

1851-1900

In 1856 Casper Koiner died at the age of 92, having worshipped for 62 years, during 7 pastorates, in the churches he helped build. His life in Virginia spanned fifteen Presidencies, from Washington to Pierce. He saw the settlement named Teesville be renamed Waynesboro in honor of General Anthony Wayne, with a population of 250 in 1810; stagecoaches stopping at Major Wilson's Tavern on Main Street; the coming of the N&W R.R. which began as part of the Shenandoah Road; the Virginia Central R.R. cross the Blue Ridge and the tunnel construction start, and the society that had been rustic become quite polished. His wife, Margaret, preceded him in 1850 at the age of 78.

The period 1861-1865, the country's darkest hour, saw the garden spot of Virginia become a beaten track and camping ground of both armies, and at the close of the war the Valley was a scene of desolation. In May of 1865, Sheridan swept through Augusta County, met General Early at Waynesboro, and in a short battle crushed him. People of no other section of the country suffered more than did those of the Valley. Many men from Koiner's congregation had to leave their homes to join in the battle, and those who remained at home had countless stories to tell of the difficult times, with frequent raids on their food supplies, and other scars of war that were to be visible for many years. To mention but a few names, John Nicholas Coiner served with Major Mosby and was imprisoned, Elijah Coiner was wounded while serving under General J. E. B. Stuart, Irenious Koiner was wounded at Petersburg, and Jacob Coiner in the "Stonewall Brigade" escaped injury when his pocket knife stopped a bullet during the 1st Battle of Manassas. David Ezra Leonard served under General Beauregard and later joined Mosby's Rangers; M. L. Leonard served under J. E. B. Stuart.

The Rev. J. E. Seneker took charge in 1866 in that difficult period of reconstruction following the Civil War, and during his pastorate a parsonage was built on three acres to the northeast of the grove.

Pastor Seneker was born January 30, 1831 and ordained 1852. He was a member of the Tennessee Synod and had served at the Peaked Mt. parish in Rockingham Co. and Rader's Church, Timberville. He married Sarah Coiner, the great-great-granddaughter of Michael Keinadt. During his pastorate at Koiner's congregation he served also at St. Paul's, Mt. Solon, and Mt. Nebo Church at Rochelle. The Concordia Synod was organized at Koiner's Church in 1868.

An unpleasant incident occurred in 1871 when a Presbyterian minister, while preaching a funeral sermon in Koiner's Church, preached against Lutheran doctrine. This caused the congregation to adopt a resolution to admit only Lutheran preachers to its pulpit. However, some members disagreed and withdrew, building Mountain View Chapel to the north of the parsonage.

For the convenience of some older members who could not attend at Koiner's Church near Crimora, a small frame church, Bethany, was built one mile north of Waynesboro in 1874 on the hill a short distance north of the old District Home not far off the present day

Hopeman Pkwy. Services were then held at Bethany and Trinity on alternate Sundays.

Pastor Seneker resigned in 1875, died January 4, 1884, and he and his wife are buried in Trinity Cemetery .

After Pastor Seneker's resignation, there was a vacancy till 1877, when the Rev. P. S. Swinehart took charge for two years. Pastor Swinehart was born in Ohio in 1847, attended Capitol University and the Theological Seminary at Columbus , Ohio . Koiner's Church was his first charge.

It was 105 years after the initial entry in the first record book before Martin Koiner, Jacob Koiner, Major Hahn and. Pastor Swinehart were appointed to draft a constitution which was adopted March 31, 1878, revised in 1880, and read twice each year to the congregation until 1904, and there after read at each annual meeting. Among the 70 signatures appended to we find 36 Coyners, 6 Bargers., 6 Leonards and 3 Freeds. .

In a meeting in January 1878 it was resolved:

"to make an effort to establish a parochial school, the location of the house to be on the extreme right hand corner of the Bethany Church lot, the size of the house to be 18' x 24' with 10' pitch; committee to draft a constitution to regulate the working of this institution being Pastor Swinehart, Marion Coyner and Cornelius Coyner".

Bethany School was opened in September 1878 with Theodore Coyner and Mrs. Virginia Hamilton the first teachers, the Pastor giving religious instruction twice a week. The tuition was \$1 per month and Mr. Coyner was paid \$25 per month for 6 months.

The Rev. Frederick Kuegele of Cumberland , Md. , accepted the congregation's call and was installed as Pastor April 24, 1879 by the Rev. G. W. Lose, a Tennessee Synod Pastor from the Edinburg , Front Royal area. Pastor Kuegele was born at Columbiana , Ohio , attended schools in Fort Wayne and St. Louis . He studied the Chippewa language in order to go into Indian Mission work, but by the time he graduated the Chippewa mission had been abandoned. He accepted the call to the frontier town, Omaha , Ne- braska, and was ordained in 1870. The following year Pastor Kuegele was called to Cumberland , Maryland , and while serving this parish he taught the parochial school, preaching also at three other places. He married Meta Reichenbach of St. Louis and three sons and six daughters were born to them. Two sons entered the ministry and two daughters taught parochial school for a time.

