformed) on May 28.
- 1872 First class of catechumens confirmed by the Reverend Walz on November 3.
- 1873 The Reverend Samuel A. Ziegenfus installed. First communion with 46 members communing.
- 1874 Formal dedication of completed church on May 2 and 3.
- 1876 The Reverend Ziegenfuss resigned.
- 1877 The Reverend James L. Becker installed at Ridge Valley, then part of the parish, on August 12.
- 1888 Parish divided at the recommendation of the Norristown Conference.
- 1888 The Reverend Becker resigned.
- 1889 The Reverend John H. Waidelich called and installed.
- 1892 Organization of the Luther League and Women's Missionary Society.
- 1892 Separation of Union (Lutheran and Reformed) Sunday School.
- 1895 Introduction of the clerical robe by vote of the congregation.
- 1900 St. Michael's purchased the half interest of the Reformed Congregation in the Union Church.
- 1903 Enlargement and remodeling of the old church building.
- 1904 Re-consecration services with the Reverends Berkemeyer, Ziegenfuss, and Becker, on January 24.
- 1904 New Charter and constitution adopted on June 30.
- 1906 Purchase of vacant lot adjoining church.
- 1910 Steeple struck by lightning, causing a fire in the clock area, on July 14.
- 1914 Cradle Roll organized by Mrs. Alice K. Waidelich.

- 1916 After discussion with Ridge Valley, St. Michael's to become self-sustaining congregation, effective the first Sunday in 1917.
- 1917 Began to hold services each Sunday.
- 1920 50th anniversary of the congregation celebrated on October 31.
- 1923 Choir became vested; 25 vestments were purchased.
- 1923 Organization of Lutheran Brotherhood of St. Michael's.
- 1926 Ground broken for an addition to the Sunday School room and a chapel, on October 12.
- 1929 60th anniversary of St. Michael's.
- 1930 Bulletin Board installed on lawn.
- 1938 Mrs. Waidelich passed away.
- 1938 Organ chimes dedicated as a memorial to Mrs. Waidelich.
- 1939 The Reverend Waidelich celebrated his 50th year at St. Michael's.
- 1940 First Vacation Bible School held at St. Michael's.
- 1941 The Reverend Waidelich passed away on September 23.
- 1942 The Reverend Ralph Kerstetter called to St. Michael's.
- 1944 Congregation purchased parsonage at 328 East Church Street.
- 1944 The Reverend Kerstetter inducted into the Navy as chaplain.
- 1945 The Reverend Robert E. Horne installed on June 17.
- 1945 Church interior cleaned, painted, and a new lighting system installed; Sunday School room divided into separate rooms.
- 1945 St. Michael's 75th anniversary observed.
- 1950 The Reverend Horne resigned.
- 1950 The Reverend Elwood W. Reitz called to St. Michael's.
- 1950 Schulmerich chimes added to the tower.
- 1956 Fellowship Hall erected.
- 1962 The Reverend Reitz resigned.
- 1963 The Reverend Laurence G. Horn installed on March 31.
- 1968 The Reverend Horn resigned.
- 1968 The Reverend William E. Dennis called to St. Michael's.
- 1969 The Reverend Robert B. Woodside, II became Associate Pastor.
- 1969 100th anniversary of St. Michael's.
- 1977 Steeple struck by lightning again.
- 1977 Monthly radio programs on WNPV Lansdale started.
- 1981 Chapel completely renovated.

- 1982 Chair lift installed.
1982 Bell Choir started.
1989 The Reverend Dennis retired.
1990 The Reverend Richard H. Summy called to St. Michael's.
1991 *Call to Worship* Evangelism program.
1992 *Brighter Future* Capital Improvement project begins.
1993 Trees planted in front of church, stained glass windows refurbished, bathrooms renovated, sound system and new carpet installed.
1993 Weather vane on steeple damaged in blizzard in March.
1994 125th Anniversary of St. Michael's.





A BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. MICHAEL'S

In 1895, Pastor Waidelich wrote a history of the first twenty-five years of St. Michael's. Now, celebrating its 125th Anniversary, the congregation has added another one hundred years to its history.

Beginning in 1859, before St. Michael's had a church building, people met for services in the old school house, located at 21-23 Walnut Street in Sellersville. Early services were conducted by the Reverend Ferdinand Berkemeyer, who was joined a few years later by the Reverend Frederick Walz; both conducted Lutheran services. The school house was also used for German Reformed services, conducted by the Reverend Peter S. Fisher, as well as for Mennonite services.

