

War and Peace...and War Again 1917 - 1945

As the year 1916 came to a close, the country was on the verge of something that would change it forever. Troubles had been brewing for years in Europe, but the Americans wanted nothing to do with those family feuds. The Hapsburgs and the Romanovs, and all the other ruling families in Europe, seemed as far off to most Americans then as the planet Pluto seems to us today. We had left Europe to get away from this type of thing. Isolationism was the word of the day. But no matter how isolated we cared to be, there were already dark storm clouds over all of Europe, and they were quickly crossing the Atlantic Ocean to fill our skies with the terror of war.

By the time that the United States became an active participant in what was to be referred to as the World War in April of 1917, many things had changed here at home. The period of great change that had just preceded the war had served to push the two congregations forward into the twentieth century. The old church and its nineteenth-century, and even earlier, ways were now one and the same . . . both things of the past. In its place was a church, and a people, ready to face all of the challenges that a new era would bring.

The period from 1917 to 1945 was one very different from the period that had just ended. Where that was a period of great change within our church, this was not. That period was one of relative peace while this, on the other hand, was a period that would start with a great war and end with an even greater one. Much of the change to the church during this period would be to the structure itself and not to the congregation, as had been the case in the preceding period. Even though this period would span many more years than the one that had preceded it, the majority of events that took place during it would not have as far-reaching effects on the congregation as those that had taken place between 1906 and 1917.

One exception to this statement was the period of time during which the United States was involved in World War 1-1917 and 1918. In a country at war, everything is felt deeply by the citizens of that country. Belts are tightened all around and, as the boys march off to fight the battles, those left at home join in to do their part, too. The following is a list of sons of Ebenezer who joined⁴ the armed forces to fight during the war:

Paul F. Ebert	Charles O. Moyer
Charles N. German	Floyd T. Oswald
Howard E. Greenawald	Palmer H. Oswald
William H. Gross	Edwin J. Peter
Lewis M. Heintzelman	Charles H. Rabenold
Urban N. Heintzelman	Nevin O. Schellhamer
Mark W. Hoffman	Edgar H. Sittler

Ralph C. Horn	Ralph H. Sittler
Dr. P. Menno Hunsicker	Arthur D. Snyder
William J. Krause	Leroy M. Wehr
George M. Loch	Harold J. Weiss
Charles R. Miller	

It is thought that all of these men did survive the war itself. That is rather remarkable, given the large number of men who fought from our church and the high number of casualties that were experienced in this war.

However, one of the above, William J. Krause, a member of the Lutheran congregation, did die after the war of encephalitis brought on by the "shocks and strains of the World War."

A son of Frank and Angelina Krause, he enlisted in the Evacuation Ambulance Corps at the onset of the war, and was trained at Camp Greenleaf in Georgia. He served for a period of twenty-one months on the battlefields of France, before returning home. It was felt that the hardships that he suffered during the war were the direct cause of the disease that ended his life on August 28, 1925.

Meanwhile, back on the home front, things were fairly quiet. The social activity that had always filled the lives of the church members was at a bare minimum. There was no place for frivolity while husbands, sons, and fathers were dying for their country on the battlefields of Europe. We don't have too many records of the period during the war that would let us know what was taking place at home. One thing we do know for certain, though, is that the congregations did help to support the war effort through the purchase of Liberty Bonds. A recently published history of the city of Allentown notes that numerous county-wide bond drives were held to raise money for the war effort, with the rural areas showing good support. This bond drive was probably the impetus for Ebenezer's purchase of these bonds. The bonds would continue to provide interest to the church right up, and into, the depression years.

The other event that took place was the dedication on Saturday evening, April 20th, 1918, of the National Service Flag, commemorating the men who were so valiantly fighting for their country across the ocean.

During the year 1918, a topic which must have come under discussion was that of sanitation. It was during this year that the great influenza or, as it was better known, the Spanish-flu epidemic hit the country, killing thousands nation-wide.

Rev. Ebert's pastoral records list a number of burials performed, within his charge, of people who passed away from the dreaded disease or of pneumonia, which was an associated disease. The death toll in many cities was so great that undertakers couldn't bury the people fast enough and, ultimately, ended up with coffins stacked one on top of the other, waiting for burial.

The spread of a disease of this type is generally associated with the degree to which germs can be introduced into the populace. One factor often mentioned is hygiene, or the lack of it. It is possible that it was with hygiene and sanitation in mind that the Joint Council-Consistory decided to build new toilet facilities for the church. In 1918, upon a motion by James Loy and Ed Snyder, the trustees were instructed to build new outhouses, "with the names 'men' and 'women' to be printed on the double toilet and toilet conveniences for men to be built." The consistory secretary went on to explain, "the motive being (for building the outhouses) to insure moral decency & cleanliness, and avoid necessary embarrassment in the house of God."

