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History of Hopeful Evangelical Lutheran Church

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by

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HISTORY OF HOPEFUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, FLORENCE, KY.

Written by Rev. Wilford C. Butt for the 150th Anniversary of Hopeful Church. June 10-17, 1956.

Among the earliest of the German colonists who came to the United States were a few Alsatians and Palatinates who had started to Pennsylvania and who after many hardships during their voyage, had been purchased by Governor Spotts Wood and sent by him to his settlement on the Rappahannock River in Virginia, which they called Germanna. These were recruited by a small band of Palatinates from North Carolina who had escaped massacres there. These families were Protestant and had left their native land because they were required to deny their faith. They founded a church at Germanna which they called Hopeful Church as expressive of their feelings that the faith they confessed should be preserved.

Later, about 1727, John Casper Stoever, Sr., became their pastor, and by him a second church was built some distance from Germanna, and this church, which was called Hebron, gradually absorbed all the German strength.

Rev. Paul Henkel became pastor in 1784. He was followed by Rev. William Carpenter, who became pastor in 1787.

Rev. William Carpenter, while pastor at the Hebron Lutheran Church, Madison, Virginia, made a journey to Kentucky in 1804. As several families from Virginia moved here the year afterward, it can very well be assumed that he came to Kentucky on a tour of investigation, and that those who came twelve months later came with his approval and likely at his suggestion.

On October 8, 1805, the following men and women with their families left Madison, Virginia: George Rouse, Elizabeth Rouse, John House, Milly House, Frederick Zimmerman, Ephraim Tanner, Susanna Tanner, John Rouse, Nancy Rouse, and Elizabeth Hoffman. They arrived in Boone County, November 25, 1805.

They gathered with their great Conestoga wagons on the banks of the Rapidan, and first went to New Market, Virginia. Thence they traveled down the Shenandoah valley until they came to the Holston river and they followed up that river until they struck the path that Daniel Boone had made through the forest from North Carolina to Lexington, Ky. From Lexington they took the ridge route to Kennedy's Ferry (Covington).

The greater part of the country was then a perfect wilderness. Those families, however, were furnished with cabins, with the exception of George Rouse, who pitched his tent in the dense forest, not far from where Hopeful Church now stands. Burlington, the county seat of Boone County, consisted of a few houses, a log court house, and a log jail. Florence had no existence. Where Covington is now situated, there was a farm and orchard. Cincinnati consisted of two brick and two frame houses with a number of log cabins.

Here amid the beech forests, these hardy pioneers settled.

The first religious meeting was held at George Rouse's at the close of 1805, or at the beginning of 1806. In these religious meetings, after a suitable hymn, one of the brethren would offer prayer, after which Ephraim Tanner would read a sermon, selected from Rev. Schubert's sermons. The meeting would be concluded with prayer and singing. These services were conducted in the German language.

When Ephraim Tanner wrote Father Carpenter at Madison, Va., he sent them a constitution, and advised them to organize a congregation, which they did January 6, 1806.

The English translation reads: "We, the undersigned, living in Boone County, State of Kentucky, members of the Evangelical Lutheran and Evangelical Reformed Church, unite in the following articles of agreement for our government:

1. "We will unite in the establishment of public worship in our midst, according to the Protestant faith, and by God's help we will continually uphold it.

2. "We will unite in the erection of a small house, which shall be regarded as a union house of worship, in which we will unitedly worship God.

3. "One of us, for whom it is most convenient, shall give an acre of ground upon which said house shall be built. And this acre of ground, with all that shall be built thereon, or that pertains to it, shall forever belong to this united congregation and their successors; so that he who gives it shall not have the power to sell it to any other person.

4. "To prevent discord and offenses, no one shall be permitted to conduct public worship in the house owned by us, unless he is a regular Lutheran or Reformed minister.

5. "We will assemble ourselves every Sabbath or as often as circumstances will permit, and by reading a sermon and with singing and prayer we will strengthen one another when we have no pastor.

6. "We will unite in inviting a worthy minister at least once a year, or oftener if possible, to preach the Word of God to us, according to the foundation of the prophets and apostles, and administer the holy sacraments; for which we will reward him according to our ability.

7. "It shall be the duty of each one belonging to this congregation to lead an orderly, Christian and virtuous life; to abstain from all gross sins, such as cursing, swearing, card-playing drunkenness, and all such ungodly actions.

8. "Should any one be guilty of any of the above sins, which may God in his mercy prevent, then the remaining brethren shall have the power and it shall be their duty to deal with him according to the directions of our Savior: Matt. 28:15-17.

"The above articles shall remain unchanged until all the members, or at least a majority of them, shall deem it necessary to alter or amend them.

"Adopted on the 6th day of January, 1806.

George Rouse	Ephraim Tanner
John Rouse	John House
Fred Zimmerman	Michael Rouse
John Beemon	Jacob Rouse
Daniel Beemon	Simeon Tanner

George Rouse gave an acre of ground on which to build a church, and accordingly in 1807 they built a cabin church. "It was a cabin church in reality built of unhewn logs. The roof and door were made of clapboards; the floor with puncheons, and the seats were made of saplings. An opening was made at each end by sawing out some logs for windows. These were always open, that is, without sash or lights. They had neither stove nor fireplace, and yet they met for worship during the winter."

The Tanner family was one of the families that had a large place in the pioneer development of the church; and Ephraim Tanner and his descendants have wielded a large part of that great influence. His wife, Mrs. Susannah Tanner, was a woman of character and influence. She was the mother of fourteen children, who became a large and growing influence in the community and who have many descendants living today.

