

# The History of St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Williamsport, Pa.

**A**S WE look back over the records of the seventy-five years' history of St. Mark's congregational life, it is to recall with a spirit of thanksgiving,

God's wonderful blessings and mercies bestowed upon us as a Church in the past; and to pray for divine guidance upon ourselves for the duties of the present and of the years to come.

We thank God for His influence, working in the hearts of our church's ancestors', which moved our forefathers to found this pioneer Church of Lutheranism in Williamsport, neither waiting for days of prosperity nor of peace, that this dwelling place of God might be established. Members of St. Mark's

today will gratefully observe the marvelous contrasts of the present and the past; and the strange deliverances out of difficulties and perilous controversies which this church has experienced in her three-quarters of a century. The heroisms and the hopes of St. Mark's beginning and dramatic growth are truly typical of the Christian life, made up of its shadows and sunshine, its crosses and its crowns. St. Mark's in all these years has not failed in her responsibilities to faith and duty. She may change in her members and in her methods, but never in her aim and desire "to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with her God." In so doing, we will in the years to come "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

## THE GENESIS OF ST. MARK'S

To narrate the story of the source, or origin of St. Mark's, your present Pastor has pondered over the venerable handwritings of his predecessors and the musty records of the Church Secretaries as they recorded the facts, forces, and incidents that gave our Church its birth and subsequent life.

Can you imagine yourself back in 1852 in our beloved city of Williamsport? When we compare 1927 with 1852,



The Original St. Mark's Church.  
Built in 1854; Replaced by the  
Present Building in 1896

we marvel at the blessings of the present and the limitations of the time when our Church was in her cradle. Seventy-five years ago, Williamsport was not the charming, busy, thriving city which we are justly proud of today. We must picture her as a typical country town, but without many conveniences that even the smallest hamlet enjoys today. When our ancestors founded this Church, there were no railroads entering Williamsport as we understand railroads today. There was a "strap-road" running between Williamsport and Ralston, which was a combination of horse and engine power; when one failed to function, the other did. This road reached Williamsport in 1839, but the first engine on the Pennsylvania Railroad ("P. & E.") entered Williamsport, December 18, 1854, two years after this congregation of ours began. People then traveled by canal boat and stage. In those days, they had to get along without electric lights, steam heat, telephones, telegraph, street cars, water works, gas, automobiles, phonographs, motion pictures, radios, anesthetics, radium, and even typewriters and a score of other conveniences we possess today. The beloved Rev. Wm. F. Rick described the original setting of our Church in Williamsport as follows, in his historical booklet printed some 32 years ago: "Third Street beginning at Penn and ending at Hepburn Street, was the main business center. Along this street there were a number of general stores where anything might be

purchased; or where the custom of the day was bartering. That means that some people did not purchase, but exchanged produce for articles of various types. For instance, butter and eggs were exchanged for shoes or high top boots; or a woman from the country would exchange a jug of molasses or a bushel of potatoes for an Easter bonnet. Fourth Street boasted nothing more pretentious than simple ordinary one and two-story houses. Where the Elliot building now stands at Pine Street, there might be heard at night the deep bass voice of a frog as in those days this corner was a green-coated pond. (We print herewith a picture of this location in 1863.) On Market Street where our Church stands, log houses predominated. The slightest rain transformed the street into a muddy sea

and it was not uncommon for wagons and other vehicles to be sunk in the mud almost to the axle. The famous canal was crossed near our Church (Canal Street) by a swinging bridge. Sometimes this was closed just at church time Sunday morning



The Busiest Corner in Williamsport as It Was in 1863; Northeast Corner of Fourth and Pine Streets. Now the Elliot Block

and caused some of the parishioners to be embarrassed because of their tardiness in entering the church. Add to this picture just a few scattered houses on the south side, and in place of Rocktown, imagine you see waving fields of grain and virgin forest and you have a picture of Williamsport when our congregation was in swaddling clothes.

In this little town of 1852 there were living a small group of Lutherans who inherited from the fatherlands of Germany and the Scandinavian peninsula, their love for their church. This band of Lutheran Christians were worshipping in union with the German Reformed congregation in a small square one-story grey stone church which stood on the same site that Reno Post now occupies on West Third Street near the jail.

