

St. John's

Statesville

Early Lutherans who found a home in North Carolina came either directly from Germany or from that Luther's land by way of England and Pennsylvania. Contrary to the rule with some denominations, the Lutherans did not think it necessary to wait for regular pastors in order to begin their church work. Therefore, the first Lutheran congregation in Statesville consisted of several family groups meeting in private homes. Services of worship were conducted for those Lutherans by pastors from neighboring parishes.

In the county seat of Iredell County on April 8, 1888, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized in an upstairs room over Leonard's Music Store on West Broad Street. The Rev. D.J. Settlemyre, pastor of Sharon and St. Martin's Lutheran Church, conducted the organizational meeting of the congregation which became a mission of the Tennessee Synod. A Sunday Church School was established; and J.S. Frye served as the superintendent.

A lot was purchased on the corner of Front and Church (now Meeting) Streets for \$350; and, on July 12, 1890, a contract was let to Watson and Cecil for construction of a church building—a 30 x 50 foot structure of brick with a tower. In order to get the money to carry on the construction, three members—L.C. Dietz, M.J. Dietz and J. S. Frye—mortgaged their homes until funds could be raised by the congregation. The building was completed in 1890, and the first service was held in the new church on January 8, 1891. By August 8, 1908, the church was free of debt and was dedicated by the pastor, the Rev. W. A. Lutz. The Rev. O.W. Aderholdt, D.D., became pastor on April 1, 1920; and, a house was purchased at 430 West Front Street which served as the congregation's first parsonage. A lot for a new church was purchased on the corner of Front and Mulberry Streets for the sum of \$6,000. Early in 1920, St. John's—having been a mission congregation of the Tennessee Synod since the date of organization—became a part of the newly formed North Carolina Synod.

A contract for designing a new church building was awarded Louis Asbury of Charlotte on July 18, 1921. A contract was signed in September of that year with Moser and Bumgardner for the construction of the new church at a cost of \$32,659. The construction was completed in 1922, and the first service was held in the new church on January 5, 1923, with an organ recital by Rob Roy Peery. The formal opening service was held the following Sunday, January 7th, with messages delivered by Dr. E.J. Sox and Dr. F. C. Longacre—both of Hickory. The church building, with a basement for organizational work, was dedicated November 7, 1926, by Pastor J. D. Kinard, Dr. E. J. Sox and the president of the synod. The total value of the church when completed was \$52,000.

Under the leadership of Pastor John K. Lasley, D.D., the congregation voted to relocate and to build another new church and educational building on September 19, 1954. Property consisting of approximately five acres was purchased at 740 North Center Street at a cost of \$25,000; and a groundbreaking service was held on February 19, 1955. The last service of the congregation in the building at the corner of Front and Mulberry Streets was held on May 27, 1956; and, the property was sold to the Catholic Church. It

was during that same year that L. Aaron Lippard was ordained and became the second spiritual son of the congregation.

The St. John's congregation began holding services at Mitchell College on June 3, 1956. This served as the church's home until August 11, 1957, when the present sanctuary and educational building, constructed at a cost of \$310,000, were occupied. The second parsonage at 874 Woodland Road was purchased in October of 1960 for \$22,000.

In 1966, the church and the educational building were air-conditioned; and, the educational building was expanded to include a kitchen and a fellowship hall with a large stage. The cost of these improvements and additions was \$124,000.

The congregation was blessed when three more of its sons became pastors. Dr. Richard B. Graf, Jr. was ordained in 1965; Mark C. Johnson, was ordained in 1969; and, John E. Boyd, Jr. was ordained in 1970.

The current pastor Dr. Hoyle L. Whiteside, was called to St. John's on December 19, 1971. Coming from Macedonia Lutheran Church in Burlington, he was installed by Dr. George R. Whittecar, President (Bishop) of the North Carolina Synod on February 19, 1972.

The current parsonage at 302 Starmount Drive was purchased in 1972 at a cost of \$42,000 leaving an indebtedness of \$22,000 after the sale of the old parsonage for \$20,000. An additional six acres adjacent to the church property was purchased in 1972 from the T. L. Goode family at a cost of \$37,500, bringing the church property to a total of eleven acres.

In 1976, Carl M. Pope, Jr. was ordained into the gospel ministry; this brought the congregations number of spiritual sons to six.

Mr. James A. Orr, III was added to the staff at St. John's as the first full time director of music with additional responsibilities in the areas of Christian education and youth ministry. He was followed by Mary Frances Whitener, and during her tenure, the current Schantz pipe organ, which was built in Orrville, Ohio, was installed in August of 1979. The organ contained 28 ranks of pipes, has four divisions—Great, Swell, Positiv and Pedal, and a three-manual console. The purchase price, including installation was \$126,000. The chancel of the church was renovated at that time and new carpet was installed in the nave and in the chancel. Later, a music and choir rehearsal room, including an office for the director of music, was established and furnished. Currently, Donnie H. Beddingfield is the Director of Music and organist since September 1980.

Dr. and Mrs. John W. Cobb joined the membership at St. John's on February 17, 1980; and, Pastor and Mrs. William H. Hall became members on June 15, 1980. From 1981-1987, Dr. Cobb served as assistant to the pastor.

During St. John's 94th Anniversary service of Worship on August 15, 1982 former pastor Dr. J. Lewis Thornburg was named pastor emeritus. At the service on that day, a sanctuary lamp was dedicated to the glory of God and in loving memory of Mr. Paul Monroe Barger.

It was on August 19, 1984, that Pastor Whiteside led the congregation in a Service of Debt Retirement; and, Dr. Michael C.D. McDaniel—Bishop of the North Carolina Synod—served as guest speaker. The congregation at this time retired a note in the amount of \$111,000 which covered the second phase of the church's building program on North Center Street and the parsonage on Starmount Drive.

In 1986, the church library was renovated and doubled in size at the cost of \$9,872. A part of the expanded library included a section for the church archives and memorabilia.

In preparation for the centennial celebration—besides the painting and wall-papering of the church facilities, carpeting the hallways and classrooms of the educational building, the establishing of a youth gathering room, the donations of a paschal candle, new paraments and chasubles—portraits of the nine pastors who have served St. John during its first century were painted, framed, and placed in the newly renovated and decorated conference room during 1987.

Early in 1988, the church lounge was entirely redecorated and refurnished. This project was initiated and conducted by members of the Katherine von Bora Bible Class.

Pastors

1888-1895	D.J. Settlemyre
1895-1898	W.P. Cline and J.C. Moser
1898-1905	W.L. Darr
1905-1916	W.A. Lutz
1916-1919	A.R. Beck, D.D.
1920-1924	O.W. Arderholdt, D.D.
1924-1929	J.D. Kinard
1930-1945	J. Lewis Thornburg
1945-1971	John K. Lasley, D.D.
1972-1989	Hoyle L. Whiteside, S.T.M.,D.D.
1990-2007	Thomas W Corbell