



Representing the Lutheran Southeast and Caribbean

Fall 2018

A Publication of the James R. Crumley Jr. Archives

Issue 27

WHY ARE CHURCHES CLOSING?

By Scott Reeves, Archives Assistant

Andy Banco was pleasantly surprised that over 200 people confirmed they will attend the homecoming at Resurrection Lutheran in Columbia, SC on September 2, 2018. This is one of the two final services prior to the September 30 closure date. The church currently has only about 30, mostly older members, so it was encouraging to realize that so many people still cared about the church. For Mr. Banco, the fact that many people would be driving in from out of town for the final special gathering is a testimony to the



Resurrection Lutheran Church, Columbia, SC

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wonderful history of a church that he says, "helped raise me and establish who I am." The people of Resurrection have treated him like family since he started attending Sunday school there as a child in the early 1960's. Evidently he is not the only one who feels such a connection.

So why is the church closing?

According to Mr. Banco, who now serves as a member of the church council and chairman of the finance committee, declining membership has led to the strain of limited resources. As a church that has remained debt-free from the very beginning of its existence, the

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congregation did not want to acquire debt now to try to maintain what seems to be unsustainable. So, once the church officially closes, ownership of the building will pass to the SC Synod and most members will be transferred to Incarnation Lutheran (also in Columbia), unless and until they find another church home.

I asked Mr. Banco if he had any sense of what led to the decline in membership. We discussed a series of articles, including "Losing Faith: Why South Carolina is abandoning its churches," in Columbia's *State Newspaper* (<https://www.thestate.com/news/local/article215384995.html>). The *Star Tribune* of July 8 also ran a significant article focused on Lutheran congregations in Minnesota (<http://www.startribune.com/as-minnesota-churches-close-a-way-of-life-fades/486037461/#1>). He was interested to learn from me of the 2012 Pew Research study about the rise of the "Nones," those adults who claim no religious affiliation. According to Pew, about one third of adults under age 30 are now "Nones" in spite of the fact that many still believe in God and pray.

Perhaps, Mr. Banco mused, it was a consequence of a general decline in morals and a shift in cultural ethics. When he was a child everyone learned the Ten Commandments, and if one claimed that the Bible said something it carried genuine cultural weight.

For the past three years, as the church has been anticipating its disbandment, Mr. Banco has remained in contact with the Crumley Archives. Preparing for holy closure is a painstaking process, and Mr. Banco has been extremely conscientious about knowing what materials he should be reserving for preservation. His proactiveness will eventually take the form of becoming a volunteer for the Archives, he hopes; that way, he can be a part of the process of formally organizing Resurrection's precious records. As he told me near the end of our talk, "This congregation has a wonderful story, and we don't want that story lost We believe that the Archives is one way to preserve the memory ... of the congregation and their contributions to the ... community." ♦

James R. Crumley Jr. Archives

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This newsletter, in its title and mast-head, pays homage to the *American Lutheran Survey* published by the noted Lutheran leader, Dr. Walton H. Greever, and was originally published at a site near the present-day Archives.

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Artist's rendering of Troutman-Gordy Atrium. Courtesy of ELCA Southeastern Synod.

THE SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD OFFICE FINDS A NEW HOME IN ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

By Armin Siedlecki

In September 2017, the Southeastern Synod office moved from its downtown Atlanta location to the building of St. John's Lutheran Church on Ponce de Leon Avenue in DeKalb County. To accommodate the new Synod office better, construction of a new addition to the building was begun in March and will be named the Troutman-Gordy Atrium, in honor of the late Rev. Dr. Gerald S. Troutman who had served as pastor of St. John's and bishop of the Southeastern Synod (LCA) and the Rev. H. Julian Gordy, the current bishop of the Southeastern Synod, who had served as an intern at St. John's.