Another interesting subject that was dealt with at the same consistory meeting in 1918 was that of unruliness at church services. What event precipitated this discussion is lost to us now; however, the Joint Council-Consistory's response is interesting. Whatever the situation, it must have been going on for some time, for H. J. Landes "complained that it was impossible to continue at the present rate." Apparently the situation was one that involved children, for James W. Loy said that "the parents should be held responsible" and suggested that every consistory member should feel duty-bound to admonish all disorderly conduct.

Rev. Ebert "emphasized the necessity of being orderly in our conduct ourselves as the first means of preserving order." He then suggested "that" a kind word from a loving, self-respecting individual would largely remedy the situation." After much discussion on the subject, it was decided, upon recommendation by Rev. Althouse, "that the Joint Council shall, by virtue of their office, *preserve order* at all regular and special services of Ebenezer Church."

One last subject discussed at this particular meeting had to do with the old German church constitution. As written previously, the World-War-I era was an era of intense dislike for anything German. It was at this meeting that a suggestion was made to have the constitution translated from German to English. Abner Reimert argued that "most young folks couldn't read German" and that because of this, the translation should take place, with English versions of the constitution printed and distributed to the congregations. We can speculate that this may really have been just another attempt to help phase out the usage of the German language in the church, brought on by the anti-German sentiments that were running so high in the country during this period.

Whatever the case may have been, it was not one that was resolved quickly. A committee was appointed, consisting of the pastors and elders of both congregations and, as the records note, "it being understood that all this committee would do was to translate the German constitution and add such parts as were adopted" over the years since it was written.

By the early part of 1919 the document had been translated, but at that point the Joint Council-Consistory decided to look into revising the constitution, and the whole thing was tabled indefinitely. Then in 1925, the constitution situation was again brought up and, again, a committee was appointed to look into it.

When all was said and done, what started out as a translation of the old German constitution in 1918 ended up as the approval of a completely new constitution in June of 1932. Seven hundred

copies of the new constitution were printed and distributed to members, twelve years after it was originally suggested.

If one generalization can be made about this period, it would most likely be that this was definitely not a period of time when things were done with any amount of speed, as can be very easily shown by the previous episode. It seems that there was an almost lackadaisicalness with which situations were handled. It's as if the attitude taken were, "if the church isn't falling down, then we don't have to hurry about what we do."

Another example of this slowness in coming to grips with things was the stable situation. For many years there existed, in the general area of the picnic stand just south of the old cemetery, a number of rows of sheds in which church attendees could shelter their buggies, wagons, and horses, while attending church functions. It seems that each individual stall in these sheds was privately owned and, as such, the church had no say over what could be done to them (see Figures #22 and #23).

By the year 1928, the automobile had come into widespread usage so much so that most, if not all, of these sheds were no longer needed. In order to adapt with the times and to follow the old saying of "in with the new and out with the old," the suggestion was made to remove the sheds, upon approval by their owners. Why, only a few months earlier, the Joint Council Consistory had ordered many loads of crushed stone, obviously in order to make a parking area for these new autos that had taken the place of the old horse and buggy.

Upon a resolution of the Joint Council-Consistory, on July 30, 1928, James Loy and Nathan Snyder were empowered to see the owners of the first row of sheds and, if permission were granted, they were to be removed. It seems that this empowerment went no further, for at another meeting in January of 1932, James Loy and Alvin German were again instructed to "see the shed owners and have as many sheds razed as possible."

What the holdup had been, all these years, we don't know. Possibly some people were reluctant to see these old sheds pass away, as they were a sign of a much simpler time when people still came to church by horse and carriage. Maybe others just didn't want to part with something that belonged to them. Whatever obstacle had held this up for so many years must have been removed by the year 1936. At the year's first meeting in January, it was finally reported that "quite a number of the sheds had been razed, and that quite a few still remained."

A final resolution to the shed situation would take place in January of 1937, at which time it would be reported that the shed-removal committee was discharged as all the sheds had finally been removed and the area partially graded. Final grading would be completed in 1939, over ten years after the idea was initially discussed.

The situation with the sheds would not be the only instance during this period in which the automobile's effect on society would be felt by the joint congregations. It seems that at some point in late 1929 or early 1930, a decision was made in Harrisburg to relocate part of the state highway, which passed by the front of Ebenezer Church, to an area whereby it would completely bypass the church.