### THE EXODUS OF OUR CHURCH ANCESTORS

The nucleus of twenty-seven brave and stalwart souls who started the present congregation, had a deep desire to move out from the little German Reformed Church, because they felt the need of worshipping in the English language, and this caused the exodus of this handful of English Lutheran pioneers and eventually through them, the establishment of the "English Evangelical Lutheran Church of Williamsport, Pa." The Rev. Henry Ziegler, the first



X THE GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH IN THE 1889 FLOOD.  
This Church is Now Known as Reno Post. Here is Where  
St. Mark's Began in 1852

Pastor, says the following, which we find in his handwritten comment in an old faded diary: "The English Evangelical Lutheran Church of Williamsport, Pa., was organized, March 7th, A. D. 1852, by adopting a creed of essentials and a form of government of discipline."

An interesting item in this connection is as follows: "The rupture with the German Reformed congregation came over the agreement in the use of the church building. The Germans wanted half of all the appointments as well at night as during the day. The Lutherans offered Sab-

bath forenoon for German preaching and the English every Sabbath afternoon and night. It was found no amicable agreement could be reached, so there was a parting of the ways." A group of German Lutheran people remained with the German Reformed Church and the English Lutherans resolved to build their own house of worship, but remained at the Reformed Church until the new building was ready.

### "THE ENGLISH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN" CHURCH

The above was the original title of our Church as our forefathers purchased lot No. 27 on Market Street for \$425.00. This lot is the one just opposite to our Church, at the corner of Market and Jefferson Streets. Later, lot No. 27 was exchanged for lot No. 25 described as on "Market Street, north end next to alley," where the present church now stands. The corner-stone was laid October 7th, 1854. The Rev. Winecoff, of Lewisburg, Pa., preached the sermon in the Second Presbyterian Church. The congregation numbered thirty people at this time. The Rev. Joseph Welker was now Pastor, having assumed his pastoral duties on May 30th, 1852. The first Pastor, the Rev.

Ziegler, resigned to become a professor of the Missionary Institute at Selinsgrove, Pa. (now Susquehanna University.)

### "THE FEMALE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY"

The Cotta Society of our present congregation will be happy to know that as early as Pastor Welker's administration, that is, in 1853, the forerunners of Cotta were busy in giving needed support to the Church. This organization was called "The Female Industrial Society." We note upon investigation that the Female Industrial Society paid \$10.00 towards the purchase of the famous lot No. 27.

And in the same year, 1853, this group of hard working women paid off a note of \$25.00 held against the Church and also paid \$1.00 on the expense of papering the parsonage. This Female Industrial Society later became the "Mite Society" and finally took the name of the Cotta Society, named after Madame Cotta, who so wonderfully helped Luther towards his education and finally into the ministry of the gospel. The Female Industrial Society in spirit is still actively engaged in doing the same helpful work for St. Mark's, but in a superlatively bigger way today by the members of their successors, the Cotta Society.

### THE LITTLE CHURCH BEGINS TO GROW

At the close of Pastor Welker's administration, the congregation had grown from 30 to an enrollment of 70 members. From the financial records of the Treasurer, though the ink has almost faded, we read that in 1857, \$24.88 was the total cash income for current expenses and that same year the congregation meeting was held in which the following business was transacted: First, the reading the names of the church members and examining into their standing as such. Second, the settlement with the Treasurer, Mr. S. Weise, was produced. The Church owed the Treasurer an amount, not stated. Third, the Church music was taken into consideration and a committee of two was appointed to make arrangements to have better singing in the church. Fourth, the minister's salary was considered, which thus far, was always raised with great difficulty. How to live was a matter of great distress for the Pastor and family. At the close of Rev. Welker's local ministry, a donation was made to the amount of \$210.00 in addition to meat, potatoes, apples, and various sundries. Rev. Welker resigned in 1856 and was followed by Rev. J. F. Fahs.