Both the congregation and the building of St. John's have a long history. Founded in 1869 as the first Lutheran church in Atlanta, St. John's moved several times from its original downtown site to Inman Park in 1924 and in 1961 to its present location in the historic "Stonehenge Mansion," purchased by the church two years earlier and subsequently renovated. An architecturally unique octagonal sanctuary with an altar

at its center was added to the building in 1969. The Stonehenge Mansion was first built in 1914 by Samuel Hoyt Venable, with granite mined at Stone Mountain, which was owned by the Venable family before it was purchased by the State of Georgia in 1958. Sam Venable himself was a highly problematic figure in Southern history as one of the leaders in Ku Klux Klan politics in Atlanta; he had granted the Klan access rights to Stone Mountain for its rallies and other activities and was instrumental in the realization of the Confederate monument carved into the mountain. Sam's nephew James Venable later served as Imperial Wizard of the National Knights of the Klan.

Aware of the dark past associated with the building, the members of St. John's neither celebrate it nor try to hide it. Instead, the history has entered the theology of the congregation as a reminder that any place, regardless of past evils, can become sacred space by the grace of God and the good will of people doing God's work. ♦

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND YOUR PARISH RECORDS *Staff Reports*

Hurricane season is upon us, and though some of us were fortunate to avoid the havoc of Florence, many did not fair so well. When it comes to disaster preparedness, we typically think of plenty of bottled water, canned goods, and a full tank of gas. And while these things are important when inclement weather is imminent, remember, parishes, that there are a few additional steps that you can take to ensure your records are kept safe.

- ◆ Seal documents in plastic bags and elevate them.
- ◆ Make sure that you have supplies like mops, paper towels, a shop vac, fans, and dehumidifier handy for disaster recovery.
- ◆ Organize a congregation disaster response team. Investigate archival societies and response groups in your area, and get to know them.

The Crumley Archives is prepared to assist parishes in the wake of disaster, so add our telephone number to your disaster response team (803-461-3234). If you find yourself in a bad situation, here are a few measures that you can take in recovery efforts:

- ◆ Remove water and prevent it from coming in again if possible. Consider “sandless” sandbags as a precautionary resource;
- ◆ Employ a dehumidifier, fans, and decrease temperature to below 70 degrees. Mold can readily occur at temperatures above 73 degrees and relative humidity levels above 50%, so stabilizing your environment is the first and most important measure to take;
- ◆ If documents have been wet for more than 48 hours, and environmental conditions are humid, records can be frozen until they are able to be rehabilitated;
- ◆ High heat can permanently damage records, so avoid heaters and blow dryers.◆



Hurricane Florence dropped more than 18" of rain in some areas of the Carolinas and Virginia, causing widespread flooding. Photos from the town of Pittsboro, NC

PROGRESS CONTINUES WITH THE VIRGINIA SYNOD

By Shannon Smith, Archives Director

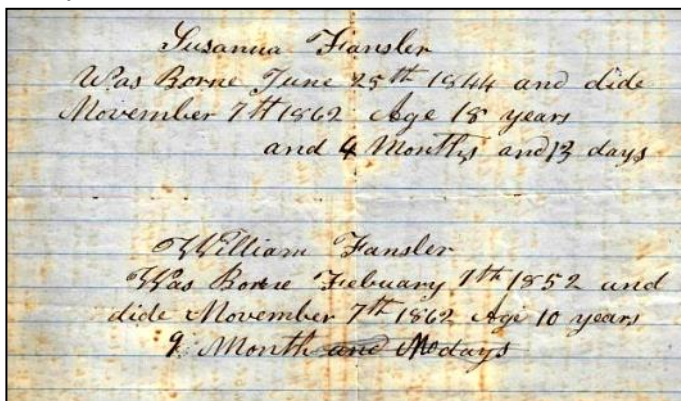
We've made tremendous strides processing the Virginia Synod collection this summer. If you've followed us closely, you know that we've accessioned more than 120 boxes belonging to churches, groups, institutions, and the synod. One fascinating discovery is a collection of manuscripts that belonged to Jacob Stirewalt. Among these manuscripts are several eulogies, and on the back of these funeral sermons, biographies of the deceased, and sometimes, an explanation for how the deceased passed. One notable eulogy tells of a man who froze to death in the mid-West. And another, a young man who died during the Civil War, only a few months after it began.