From the first it was resolved that they would have a regular minister at least once a year to administer the sacraments, and Rev. William Carpenter of Madison, Virginia, came here at least twice for that purpose. In October, 1813, he moved here and became their first regular pastor.

Born in Virginia he had served as a soldier during the Revolutionary War.

He was a man of good education and worthy character. There must have been much of the soldier militant in his appearance as he wore knee breeches and gold buckles as long as he lived. He was a man of means, but very kind to the poor, and the very soul of honor. At one time, going to his crib, he discovered a neighbor stealing corn. When he saw the preacher coming, he was greatly frightened and began to empty his sack in a hurry. "Hold on! Hold on!" cried the parson, waving his cane at the frightened neighbor. "You surely would not come here for corn unless you needed it. Now fill your sack and go along, and when you need corn again, come and ask me for it, and don't try to steal it."

The baptism of Abraham Beemon on July 31, 1814, is the first recorded baptism at Hopeful.

The first recorded communion was held on "Holy Whitsunday, 1814", with 33 persons receiving Holy Communion.

At the congregational meeting held January 6, 1815, a new and much longer constitution was proposed and adopted. It breathes throughout a spirit of devotion and piety and deep and abiding loyalty to the Lutheran church. It was written in the German language.

The new constitution said some very plain things about the duties of members, as for instance the following: "He must model his life according to the Christian ordinances, and if he deviates therefrom, he must be cheerfully corrected. Everyone must contribute according to his means as God has blessed him, whether it be much or little for the maintaining and carrying forward of God's work in the congregation. Through the mercy of God, we should avoid all gross sins and vices, such as cursing and swearing, lying and cheating, carnal sins, fornication and adultery, drunkenness, immoral plays, gambling, obscenity, horse-racing, as also hatred, enmity, strife against neighbors, and all other sins and vices, forbidden in the word of God, and offensive to a true Christian; and he shall lead a consistent, pious, industrious, Christian life, through which the doctrine and church of Jesus Christ will become beautified and adorned."

On the 6th of January, 1823, at a congregational meeting held at the house of Jacob Rouse, the question relative to the building of a new church was taken up for consideration. When Father Carpenter spoke upon this subject, he became so deeply affected, that he gave vent to his feelings, burst into tears and said: "Alle bauen gute Haeuser und lassen Gott in der Huette wohnen!" "All build good houses and let God live in the tent." This had such an effect upon the brethren, that they at once resolved to build a new church. Therefore, in the summer of 1823, a log church was built. It was 25 by 25 feet in the old style with an end gallery and a high pulpit.

Stress was laid by the Church upon catechization, which was conducted in both German and English, and as English catechisms could not conveniently be secured, they had some printed in Cincinnati which cost twenty cents apiece.

On July 10, 1832, Father Carpenter wrote a letter to the Rev. Jacob Crigler of Berlin,Pennsylvania urging him to come and take charge of the congregation.

After the death of Father Carpenter on February 18, 1833, the church was vacant for about fourteen months. The Rev. Jacob Crigler moved here from Berlin, Pa., in April, 1834. Father Crigler was first married to Lydia Utz who at her death left him with two children. Father Crigler was married a second time September 20, 1808, to Nellie Tanner, to whom were born twelve children.

After the arrival of Father Crigler, the first communion was celebrated October 26, 1834, at which time there was a total of sixty-nine communicants, twelve of them being confirmed that day. The record is made for the first time in English and at the next annual meeting, January 6, 1836, the minutes are recorded in English, though it is stated that the discipline was read in German.

Beginning Saturday, October 11, 1834, a Convention for Lutheran Churches in the West was held in Jeffersontown, Ky. Rev. Jacob Crigler preached at least three times during the Convention, and was elected Chairman of the Convention.

In October, 1835, the Synod of the West was organized in Louisville, Ky., composed of congregations in Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. Jacob Crigler was elected President of the Synod.

The next session of the Synod of the West was held here in Hopeful Church beginning October 2, 1836. On the day previous were held the preparatory services at which time the Rev. Ezra Keller, Missionary from East, Pennsylvania, and later President of Wittenberg College, preached in the English language, upon Revelations 3:16. He was followed in the German language by the Rev. Mr. Schwartz, who preached from Romans 8:10-17.

The Rev. Daniel Scherer, of Hillsborough, Illinois, with his delegate had set out to reach Hopeful Church, but after riding upwards of a hundred miles were compelled to return home on account of the great rains, and the rivers becoming impassable.

An interesting Ministerial character at the Synod of the West conventions at Louisville and Hopeful was the Rev. John J. Lehmanowsky from Rush County, Indiana. The Rev. Lehmanowsky had become a Lutheran minister at the age of 60 years. A native Polish Jew, he had served as a Colonel in the French Army under Napoleon Bonaparte in all of his campaigns except one. After having many thrilling experiences in the military campaigns that culminated with the final defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, Colonel Lehmanowsky along with Marshal Ney, his superior officer, had been sentenced to be executed. But he escaped from prison and came to the United States.

While Pastor of the Corydon, Indiana, Lutheran Parish the writer was able to locate the original minutes of the Synod of the West in the home of the granddaughter of the Rev. Lehmanowsky near Corydon, Indiana. He found the bound minutes of the Preliminary Convention at Jeffersontown, Ky. and of the conventions of the Synod held at Louisville and at Hopeful in very good condition. They were written in the fine penmanship of the Secretary of the Synod, the Rev. William Jenkins of Thompson Creek Lutheran Parish, Bedford, Tennessee. The Rev. John J. Lehmanowsky had been the last President of the Synod of the West; and they had been kept in the possession of his family for all these years.

