

1929-1949

On July 7, 1929, the Rev. Karl H. Maier was ordained and installed as Pastor by his brother, Dr. Walter A. Maier, the founder and first speaker on the International Lutheran Hour. The service was held at Trinity Church .

Pastor Maier was born in Boston , educated at Concordia, Bronxville and the St. Louis Seminary, where, he earned a B.D. degree, and S.T.M. degree. He continued at Washington University in St. Louis earning a Master of Arts degree, majoring in History and English. He married Esther Niehaus of St. Louis in 1929, and their home was blessed with Ruth, Marcia, Roger and Harry.

Postwar prosperity came to a dramatic end in the stock market collapse in October 1929, followed by an economic depression of greater severity than at any period in American history, having a profound effect in this area as well as in the rest of the country. But efforts to reduce the church debt continued, District and Synod were supported, while money and clothing were sent to the Immigrant Mission Board to aid the Russian refugees emigrating to Canada

The Senior Walther League purchased a mimeograph in 1932, making it possible to begin the publishing of "The Bulletin" which appeared monthly until October 1966, after which a bulletin was printed weekly.

The tenth anniversary of Bethany Church in Waynesboro was celebrated November 1, 1935, with the Rev. O.A. Sauer of Richmond preaching. That same year the congregation enjoyed an uncommon experience when it celebrated the 100th birthday of "Aunt Kate" Coyner Palmer (great-granddaughter of Michael Keinadt), with a special service at Trinity Church . She was born November 30, 1835 and died February 15, 1941, at the age of 105.

Pastor Maier was a pioneer in audio-visual work in the Lutheran Church and Bethany School 's curriculum and the church's program were augmented with a well-rounded visual education program. He produced motion picture films for the Synodical Department of Missionary Education and Publicity, the International Walther League, the Army and Navy Commission, the Southeastern District, Lutheran Camp Pioneer in New York , along with missionary filmstrips.

In "The Bulletin", November 1938, we read that Mrs. F. G. Harper had been received by transfer, with the comment "though we have received a goodly number into membership, this is only the third time in ten years that we have received a member by transfer",-this, inspite of the fact that the duPont Co. had begun operations in Waynesboro in 1929.

Because of the need for larger school and Sunday School facilities, an auditorium with a stage, two basement rooms, lavatories and a kitchen were added to the Bethanv School room in 1939.

Services were still being held at Bethany and Trinity on alternate Sundays, and in 1938 it was voted to conduct Sunday School in Waynesboro every Sunday when the services were being held at Trinity. Two years later it was voted to conduct services at Bethany every Sunday, with afternoon worship services at Trinity on the first and third Sundays. In 1947 it was voted to discontinue afternoon services and hold only special services, such as the Mission Festival, (started in 1909) funeral services, and Memorial Services (observed for the first time in 1947) at Trinity.

Sunday evening services were held regularly at Bethany, including the summer months; in 1942 evening services were discontinued because of gas rationing, but were soon started again and held every Sunday evening except during June, July, and August.

In 1941 the constitution and by-laws were revised and the name "Coyner's Congregation" was changed to "Bethany-Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church", to dispel any misconception of the character of the congregation that the public might have.

During World War II 31 men and women of the congregation served in all combat areas, and all returned safely except Lieut. John Henry Miller, Jr. who died in England, and E. Warren Barger who gave his life in the nation's service in the Air Force. Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Barger established an endowment fund in their son's memory, the income to provide equipment for Bethany School.

A Trinity Cemetery Trust Fund was established in 1941 to provide for the perpetual care of the cemetery. Also in 1941 a daily Vacation Bible School was held for the first time, providing two weeks of Bible study, handwork and recreation. This has continued to the present time, but in later years on a one-week basis.

The Waynesboro Red Cross used the Bethany kitchen as the surgical dressings work room until larger quotas and more volunteers made larger accommodations necessary. The Ladies' Aid equipped the kitchen, contributed to a Sound Projector Fund and, along with the Walther Leagues, provided much new equipment for the expanding Bethany School.

In 1945 the 20th anniversary of the building of Bethany Church in Waynesboro was celebrated with Pastor Plehn as guest speaker on Sunday, November 11 at 11 a.m. with music by the Fairfax Hall Junior College Choir. The evening service was followed by an informal reception. A special service was held the following Wednesday night with Dr. Walter A. Maier, the Lutheran Hour Speaker, delivering the sermon.

A Men's Club was organized in 1945, affiliated with the Lutheran Laymen's League, and elected Fillmore Coyner, president; Leland Baker, vice-president; Albert DeValve, secretary; Frank Foster, treasurer; and Will Leonard, membership chairman. One of their projects was providing a \$500 scholarship yearly for a ministerial student from Virginia. This group was host to the District Convention of the L.L.L. in 1957 and again in 1971.

The 175th anniversary of the Congregation was observed in 1947 with the former Pastor,

Dr. E. Friedrich returning to preach at the 11 a.m. service and at the informal service and reception in the parish building at 7:30 p.m. The anniversary booklet "Highlights of 175 Years of Divine Blessing" was based upon a historical sketch of the congregation compiled by Edna Coyner Leonard (Mrs. Fred B. Leonard).

Foreign relief and displaced families were one of the concerns as the aftermath of World War II, followed all too soon by the Korean War and the relief efforts it necessitated.