

An Historical Record
1796-1989

Evangelical Lutheran Church



Hartwick Seminary, New York
on the Occasion of the Sesquicentennial of the
Congregations' Founding

Compiled by Robert Geberth

Mr. Geberth acknowledges that, without the help of Mrs. Faith Buechner and her faithful collection and preservation of the history contained herein, this effort would not have been successful or possible.

December 1989

Residents of Hartwick Patent issued a call to Rev. John Fredrick Ernst after the death of John Christopher Hartwick, which occurred on July 17, 1796. Pastor Ernst came in 1797 and settled in Cooperstown in 1799. He preached for the inhabitants and was to assist in the education of the youth of the community. He was to ascertain if the land in the patent would be suitable for a seminary. Pastor Ernst's efforts to form a Lutheran Church failed, although he continued to preach in the area until the early 1800s.

Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized with 40 members by Rev. J.D. Lawyer, the first Pastor, on May 1, 1839.

The Act of Incorporation

"To All to Whom these Presents may Concern: We whose names and seals are hereunto affixed do certify, that in pursuance of notice duly given, according to law, for that purpose, at that time of divine worship, on two successive Sabbaths preceding the day of election the male persons of full age belonging to the Church, Congregation or Society called the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hartwick, assembled in the Chapel of the Seminary, in the town of Hartwick, Otsego County, being the place where said Church stately attends for divine worship, for the purpose of incorporating themselves under the Act entitled, 'An Act to Provide for the Incorporation of Religious Societies,' and the act amending same.

"At which meeting, held in the Tenth Day of August, 1839, the undersigned, Clark Davison and John Rich, two of the members of the said Church, were nominated by a majority of the members present, to preside and certify the proceedings of said meeting. The undersigned do hereby certify that Joshua H. Dewey, George H. Derbyshire, Elisha Eldred, John Robinson and Henry Y. Galway, by a plurality of voices were elected Trustees to take charge of the estate and properties belonging to said Church and to transact all affairs relative to the temporalities thereof; and that the first Monday of April in each year hereafter be fixed for the annual election; and the name or title of 'The Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hartwick,' was in like manner fixed on and agreed to, as that by which the said Church, Congregation or Society, shall be known in law.

"In Testimony whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names and affixed our seals, this Tenth Day of August in the Year One Thousand and Eight Hundred and Thirty-nine."

Signed and sealed in the presence of

John D. Sawyer

C. Davison

George B. Miller

John (his mark ☩) Rich

The church was erected in 1840 at a cost of \$1,600. An interesting fact is one of the grandfathers of Faith Buechner (our oldest current member) donated \$12 for the purchase of lumber, a sizable donation in 1840. A shed was erected on the north side of the church for a shelter to protect the horses and their carriages during church services. The Church served the students of Hartwick Seminary and the residents of the surrounding community.

On February 8, 1887 a sum of \$500 was subscribed toward the total of \$1,000 needed to remodel the Church.

The memorial windows for the Church arrived on November 11, 1887 from the manufacturer Mr. H. Stellwagon of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Church was raised on its foundation about 18 inches, the old gallery removed, a new entry built in front and an alcove built in the rear. The church's main room is now 34 feet by 48 feet and is furnished with 44 pews. Mr. H.R. Bowdish of Cooperstown was in charge of the carpenter work, Mr. John H. Weeks of the masonry work, Mr. J.E. Smith of Milford the furnace and tin work, and Mr. Charles H. Whitbeck the painting. The decorations were furnished by Messrs Bullock & Becker of Albany. The seats, pulpit and altar furniture came from the Globe Furniture Co. of Michigan and were made of black walnut. The pews were of oak and the rest of the interior of the Church is of cherry. The remodeled Church was dedicated at an 11 a.m. service on December 22, 1887. On June 15, 1888, commodious sheds were erected for the horses and carriages. Although the estimated cost of remodeling the Church was \$1,000, the final cost was in excess of \$2,000.

In the early 1900s, the Church was again rebuilt to conform to Lutheran architecture. The pulpit and altar hangings were a gift from Dr. and Mrs. J.L. Kistler, a memorial to their son, Ralph Kistler.

In 1921, the pipe organ was installed at a cost of \$1,200 from the Moller Organ Co. In September 1980, the organ underwent extensive rebuilding at a cost of \$2,000. The Hayes Room was dedicated on November 3, 1956 as a memorial to Rev. Dr. Harry Hayes. Remodeling of the Hayes Room continues as an ongoing project with the latest alteration in 1984, which saw the addition of much needed restroom facilities and a new entryway. The restoration of the stained glass windows was started in October 1977, with an estimated cost of \$6,800; the final cost exceeded \$7,000. On June 24, 1979 the windows were rededicated at the regular 11 a.m. worship service by the Rev. Dr. Edward Kirsten Perry, Bishop of the Upstate New York Synod of the Lutheran Church in America.

The Tri-Church Parish was formed by a "Covenant Agreement" in 1953 and was comprised of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the hamlet

now known as Hartwick Seminary, St. John's Lutheran Church in West Burlington and St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Laurens. The Tri-Church Parish was dissolved in 1986 when the Rev. Arthur Henne accepted a joint call from Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hartwick Seminary and the Lutheran Church of the Atonement in Oneonta.