St. Agnes, a Roman Catholic Church and Sellersville's first church, had been built in 1868. At the same time, plans for erecting a Protestant church began to be considered. The original thought was to build a church that would be conveniently located for members in Sellersville and Perkasio (then called Bridgetown). However, this plan proved to be impractical, and the congregation began planning for a building within the limits of Sellersville. For this purpose, three acres of land were purchased from William S. Schlichter. This land was divided into cemetery lots, which were offered for sale to the public. The proceeds were to be the basis of the building fund for a church.

While still in the process of raising the money for the building, in 1869, St. Michael's congregation was organized by the Reverends Berkemeyer and Walz, and its charter granted.

Within two years of the land purchase, enough money had been raised to begin the construction of a "Union Church," for Lutherans and Reformed. A building committee was named, consisting of Elias Shellenberger, William Schlichter, and William Deetz (Reformed), and Joseph Cressman, A. K. Wambold, and A. S. Cressman (Lutheran).

The stone for the church building was quarried from a field next to the cemetery, and the cornerstone of St. Michael's was laid by Pastors Berkemeyer, Walz, and Fisher in May 1870. At this stage only the first

floor of the building was completed; the rest was to be added later. The new building was used for Lutheran, Reformed, and Mennonite services. (The Mennonites moved to a different location in 1888.) The first class of catechumens consisted of nine members, who were confirmed by Pastor Walz on November 3, 1872.

In 1873, the Reverend Samuel A. Ziegenfuss was called and installed as pastor of St. Michael's and Christ Church in Towamencin by the Reverends Frederick Walz and F. Lazarus. His first communion was held on June 27, 1873, for forty-six members. During Dr. Ziegenfuss's ministry, St. John's of Ridge Valley was added to the parish. Pastor Waidelich noted in his *History*, that "the first Church Council seems to have been the one installed by Pastor Ziegenfuss, April 5, '74: Noah Wambold, Jos. Cressman, A. K. Wambold, A. S. Cressman (Elders), John E. Oberholtzer, Aug. Smith, A. R. Cressman [and] Silas Billger (Deacons)."

St. Michael's church building was completed in 1874, and formally consecrated on May 2 and 3. Three services were held to celebrate this occasion, with sermons in English and German, by the Reverends Dr. Mann, Dr. Muhlenberg, and Dr. Horne. Pastor Ziegenfuss left St. Michael's in 1876, to accept a call to a congregation in Northampton County.

The next pastor to serve St. Michael's was the Reverend James L. Becker. He was installed at Ridge Valley on August 12, 1877. During his ministry, he began preaching in Lansdale also; this resulted in the establishment of Trinity Lutheran Church there. In 1886, the Sellersville parish was divided, as recommended by the Norristown Conference. Towamencin was added to the Lansdale Trinity congregation, and Pastor Becker resigned from St. Michael's and St. John's to accept the charge of the new Trinity Church in Lansdale.