What precipitated this move we don't know. Possibly it was an attempt to bypass the many small villages that the route snakes its way through as it winds through the countryside. Whatever the case may have been, we know it didn't set well with the church leaders. A special meeting of the Joint Council-Consistory Was called on February 3, 1930, at which the following resolutions were adopted, copies of which were sent to then State Senator Horace Schantz, State Assemblyman H. Stanley Welty, Governor Fisher, and to the Lehigh County Commissioners. It stated:

"Be it resolved by this joint council of Ebenezer Union Church of New Tripoli, in the township of Lynn, state of Pa., in meeting assembled, acting individually and collectively for the best interest and sincere wishes of our six hundred and seventy members, do hereby express our displeasure of the proposed attempt to relocate the state highway route known as no.226 in Lynn Township. And be it further

"Resolved that we the joint council of the Ebenezer Union Church of New Tripoli, Pa., do hereby express our pleasure of and unanimously ask for the retention of the State Highway route no. 226 as originally laid out, adopted and passed by the State of Pa., in Lynn Township. Therefore be it further

"Resolved that the joint council of the Ebenezer Union Church of New Tripoli, Pennsylvania, acting for the welfare and behalf of the 670 members does hereby pray to the State Highway Department of Pa. and respectfully represents:

"1. That we have the information that the State Highway Dept. is planning to relocate route no.226 in Lynn Township.

"2. That the proposed relocation would entail heavy land damages, as it appears that the new route would not be on or near any present highway, but would cross private property throughout.

"3. That route no.226 as presently laid out from route no.285 near the Ebenezer Union Church at New Tripoli northwardly, is a more desirable and practical route.

"4. That the proposed new route would put an unnecessary burden upon Lynn Township, as it would have to maintain the abandoned portion.

"5. That the proposed new route would not be of benefit to Lynn Township or any other township south of Lynn as it would be far away from its populated sections and very remote from the general traffic.

"6. That the old route as they believe the adopted and established route, is a greater accommodation to all the public, that the same is a mail route, accommodating many people and that from all angles they believe improvement of the route northwardly from near the Ebenezer Union Church at New Tripoli, is the more to be desired from the standpoint of the general traveling public.

"7. That route no.226 as originally laid out is a much safer highway to travel than the proposed new route.

"8. That the public either resident or traveling from any location west of Lynn Township would be greatly handicapped and discommoded by the proposed new route in so far that they would have a more greater distance to travel on a great deal more dangerous road.

"Wherefore, the undersigned respectfully pray the State Highway Dept. to make the improvements of route no.226 as originally contemplated, instead of abandoning a portion of the same, as it appears, is presently considered."

The above resolutions were then signed by the members of the Joint Council-Consistory and sent off to the aforementioned recipients. It is noted that only Mr. Welty acknowledged receipt of the petition. Whether or not these "resolutions" had any direct effect on the State Highway Department's decision is not known; however, we do know that as of today, a state highway still passes by the front doors of Ebenezer Church.

When people think of a church building, there are probably two things that readily come to mind: the church bell and stained-glass windows. So was the case with Ebenezer Church, during the early part of the 1920s. The church bell and stained-glass windows were on the minds of many people.

In January of 1921 a motion was brought before the Joint Council-Consistory by Edwin D. Snyder, and seconded by Edwin J. Fister, to appoint a committee of two to look into getting information about a new bell. It seems that at some point in time the old bell had become defective, and there was a general consensus that a new bell should be purchased.

A number of bell manufacturers were contacted, and the best offer came from the McShane Bell Company of Baltimore, Maryland. It was from this company that the church's two previous bells had also been purchased. The duty of corresponding with the company was handed over to the Hon. James A. Miller, former State Senator from Lehigh County, who was instructed that no bell was to be ordered until the money to buy it had been collected.

A general canvass was made of the congregations for the purchase of the bell, and also for funds to build a new pigsty on the church farm. Enough funds were collected, and a bell was ordered. Upon its arrival, it replaced the old bell in the church steeple, where it still hangs today. Dedication services were held on Whitmonday, May 16th, 1921, at 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

A little less than one year later, the idea of placing memorial art-glass" or stained-glass windows in the church would be presented. An information committee was appointed to whom the people could go who wanted to purchase windows. The four trustees, Osville J. Moser, Franklin Kerschner, John S. Mosser, and Allen J. Kistler were appointed to this committee, and they would also be responsible for the installation of the windows. The time to purchase the windows was held open for two weeks, closing on April 1, 1922.

