

Brief History of First Lutheran Church, Sunderland, Maryland



1974: January 6, 1974: First service at the home of Al and Sally Plusch with 27 people in attendance. Rev. P. Arthur Juergensen of Redeemer, Hyattsville organized the services as Huntingtown Chapel.

May 19, 1974: Began evening services at All Saints Church, Sunderland. Pastors G. Holmes Mendelman and Gary L. Danielson aided Pastor Jurgenson. Ardith Harle was organist.

November 1974: Approval of the mission by Southeastern District, LCMS. Sunday School started; first baptism – Susan Vince.

1975: Executive Board was elected with James Harle, Leader; Sally Plusch, Secretary; John Fales, Treasurer; and Al Gadow, Financial Secretary. The church roster carried 47 names by mid-year. Pastor James A. Stoltenberg, St. Pauls Lutheran Church in Charlotte Hall, became another visiting pastor. Also serving a few times were Pastors Wayne Koenig, Joel Borchelt and Eric G. Peterson. Seminarian George Heider III was hired for the summer to organize evangelism. The Congregation renamed the Mission the “First Lutheran Church of Calvert County”.

1976: Pastor Raymond G. Hohenstein, retired U.S. Naval Chaplain, became interim pastor. Sunday morning services were first held at Lower Marlboro United Methodist church, with Sunday School classes at the nearby home of Nick and Carol Wilson. We soon outgrew those spaces and moved to a large room at Mt. Hope Community Center. Pastor Arthur J. Doege, retired U.S.

Army Chaplain, became regular pastor starting June 20. Charter Sunday took place on October 3. A total of 65 members and children signed the charter. Nicholas B. Wilson was elected President, Jim Harle, Vice President, Sally Plusch, Secretary, John Fales, Treasurer, and Al Plusch, Financial Secretary. During this year Ardith Harle began organizing a choir.

1977: Constitution and By-Laws and a budget were adopted. On June 2 the congregation signed the Constitution. David R. Harris found 4.9 acres at Routes 2 and 4 and a contract was signed with the owner, Mrs. Linnae B. Russell, on April 9. The Articles of Incorporation were approved. The Womens’ Guild was formed this year; and Mrs. Lena Brandt became president.

1978: Pastor Michael E. Koch served as regular part-time pastor from January 29 until he resigned on October 9, at which time Pastor Doege returned. Robert Bumbulucz became president in the first election under the new By-Laws. A planning committee was formed to study church buildings and a call committee was formed to select a Pastor. Church attendance in 1978 averaged 80.

1979: Vicar Harold R. Hoeferkamp accepted the call as our first full-time pastor. He gave his first sermon on July 15. The number of baptized members went from 155 in 1980 to 228 in 1983. The first Vacation Bible School was held at the home of Arnold and Lee Johnson. A youth group was formed in October. Pastor Hoeferkamp was ordained in 1980.

1981-86: F. Ray Weems headed a building committee; and ground was broken for an all-purpose building on Palm Sunday, April 4, 1982. The building was dedicated on Charter Sunday, October 3, 1982, after which a marked increase in attendance occurred. A second Sunday morning service was started in December 1984. A branch of the Aid Association for Lutherans was formed on January 5, 1982. On July 17, 1982, the congregation voted to hire a church secretary, Mrs. Marsha Trott. In 1984 the church had a team in the new church softball league. Pastor Hoeferkamp accepted a call to Myrtle Beach and Pastor A. Kenneth Beachboard became the interim Vacancy Pastor on August 31, 1986.

1987: Pastor Robert L. Hinz was called. Attendance was excellent; and by year-end averaged 108 per Sunday.

1988: Gail M. Traffelet was hired as permanent organist on January 3, 1988; and a second Sunday morning service was re-started on April 10. Church income in 1988 was \$83,000.

1989: The congregation voted to participate in the 50th Anniversary of the SED fund raising "Together We Can" program. Funds were raised resulting in for the completion of the church basement – nursery room and bathroom added, painting and flooring. A new secretary, Susan C. Justin, was hired at the end of the year.