In addition to being the first president of the Synod of the West and an active and useful member of that body for nine years, Father Crigler was president of the Missionary Society of the Synod in 1841 when it was resolved in connection with the English Lutheran Synod of Ohio to help support the Rev. Abraham Reck as a missionary in Cincinnati.

Father Crigler was a faithful, active, and progressive pastor, and he was heartily in favor of English services, Sunday Schools, Missionary activity, Temperance, and Sabbath observance.

Among the minutes of the annual meeting, January 6, 1836, we find: "Resolved, that Ben, black boy, be employed to open the doors and windows of the meeting house, make the fires, fetch the water, sweep the house, etc., and etc., and that he receive two dollars a year for his services." The next year A. F. Crigler was sexton for the same amount - the last in the old church.

At a special congregational meeting on March 4, 1837, it was decided to build a new church, the walls to be of brick, size 35 x 50 feet. The bricks were made near the church, and beside the work donated, the treasurer says in his final report that he paid out altogether in money $1587.28½.

Father Crigler closed his labors as pastor of the charge in February, 1842. The next year, in October, 1843, the Synod of the West met again in Hopeful Church.

Father Crigler had taken an active part in the organization of the Miami Synod at Xenia, Ohio, in October, 1844, being chairman of the called convention. About that time he retired to his farm near Florence, where he lived until July 14, 1847.

Quite a number of Father Crigler's descendants became active and useful members of the different churches of the County.

The Rev. John Surface succeeded Father Crigler at Hopeful. Born in Shenandoah County, Virginia, he moved with his parents when a boy of five years to Warren County, Ohio, which was his home the rest of his life, though in later years he served churches in various localities, being pastor in Boone County for nine years and six months.

Rev. John Surface was very active in gathering funds for the Building Fund at Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio. We have here among old papers a receipt dated April 17, 1847, received by John Surface and signed by Rev. Ezra Keller, first president of Wittenberg College. It reads as follows: "Received April 17, 1847, from Rev. John Surface, Seventy-two dollars for the Building Fund of Wittenberg College, collected in his congregations. Ezra Keller". Other receipts we have are for money received from Rev. John Surface for the Building Fund of Wittenberg College dated: two in 1850, and one in 1851 signed by Mr. Snyder, Treasurer of Wittenberg College.

The descendants of Father Surface continued to live in Ohio except one of his sons, Noah Surface, who came to Boone County in 1845 and was married to Miss Mary Tanner in 1845. He was elected chairman of the annual meeting at Hopeful in 1848, when only 22 years old. He was a great leader in Sunday School work, organizing and carrying on schools at Union and Walton. He labored in both the Hopeful and Ebenezer Lutheran churches. Like Father Carpenter and Father Crigler, Father Surface has a number of descendants here in Boone County.

After Father Surface resigned the charge was vacant until March, 1852. Rev. Daniel Sumners, then a student at Wittenberg College, supplied the congregation until it became united enough to elect a pastor. During his supply work he had received an ad interim license to administer the sacraments.

No one associated with the work of Hopeful Church has ever been more widely known or more highly esteemed than "Uncle Ben" Tanner, as he was familiarly called, who died February 27, 1875. He was by common consent acknowledged to be a model Christian. He was for a long time an official, superintended the Sunday School, led the prayer meeting and took an active part in all the work of the Church.

In March, 1852, Rev. David Harbaugh became pastor of Hopeful. On his first communion on May 9 seventy-two communed. June 12th he organized a class of catechumens when twenty-nine gave in their names.

He began his first protracted meeting at Hopeful November 12th, and continued until December 6th, 1852, during which time it is said that the members of the church were greatly revived, back-sliders reclaimed, and many sinners converted to God. The order was as a rule exceedingly good. But on one occasion a young man was present who did not behave very well. Brother Harbaugh endured it for a little while and then remarked: "I never correct any one for misbehaving in church, because I read of a minister who did and he was told after the service that he had reproved an idiot. I am afraid that if I correct any one, I will do the same thing; for no one but an idiot is likely to misbehave in church."

On January 6, 1854, when the forty-eighth anniversary of the congregation was celebrated, there were 154 adult members, 134 infant members, six weekly prayer-meetings, and four Sunday Schools attended by about 200 scholars.

The year 1854 was one of the most eventful in the history of the Boone County Charge. A. F. Crigler, Elisha Rouse and William Rouse each agreed to lease the Church an acre of ground for a parsonage, and on that lot of three acres of ground near Limaburg, the pastors lived for about thirty years.

On January 21st Hebron Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized in the home of John J. Crigler near Hebron. There were sixteen charter members and other new members were soon added.

On February 13, 1854, Brother Harbaugh started for Virginia to visit the old mother church near Madison, and to solicit funds for the new church at Hebron, Ky. He was cordially received in Virginia, giving them an account of their daughter, Hopeful Church, and the granddaughter Hebron, not yet a month old. He also preached a sermon on "Benevolence" in the afternoon of the same day, and the following week he took subscriptions from the members to the amount of $130, and the trustees held a meeting and kindly voted him $400 more.

Pastor Harbaugh attended the first meeting of the new Synod of Kentucky and was elected the first treasurer. John J. Crigler was his lay delegate. The next year, May 18-22, 1855, the Synod of Kentucky met in Hopeful Church. Brother Harbaugh was then elected secretary. The worthy resolutions of the Kentucky Synod urging the pastors to preach on "Benevolence", and the people to practice temperance, were, no doubt, inspired by him.

