

Christ Lutheran Church Historial Timeline

The Early Years: 1895-1959

1895 – The Rev. Milton H. Stine became pastor. The building at 1311 Derry Street was purchased for use as a parsonage for \$3,800.

1896 – The Boys Brigade was organized.

1901 – The Rev. Austin A. Kelly assumed his pastorate. Members of Christ Church's East End Mission Sunday School met April 3 to form Redeemer Church, with a charter membership of 63 people.

1906 – Three properties next to the church were purchased for \$11,000 for expansion.

1908 – Improvement of the nearby Gorgas property created more Sunday School space.

1911 – The Rev. H. F. Long became pastor.

1912 – The Rev. Thomas Reisch assumed his pastorate, to serve for 17 years.

1914 – The congregation voted in January to build a new Sunday School building. The cornerstone was laid in September, 1915, and the building was dedicated in March, 1916.

1922 – The Sunday School hour was changed from afternoon to morning.

1924 – The present church's cornerstone was laid April 27, 1924. The new church was dedicated on January 10, 1926.

1926 – Tower chimes were installed.

1927 – A Boy Scout charter was granted March 21.

1928 – The first Vacation Bible School was held and a Junior Choir was organized.

1929 – The Rev. Milton H. Stine returned for a second pastorate.

1932 – The Rev. W. C. Dunlap was elected interim pastor. Later the Rev. Jacob E. Rudisill became pastor, to serve for 27 years.

1940 – The Fiftieth Anniversary was observed April 21-28.

1942 – A Cub Scout pack was organized March 2.

1943 – Weekday Church School started, continuing into 1959. Sunday evening services were discontinued. A Senior Girl Scout troop was organized in December.

1946 – A Sunday School orchestra was organized.

1948 – The Garverich property next to the church was purchased for \$13,000. It was demolished in 1957 to make way for the Education Building.

1949 – An acolyte organization was formed.

1953 – Two morning worship services were instituted (the early service was discontinued in 1979).

1957 – Midweek services were discontinued. Rev. Henry Wohlgemuth, a son of the church, served as supply pastor for four months during Pastor Rudisill's illness

1958 – The Rev. Albert Weber was elected associate pastor; he served for one year. "The Helper" newsletter was established, later to be called the "Hill Beacon" and then the "Beacon."

1959 – The property at 3901 Schoolhouse Lane was purchased for a parsonage in November. A parking lot was begun with purchase of 1333 Vernon Street. In 1964 the 1335 Vernon Street property was added.

The brick Sunday School building added in 1915, joined to the new stone 1926 Sanctuary.

The Middle Years: 1960-1988

1960 – The Rev. Raymond E. Fisher became pastor in January. The Altar Guild was organized in May.

1961 – The church constitution was amended in January to admit women to Council.

1962 – The Rev. Guy E. Miller was chosen as visitation pastor. He served until 1974.

1963 – A Handbell Choir was organized with 61 English bells.

1964 – A new Sunday School curriculum set up 12 scholastic grades

1965 – Christ Church observed its 75th anniversary September 26 to October 3.

1966 – The Heffelfinger property was purchased for \$10,000. It was renovated in 1969 for the Special Education Class and in 1980 for parsonage use.

1968 – Sister Sarah Heintzeman was engaged as Director of Christian Education. (Ten years later she was ordained into the ministry.)

1969 – The church nave was rededicated September 7 after renovations involving 84 memorial gifts. The congregation approved gradual reduction of Council members from 26 to 16 in November (the present number is 12).

1970 – A three-hour Good Friday service was instituted with the Multi-Parish.

1971 – A “Coffee House” for high school students was started.

1973 – The Rev. Thomas D. Pearson was elected co-pastor to serve with Pastor Fisher. He resigned in 1976.

1976 – Bicentennial Sunday was observed July 4 at a worship service. The Rev. Harrison Ziegler, III was called as visitation pastor. The Sacristy was refurbished as a memorial to Kenneth Hackman, long-time Sunday School secretary.

1978 – The Rev. Ronald R. Mulberger was installed as a pastor to serve with Pastor Fisher. The Retarded Citizens of Dauphin County presented an award to Christ Church for its Special Education Class.

1979 – The church joined with other city Lutheran churches for combined midweek Lenten services. (joint Advent services came later). Pastor Fisher retired on August 1. Rev. Mulberger became senior pastor.

1980 – The parsonage on Schoolhouse Lane was sold preparatory to renovation of the Heffelfinger property at 120 South 13th Street for use as a parsonage/parish house, which was dedicated November 2. Council approved use of lay assistants in worship.

1981 – The Prayer Line was re-established.

1982 – Mrs. Shirley Dietz was engaged as Christian Education and Youth Ministry director. She served through 1983. Weekly Communion services were authorized.

1983 – A literacy instruction program was authorized.

1984 – Major renovation of the Austin organ was carried out. Pastor Mulberger's wife Carolyn died on March 2.

1985 – Rev. Mulberger resigned as pastor effective February 15. The Rev. Alan Wenrich became vice-pastor on March 11.