Seventeen windows needed to be purchased. The history of Ebenezer Church written in 1940 states that the number was twenty; however, that is incorrect. The three windows located in the balcony, facing to the south, we believe to have been placed in the church upon its completion, or sometime shortly thereafter. Based upon photographic evidence, we can see in the photo, shown previously in this work and believed to have been taken in 1900, that these three windows were already in the church. In addition, these windows, we believe, were probably placed by Revs. Fegley and Helffrich and, possibly, by the church choir. The one smaller window is in memory of Mrs. Marie Fegley and Mrs. Hannah Long, the mothers of Rev. Fegley and his wife. The other smaller window is in memory of the Helffrich family. The large center window is placed in memory of Frederick Smith, organist from 1850 to 1876, and of his wife, Mary Margaret. Based on style alone, these windows are much more typical of the Victorian period, with their darker colors and geometric designs, than of the later period when the other windows were added.

The seventeen windows were quickly purchased by congregation members and church organizations. In almost no time at all, what had once been tall blank panes of glass were transformed into beautiful memorial windows. It is not known what company designed and crafted these windows, but they are definitely pieces of fine quality workmanship.

Each of the seventeen windows does have a small circular panel, near its peak, upon which a Christian symbol has been painted. A number of the symbols repeat themselves, but those that are there are symbols that should be familiar to everybody.

They are as follows:

A gold communion cup with a wafer,

Grapes and wheat,

An anchor with a rope entwined around it,

A shock of wheat,

Lilies,

An open book with the Greek symbols for the beginning and the end (alpha and omega),

A dove with an olive branch,

A crown with a wooden cross through its opening,

A crown with a gold cross,

Palms and a cross,

A descending dove,

A lamp on a Bible and, lastly,

A lamb resting on a book from which extend seven seals and a banner waving overhead.

The windows were placed by the following:

The Ladies Aid Society, in honor of Rev. A. O. Ebert,

The Ladies Aid Society, in honor of Rev. H. A. Althouse,

James Bittner,

Granville W. Snyder and family, in memory of Jacob D. Snyder,

Leah Weaver, in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Reuben Weaver,

Mrs. Snyder and Mrs. Kressley, in memory of Elias Snyder and Dr. J. A. Kressley,

Mr. & Mrs. Lewis F. Mosser, in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Mosser,

William H. Hoffman and family, John S. Mosser and family, in honor of the choir,

The Lutheran congregation, in memory of Rev. H. S. Fegley, Pastor, 1869 - 1906,

Mr. & Mrs. William J. Peter,

Nathan Snyder and family,

Mr. & Mrs. Allan J. Kistler,

The Missionary Society, in memory of Rev. W. A. Reimert,

Mr. & Mrs. William J. Wertman,

Mrs. Heller and Mrs. Brittner, in memory of Harrison Saul and wife, and

An anonymous donor, in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Paul Hunsicker.

This was definitely a period of generosity on the part of church members and organizations. A number of other improvements took place during this period, often as the result of bequests by groups and individuals. New carpet was placed in the church auditorium by the Ladies Aid Society in 1921. 1925 was a year of many improvements. In January, the Ladies Aid Society paid for the painting and general fixing-up of the Sunday-School room. In April, it was decided to get the church wired and have electric lights installed.

The latter half of the 1920s saw further modifications. Radiators were placed in the church in 1927, and a new boiler was installed at the end of 1929. In 1928 authorization was given to do a remodeling of the Sunday-School room, a project which would be completed in 1929. It was decided that the motor room be diminished to as small as possible, and that the stage be moved from the north end of the basement to the south, with a dressing room to be built alongside of it. Lastly, a wall of sliding, frosted-glass-paneled windows that extended from the Sunday School entrance, behind the old stage to the west wall of the building, were to be replaced with a permanent wall. The Sunday School rooms today remain much the same way, except for the addition of the folding wooden walls installed in the 1960s.

All structural modifications aside, the year 1924 was the year that the Reformed congregation was to see another ministerial change. This time it would not be a death that would take away the Reformed minister, but an offer from another congregation. The Swamp-Amity Charge, near Boyertown, was in search of a minister, and an offer was tendered to Rev. Althouse, which he accepted. He would leave New Tripoli, and Ebenezer, in the latter part of 1924.

A replacement would be found for Rev. Althouse in the person of one Rev. Thomas Henry Bachman. Rev. Bachman was born June 16th, 1885, at Neffs. He attended the local schools and eventually advanced to the Muhlenberg Prep School. In the fall of 1902 he entered Muhlenberg College. He was an active member of the college community, participating in many clubs, and as the assistant editor of the "Ciarla," the Muhlenberg College yearbook. His yearbook notes that at that early age he was already following a path towards the ministry. His fellow classmates wrote of him that "He is of a kind, loving, and genial disposition, rather comic at times, but always good-natured and tenderhearted."