The details of the soldier's death are moving and are certainly unlike what most of us hear in a typical eulogy. Here is an excerpt:

"We are assembled here at this time upon a very solemn occasion—to the last tribute of respect for one of our friends who was accounted near and dear—of who, in obedience to the call of his country, of in [sic] defense of our Southern Confederate Constitutional rights personal liberty of safety, fell upon the battle field, near Manassas Junction, on the 21st of July 1861, from a shot which took effect upon and fractured his head and directly terminated his earthly career." The eulogy turns into a rousing political treatise on the nature of the Civil War. Stirewalt

describes the "North" as the aggressor and the "South" as protectors of "constitutional rights and liberties, achieved by our ancestors, and guaranteed unto us by the old Federal Constitution of the United States."

But where this sermon may lack in traditional notions of the Kingdom of God to be inherited by the blessed, in other sermons, Stirewalt delivers. For siblings Susanna and William Fransler, Stirewalt gives an encouraging sermon based upon I Cor. 15, reminding those mourning the loss of these young people the promises of Christ.



Biographical detail for Susanna and William Fransler

These eulogies tell us a great deal about history and what life was like during the mid-19th century. They're also testimonies to how Christian brothers and sisters grieved, the theology of the Resurrection that they all hoped for, and the way in which they bore each other's burdens. ♦



THE HISTORIC SEMINARY COLLECTION

by Shannon Smith, Archives Director

During the spring, the Crumley Archives inherited a box of historic Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary photographs. Combined with photographs that we already had archived, we have an incredibly rich pictorial history of what we call "The Historic Seminary Collection."



James Deal, class of 1896

The vast majority of these photographs are of the Columbia campus, which was established in 1911. So many of these photos are breath-taking in detail, documenting the campus's early beginning on "Seminary Ridge" with the construction of Beam Dormitory. As some of you historians of the seminary know, Beam was *the seminary* for many years, before buildings like Voigt and Price House were constructed. This magnificent stone building stands today as a testimony to the stalwart nature of the seminary.

These photographs have been compiled and used in various resources throughout the years. The most recent, and probably most well-known resource is Drs Susan McArver and Scott Hendrix's *A Goodly Heritage*. This work documents the very beginning of the seminary in Pomaria, SC, 1831, and carries readers through a span of 175 years, into the 21st century. The photographs that the authors selected are some of the most quintessential

images that we have archived. But there are many more photographs yet to be enjoyed by audiences interested in historic Columbia, S.C., religion in the South, classical seminaries, and Lutheranism in general. Over the next few months, we hope to select photographs, much like the one to the left, and create an exclusive online digital exhibit dedicated to historic Southern Seminary.

But of course, the seminary is more than just buildings. The men and women who roamed these campuses are the heart of the institution. Among the photographs in our collection are many candid shots of seminarians. Organizing and identifying these photographs motivated us to take a closer look at the more “formal” photographs we have of our seminarians, what we otherwise call our class composites. For our alumni readers, you will recall that these composites once hung in Reinartz Hall. I have been told that a past-time of Alumni Day was for guests to visit this large room beneath Christ Chapel and slowly browse the rows of seminarians, affectionately known as the “Cloud of Witnesses.” Since the removal of the composites, many seminarians have communicated their desire to see the pictures displayed again.

These composites are maintained between Crumley Archives and Lineberger Library. The Archives reached an agreement with the library that the earliest composite (which

predates the 20th century and the Columbia campus) up to 1950 would be maintained by the Archives, while all composites subsequent to 1950 would be maintained by Lineberger Library. What this arrangement has allowed the Archives to do is once again display these composites in the gallery area of the archives. We have Perry Bouknight and Earl Sease to thank for their hard and detailed work, hanging more than 30 of these composites on a very thick concrete wall!

We understand, though, that not everyone can easily admire these photographs, given the obstacles of time and proximity. And that is why the Crumley Archives has recently launched the “LTSS Alumni Project” on its website. An entire page of our website has been dedicated to the graduates of LTSS, but with a bonus: rather than stopping at 1950, we have scanned up to 2013. Here’s the link to our website so you can enjoy the project, too: <https://www.crumleyarchives.org/ltss-alumni-project>. ♦



Volunteers Perry Bouknight and Earl Sease hard at work

Photo from Google Maps



ST. ANDREW'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

CONGRATULATIONS
ON YOUR 125 YEAR
ANNIVERSARY!