### "LET ALL THINGS BE DONE DECENTLY AND IN ORDER"

Pastor Fahs had been blessed with the privilege of being theologically trained by the celebrated Lutheran divine, the

Rev. Dr. Joseph Seiss, one of the most outstanding Lutheran preachers in America, even to this day. With this training in mind, the new Pastor began his ministry by insisting upon strict decorum and orderliness in the conduct of the affairs of the church. The first move was to install appropriate churchly equipment in the chancel. He insisted upon regularity of Lutheran customs and the promotion of a more solemn ecclesiastical atmosphere in the little church. Here is a page from the Council minutes of 1858:

"The Council thought it proper that we should have an altar to be erected in front of the pulpit and Brother Sneighder was given full power to dispose of the table in front of the pulpit and to erect an altar providing it to be done for the price of the table. The Council then thought it proper that the gas lights in the pulpit should be moved and some seats fixed for the quier (choir) and the council. The Pastor appointed a committee to have those things attended to and fixed the coming week."

Another item which shows the spirit of the new Pastor reads as follows:

"The Council thought it proper for to see the work of the Lord to prosper among us, that we create a missionary feeling amongst us and appointed the last Wednesday in every month for a missionary meeting and a collection to be taken up for and to this cause. One member of the Council did not attend to the duties of his office and be-



cause he did not take a greater interest in the work of the Lord, the church Council considered his seat vacant in the Council."

The author of this historical sketch was somewhat amused as he read of four successive Council meetings having as their chief theme of discussion, the sexton of the church. After much debate the Council adopted the following resolution:

"In order to the better management of the regulations of the English Evangelical Lutheran Church of Williamsport, the duties of the sexton shall be as follows: He shall open and close the house, ring the bell, light and extinguish the lights, make fires, stow away fuel and see that none be wasted. Sweep and dust off the church every week and keep clean of dust and cobwebs. Sweep and dust off lecture room for Wednesday evenings and for Sunday school. Keep pavement clean of grass between the bricks and all other obstructions and nuisances. Wash church and basement once a year. During service, he is to take the seat in the back part of the Church to turn off and on gas, and keep order, and attend to all other duties usually devolving on his office and for the faithful discharge of all these duties he shall receive the sum of (not given) per month and for neglecting any of the above duties, he shall forfeit the amount for which the same shall have cost to have the same done."

## THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE OLDEN DAYS

One duty of the sexton as referred to above, namely, to sit in the rear of the church and "keep order" of course refers to the discipline of the young people of that day in the House of God. It is a noteworthy fact in studying the history of the Church that the same depressing judgments were passed upon young life in those olden days which we are in the habit of hearing now. From our reading of an old sermon, written in the time of Pastor Fahs, it seems to a certain class of mind, even then, that their own age appeared as an age of peculiar degeneracy, on the part, particularly, of the young people. Many persons feel the same way now and the gossip of 70 years ago might also be taken as the talk of today. One characteristic statement of a sermon in the early days of St. Mark's is as follows. "I tremble to think what will become of the glorious work we have done when we are gathered with our fathers. I fear grace and blessing will die with the present generation. We grow worldly everywhere; everyone for himself; little care for the public good; the golden age is past." This was the conception of the times and the style of preaching particularly on young life, in the days of 1856-1863.

### THE GERMAN AND ENGLISH LUTHERANS WORSHIP TOGETHER

In 1863 the Rev. F. C. H. Lampe, of Pottsville, Pa., was called to become the Pastor of the joint congregation, composed of the English Lutheran Church and the now Immanuel German Lutheran Church. This pastorate lasted one year. The arrangement of having the same Pastor look after both congregations, preaching in both languages, went along in an amicable way, but inasmuch as the English group now numbered 120 members, and the German flock had grown to 130 members, they mutually agreed to found their own churches again. The English Lutheran Church therefore called the Rev. A. R. Horne, of Turbotville, Pa., who proved himself a veritable Moses in leading this moving congregational army through one of the most turbulent eras of difficulty, and a wilderness of trial in the 75 years of St. Mark's history.

### WAR, FLOOD AND SEPARATIONS

The new Pastor, Dr. Horne, in his own handwriting, says: "I recall that when I came to Williamsport to become Pastor of what was then called the "Market St. Church," April 15, 1865, that President Lincoln had been assassinated the evening before. All was sad and gloomy



THE WHITE STEEPLE OF ST. MARK'S TOWERED OVER HER  
SURROUNDINGS IN 1863

then. My ardor was greatly cooled. The terrible war was just now drawing to a close. Many of the dead and wounded were brought home and Williamsport, St. Mark's not excepted, saw many a sad sight."