He was graduated from Muhlenberg College with the class of 1906, from whence he entered the Reformed Seminary at Lancaster. In 1909 he was ordained, and held his first pastorate in the Bethel Charge in Lebanon County. Pastorates followed at Great Swamp-Chestnut Hill in the Goshenhoppen Classis, and in Northampton. It was from this charge that the call to Heidelberg and Ebenezer came.

Rev. Bachman was forty years old upon his arrival at Ebenezer, and already fairly well-established in his career. Today, Rev. Bachman is fondly remembered by many church members. He was a very-by-the-book minister who knew his Bible well. Not always the most dynamic of ministers, he could still get his point across effectively. He was well-liked and would eventually serve one of the longest pastorates in the church's history.

The years during the great depression were difficult years for everybody. Many people went without, and many things went undone. The prosperity of the 1920s that, fortunately, had allowed for so many improvements to the church was gone, only to be replaced by hard times. Everyone, it seems, felt the effects of the depression . . . the church included.

For many years things were discussed at the Joint Council Consistory meetings, but they were never acted upon. Changes and improvements were put off indefinitely. Fortunately, so many things had either been repaired, improved, or replaced during the '20s that the effect on the church really wasn't as bad as it could have been. Still, it was felt.

One thing that wasn't harmed, but actually flourished during the depression years, was the social life of the church. Given the times, this is understandable. With the high-rolling days of the 1920s behind them, many people, forced by the depression to live much less extravagant lives, were returning to the simpler days of their forefathers. Many of the things like church socials, that had somewhat fallen into disfavor during the '20s, were once again becoming popular.

From the year 1931 through 1936, a series of annual "Homecoming" get-togethers were held. The object was to provide people with an opportunity to come back to their roots once more. The days had passed when the majority of people were born, raised, lived and then died in one town. Over the years, many people had gone away to seek success and fortune in different locales. With these Homecoming gatherings, people were able to return to the places of their childhood and renew old acquaintances, and once again worship in their old church.

The event, it seems, must have been very successful on its very first try. By the second year it was held, it was necessary to have the State Police there to help direct traffic. From the very beginning, the day-long event was held at Ontelaunee Park. The programs would vary from year to year with lectures, skits, and singing as the primary entertainment.

Take, for example, the 1933 Homecoming Celebration held August 20th of that year. "The weather was ideal" that day as Attorney Francis Gildner addressed the morning audience. Rev. E. Elmer Sensenig and well-known Allentown minister, the Rev. Klick, spoke in the afternoon. The evening's program was presided over by then Lehigh County Judge Richard Iobst. The afternoon's entertainment was provided by the Male Chorus of the Slatington Lodge of the Knights of Pythias. The evening saw a performance by the Weisenberg Choir, with Attorney Harry Schoenly singing, "I Would Be True."

The entertainment did vary somewhat but, for the most part, it followed the same format. One year saw addresses by Revs. Clarence Rahn and Corson Snyder, and another year the Young People's Council performed a play titled "The Road to Happiness."

In addition to the entertainment, another great attraction was certainly the food that was served. Chicken and veal were the main fare, cooked and served by corps of volunteers from both congregations.

After a few years, it seems attendance must have started to fall off at these events. By the year 1935, there was some discussion as to whether the Homecoming celebration should even be held. It was, but the year 1936 would be the last year that a Homecoming celebration of this type would be held.

As old-timers returned for that last celebration, held in 1936, they were greeted by a surprise. In the interval since the previous year's Homecoming, some real changes were made to the church, as most had known it. Upon a suggestion by the Ladies Aid Society, ever living up to its constitutional objective of church beautification, the Joint Council-Consistory appointed a committee to look into a rebuilding of the chancel area of the church.

As originally built, the chancel area, as can be seen by early photographs, was not very accessible to the congregation. An altar rail went along the front of the chancel, similar to the rail presently around the choir area, separating the chancel from the auditorium. The pulpit was on a raised platform in the center of this area. Access to the pulpit was gained by steps placed at the rear and to the sides of the platform. The area was essentially cordoned off to those not taking an active part in the service.

The reasoning behind this rebuilding has not been fully presented to any of the members of The Anniversary Committee.