Pastor Harbaugh continued very active in the Lutheran Church after leaving the Boone County charge in June, 1855.

Rev. J. G. Harris followed Rev. Harbaugh.

Ebenezer Lutheran Church was organized with eleven members January 22, 1856. Already on April 8, 1854, twelve of the members of Hopeful Lutheran Church, somewhat restless for various reasons, but mainly objecting to Rev. Harbaugh's views in favor of temperance, met at the Tanner school house and discussed the advisability of organizing another church. On March 30, 1856, their church building was dedicated.

At the meeting of the Synod of Kentucky in Harrison County, Indiana, May 1856, Rev. Harris was elected president and served two years. He was elected president again in 1860.

On May 30, 1861, the Kentucky Synod again met at Hopeful Church when Brother Harris called attention to the serious troubles that had arisen on the political horizon.

In 1859 the Ebenezer Church withdrew from the charge and on July 2, 1859, elected Rev. John Surface as their pastor for one year. He was reelected for another year. But on June 13, 1861, Rev. Harris was again elected pastor and the Ebenezer congregation came back into the charge.

Rev. J. G. Harris wrote, "During my last two years in Boone the Civil War raged, and hostile companies and armies swayed back and forth over the charge. As an illustration: One Sunday afternoon I rode over to fill an appointment at Ebenezer at the time of Gen. Kirby Smith's advance on Covington and Cincinnati. Although there were scouts at every cross road, I escaped their vigilance. No person was at the church. As I stood at the door, I saw a woman coming out of a house, near a saw mill opposite, and cried out: 'Ho, are you all dead here?' 'No', replied she; 'but we might as well be dead, for we have received notice to pack up and clear out, as the Confederates are going to make a stand on this ridge against the Union army movement from Lawrenceburg.' Then came good old Benjamin Tanner, and the faithful Noah Surface. After a little consultation we thought it best to go home and abide the result.

"Happily the expected battle was not fought, consequently there was no grand display of fireworks and slaughter. Our churches were not desecrated and ruined by the soldiers of either party."

Pastor Harris left Boone County in 1863 because the horizon looked so gloomy, and dangers from scouting parties became so numerous that his wife's friends insisted that he come back home to Ohio.

Rev. W. G. Harter came on the Boone County charge in January, 1864. He had just completed a useful ministry of six years at Jeffersontown, Kentucky.

He began his work here with great promise. Though pastor but little over seven months there had already been about fifty accessions to the church, and he had won the confidence and esteem of the entire charge. He had a voice of great power, and by faithfulness and Christian zeal, he was capable of great usefulness in the ministry.

After a very brief illness he died on July 31, 1864. He was universally esteemed by his parishioners. The church paid his family the salary for the remainder of the year.

He was the last delegate from the Kentucky Synod to the General Synod and there seems to have been no meeting of the Kentucky Synod after his death.

A grandson of the Rev. Harter, Mr. E. W. Harter and family live at Belpro, Ohio.

After a comparatively short vacancy the Rev. Thomas Drake was called as pastor of the Boone County charge in the fall of 1865. During the Civil War he had served as Provost Marshal of Fairfield County, Ohio. He was told by one of the members of the Parish that the prevailing political sentiment was strongly in favor of the South and that he must be careful not to engage in any denunciation. But he found it harder to restrain his sentiments than he supposed. And so soon there was quite an opposition against him. After two years of fruitless effort he resigned, and the end of the year 1867 found the charge again vacant, and with more war feeling than existed during the war itself.

There was but a short vacancy after Rev. Thomas Drake resigned until Rev. A. G. Emerson came to the work in the latter part of 1867.

There were quite a number of additions to the church. But there were soon some little items of friction. He resigned on October 1, 1869. Brother Emerson was a speaker of much power and his sermons were good.

Rev. S. B. Hyman was chosen pastor of the Boone County Parish in February, 1870. He had served in the Civil War in the "Army of Virginia" and had been a prisoner of War for four months in Old Capital prison, Washington, D. C. He was here but a short time until there was trouble in the camp. At a called congregational meeting held in Hopeful Church, September 10, 1870, he was discharged as pastor of the Parish.

Rev. W. C. Barnett of Butler, Indiana, became the next pastor assuming the work of the Parish in April, 1871. He became the means of establishing our Lutheran Church at Bellefontaine, Ohio. He was quite a debater; debating with Rev. Andrew Henkel of the Ohio Synod on Lutheranism. He also held public debates with the Universalists gaining marked victories each time.

Because they were not granted one morning service a month, Ebenezer Lutheran Church withdrew from the charge in 1873. They rejoined the charge on July 2, 1881.

We are told that a large part of the members at this time prayed in public.

Brother Barnett was a noted hunter and had even more than ordinary Kentuckian's fondness for good horses. He usually hunted a great part of the time when holding special services and sometimes when the chase was a little exciting he was kept late and the brethren would go on with the meeting, praying and singing until the pastor would arrive. He would set his gun in the corner and preach some sermons of great power. Over one hundred and twenty-five were brought into the church during his ten year pastorate ending in April, 1881.