Congregation leaders from 1974 to 1989 included: James A. Harle, Leader of Steering Committee and interim Executive Board; Congregation presidents: Nicholas B. Wilson, Robert A. Bumbulucz, Stuart J. Hanson, Harold J. Kahl, Alvin L. Etzler, Ardith Z. Harle, Keith E. Nelson, Gustave C. Wolf and Bruce A. Watson.

1990: A crushed stone parking lot was blacktopped. A riding lawn mower was purchased.

1991: Pastor Hinz left First Lutheran and went to Saint Paul Lutheran Church in Gambrills. We called Vicar John Kassouf upon his graduation from Concordia Seminary in St Catherine's, Ontario. Average attendance for 1991 was 125, the budget was \$99,602 and there was a deficit of \$1,733. The 5th Sunday of the month was designated as Youth Sunday.

1992: The tradition of Friendship Sunday was begun in February of 1992 to encourage members to bring a friend for a special service. Pastor Kassouf was ordained at First Lutheran Church. The Barnabas process for planning was completed and priorities were set. The top 5 were: Develop community outreach; members participate with time and talent; new member assimilation program; more emotional support; and new worship center / building fund. A mission statement was developed which included our resolve to: witness that Christ is Lord; serve others; meet and encourage one another; encourage all to worship and praise; encourage each other to share our gifts, talents and abilities; and provided varied opportunities for fellowship. The budget for the

year was \$114,575. We began setting aside an emergency fund in the budget.

1993: We started weekly Wednesday evening services. Weekly recording of attendance of individual members was begun. Gib Devey organized a committee to begin planning for a new building. The Elders department was renamed Deacons and Deaconesses. The parking lot was expanded and paved. The Men's League was begun. Cheryl Johnson began to serve as interim organist. Their first major project was clearing of some of the woods at the rear of the parking lot in preparation for the first Pig Roast, which was a big success. At the end of the year there were 229 communicant members with an average weekly attendance of 166.

1994: The church officers and council were re-organized to have 3 vice presidents and an executive council which met monthly with the full council meeting at least every 3 months. People were elected to 2 year terms with a limit of 2 terms. Bob Hoerauf became president of the congregation. An electronic keyboard was purchased to give us more flexibility in styles of music in worship. The practice of having greeters at each service was begun and 25 people were trained to be greeters. Average weekly attendance for the year was 188.

1995: A contract was made with Laborers for Christ to assist us with construction of the new building. For the 22nd anniversary, Dr. George Heider III, president of Concordia College – River Forest and son of FLC members - George and Doris Heider preached. A congregation meeting in October set out general ideas for 5 year targets for the congregation. Average weekly attendance for the year was 212. At the end of the year there were 303 communicant members. There were 19 baptisms: 6 adults and 13 children. This was one of three years in which we led the Southeastern District in the number of adult baptisms.

1996: A simplified mission statement was approved: The mission of First Lutheran Church is to joyfully and enthusiastically proclaim God's Word and share Christ's love among others and ourselves. Ground was broken on May 19. The operating fund budget for 1996 was \$184,130 and there was a

surplus of \$13,998. Average weekly attendance was 220. There were 70 students enrolled in Sunday School and 67 adults involved in Bible studies.

1997: The major effort of 1997 was construction of the new sanctuary. A lot of members worked with Laborers for Christ and contractors toward the construction. An employee benefit manual was produced. Confirmation students began partnering with specific adults in doing service projects for the church. There were 14 baptisms – 9 children and 5 adults. There were 75 children in Sunday School and average attendance at Adult Bible class was 30.