In April of 1880 the congregation voted that instead of Sunday School, catechetical lectures would be given by Pastor Kuegele every Sunday morning at 10 a.m.

It was recorded in January of 1880 that "Coyner's church was in such a condition as to make either repairs or a new building necessary; it was resolved that a committee be appointed to make calculations as to the feasibility and cost of repairing the old as well as the costs of a new building". A new church was agreed upon and a strip of about an acre

of land was bought from Mr. Saint Clair Koiner. This new brick church was located outside the cemetery at the southwest corner of the grove and it was decided that

"the new church be built 45' long, 35' wide, walls to be 13" thick with pilasters; a steeple of corresponding height; a square ceiling 16' high; 3 windows on a side with glass 10' x 16'; 2 single doors with arched transom".

Building Committee was Franklin Barger, H. Hahn, and Irenius Coiner.

After a severe winter, the new church was dedicated in the Spring of 1881, the speaker being the Rev. E. L. S. Tressel of Baltimore, President of the Concordia District of the Joint Synod of Ohio. (In 1878 the congregation had sent money to President Tressel to purchase altar vessels for Bethany). The name "Koiner's Church" was dropped and the new church called "Trinity". The full title of the congregation became "The Coyner's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Augusta County, Virginia, worshipping at Trinity and Bethany Churches".

The responsive service with some changes was adopted for use at Trinity in 1881; the ladies "were allowed the privilege of staining the floor of Trinity Church"; and in November it was resolved "that we permanently withdraw our connection with the Joint Synod of Ohio".

The celebration of the 400th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther was recorded in 1883.

In 1884 a monument was erected in memory of Pastor Seneker and is located on the spot in Trinity cemetery where the pulpit of the first log church and the first brick church had stood. The Pastor was granted permission to preach every 5th Sunday in Charlottesville; the feasibility of a High School was discussed, as was a proposal to build a school at Trinity.

Teacher F. Schroeder, educated at the Teacher's Seminary in Addison, Illinois, arrived in 1883 to teach the school at Bethany and in 1884 the school house was enlarged by adding 12' to the end. A frame schoolhouse was built at Trinity in 1885, making two schools, one at Trinity and one at Bethany, and a nine room residence was built at Bethany for \$1,177, to serve as teacher's residence and boarding house for children who could not reach the school from home.

The October 7th edition of the Lutheran Witness in 1886 carried an account of the English Lutheran Conference which assembled in Waynesboro, and closes with this comment:

"The great zeal shown by our lay brethren down there in Virginny for good and true Lutheranism, and the kindest of hospitality to which we Missourians were treated, has certainly left a lasting impression on us all".

In January of 1888 the congregation considered how much money could be raised for

building a new Bethany Church, and when Mr. Elijah Coiner reported \$1685 subscribed by February, a motion to build a new brick church at Bethany was unanimously carried, stipulating that it cost not less than \$1500 or more than \$2000. Elijah, Marion, S. C., and Theodore Coyner, Ezra and M. L. Leonard were the building committee. At the same meeting a motion to use wafers at communion was voted down, and the teacher's salary for 1889 was raised to \$400. Permission was given the young men of the congregation to organize "a society for the promotion of useful knowledge."

The new Bethany was dedicated February 20, 1889, the Rev. C. A. Frank of Zanesville, O., preaching the sermon. Building the brick church, moving the old frame structure to the eastern end of the property and fitting it up for a school room cost \$2100.

We read in the minutes of 1891:

"Whereas certain persons spread reports that this congregation does not desire strangers to attend its services, the Pastor is allowed the privilege of publishing the time and place of each meeting in the local papers".

The year 1892 saw the erection of a suitable monument to Michael and Margaret Keinadt in Trinity cemetery to replace the original sandstone marker, and a reunion of the family at Trinity Church, attended by 2000 Koiners gathered from many parts of the country. The Staunton newspaper account of the reunion states,

"Upon the long tables aggregating 300 feet, and after the multitude had feasted to fullness, there was left enough of choice food to supply a hungry regiment, and yet there were baskets and boxes of supplies in waiting to supply more than the 2000 persons present".

In 1892 the congregation was given a detailed report on the Pendleton County mission it had supported for five years, showing 87 baptisms, 32 confirmations, and 18 burials.

That same year witnessed the enlargement of Trinity cemetery with the addition of a plot 80' x 188' and a map of the cemetery made by the Rev. A. A. Hahn.

The commemoration of the one hundred years since the building of the first log church was held on October 31, 1894, with the Rev. Oelschlaeger of Richmond invited to deliver the sermon.

Two ladders to be used in case of fire had been purchased in 1892 for the teacher's residence at Bethany. The residence did burn in 1897 when Miss Lizzie Hall was matron, and she was reimbursed for the loss she sustained.