Rev. A. J. Douglas, a native of Ohio, accepted a call to the Boone County Parish and began work in November, 1881. He had taught school in Ohio. He then took charge and taught at Wartburg Seminary near Coesse, Indiana, for eighteen months. He successfully practiced law in Indiana being elected one term as state senator. Besides preaching he served for some years as principal of the schools and several years as superintendent of public schools at Columbia City, Indiana. Pastor A. J. Douglas was the father of the noted preacher and author, Rev. Lloyd Douglas. Lloyd Douglas was at first a Lutheran minister. He later became a Congregationalist minister and noted author. Lloyd Douglas was a small child when his father was pastor here. He mentions Hopeful Lutheran Church in one of his books.

From the beginning there was a difficulty with the Hebron Church and Pastor Douglas never preached there. Brother Douglas was an interesting speaker and his preaching was very acceptable because he was fresh and original as a speaker. However, there was some difficulty with Noah Surface, the Superintendent of the Hopeful Sunday School, over their interpretations of the Sunday School lesson. The discussion led to a disagreement that was finally carried to the Miami Synod for adjustment at its meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, in October, 1882. The Boone County charge had been for some time now a member of the Miami Synod. Brother Douglas continued to serve the charge for more than a year after this meeting of Synod at Cincinnati.

Many difficulties were encountered in seeking to select another pastor. And there was a great amount of controversy as to what was best to be done about the parsonage. Several committees dealing with the parsonage situation were appointed. Finally, on January 6, 1885, at a meeting at Hopeful Church, a committee was appointed to receive plans, adopt one and arrange for building a parsonage.

After much delay and many meetings, Rev. W. H. Keller was elected pastor at a meeting held at Hopeful Church, November 29, 1884. The charge had agreed to give a salary of $850 to pay the moving expenses of the pastor and pay rent for him until a new parsonage could be finished. Rev. Keller would not accept the call without an agreement to build a new parsonage. He declined to move into the old parsonage until a new one could be built. He moved into the old Carpenter homestead on the Lexington Pike and remained there until the new parsonage was ready to be occupied in August, 1885.

The Rev. Keller came to Boone County in the highest pitch of its great enthusiasm. There was at once notable improvement in the work of the charge. Brother keller was a preacher of much ability and power while he was active in every good deed and work. However, the promises made to him with enthusiasm when he became pastor were hard of realization and when the time for payment came there was difficulty in meeting obligations that caused some misunderstandings. The work prospered, however, and Brother Keller continued as pastor for three years.

Two of his sons entered the Lutheran ministry, Ezra Keller and Francis M. Keller, both of whom passed away this year. Dr. Ezra Keller, until his retirement a year ago, had been pastor for sixty years of St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, Hillsboro, Ill. Rev. Ezra Keller was married to Miss Lena Tanner of Florence in Hopeful Lutheran Church on December 6, 1896. Among many other bequests for institutional and religious purposes he bequeaths to Hopeful Ev. Lutheran Church the sum of one thousand dollars as a permanent endowment to be invested in Government bonds and only the income therefrom shall be used for Church expenses. This fund shall be known as the Lena Tanner Keller Memorial Fund.

Dr. Francis Keller had served three pastorates in Illinois and had served in St. Louis and Detroit before retiring in 1955.

Both Dr. Ezra Keller and Dr. Francis Keller had been members of the Ebenezer Lutheran Church before entering the Lutheran ministry.

There was some misunderstanding about the time when the resignation of Brother Keller was to take place, and after a vain effort to settle the matter at home, the matter was taken to Synod for adjustment. The congregation promptly complied with the decision of the Synod, borrowed money and settled with Brother Keller. Immediate steps were then taken to secure another pastor.

In the minutes of the Joint Church Council meeting held in Hopeful Lutheran Church on March 12, 1887, there is the following interesting item from which we quote:

"The regular order of business was suspended that Brothers Drirs and Kife from Walton might address this Council:

"They stated that they were here in the interest of a number of persons who lived in and about Walton; that there were not enough of them to employ a regular pastor and that if we would make some arrangements so that they could have preaching once a month that it would be thankfully received and they thought do much good. Brother Keller stated that if they would change the appointments here that he would go from Ebenezer to Walton on a day that did not conflict with the churches in Walton that he would go there once a month. On motion the desired change was made."

How long the families at Walton were supplied with preaching we do not know. Evidently some of the families now living in Walton with German names are descendants of these Lutheran families.

After the Rev. W. H. Keller had left, numerous letters were written and a number of ministers preached for the charge. Students from Wittenberg Seminary at Springfield, Ohio, supplied the charge with preaching at least once a month. One visiting brother, who preached first at Ebenezer, was met at the train by a young member. On the road home many features of the work were discussed. Among many things, the minister wished to know whether the people liked loud preaching; he had come prepared to give them what was wanted. He was told they liked it loud. Accordingly, when the brother let loose at Ebenezer, all the country around was notified that something unusual was going on at the church. Some persons declared that they could distinctly hear him a mile away. Thus, the man who was anxious to please became a laughing stock and the charge was still vacant.

Rev. H. Max Lentz was called as pastor of the Boone County charge in March, 1890. At the time he was acting financial secretary of Carthage College, Carthage, Illinois. He had been born in North Carolina and had taught several terms of school in that state. He had served pastorates in Illinois, Kansas, and Iowa.

The pastor was installed Thursday, May 23, 1890; Revs. E. K. Bell and J. A. Hall of Cincinnati, preaching the sermons at Hopeful Church. A bounteous dinner was served in the grove between morning and afternoon services. Regular preaching services were held twice a month at each church and some special services were held annually. In September 1882, the pastor was called to part with his wife, who had greatly endeared herself to many friends. Three small children were left. On October 25, 1894, the pastor was married to Mrs. Laura H. LaMotte of Taneytown, Md., a pastor's widow.

