

Concordia China Grove

Organized: 1881

County: Rowan

Affiliation: NC Synod

Status: Active

During the summer of 1881, the Rev. William Alonzo Lutz, a missionary minded young pastor of St. Enoch Lutheran Church, Enochville, NC began a preaching-teaching mission in a grove of trees across the road from the present church. Interested people, mostly farmers of the area, built a “brush arbor” or “stand” and from this improvised pulpit Rev. Lutz preached the Word of God and teaching the catechism on certain Sunday afternoons. Pastor Lutz’s labors bore fruit and toward the end of the summer of 1881, the congregation was ready to secure a building site, organize a congregation and make plans to build a church. By mid-September they had secured a two and a half acre tract across the road from the brush arbor. A 50’x70’ wood-frame church was built under the supervision of Rev. Lutz. Moses Bostian and Pinkney Cooper were chief carpenters. David Cooper made the nails, bolts, irons, and other hardware needed for the church in his blacksmith shop nearby. On Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, April 28-30, 1882 a series of meetings was held and a congregation was organized with eighty-one members—thirty-six men and forty-five women. Of the charter members, twenty-five were received by confirmation, and fifty-four came by letter of transfer from neighboring congregations. They were received into the North Carolina Synod, May 3, 1882, at the Synod meeting held at St. James, Concord.

In 1924 the church was remodeled under the leadership of Rev. F.D. Rishinger to make more room for Christian Education. The vestibule was made smaller by putting two class rooms on each side. The balcony was closed off with doors and also used for class rooms. Double doors with a center aisle replaced the two aisles that formerly ran through the congregation. (Until then, it had been customary for the men to sit on the left side and the ladies to sit on the right side.) Lighting in the early church was by oil lamps. The Aladdin type mantel lamps were in use at the time electric lights were installed, which was not until 1936.

Church records show that in January 1935, the council voted to ask each member to pay one cent for each year of their age, not to exceed thirty-five cents. This money was to be used at Christmas to purchase a Christmas treat for each member. This was a custom that began in 1935 and continued for several decades.

The original church building was completely destroyed by fire in 1942. The present brick structure was constructed at a cost of \$40,000 and was dedicated debt-free on May 9, 1943.

Parish alignments varied through the years. In 1895 a parish was establish including Concordia and St. Luke’s, Bear Poplar. This parish alignment lasted until 1912 when Concordia and Trinity, Landis joined to form a parish.

This sharing of pastoral duties lasted until 1945 when H. G. Fisher was called as Concordia's first full-time pastor. In 1960, construction was completed on a new parish hall building which included a common gathering area with kitchen and classrooms. In 1978, Concordia built a Youth Building which currently houses the church offices, classrooms, youth choir rooms, and a "youth basement" gathering area that was re-modeled in 2004. After an extensive visioning and self-study period, July 20, 2003 was the opening day of Concordia's new Family Life Center which was built on the site of the former parish hall. This modern ministry facility (complete with classrooms, a large-open activity space, stage and kitchen has become a central gathering point for the Atwell community (i.e. school tutoring programs, local non-profit & school events, Bible school, youth and senior events, fall festivals, community meals, funeral visitations, music, dances, recpetions and more), in addition to many Concordia ministries. On August 24, 2004, the Family Life Center was dedicated to God's glory and to the work of Jesus Christ in the world, and Rev. Kenneth W. Reed Jr, was installed as the congregation's new pastor. On April 6, 2008, a new playground was dedicated on the grounds of Concordia. After several years of planning due to the growing number of youth and children in the congregation, this space for recreation and play now serves as a sign of welcoming for all families in the Atwell community.

Mission Developer: W. A. Lutz, 1881-1882
Pastors

1882-1883 William A. Lutz
1883 Holmes Dysinger, Supt.
1884-1885 Whitson Kimball
1886 C. B. Miller, Supt.
1887 C. A. Brown, Supt
1887-1888 D. A. Sox
1889-1891 Whitson Kimball
1892-1894 Christenberry A. Brown
1894-1900 Herbert W. Jeffcoat
1900 C. A. Phillips, Supt.
1900-1904 Bachman S. Brown
1905-1908 Theodore C. Parker
1908 M. L. Ridenhour, Supt.
1908-1909 C. B. Miller, Supt.
1909 S. W. Kuhn, Supt.
1909-1912 Martin L. Ridenhour
1912 Christenberry Brown
1912-1915 Bachman S. Brown
1916-1917 Perry E. Shealy
1917-1921 Carroll I. Morgan
1922-1924 Paul D. Risinger
1924-1930 Carl O. Lippard
1930 C. M. Fox, Supt.
1930 P. G. Kinney, Supt.
1930-1944 Clifford P. Fisher
1945-1948 Herman G. Fisher
1948 W. B. Aull, Supt.
1948-1954 Cy E. Lutz
1956-1959 Paul L. Conrad
1960-1978 Clyde A. Misenheimer
1979-1989 Clarence G. Walck, Jr.

1990-1995 James White
1996- 2002 Wayne Sipe
2003-Kenneth W Reed Jr