"We rejoice in our calling to be the 'College Church' at Lenoir-Rhyne University, a faithful partner in the life of our Hickory community and a loyal, leading congregation in the North Carolina Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America."

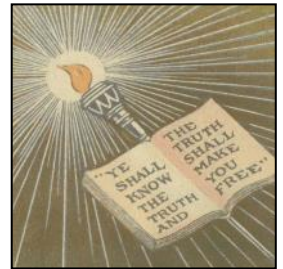
LIVE 
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Your Thrivent dollars really do matter. Since our enrollment in the program, we have raised over \$8,000 for Crumley Archives!

Thank you for your support.

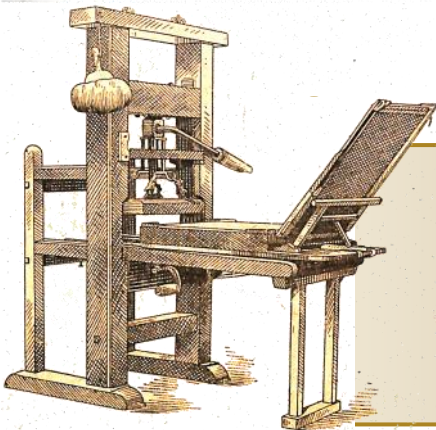
Notice Anything Different?

The Archival Survey has a new format! Not only is it more compact, it has an updated masthead. The image above is a detail from the earliest covers of The American Lutheran Survey. Our new masthead uses elements from it, in a nod to our Lutheran legacy. ♦



Homecoming? Anniversary?
Advertise Your Church
Events Here!

Contact the Archives
at 803-461-3234 for details.



LUTHERANS AND PROHIBITION—100 Years Later

By Ellen Fishburne Triplett

Can you remember the last time you danced in a Conga line? Of course you can, if you attended “Lutherans and Prohibition: 100 Years Later.” The April 27th event in beautiful Alumni Hall took us back to the days of Gatsby, speakeasies, and flappers.

Dr. Susan McArver enlightened us with her presentation: “The Cheerfulness Which Comes from Beerfulness Leads to Tearfulness,” Lutherans and Prohibition in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

Guests enjoyed delicious *hors d’oeuvres* and (perfectly legal) libations. The evening wound down with some hotsy-totsy hoofing by Richard Durlach and Breedlove, of Big Apple fame. After performing popular dances from the Twenties, they led guests in a lively Conga.

What surprises lie in store with our next event? Stay tuned; you won’t want to miss it! ♦



FRIENDS OF THE ARCHIVES

Since the last issue of the *Archival Survey* (Spring, 2018), the following friends have made contributions to the James R. Crumley Jr. Archives. We are most grateful for these gifts because they enable us to preserve our church's history and to assist researchers, congregations, and institutions in their work. If you have made a contribution since Spring 2018 and your name is not listed here, please accept our apologies and send us a note indicating the amount and date of your gift. Also, if you've made a donation in honor of others, be assured we have written them directly.

If your congregation could make a gift to the Archives, that would be a wonderful support. We would be glad to supply any information you might need to help you make such a request at your church. Many thanks for your gifts!

From Individuals

The Rev. & Mrs. James Addy,
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Alexandra Leach, Columbia, SC

Adele Lindberg, Elgin, SC,
in honor of Dr. Susan Wilds McArver

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Bishop and Mrs. Herman Yoos, Chapin, SC

Jim and Rachel Young, Leesville, SC

Cristy Fossum, Comer, GA ,
in memory of Mrs. Betty Wilds

The Rev. Dr. & Mrs. William Trexler,
Mt. Pleasant, SC,

in memory of Mrs. Dorothy Trexler

Congregations

Corinth Lutheran Church, Saluda, SC

Grace Lutheran Church, Lakeland, FL

Lutheran Church of the Resurrection,
Columbia, SC

St Andrew's Lutheran Church, Hickory,
NC, *in honor of 125th Anniversary of the
Church*

St. Luke's Lutheran Church,
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