In February, 1897, the work suddenly ceased for a time due to the pastor having taken down with a severe case of pneumonia. After some rest and a trip south, the Pastor was ready for duty again and had the hearty co-operation of his people. In 1896 the Pastor had begun the publication of a parish paper, the Boone County Banner. He had it published in Pittsburg, Pa., for a year and a half; later it was printed in Florence and still later in Erlanger. Pastor Lentz also helped in the publication of the Lutheran World in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Early in October, 1900, a call was received to become pastor at Sheperdstown, W. Va., and the call was accepted. Thus closed a pastorate of ten years and seven months.

There had been notable improvements about the parsonage property. Benevolences were more than double of any preceding decade, not counting the contributions of the Women's Missionary Society organized in 1890.

One hundred and fifty-five members were received in the churches of the charge; nearly all by adult baptism and confirmation. The oldest daughter of Pastor Lentz, Mrs. Ruth Woodcock, lives in Black Mountain, North Carolina.

Church Council for borrowing
A Kenwood organ was purchased in November, 1901, from Chicago, Illinois, at total cost of $55.15.

The Rev. S. E. Slater became pastor January 1, 1901. He was very kindly received by the people and his work moved off pleasantly from the start. There was increased interest, and after holding special servites in all the churches during the early fall, he had the pleasure of recording forty-four additional names of those received as communicant members of the church for the first year of his pastorate.

The Rev. Slater was a preacher of great power; he backed up his preaching by a worthy Christian character. He resigned from the charge November 21, 1905.

Rev. Frank A. Dressel became pastor of the Boone County charge January 1, 1906, and resigned from the parish in less than ten months on November 1, 1906. The reason that he gave for such a short pastorate was that he could not stand it here on account of the fleas. Pastor Dressel went to Indiana where he became one of the most powerful Lutheran preachers in Indiana serving as pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, Elkhart, Indiana, and serving for many years as pastor of First Lutheran Church, Richmond, Indiana. He served at one time as president of the Synod. The writer served as supply pastor for Dr. Dressel and First Lutheran Church, Richmond, Indiana, during the summer of 1933.

New pews for the church were purchased in 1906, largely through the efforts of the Ladies Aid of the congregation.

Rev. J. H. Walterich, an elderly man, became pastor of the charge on April 1, 1907, and resigned December 1, 1909.

In his report to the congregation on January 6, 1909, he wrote in part: "While conscious of many failures, offences, and shortcomings: hence plead your kindly forbearance and our Lord and Master's forgiveness. The Lord of the vineyard knows our willingness as also our limitations."

Rev. W. S. Tomlinson became pastor of the charge May 1, 1910. There was opposition to him on account of his manner of speaking. His resignation took effect April 30, 1912. He went into secular work after leaving here.

A Putnam organ was purchased in 1910 from the Rudolph Wurlitzer Organ Company at a cost of $100.

Rev. W. F. Wallace became pastor of the charge January 16, 1913. In his report of January 6, 1914, he reported that 16 new members had been added to the charge all but four of them having been added during the special services.

An individual communion set was purchased August 10, 1913.

The Rev. Wallace was interested in getting a new Church built. On May 23, 1915, a congregational meeting was called to order im-

was presented by the Church ... completion of the Building.

mediately following the church service by the Pastor. The object of the meeting was whether or not to move the Church. The vote was: Yes - 11. No - 71.

Pastor Wallace resigned effective October 16, 1915. Pastor Wallace, who is still living, went to Indiana and served several pastorates there before his retirement from the ministry.

Rev. George A. Royer became pastor of the charges February 1, 1916. Born in Maryland, he was graduated from the Gettysburg Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He served pastorates in Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania before coming to Boone County.

At a congregational meeting on April 29, it was voted that we give the County a road over our church lot, connecting the road that leads from the Burlington Pike to the road that leads from the North Bend Road to the church lot.

Pastor Royer was very much interested in getting a new church built here at Hopeful.

At a congregational meeting on May 27, 1916, it was voted to build a new Church. The vote was: Yes - 26. No - 12. There being so small a vote cast, the Pastor was to set a date when another vote would be taken so there would be a vote from the majority of the members.

The second vote was taken following the church service on June 11. The vote was: Yes - 39. No - 15.

At a congregational meeting on November 26 a vote was taken to decide whether we build a new church; the soliciting committee reported a subscription of $4725. It was voted that we build a new Church and that the Council be a Committee on building; three additional members were to be elected to serve on the committee also. The three members elected to the Building Committee already composed of the Church Council were: E. A.Blankenbeker, N. C. Tanner and E. O. Rouse. The members of the Church Council were: Elders - J. S. Surface and M. P. Barlow; Deacons - B. F. Floyd, W. P. Utz, Harry Wilson, and Howard Kelly; Trustees - L. C. Acra, H. C.Beemon, and Noah H. Zimmerman. Mr. Harry Wilson, Mr. Howard Kelly and Mr. M. P. Barlow are the only members of the Building Committee living at the present time.

On March 16, 1917, the contract for the new building was given to George P. Nicholson of Walton, Ky., and the contract price, not including art glass, windows, light, heat, and fresco and other furnishings, was $8,500.

On June 13, 1917, ground was broken for the new building and the corner stone was laid July 15, 1917.

The church building was dedicated on Sunday, November 11, 1917. Services were held both morning and afternoon. A long table was set on the church grounds and a bountiful dinner was enjoyed by both members and visitors.