1998: The first service in the new sanctuary was on March 29, with dedication of the sanctuary on May 3rd. A congregational summit was held to help chart a course for the next 4-5 years at First Lutheran. In an all-day Saturday session, the congregation decided that their main missional objectives would be achieved through an increased emphasis on Christian education. Corporate Dynamic Worship was identified as an area where we do well, but where we could continue to add strength. The directions chosen by the summit guided planning for a second professional staff member. The church's web page, www.firstlutheranchurch.org was designed and implemented by 15 year old Tim Kassouf. Leah Maloney and Beth Johnson were hired as organist and choir director, respectively. The cooperative play group began for members of the congregation. There were 6 children ages 18-36 months. The large new narthex with a high ceiling allowed us to have a Christmas tree that was about 22' tall. There were 23 baptisms – 16 children and 7 adults. 15 youth were confirmed. The Sunday School grew to 9 classes for 120 children and youth with 20 teachers. Marilyn Georg organized the library in its new area in the lower level.

1999: Tracy Mizelle was added as a second part time secretary. An employee manual was produced to define the rights and expectations of employees of First Lutheran. A capital stewardship campaign called Together We Can was begun to fund completion of the new building and renovation of the old. Weekly newsletters were begun. We started to have name tags for all members and guests each Sunday at worship. Shawn Maassel was selected for the position of Minister of Family Life, Youth and Education. The cooperative playgroup extended its scope to friends of congregation members.

Holy Communion was celebrated at least one service each Sunday. The budget for the year was \$301,729. There was a surplus of income over expenses for 1999 of \$10,746.

2000: Pastor John Kassouf accepted a call to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Bel Air, MD. A contract was given to Pastor Jim Johnson to act as our interim pastor. Bill Johnson was elected as congregational president. A lift was installed to aid those with special needs to more easily go between levels. The play group was given a name – Little Lambs – and was licensed to operate as day care. Angie Hohl was chosen as acting director. Renovations were done to the old sanctuary to make it a suitable place for the day care / play group and as the church nursery. A sabbatical policy was approved by the voters' assembly. After each 7 years of service to First Lutheran, a pastor is eligible for a 3 month sabbatical. In the months of June, July and August, we had 3 services each Sunday: one traditional, one contemporary, and one blended. The object was to introduce the congregation to contemporary worship so that we had new forms to reach non-believers. A voters' assembly concluded that the first service should stay traditional and that the second service be alternated between contemporary and blended. The budget for the year was \$343,044, there was a net deficit of \$20,100 in the operating fund.

2001: Little Lambs officially became a pre-school. Angie Hohl was named director. Interim Pastor Jim Johnson accepted a call to Hamburg, NY. The approved budget was \$325,400, but spending targets have been reduced due to lower attendance and income.

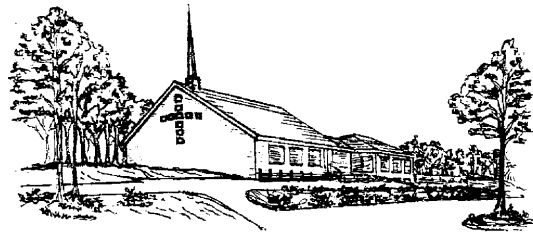
2002: Pastor Paul Liersemann accepted the call to be our pastor. John Fogleman was elected as president of the congregation. Ray Weems led the effort to complete the kitchen and the bathrooms. The additional land next to the church property was purchased. Bible studies and small groups were expanded. The weekly average attendance was 263. There were 582 baptized members.

2003: The fellowship hall renovations were completed with the addition of a new heating and cooling system. A double mobile unit was purchased to allow for additional space for Sunday School and the Senior Youth. Weekly attendance averaged 278 and there were 596 baptized members.

2004: Renovation of the original building was completed to improve classrooms, multipurpose room, and add a new library. Steve McCord was elected president. The renovations were dedicated on September 12. The average attendance was 294 and there were 631 baptized members.

2005: Super Sunday planning event involved 175 members who identified the following 4 focus areas for our goals: healthy relationships, life changing small groups, empowering leadership, and functional structures. As a result long range goals were created and several task force committees began working on the goals. Average attendance was 264 and there were 633 baptized members.

Celebrating 30 Years of Fellowship....



First Lutheran Church

*Joyfully Proclaim God's Word and
Enthusiastically Share Christ's Love*