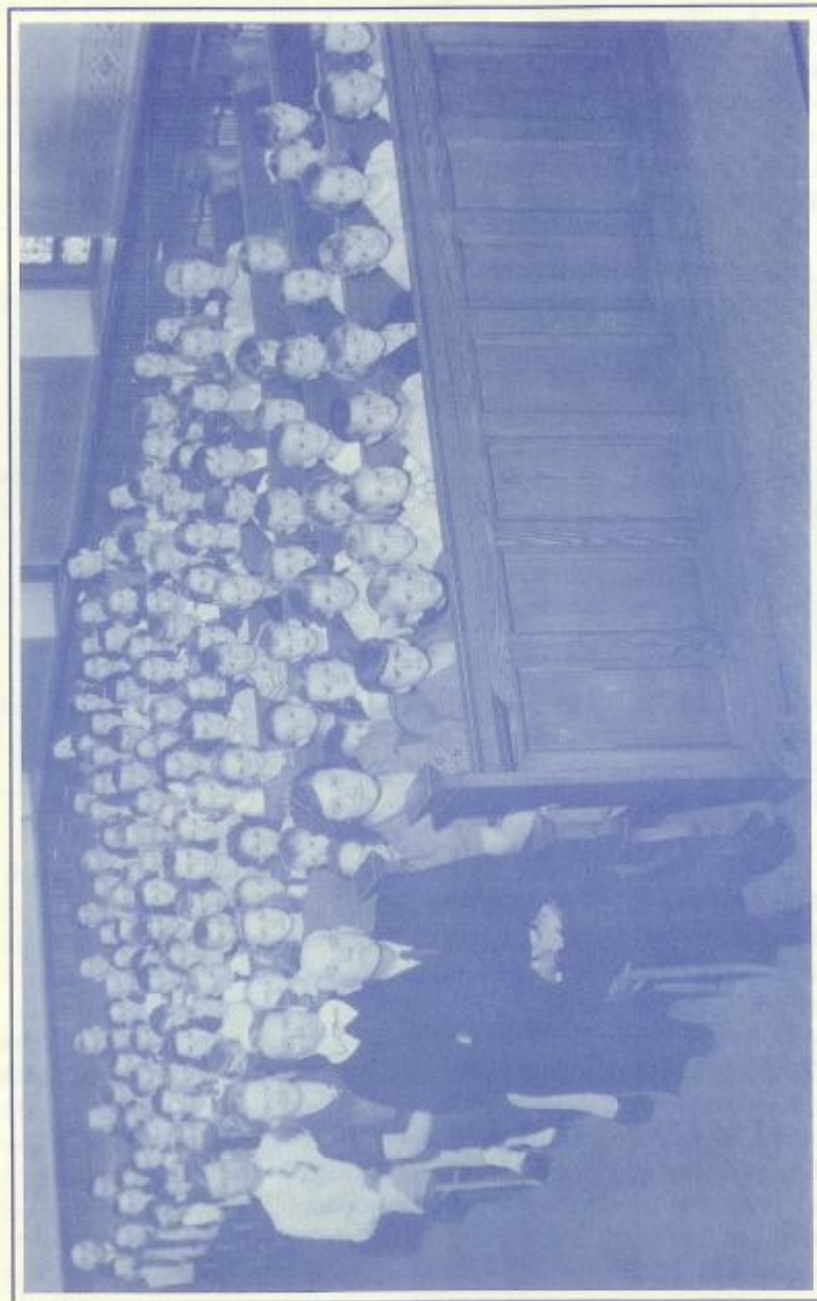
The Reverend John H. Waidelich's long ministry at St. Michael's began in 1889. While still a student at the Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia, he had been asked to preach as a supply during November of 1888. He was ordained in Lebanon on June 17, 1889. After a unanimous election at St. Michael's, a call was extended to him in February 1889, and he was installed at St. Michael's on June 23, six days after his ordination, by the Reverends H. S. Fegley and James L. Becker.



Pastor Waidelich's 50th Anniversary at St. Michael's

Pastor Waidelich's time at St. Michael's turned out to be extremely active, and the church grew and prospered. He remained here until his death in 1941, having had charge of the congregation for fifty-two years. He was admired by all, and is remembered fondly by many of today's congregation members.

Among Pastor Waidelich's many efforts for this church were the establishment of the Luther League and the Women's Missionary Society (both in 1892). Also in 1892, the Church Council agreed to appoint a committee to assist the Lutherans in Perkasio to secure their own services. The committee consisted of A. H. Wambold and Thomas B. Deetz. This action resulted, through the efforts of Pastor Waidelich, in the erection of a church and the organization of a congregation in Perkasio - today's Trinity Lutheran Church - which he served as pastor until 1899.



First Vacation Bible School, 1940



First Vacation Bible School, 1940

Many renovations, alterations, and additions were made to the church building during the early part of this century. The following were among them: the church building was enlarged; a pipe organ, a gift from Andrew Carnegie, was added; stained glass windows, by Nicolai D'Ascenzo, were installed; and a clock was put into the steeple. The church clock struck the hour of 5 PM for the first time on November 11, 1903. In addition, electric lights were installed. Upon completion of all this work, the church was reconsecrated in 1904.

Beginning in 1917, St. Michael's and St. John's each became self-sustaining congregations, with two services on Sundays being held at St. Michael's from then on.

Pastor Waidelich witnessed many special anniversaries, his own as well as St. Michael's, during his many years here. His Silver Jubilee occurred on June 28, 1914, he received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Muhlenberg College in 1918, and he celebrated his 50th anniversary at St. Michael's in 1939. During his pastorate, the congregation observed its 25th, 50th, and 60th anniversaries. Pastor Waidelich died, working, on September 23, 1941, the year following his introduction of the first Vacation Bible School in 1940.