We have heard, and it has been speculated, that it was done to open up the chancel area and provide more accessibility to this area, especially during communion. With a change to communion being held four times a year, when it previously was only held twice a year, this inaccessibility to the chancel area probably became even more pronounced. The original design, with the altar rail, tended to separate the minister from the congregation and set him apart from them. It was for this reason that we feel this remodeling was done. Again, we can only speculate on this, as no one has been able to frilly explain the reasoning.

Whatever the case may have been, the committee made up of both ministers, Raymond Mantz, Lewis Kunkel, and Charles Krum, set about designing plans for the remodeling of the chancel area. The plans, as presented, received unanimous approval. In a period of just under two months, the transformation of the chancel of the church took place. The old platform was removed and a new, more spacious, one was built . . . one with room for both a pulpit and a lectern. Access to the chancel was provided by a set of wide steps in the front, opening up the chancel to everyone. The rededication services were held on June 28th, in conjunction with the Homecoming celebration. Today, over fifty years later, the chancel remains as redesigned in 1936.

A sad note during those depression years was the sudden passing of the much-beloved leader of the Lutheran congregation, Rev. Alfred O. Ebert. After serving the Lutherans for a period of twenty-eight years, a heart attack in the early hours of November 14, 1934, took the minister's life. Prior to that, he had been ill, but it was felt that his condition was not serious.

The services, held at the church, were attended by so many people that the church basement was again utilized. The services were conducted by Rev. Corson Snyder, president of the Allentown Conference, and Rev. Dr. E. P. Potteiger of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. Many tributes were paid to Rev. Ebert and to his many faithful years of service to his congregation. After the services, his body was laid to rest in the church cemetery.

For the first time in many years, the Lutheran congregation was without a leader. In contrast, the Reformed congregation was already on its third minister in as many years. It seems that the Lutherans wasted no time in making their choice of a replacement. In just under five months, an offer went out to a twenty-five-year-old seminary student by the name of Rev. Leroy M. Bond.

Born in Hamburg on May 24, 1909, he was the son of Charles E. and Irene (Miller) Bond. Upon graduation from the Hamburg school system, he entered into Albright College in the fall of 1927.

After two years, he transferred to Muhlenberg College, graduating with the class of 1931. From there, he went on to the Philadelphia Seminary, from which he graduated in 1934. It was from there that he received his call to Ebenezer. He was ordained in his home church, St. John's Lutheran in Hamburg, and began his duties on the first Sunday in May, 1935. His installation took place on the second Sunday of May at Jacob's Church in Jacksonville.

The arrival of this young and, at the time, unmarried minister to the church, would be a real change for the Lutheran congregation. The age difference alone, between Revs. Ebert and Bond, would naturally make for some change. Whatever the case, it seems that Rev. Bond was well-received by the Lutheran congregation, and immediately fit right in. Many people very fondly remember Rev. Bond today for the likeable, friendly young man that he was.

Finally, the 1930s did see a resolution to two matters which appeared to have plagued the Joint Council-Consistory from its beginnings in 1908. The first was the problem of filling the position of janitor and also the rental of the church house and farm. As written earlier, the position of janitor and the rental of the church properties were periodically auctioned off to the lowest and highest bidders, respectively.

The position of janitor had passed to numerous individuals over the years, some of those being James L. Bittner, George A. G. Kistler, and Robert Kershner. In January of 1930, Reuben Fister made an offer to the Joint Council-Consistory by which he would operate the farm and live in the farmhouse, rent free, and in return would perform the duties of janitor on a no-fee basis. The Joint Council-Consistory accepted this offer, bringing a temporary solution to this problem which had followed them from their beginnings.

Upon Reuben's death in the final days of 1934, his heirs and assigns were asked whether they would be interested in continuing on in his former position. His son, Edwin J. Fister, stepped forward, and upon approval by the Joint Council-Consistory, he and his family stepped into the position that had formerly been held by his father. Edwin Fister would continue to fill this position until 1948, providing a solution to both problems for many more years.

The other problem to which the Joint Council-Consistory received a resolution, or at least was able to wash its hands of was the situation with the cemetery. Since the earliest days of the cemetery, care of the graves was left to the church to administer. Funds for this care were generally received in one of two ways: bequests from wills or contributions by family members. Each contribution was evaluated by the Joint Council-Consistory to determine its acceptability. Once accepted, those funds were then used to care for that family's graves.

By the 1930s, the cemetery had many graves which needed to be tended. Administration of this, in addition to the Joint Council-Consistory's regular tasks, was beginning to take up an inordinate amount of time. The situation, it seems, had gotten so out-of-hand that something had to be done. A committee was appointed by the Joint Council-Consistory to look into the matter. Its final resolution was, upon advice by its attorney, that the cemetery should be incorporated.