On March 17th, 1865, the first big flood of the three floods Williamsport has endured, almost submerged the town and the church, and the spirit of this little congregation was very much minimized. We print in this little booklet a picture taken of this flood, showing very clearly the tower of old St. Mark's in the distance. Not only war

and flood tried the struggling church but loss of membership followed as three groups of members separated themselves from the home congregation. The formal establishment of the German Immanuel Lutheran Church took place on April 1st, 1868, when instead of 130 members leaving St. Mark's, as was the original plan, subsequent records show that 230 members of the German training and inclination, instituted the German church as cited above.

Rev. Horne had still another separation to face and certainly made the very best of the situation. At this time there were a handful of St. Mark's people living on the South Side, which had grown to be a thriving, teeming little borough. This group of people started a mission in the Rocktown schoolhouse. Today this infant daughter of St. Mark's has grown into the large congregation known as Messiah's, over which the Rev. R. G. Bannen, D.D., has been the beloved and faithful Pastor for over thirty-five years. This church was dedicated in 1869 by the first Pastor, Rev. J. G. Griffith.

A third migration from the mother English church took place when a number of the younger and aggressive members of the church desired to continue their affiliation with the General Synod of the Lutheran Church, rather than the

General Council, the more conservative wing of the Church. This division of St. Mark's eventually has grown into St. Paul's Church of our city, which now worships in their beautiful and splendidly appointed sanctuary at Fourth and Center Streets, under the able pastoral care of the Rev. Geo. W. Nicely, D.D. From a clipping taken from a church paper published at Selinsgrove in 1870, we may read the following regarding the separation of St. Paul's congregation from the English Evangelical Lutheran Church (St. Mark's):

"It seems that a few weeks ago, the English Lutheran Congregation, Rev. A. R. Horne, Pastor, voted to connect themselves with the Synod of Pennsylvania (now the Ministerium of Pennsylvania.) We believe in the doctrines of the election and affinity, and therefore we have no objection to congregations connecting themselves with any Synod with which they sympathize doctrinally and practically. Why should a congregation remain in the General Synod if they sympathize with the General Council? And why should a congregation remain in a General Council when they are doctrinally and practically allied to the General Synod?

"In the case of the congregation at Williamsport, however, the union with the Pennsylvania Synod seems to be by no means unanimous. A large portion of the Congregation intends to withdraw and organize themselves into a



separate congregation to remain in connection with the General Synod. (50 members withdrew.)

"We understand that those going out are principally the younger and zealous portion of the membership and they are entering upon the work with determination and energy. They have secured a lot for a church building in the most central and eligible part of the city which is to cost \$6,000.00. On this lot they intend erecting a frame chapel 80 feet long by 10 feet wide which can afterwards be moved back to give place for a large and more substantial building. (This is the location of the old church on William Street, in the rear of the Northern Central Trust Company. This church was sold two years ago to the bank and the congregation moved to the new church as above mentioned.)

"We are glad to hear the Pastor, Rev. A. R. Horne, express himself favorably to this new movement. He thinks there is abundant room for two English Lutheran Churches in Williamsport and he says that the members who remain in the old church will help the organization to build their new church. This is certainly the right spirit and the right quality on church extension. May it everywhere be imitated."

We rejoice today in the marvelous growth of St. Paul's and the fine friendly relationship that exists between these mother and grown-up daughter congregations. Pastor Horne resigned the pastorate of St. Mark's in 1871 to become the President of the Kutztown Normal School.

### THE LONGEST PASTORATE AT ST. MARK'S

The Rev. William H. Rickert, who had recently graduated from the Theological Seminary of the Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, succeeded the Rev. Mr. Horne as Pastor of St. Mark's in 1871. Now begins the longest ministerial service in our congregation's entire history. Rev. Rickert is remembered by many today and by the spirit of his writings, as a pastor of the most lovable and sympathetic type. He it was who enriched the beautiful service of our church by introducing the Pastoral Robe, which certainly provokes reverence on the part of the congregation as the minister conducts worship. Space will not permit us to go into detail, but the facts are on record to show that our Church developed in various ways, church membership, Sunday School, and in the young peoples' activities. Pastor Rickert resigned in 1886 after a pastorate of 15 years, with the deep respect and genuine appreciation of a united people.