Mrs. Waidelich, who had been very active in the life of St. Michael's, and had so ably assisted the pastor, died in 1938. In recognition of her work for the congregation and of her devotion to St. Michael's, the organ chimes were dedicated as a memorial to her.

St. Michael's was without a pastor for a year, before the Reverend Ralph S. Kerstetter began his ministry here in 1942. Two years later he was inducted into the Navy as a chaplain. The parsonage at 328 Church Street was purchased during his ministry.

The Reverend Robert E. Horne became St. Michael's pastor from 1945 to 1950. While he led the congregation, extensive renovations of the church building were undertaken; in addition to large-scale cleaning and painting, the building needed to be rewired completely for a new lighting system, which was to replace the original installation, in use since 1903. Another anniversary celebration took place during that period, namely St. Michael's 75th anniversary, which was celebrated on December 23, 1945.

The Reverend Elwood W. Reitz was St Michael's pastor for the next twelve years, from 1950 to 1962. In addition to his pastoral duties, Pastor Reitz was much involved with the renewed changes done in the church building at this time. The fellowship hall was built, Schulmerich chimes were added to the tower, the whole interior of the Church was renovated, new carpeting was laid, and a new organ was installed. Pastor Reitz left to accept a call to Calvary Lutheran Church in West Chester, but has been back to preach as a supply pastor many times, to the great delight of the congregation.



Ground breaking for Fellowship Hall, 1956

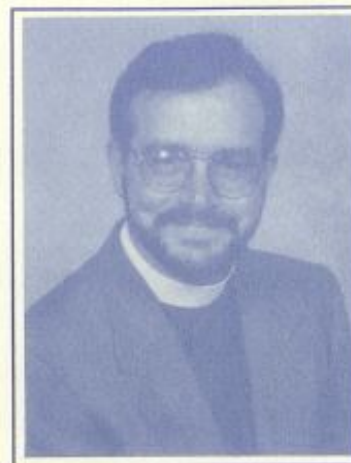
Pastor Laurence G. Horn served St. Michael's from 1963 to 1968, and was followed by the Reverend William E. Dennis, who was installed on August 25, 1968. Pastor Dennis' strong commitment to visiting members of the congregation in need of spiritual help was very much appreciated. His efforts in evangelism proved successful in bringing new and returning old members to the congregation. During his pastorate, St. Michael's celebrated its 100th anniversary, a Youth Ministry Committee was appointed, and greeters at Sunday services were introduced. St. Michael's became a supporting member of FISH, and a Capital Improvement drive was launched. Pastor Dennis retired in 1989.

The Reverend Richard H. Summy was called to St. Michael's in 1990 and

was installed on September 9. Under his leadership, the *Call to Worship* evangelism program was carried out in 1991, resulting in nearly 100 new members. In 1992, *Refurbishing St. Michael's - Our Commitment to a Brighter Future*, a capital projects campaign, was initiated. To date, the stained glass windows have been completely refurbished, the bathrooms have been renovated and made handicapped accessible, a new sound system and new carpet were installed, trees were planted in front of the church, and an air conditioner and computer equipment were purchased for the office. The fellowship hall and kitchen are scheduled to be renovated in the near future.

Reflecting upon the 125 years of St. Michael's, Pastor Waidelich's closing words of his *History* are as appropriate today as they were in 1895, "hitherto the Lord hath helped us. May He prosper the work of our hands, and instill us with true earnestness for the work so committed into our hands."

Hildegard Stephans



**The Reverend
Richard H. Summy**

On September 13, 1869, St. Michael's was granted a charter as a "working Lutheran church in [Sellersville] and active in the Ministerium of Pennsylvania." Today, on September 11, 1994, we are celebrating 125 years of official ministry in this place. Because God has in the past and continues in the present to bless us as a living, growing, vital congregation that worships, witnesses, learns, serves and supports in the name of Christ, we can celebrate the past with thanksgiving and much rejoicing and can also look forward to the future with hope.

THE ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

Robert Frick, Chairperson
Arthur and Mary Alderfer
Peggy Barndt
Dorris Francis
Eleanor Hillegas
Evelyn Hollenbach
Martha Hunsicker
John and Nancy Patton
Hildegard Stephans
Nancy Styer
Patricia Wolfinger