The special speaker for the day was Dr. C. J. Heckert, President of Wittenberg College. Under his leadership subscriptions were secured that day to pay off the amount that was still owed on the Church building.

In 1917 Hopeful Lutheran Church was incorporated under the laws of the State of Kentucky. In 1917 it was voted to install the electric system by which the electric current from the main line would be run to the church.

The importance of visiting the homes in the congregation was realized when at the Joint Church Council meeting on February 22, 1919, it was voted that each congregation appoint a committee consisting of seven members for the purpose of visiting. The Boone County Parish became a member of the Ohio Synod at the organization of the United Lutheran Church in 1918.

Pastor Royer's resignation from the charge became effective July 31, 1925. Pastor Royer had been very active as a pastor especially in visitation. He had been chairman of the meetings of the Building Committee, and had worked along with the men of the congregation in any work that had to be done in connection with the building of the new church.

Pastor Royer passed to his Heavenly Home May 9, 1940. His two daughters are: Mrs. E. S. (Mabel) Judd, who lives in Milford, Ohio, and Mrs. George Davis, who lives in Somerville, New Jersey.

On July 24, 1926, it was voted to employ Brother Harold Beemon to preach on the second and fourth Sunday mornings of each month. Mr. Beemon, a son of the congregation, was at that time attending Wittenberg College during the regular college terms.

Rev. Guy M. Lubold supplied the charge from May, 1927, until the Spring of 1928. He was given a call by the Parish to become its regular pastor but did not accept the call.

Hopeful Lutheran Church voted on August 11, 1928, to have Brother Harold Beemon to hold services the three remaining Sunday evenings and to hold services on the second and fourth Sundays, unless we have a trial sermon or secure a regular pastor.

Dr. Frank B. Heibert became pastor of the charge on January 1, 1929. He had served pastorates in Ohio, Champaign, Illinois, and Lafayette, Indiana. During his pastorate the parking areas at Hopeful were covered with crushed stone.

Because of both he and his wife's health he resigned from the charge and retired from the ministry. His resignation was accepted with regret by the Joint Council becoming effective October 31, 1931.

Dr. Heibert is now in his ninety-fourth year, living in the Sumner Home at Akron, Ohio.

Rev. Harlow Haas became pastor of the charge December 1, 1931.

A meeting of the Ebenezer congregation was held in Hopeful Lutheran Church on March 6, 1932, with Pastor Haas as chairman. At this meeting Ebenezer voted to merge with Hopeful. An all day meeting of acceptance of the Ebenezer congregation was held Sunday, April 10, 1932, at Hopeful. It was merely announced that the two congregations had merged. A list of the Ebenezer members as of March 6, 1932, was furnished by their Secretary, Henry S. Dixon, and duly entered on the Hopeful membership list.

The resignation of Pastor Haas became effective January 6,1933.

Rev. H. M. Hauter became pastor of Hopeful and Hebron churches August 20, 1933. In this same year he organized Luther Leagues at Hopeful and Hebron. By the combined efforts of these Leagues an A-Capella Choir was organized that met weekly.

The Parish became a member of the Kentucky-Tennessee Synod at its organization in 1934.

In 1937 the Ebenezer Church property was sold to Mr. I. M. Tanner for $25 less $3.50 half the cost of surveying.

In 1938 Hopeful Lutheran Church was redecorated. The balance of $577.45 in the Ebenezer Ladies Aid Treasury received by Hopeful Lutheran Church was used for that purpose.

At the Hopeful Church Council meeting on January 13, 1937, "On Rev. Hauter's request a motion was made that he be allowed to omit giving an 'Invitation' at Church service and to organize an Adult Church Class for prospective members. Carried."

The Common Service and Lutheran Chancel appointments were introduced during the pastorate of Pastor Hauter.

Rev. Hauter left Hopeful to accept a call to St. John's Lutheran Church, Napoleon, Indiana, in the summer of 1944.

Rev. J. Paul Rimmer became pastor of the Boone County Parish February 18, 1945. During Pastor Rimmer's pastorate steps were taken to make both congregations self-sustaining. Pastor Rimmer took a very active part in this movement. At a Joint Council meeting on February 23, 1946, it was voted that a Committee be appointed to investigate the ownership of the Florence Parsonage and property.

Since the parsonage had originally been owned by Hopeful, Hebron and Ebenezer the question of the interests of Hopeful and Hebron in the property had to be answered.

In a Joint Council meeting on September 8, 1946, a motion was carried "That we recommend the withdrawal of the two churches to be voted on by the congregations. It was then moved that this motion be tabled.

In the Joint Church Council meeting of February 22, 1947, the following motion was made and carried: "The Joint Council having voted to attempt to make each congregation self-sustaining and in order to carry out this intent I hereby move that each council in regular session appoint a committee to formulate individual plans to carry out this Program."

Appraisals of the Parsonage property were made. On December 20, 1947, the Joint Relationship between the Hopeful and Hebron Lutheran churches was dissolved by action of the Joint Council in special session. And so the Hopeful and Hebron churches became self-sustaining congregations.

Pastor Rimmer's resignation from the Boone County Charge became effective December 1, 1947.

Rev. Herman V. J. Andres became pastor of Hopeful Lutheran Church on January 16, 1948.