### FROM NOVA SCOTIA TO WILLIAMSPORT

On December 1st, 1886, the Rev. A. L. Yount, D.D., arrived from Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, to take charge of this church as Pastor. A gathering of the congregation in the lecture room and parsonage, welcomed the new minister

and his family, the infant of which became the present Pastor of the Church. Rev. Yount was installed by the Rev. David Hinkle, D.D., on Sunday morning, December 19th, 1886. A number of historical items may be cited. On January 23d, 1887, we read this note:

"This morning the church took fire over one of the heaters and narrowly escaped destruction. Insurance covered the damages, which amounted to more than \$200.00."

A memorandum dated December, 1887, says:

"The old pulpit, a large and somewhat unsightly structure was removed and a new one was substituted, more modern in convenience and style. The whole chancel was changed. During the last month, the ladies of the society (Cotta) procured new and beautiful coverings for the chancel furniture. All of these improvements cost about \$100.00. A partition of sash doors was also erected in the Sunday School room at a cost of about \$120.00.

"After previous arrangement, and advertisement, on April 1st, 1888, an Easter Offering was taken up in the Church amounting to \$800.00 which will liquidate the entire indebtedness of the congregation at the present time. Pastor Yount bought 17 yards of silk for a gown to be worn during the services in the church, paying the sum of \$11.33 which money had been contributed by three friends of the church." (A similar gown today bought for the Pastor, cost \$100.00.)



"THE BOOM" IN THE 80'S WHEN WILLIAMSPORT WAS CALLED THE "LUMBER CITY"

### THE FLOOD OF '89

On June 1st, 1889, a destructive flood inundated the greater part of our city, causing great loss of property and some loss of life. Our Church shared in the ruin, there having been 7 feet 10 inches of water in the basement. The libraries of Pastor Yount and the Sunday School were almost completely ruined. The buildings (church and parsonage) and furniture were damaged to a big extent. Many of the members were great sufferers by this flood. The parsonage, which was the house first door south of the church in which the sexton now lives, had 6 feet 8 inches of water in it, and it was necessary to move the family out of the upper windows into row boats and thence to safety.

## THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, which we are very happy to note, is about to erect a large splendidly designed church in the near future, is a child of St. Mark's, and began during the administration of Rev. Yount. The Mite Society volunteered as teachers for the Sunday School which emerged into the congregation of the Redeemer. The Pastor of St. Mark's preached for this struggling little mission on Sunday afternoons until they could get properly started. The names of Mrs. Godfrey Hess, Mrs. Henry Metzger, Mrs. Adolph Niemeyer, and Mr. C. A. Shuman will ever be linked with the founding of the Redeemer Lutheran Church on Sherman Street.

A congregational paper was started at this time in St. Mark's under the title of "The Church Chronicle," and another fact well to remember is that in 1892 the name of our Church was changed from the English Evangelical Lutheran Church of Williamsport, Pa., to St. Mark's English Ev. Lutheran Church of Williamsport, Pa. The names of the Trustees affixed to the title of the said corporation are as follows: Samuel S. Kurtz, Adolph Niemeyer, Fred K. Kimmerer.

Throughout this historical sketch, we have referred to our Church as St. Mark's, but in fact the correct name was the English Evangelical Lutheran Church until 1892, when the name was changed as before stated.

## OUR VENERABLE PASTOR

On the second Sunday in March, 1892, Rev. George G. Kunkle, of Easton, Pa., became pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. During his one year term of office, a portion of the partition of the Sunday School room was removed in order to make more room for the growing Bible School. In June, 1893, while the Pastor was absent attending the meetings of Synod, the steeple was struck by lightning and slightly damaged.

It will be interesting to members of St. Mark's today, to know that Rev. Kunkle is the oldest living former Pastor and we expect to have him present during the seventy-fifth anniversary. On July 21st, 1927, your present Pastor received the following letter from Rev. Kunkle:

Kresgeville, Pa., July 21, 1927.