1986 – The Rev. D. Michael Coombe was called as pastor on January 5.

1987 – The congregation approved Council's recommendation that an outreach pastor or lay assistant be called.

1988 – Christ Church became part of the Lower Susquehanna Synod of the new Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on January 1. A "kickoff" covered dish luncheon heralding the current Centennial celebration was held on October 1, with a German theme.

Recent History: 1989 - Today

September 1992 – Pastor Isabel Chavarria was brought on as an associate pastor to reach out to the community and bring to members. He left the end of 1993.

June 1993 – Associate Pastor Ziegler retirement, due to failing health.

October 1995 – Council discussed selling the Vernon Street parking lot. It remains a problem, having to continue to keep it clean, filling 26 bags of trash, Church keeps getting citations.

December 1996 – Special Council Meeting with the Bishop Guy Edmiston to help seek direction for the Church. Several visions and paths with no clear direction.

September 1997 – Pastor Michael Coombe steps down as pastor.

September 1997 – Pastor Walter Hafer comes on board as an Interim. He stayed until February 1998.

December 1997 – Permission granted from Synod to suspend the council election process and term limits indefinitely.

December 15 1997 – Bishop Edmiston introduced Jody Silliker, newly from Seminary who is interested in a call to half-time ministry. She preached before the congregation and in January and was invited for the call.

February 28, 1998 – Pastor Jody Silliker's Ordination and Installation Service.

1998 – Changed from wine to non-alcoholic wine for Communion.

1998 – Vernon Street parking lot sold.

1998 – Breakfast was established; meets every Tuesday morning at Perkins Restaurant, then moved to Dodge City Restaurant. Originally 6:30 AM, eventually changing time to 7:30 AM. Continues today!

1998 – Camperships were made available in order to send our youth to Camp Nawakwa each summer.

1998 – Food Voucher Program began, located in the church parlor 4 mornings a week. Mary Hammacker, church Full time secretary, issued vouchers. Jean Newell, followed by Arlene Kimberling, both long time church members, volunteered to issue vouchers after Mary. Other members filled in along the way. Finally, Nate Maples, volunteered to issue vouchers from 2009 until his death in 2012, which ended the program.

June 12 1999 – Rummage sale was help to benefit the community and our youth.

1999 – Pastor Walter Hafer is brought on as Visitation Pastor.

1999 – Pastor Jody Silliker reached out to sister churches beginning our process of securing our future with the help of others. This in turn has allowed Christ Lutheran to keep its doors open and use this big beautiful building for God's work.

1999 – A Medical Needs Bank was established: this allowed the community to have access to free, new and used medical supplies/equipment.

1999 – Movie Nights were introduced and held occasionally.

1999 – Youtherans, a group of youth from State College, begin a program of service with our church. They came to Christ Lutheran 1-2 weekends a year and completed service projects in the church and community. They would then lead the Sunday Service. This continued until 2011.

2000 – The old tradition of the Rose Breakfast, was brought back. Originally started in the 1930's, and continued until 1960. In 2001, the Patriot News covered the event. The Rose Breakfast continued each year until 2004.

2000 – Passion play, written by church member, Barb Klinger, was performed by various members.

2000 – A bus trip to Atlantic City for the day was enjoyed by many. A day of fellowship and fun.

2000 – Safe Harbor uses the downstairs and side yard for after school programs.

2000 – Nature Walks at Wildwood Nature Park were held every other Wednesday. These walks were led by member, Carolyn Lupkie. Carolyn had a love of nature and especially birds. Walks continued thru and including 2004.

2001 – Baby Furniture Bank was established and contained used but mainly new baby items for families in the community.

2002 – Chuck Bateman became our fulltime organist. Chuck was Bass Soloist in the church choir in 1987 and 88. He was Choir Director and Minister of Music from 1988-1990.

May 4th, 2003 – Pastor Jody Silliker was married to Paul Vollmar during the Sunday Service. Service was led by Pastor Ron VanBlargan.

2003 – The first ever church web site was established. This can be found at www.pcvsoftware.net/christlutheran. This was created by member, Paul Vollmar.

2004 – attended Lutheran Night at the Harrisburg Senator's baseball game, for the first time as a congregation. This event has become an annual outing for us.

July 2004 – Medical Outreach Clinic moved to Christ Lutheran Church. It was originally launched in October 1995 at the dining room of the St Francis Soup Kitchen with Jody Silliker, RN.

2004 – Mission of Mercy started at our location twice a month.

2004 – External Property Committee was established. This group was made up of members from various Mission Partner churches. They met one Saturday a month from September thru May. The purpose was to complete property jobs that needed to be taken care of. This continues to be a life saver for Christ Lutheran.

2004 – Sweet Heart Luncheon was hosted by Pastor Silliker.

2004 – Summer cook out and swim party for church youth was held at Pastor Jody's house. This would be the first of many.

2004/2005 – Grant received for Sunday school Leader.

June 2005 – 1st Annual Celebration service and luncheon of Thanks for Mission Partners.