In October of 1937, the incorporation process was begun. It was decided that the "Ebenezer Union Cemetery of New Tripoli," as it was called, should have four trustees. Two trustees would

he chosen from each congregation. The first four trustees were Charles Betz, Allen Rau, Granville Snyder, and Homer Frey, and they were elected by acclamation.

Eventually all cemetery duties, such as grave-digging and care of lots, were turned over to this Cemetery Association. The final step in this incorporation process was that the two congregations turned over all monies in their possession, for perpetual-care lots, to the Cemetery Association. Over the years the Cemetery Association has added numerous parcels of land to the cemetery, increasing its size considerably. Today, the Cemetery Association is still governed in much the same way as it was upon its incorporation.

By the time the decade had once again turned, much of the crisis in America was over. The worst of the depression was past, but it would take World War II to completely remove the last vestiges of this troubled era. Although the period of 1940 thru 1945 was only a six-year span, it was definitely an active six years at Ebenezer Church.

The year 1940, the last year of peace for that half-decade, would be a banner year for both congregations. It was an anniversary year at Ebenezer. The year 1940 would mark the 200th anniversary of the congregations and the 50th anniversary of the present church building. In honor of those two rather momentous occasions, celebrations were planned.

In anticipation of the celebrating to be done that year, it was decided in either late 1939 or very early in 1940 that a major redecorating of the church should take place, following on the heels of the chancel redesign of 1936. In January of 1940, bids were taken on this project, which was to include an entire painting of the church's interior, including a varnishing of the pews and woodwork. The low bidder for the project was Clinton V. Dorward of Slatington, coming in at a price of \$1,982.78.

As times change so, too, do styles. The highly-decorative and very-ornamental styles of the late Victorian period, which had prevailed when the church was built, and in which style the church had been decorated, had fallen out of style many years previous. By 1940 these designs were looked upon as excessive, oftentimes too busy and, at best, bordering on gaudy. With this in mind, Mr. Dorward and his two sons set about redesigning the church's interior. Little could these people have known that, barely fifty years hence, these designs that were so out-of-style would once again be more frilly appreciated for their beauty and richness of design.

For many months the Dorwards worked on this project. The Victorian faux columns that were to either side of the chancel, the torches, the palms—all were painted over. In its place were painted new designs. Each one was created from a myriad of stencils, painstakingly applied layer by layer, to achieve the final look. Much of the interior painting was handled by Clinton Dorward's two sons, George and Roy, with much stencil-holding assistance coming from the janitor's two daughters, Eleanor and Alma.²⁴

Clinton Dorward provided assistance throughout the job. However, one facet of the project remains today as a tribute to the skills and talent of Mr. Dorward, and that is the painting of Jesus which graces the chancel of the church. Clinton Dorward was a trained and talented painter who was educated at the Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. His talents are very apparent. One

only needs to look at his artwork to see that. The painting itself was painted on a canvas that had been set up in the church basement.²⁵ When completed, it was attached to the surface upon which it hangs today, covering an earlier painting of Jesus that had adorned the chancel. One interesting thing that we have learned about the painting is that church member Eleanor (Fister) Snyder was used as a model by Mr. Dorward when painting the lips of Christ.²⁶

It is interesting to note that the designs that were used by the Dorwards in 1940 are very reminiscent, style-wise, of the Victorian designs that they had been hired to replace. To the unknowing observer, this intricate stencil-work could easily be assumed to be the original interior decoration of the church.

While this task was busily being completed, another group of people were also hard at work on a task of another nature. As early as July of 1939, we have records indicating that the anniversary celebrations of 1940 were being planned. At that time, a committee appointed by the Joint Council-Consistory was just getting started in writing a history of Ebenezer Church. That committee, consisting of Carl Ebert, John Weiss, Elmer Zellner, Ed Greenawalt, and Allen Rau, would eventually author the text known today as "A Half Century of Ebenezer Union Church 1890 - 1940."

Many other committees would be formed as the days passed. By the time January, 1940, had arrived, the dates of the anniversary celebration had been set. The dates, all in fall, were as follows: October 27 would be a joint-rededication service; November 3, a homecoming celebration for the Lutheran congregation; and November 10, a homecoming for the Reformed congregation. Three services would then be held on each of those days.

By the time that fall had arrived, all preparations had been completed. The anniversary history, which had been a large undertaking, was finished. Copies were being sold at one dollar each. Programs had been set up, and advertising had been done.

Invitations had been sent out, inviting one and all to attend the anniversary celebrations. Even an altar and flower committee had been formed to look after the decorating of the freshly painted auditorium. The only thing that needed to be done was the celebrating, and celebrate they did.