"My Dear Dr. Yount:

"Yours of the 18th inst. was received yesterday. It recalls to my mind many pleasant occurrences. Your father installed me as his successor and introduced me in his inimitable way to many of St. Mark's members back in 1892. God willing, I shall be with you on October 11th and do my very best to make the occasion what you all desire it to be. By that time, I shall have entered my 81st year.

Very gratefully yours,

(Signed) GEO. G. KUNKLE."

### NEW CHURCH BUILDING

The floods of '65 and '89 may have checked temporarily the progress of old St. Mark's as we have before cited in this little sketch, but the flood of 1894, the last of the great floods of Williamsport, did not dishearten the very much alive congregation.

A panic had also gripped the city and the country in 1894 but in spite of flood and panic the congregation decided to build a new church. The time and need brought forward the man to build this new edifice, the Rev. Wm. F. Rick, just graduating from Mt. Airy Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa., was called as Pastor. His installation took place in August, 1893. Rev. T. B. Roth, D.D., and Rev. Frank Klingensmith conducted the service. The new church corner-stone was laid in September of 1895 and the dedication of the Church in which we now worship, took place on October 14th, 1896.

This building remained very much as Pastor Rick dedicated it until 1921 when under the present administration, it was re-decorated; new chancel furniture installed; the lighting fixtures replaced by more modern ones and various other innovations to meet the need of the times.

Pastor Rick will always be remembered as an impressive preacher, the outstanding orator of his day in most public

gatherings of Williamsport. This congregation will always connect his name as the builder of this edifice and the man who gave the present congregation much of its zeal and enthusiasm. In a broader way, Rev. Rick will be remembered as a chaplain who served our country during the Spanish-American War during 1898, and died of typhoid fever as a result of this sacrifice for his country. His church, his comrades, and the town, memorialized him by the erection of a granite cross which may be seen today in yonder Wildwood Cemetery. The local chapter of Spanish-American War Veterans has honored this Pastor of St. Mark's by calling their organization by his name, the William F. Rick Camp, of Spanish-American War Veterans.

### THE GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

The Rev. Edwin Lunn Miller became Pastor of St. Mark's in 1898. He was called from St. Mark's Church of South Bethlehem, Pa., to succeed the Rev. Wm. F. Rick. Pastor Miller had the honor of conducting the fiftieth anniversary of this congregation's history during the week beginning March 9th, 1902. A golden jubilee booklet was published in honor of this event. The parish records bear testimony to the healthy condition of the church. "Annual year books" were published showing the names of members in good and active standing.

Rev. Miller stressed the promptness of the church in paying local obligations and also gave them a broader vision of the church at large in helping to finance the various causes of the Lutheran Church in America and abroad. We read in Pastor Miller's own words, the following policy: "We owe a debt to missions, education and charity which must not be overlooked."

Today our congregation is carrying out this splendid teaching of Rev. Miller, as our records show that one-third of our entire income is annually devoted to the benevolent causes of the church and charity beyond our own parish limits.

Rev. Miller resigned in 1903 to become the pastor of St. Mark's Church of Boston, Mass., where he is still serving, a faithful pastorate of 24 years.

#### "1903-1911"

In faraway Iceland was born the next leader of this Church of our fathers. The Rev. Stephen Paulson became the Pastor of St. Mark's on May 15th, 1903. He was Pastor of said Church for eight and one-half years, this being the second longest pastorate in the history of this church. His valued services are still so fresh and vital in the pulse of the present congregation that to enumerate

them would be superfluous. The present substantial status of the personnel of the church roll can be attributed very much to his zeal and untiring efforts, for upon reference to the members received during his ministry, we note the commendable addition of 419 new members added to the congregational roster.

As a testimony to Dr. Paulson's talents, culture, Biblical and theological training and scholarship, we want to mention his authorship of weekly sermons appearing in "GRIT" since 1905, and which are now being read all over this country.

It is a pleasure and privilege for St. Mark's people to meet and greet this beloved former Pastor and his wife who was baptized and confirmed at St. Mark's, as they visit their former church and many friends in Williamsport from year to year.