2005 – youth group activity re-started. This included, youth and adult bowling, skiing, and numerous other activities.

April 2005 – Dental Screening Clinic opened in first floor nursery room.

2006 – Dedication of the re-lighting of the Cross on top of the church tower. New LED lighting was added.

2006 – Dedication of the new Carillon was held. They replaced the original church chimes in the tower.

2007 – Prenatal Clinic opened. Free prenatal care for those who are unable to access medical assistance.

2007 – 1st annual Portrait Day was held. This event is hosted by St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Photos are taken in front of the Christmas tree. Free to all community.

2007 – Trust and Memorial account changed from PNC Bank to an investment account.

2007 – Chair lifts installed, underwritten by a grant.

December 2008 – No grant for Sunday School Mission. Decided to continue to pay from the budget.

November 4, 2018 -- The Rev. Andrew F. Stockstill was installed pastor of Christ Lutheran Church. Pastor Drew is married to, Dr. Ellen Stockstill, Assistant Professor of English Literature at Penn State Harrisburg. They have two young daughters.

July 2019 -- Susan Schrack Wood became Director of Music. She is married to Brian Wood and they have a daughter, Abbie.

2009 – Sunday school on the 2nd floor, the Jean Newell room – to be used to establish a free clinic for Dental Services.

2009 – Russ and Nancy Mueller take over a pickup choir with the help of Chuck Bateman, our organist.

February 2010 – Pastor Silliker's daughter Amanda does a benefit concert for Health Ministries, at Camp Hill Presbyterian Church. St. Michael's hosted a reception after the concert.

August 2010 – Dental Clinic opened on the 2nd floor.

2012 – Pastor Hafer to retire as visitation pastor. Pastor Russ Mueller will be visitation pastor.

December 2012 – Dwight Clinkscale is new Sexton.

December 2012 – began an annual Christmas Caroling Event for those elder members that are unable to attend church. After singing to 12 different members, we all stopped for dinner together.

February 17, 2013 – 15 year celebration honoring Pastor Jody Silliker's Ordination.

April 2013 – Blessing of the new All Seasonal Paraments in memory of Carol Shumaker, tailored by Debbie Stepansky.

May 2013 – Started the process to call for Associate Pastor.

2013 – Security camera system installed.

September 2013 – Pastor Brian Biery started as associate pastor, his Ordination at St Michael's on December 6.

Pastor Mueller stepped down as visitation pastor, Pastor Biery to take over.

October 27 2013 – Special recognition was given to Frank Boroz, as a long time council member and church treasurer. Wendy Baker, for long time Youth Leader and Retired Pastor Russ Mueller, for his service as Visitation Pastor.

December 2013 – 2nd annual Christmas Caroling event took us to 12 members again for Christmas songs. We again enjoyed the fellowship of a meal together after the singing.

January 2014 – as part of his responsibilities, Pastor Biery, began teaching the youth Sunday School Class.

April 13 2014 – Spanish language service was introduced. Due to limited participation, it was discontinued.

June 4th 2014 – ELCA, Lower Susquehanna Synod approved and amended the guidance for Pastors and congregations regarding 'Same Gender Marriage's in the Lutheran Church.

June 2014 – Mission of Mercy left our location.

September 2014 – Pastor Silliker performed the 1st same gender marriage ceremony during the Sunday Service.

December 7 2014 – Held our first meeting to begin the planning of the 125th Anniversary for Christ Lutheran. The date chosen for a special anniversary celebration is October, 18th, 2015.

December 2014 – 3rd annual Christmas Caroling event took us to 11 members as we sang Christmas carols to each. Fellowship was enjoyed with a meal following the singing.

January 2015 – Timeline was established for the 125th Anniversary celebration and displayed on the large bulletin board in the entry hall. A Memory Book was also placed there for anyone to add special memories and photos.

April 1 2015 – Associate Pastor Biery resigned.

May 2015 – Pastor Jan Mills became our Visitation Pastor

May 2015 – The Youth Sunday School incorporated a ‘student teacher’ program. Various, selected Young Adults have agreed to teach our youth during Sunday school on Sundays.

October 18 2015 – 125th Anniversary Service and Luncheon was held. Luncheon was held at Hoss’s Steak House in Hummelstown. We had 139 people attend.

2016 – Bilingual Lending Library opened / Reading Program.

2016 – Pastor Jody along with selected congregation members began the search for a Director of Health Ministries. Rev. Andrew (Drew) Stockstill was hired and will continue the works of Pastor Silliker.

2018 – Book Club started.

February 2018 – Pastor Jody celebrated the 20th year of her Ordination with a special service and luncheon afterwards.

June 2018 – Pastor Jody retired following the Mission Partner Sunday celebration and luncheon.

June 2018 -- Restoration of the altar window completed after a major gift by Peter and Carolyn Cobb of Atlanta, GA in honor of Rev. Silliker's two decades ministry and in celebration of the call of Rev. Stockstill. The restoration was also made possible through Mid-State Construction, the support of The Historic Harrisburg Association, Bill and Marion Alexander, and Derry Presbyterian Church.