At a called meeting of the congregation on February 20, 1949, it was moved by Raymond Beemon and seconded by Virgil Kelly that a new parsonage be built on the property adjoining the church. Motion carried. It was moved by Mrs. Betty Rouse and seconded by Francis Barlow that the congregation accept the committees proposed plan for building a new parsonage and leave to the discretion of the committee all other small details. It was moved by Mrs. Betty Rouse and seconded by David Tanner that the committee proceed with plans to build the new parsonage as soon as possible and consult with the Church Council to secure the necessary funds until the old parsonage was sold. The parsonage was completed and dedicated in 1949.

Several steps had to be taken before the old parsonage property could be sold. Joshua Zimmerman, who had been a very active member of Hopeful Church, died in 1852; he willed to the Church three acres of ground on the Burlington Pike on which to build a parsonage. Since he had willed to Joshua Tanner an entire tract of land that included the parsonage land, there was a question as to whether the church had clear title to the parsonage property. But a quit claim deed was found among church papers by which Joshua Tanner deeded the parsonage property to Hopeful Lutheran Church. However, the deed had never been recorded. In order to make everything solid, a planned trial was conducted at Burlington in which the court established Hopeful Church's right to the property.

Grateful mention should be made of the gifts of Emma V. Rouse to Hopeful Lutheran Church. She deeded additional ground to Hopeful Lutheran Church adjoining the church property. We quote from her will: "I give, divide and bequeath all the residue of my real estate, wheresoever situated and whether now owned by me or hereafter to be acquired, to the trustees of the Hopeful Lutheran Church, Boone County, Kentucky, their successors and assigns."

This real estate consisted of lots on Kentaboo and properties in Florida, the income from the sale of which has meant much to Hopeful Lutheran Church.

A Wurlitzer Electric Organ was purchased and installed in October, 1952.

Pastor Herman Andres resigned from Hopeful effective February 1, 1953.

Hopeful Lutheran Church did not have its own church cemetery until in 1868 when a charter was granted. The Hopeful Lutheran Cemetery Board, under the direction of the Church Council, has a big responsibility in keeping the cemetery clean and in performing other necessary duties.

Rev. Wilford C. Butt became pastor of Hopeful May 19, 1953.

There has been a fine increase in church attendance; the Sunday School attendance has doubled.

In 1953 a new furnace was purchased from the Montgomery Coal and Heating Company at a cost of $520.

At the annual congregational meeting on October 6, 1953, a motion was carried that the Church Council be given the privilege to install rest rooms in the church basement. As a result of this motion and as the Sunday School attendance continued to increase in the fall and winter, some of the members began to think about the need of a Parish Educational Building to provide needed facilities. At a called congregational meeting on April 21, 1954, certain recommendations of the Church Council were presented to the congregation.

As revised the following recommendations were adopted:

1. The plans presented by the committee were approved subject to change.

2. The Council recommends to congregation that there be a two-thirds majority in favor of proposed plans of building by the members of the congregation present to carry the motion. Motion was passed by a two-thirds majority.

3. The Council recommends a building program be set up to secure funds for the proposed building providing the proposed plans have been accepted by the congregation. Motion passed.

A motion was carried that the Vice-President be Chairman of the Finance Committee and to select two more to assist him.

A motion was made and seconded that the Chairman appoint the Building Committee. Carried.

A motion was carried that we have one-third of the cost of the building and arrangements be made for securing the rest of the money.

The following men were appointed to serve on both the Building and Finance Committees: Raymond Beemon, Chairman and Builder; Joseph Dringenburg, Builder Advisor; Arthur Tanner, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer; Russell Luck, Charles Rouse, Robert M. Rouse, and Charles M. Tanner.

It was reported at the annual congregational meeting on October 1, 1954, that one-third of the estimated cost of $22,000 for the construction of the Parish Educational Building was on hand.

A resolution was presented by the Church Council for borrowing the balance of the money needed for the completion of the Building. A motion was carried to that effect.

Ground-breaking services for the new Parish Educational Building were held on the church grounds on Homecoming Sunday, October 10, 1954. The services were in charge of Pastor Wilford C. Butt assisted by Rev. Herman Andres, Pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church, Louisville, Ky., and former pastor at Hopeful.

On Sunday morning, September 25, 1955, the Parish House was set apart as a place of worship and study; dedicated to the glory and honor of God and to the service of His Holy Church in the name of the Triune God. The morning sermon was delivered by Dr. Gerard Busch, President of the Kentucky-Tennessee Synod, using as his subject "THIS ALSO WE SHOULD DO". At the Fellowship Service held in the evening Dr. Jesse E. Stomberger, Pastor of the Hebron Lutheran Church, delivered a stirring message on the subject "Christian Growth". This service was followed by a Fellowship Hour.

We thank God that we were able to erect this Parish Educational Building to help us to meet the religious educational needs of this community.

A Tone Cabinet for the organ was installed at Christmas time, 1955; it was a project of the Senior-Junior Choirs as their gift to the Church for the Sesquicentennial Anniversary.

A very successful Evangelism Mission was held in the Church in February of this year. The speaker at these services was Rev. Harold Beemon, a son of the congregation. Pastor Beemon has been pastor for 12 years of Messiah Lutheran Church, Constantine, Mich. His other pastorates were Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, New Castle, Indiana, and the South Whitley Parish in Indiana.

Another son of the congregation, Charles Aylor, is attending Wittenberg College preparing for the Gospel ministry.

Hopeful Lutheran Church was just redecorated in May of this year.

With the continued rapid growth of the Florence community, Hopeful looks forward to continued numerical growth.

Hopeful Lutheran Church has a rich heritage from the past. The future lies ahead of us. Only as we seek Divine Help and Guidance can we expect to grow spiritually and in every way, and be able to meet the spiritual needs of both young and old.