#### THE DORCAS SOCIETY

One phase of the ministry of Rev. Paulson at St. Mark's is visualized every Sunday in our present church in the work of a certain organization within the congregation, namely the Dorcas Society. This society was organized in 1905 under the direction of this Pastor. It was then a group of 12 younger women of the church. The society has now grown to a membership of 106. The name "Dorcas"



comes from the original young woman disciple mentioned in Acts 9:36, "Dorcas, this woman was full of good works and alms deeds which she did." The reference is to "a certain disciple at Joppa" of New Testament days.

The work of Dorcas was to sew for the poor and help the needy. The deeds of charity which she did were done quietly but effectively. Dorcas also helped to establish the early Christian church. From her example, the Dorcas Society of our church deserved much commendation for doing a similar work. The church in which we worship Sunday after Sunday, has its altar and chancel tenderly cared for by the members of this society. The beautiful altar and pulpit hangings are changed according to color to suit the seasons of the year. Flowers are placed in the altar vases by the hands of these young women and after service they are delivered to the sick of the congregation. The happy, social, congenial atmosphere that prevails among the younger element of the church may be attributed to the spirit of Dorcas. A motto in the life of Dorcas of the New Testament might be put in these words, "Honor imposes obligations" or "She could not profess Christianity unless she practiced it." Her purpose therefore, was to be doing something noble and good in the service of Jesus Christ.

This is the underlying aim of the Dorcas Society as well as the other organizations of our church.

After a very successful pastorate here, Dr. Paulson resigned in 1911 to accept a call to St. Michael's Lutheran Church of Germantown, Pa., and later became Pastor of St. Luke's Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., where he is now ministering.

### MY BELOVED PREDECESSOR

During the student days of the present Pastor of this Church and the author of this historical sketch, we learned to deeply admire the late pastor of this congregation. During those days, it was our privilege to supply the pulpit at vacation times and make our temporary home in the apartments of the Pastor. The impress of that contact is still fresh and beautiful in our memory. To become his successor was indeed a signal blessing and honor.

The Rev. Henry Douglas Spaeth, son of the beloved nationally known Lutheran theologian and teacher of Lutheran pastors, the Rev. Dr. Philip Adolph Spaeth, D.D., LL.D., and Maria Duncan Spaeth, became Pastor of St. Mark's in 1912. He came to us from our neighboring college town of Selinsgrove, where he was Pastor of the First Lutheran Church and Professor of Homiletics in Susquehanna University. Certainly conspicuous among the

preachers who have filled the pulpit of St. Mark's during these seventy-five years, there stands out in bold relief, the name of Dr. Spaeth. He was a brilliant, gifted, eloquent, scholarly sermonizer and impressive expounder of the gospel. He was an ardent student of church music and his influence in this important phase of worship is still felt in the singing of our hymns and in the rendition of our liturgy. Dr. Spaeth's memory remains in the hearts of the congregation as one of the most valuable treasures we possess.

To take care of the growing activities of the various societies of the church, Dr. Spaeth proposed the purchase of the Thompson property, just north of the church, to be converted into a parish house.

This was done and completely paid for during his administration. This added building provided the home for the Pastor on the second and third floors and on the first floor a meeting place for missionary, Cotta, Dorcas, and the Brotherhood. The Pastor also had his office here and conducted weddings, and other services of a pastoral character. The parish house has recently been remodeled, various partition walls taken out, and new kitchen equipment installed adding new floors and new paper and paint, and it is now splendidly appointed for its intended purposes.

## THE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The missionary work of St. Mark's was given a new and bigger impetus and scope during Dr. Spaeth's pastorate. The Pastor and his devoted wife were the factors in reforming and enthusing the present active Women's Missionary Society. This society follows a program of study, education and action. During the year an interesting book of a missionary nature is carefully reviewed by the members. The effort is made to have each member take some personal part in the meetings. The various kinds of missionary work are presented and through the moneys received by this organization, all departments of the great missionary work of the Lutheran Church being done in America and foreign lands, are helped, through this society. A big annual missionary service is held in our church, usually on the first Sunday after Thanksgiving. This is called the "Thank Offering" service. At this time, the missionary work is brought very graphically and vitally before the members of the congregation. A prominent speaker is usually invited to bring the message for the occasion. In recent years, this society has had two notable speakers of national importance. The Chaplain of President Coolidge's yacht, the Mayflower, presented his lecture entitled, "Ring the Doorbells of Europe," given before a