The oldest organization within the Congregation is the Women's Missionary Society, which was organized in 1885 and which is now known as the Lutheran Church Women. This organization has met without interruption for over 100 years with a record of mission work that, to this day, far exceeds the capacity of its members and stands as an example of what mission work is about.

Evangelical Lutheran Church has hosted the Hartwick Seminary Alumni Association every year since that organization's creation in 1953. Mr. Barringer served as the Alumni Association's first President. The Church welcomes the alumni in early August, coincidental with the August 10, 1839 founding of the congregation.

The Church has been served by three vicars:

Roy Steward Jr.	1968
John Pearson	June 1971-June 1972
Ned Lindstrom	June 1979-June 1980

The Pastors of Evangelical Lutheran Church were, in the following order:

Rev. John Fredrick Ernst	1797-1802
	?
Rev. E.L. Hazelius, D.D.	1815-1830
Rev. Prof. George B. Miller (first time)	1830-1839
Rev. J.D. Lawyer, D.D.	1839
	?
Rev. Prof. George B. Miller (second time)	1844-1851
Rev. Prof. Levi Sternberg	1851-1864
Rev. Prof. George B. Miller (third time)	1864-1869
Rev. William Schell	1870
	?
Rev. Timothy Titus	1873
Rev. Peter Bergtresser	1875-1876
Rev. James Pitcher	?
Rev. Alfred Hiller, D.D.	1881-1920
Rev. Archibald Dietz, D.D.	1920-1924
Rev. John G. Traver*	
Rev. Frank Wolford*	
Rev. Charles Myers	1924-1925
Rev. Bruce Carney	1925

	?
Rev. Harry D. Hayes, D.D.	1934-1947
Rev. Paul M. Orso, Ph.D.	1949-1952
Rev. Charles Pope	1953
Rev. William Rittberger	1955-1960
Rev. Theodore Warren	1960-1962
Rev. Louis F. Wagschal	1962-1967
Rev. William Wittcopp	1967-1968
Rev. S. Kenneth Arnsten	1969
Rev. Myron Jawenacke	1969
Rev. Robert Maier	1970-1972
Rev. Robert Heffner	1972-1985
Rev. Robert Mansbach, D.D.	1972-1985
Rev. Maurice Gold	1985
Rev. Arthur Henne	1986-present
<i>*Local Ministers who substituted</i>	

The stained glass windows on the north side of the Church are dedicated in memory of:

First Window: Rev. Henry N. Pohlman, D.D., 1816—first theological student and graduate at the new Hartwick Seminary on the Patent

Second Window: Rev. Prof. Henry Schmidt, D.D., 1844-1848

Third Window: Miss Letitia Swartout

Fourth Window: Alvah P. Converse

The windows on the south side are dedicated in memory of:

First Window: Rev. Prof. Earnest Lewis Hazelius, D.D., 1815-1830

Second Window: Rev. Prof. Levi Sternberg, 1851-1864

Third Window: Mrs. Delia Bray Miller, wife of Rev. Prof. G.B. Miller, D.D.

Fourth Window: The gift of Cuyler E. Carr

The Altar Window: dedicated to Rev. Prof. George B. Miller, D.D., for his service from 1830-1839 and 1844-1869.

The Narthex Windows: dedicated to Joseph R. Slater and George R. Slater

Bronze plaques were installed for the restoration of the stained glass windows as memorials to:

Rev. Prof. Frank & Jessie Wolford, donated by Esther Backus
William Zoeller family, donated by the William Zoeller family
Dr. Richard Andresen, donated by a memorial fund
Alfred Engelmann, donated by Paula Engelmann
Peter James Bissell, donated by the Charles Bissell Family
Gift of the Congregation, donated by the Congregation

In June 1984, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Berdan gave a Memorial Book to the Congregation and all past and present memorial gifts to the Church have been recorded in it.

The 44 pews of the Church were dedicated as memorials to:

Rev. G.A. Linter, D.D.

Class of 1888

Class of 1886

Class of 1885

YMCA Central Bridge

Rev. J.D. Miller

Mr. & Mrs. A.B. Yetter

J.G. Yetter

G.A. Traner

J.G. Traner

Rev. N. VanAlstine, D.D.

Rev. Philip Weiting

John L. & Anna E. Enders

Miss Polly Davison

Col. J. Hyde Dewey

Rev. Theodore Heiky

Rev. J.J. Senderling

Philip Wickel

Rev. J.P. Krechting

Henry Y. & Ellen H. Gowey

Mr. & Mrs. Orange Todd

Mrs. Elizabette Enders

John Lattire

Mr. & Mrs. Dr. J.L. Hiller

Levi Dederick

William Davison

Rev. & Mrs. G.H. Prentice

Class of 1883

Mrs. Chester Carr for Young Men

Miss E. Ingalls for Young Ladies

Judge Lyman Sanford

Rev. Adam Crounse

Mrs. William Davison

Jerome & George Clark

J.T. Metcalf

Mr. & Mrs. Clark Davison

Rev. M.W. Empie

P.M. Kirby

James Fellows

Rev. L. Swarthamer

G.N. Frisbee

G. Bauch

Compliments of



Hartwick College
BICENTENNIAL