The first of the three Sunday services was the 50th-anniversary rededication held on Sunday, October 27th. From all accounts, there were "several hundred persons" in attendance that day. The services themselves, consisted of a morning Sunday-School service, where an address was given by the Rev. Charles Peters, Ph.D., a son of the church. The afternoon rededication service was addressed by Rev. W. C. Veit of Easton, president of the Allentown Conference, Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania, and adjacent states, and the Rev. W. O. Wolford of Fogelsville, president of the Lehigh Synod. The final service of the day, held at 7:00 in the evening, was a service where greetings were extended to the congregation by neighboring churches in honor of the anniversary.

The individual homecoming services were held on November 3rd and 10th, 1940. We have no records to indicate what the programs were, or how the attendance was, at the Lutheran

Homecoming on November 3rd. The Reformed Homecoming, from all that has been recorded, seems to have been a real success.

The program that day consisted of an address entitled "The Enduring Church" by the Rev. Ralph D. Althouse, a son of the former minister and a member of the confirmation class of 1920. A roll call was conducted by Mark W. Hoffman, at which time confirmands of each class were asked to stand and be recognized. The oldest confirmands present that day were from the confirmation class of 1870. The honors for the class with the most confirmands in attendance went to the classes of 1936 and 1938, both with twenty-two members present. The final tribute was a memorial service for all those individuals who had since passed on. That service was conducted by John F. Weiss of the class of 1888.

Two other actions were taken in the year 1940 and are worthy of mention. One is that in June of that year, the Sunday School was granted permission to build the picnic stand, which is still in use today. The other was a request by Rev. Bachman to the Reformed Consistory in which he asked permission to wear a gown while conducting services. Approval of this broke a long standing practice of preaching to the congregation, minus the formal trappings of many other churches. More likely than not, these sentiments were a throwback to many of the European traditions that were looked upon so disdainfully by the early church leaders.

In spite of all of these happy times and celebrating, things were not so good in other parts of the world. For the second time in twenty years, the dark clouds of war had started to collect over Europe. Once again, America attempted to maintain a neutral stand, while her foreign allies were being swallowed by the German war machine.

With the inevitable about to happen, the United States entered into its first peacetime draft in its history. Ebenezer, in response to these actions, set up a committee whose duty it was "to stay in contact with the men who are enlisted or drafted." To accomplish this task, a motion was passed "to have a chart made with the names of draftees and to keep their addresses up to date, to honor the boys called into military training and to give members opportunity to correspond with them."

By the time 1942 arrived, the United States found itself fully involved in World War II. Many members of our congregations, never ones to shirk their patriotic duty, either enlisted or were drafted into the armed forces. The final count of church members who served their country during this conflict would be eighty-five. Eighty-five husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers from Ebenezer found themselves fighting on foreign shores, only this time not everyone would return home.

Five sons of Ebenezer made the supreme sacrifice during World War II, giving their lives for their country. They are as follows:

Private Clarence J. Wanamaker, who was killed while fulfilling his duties as a military policeman in the Army Air Force at Lowry Field in Colorado,

Private Albert F. Boger, who died as the result of an airplane accident in the Pacific,

Private Lee E. A. Feinour, who was killed during action on the Palan Islands,

Lester A. Wertman, who was killed during the Battle of the Bulge, and whose body was laid to rest in Belgium, and

Lieutenant William C. Bachman, a son of Reformed minister, Rev. Thomas Bachman-probably the death that was felt most widely throughout the church community. Lt. Bachman, who had spent most of his youth amongst the congregations at Ebenezer, was killed in action in Burma on December 15, 1945.

Meanwhile, on the home front, the church became very involved in many facets of the war effort. A unanimous vote in 1942 put off the annual confirmation class homecoming, in an effort to support gas and tire rationing which, at that point, had been put into effect. In June of 1943, the basement was used for graduation services for the local chapter of the Airplane Spotters, Post 16C. In an effort to participate in the war-time scrap drives, the old German hymnals which had finally been removed from the pews in 1930, were given to the Boy Scouts during one of its paper drives. Incidentally, it was Ebenezer Church that helped to form the area's first Boy-Scout Troop in 1941. The Girl Scouts first appeared in 1944, at which time both groups were given permission to meet in the new picnic stand.

The servicemen themselves weren't forgotten. In 1943 it was decided that yearly dues for draftees and enlisted men should be waived. At the same time, a servicemen's welfare committee was formed, through the Sunday School. It was later enlarged to include a representative from each congregation, and one from the Ladies Aid Society.

Never ones to forget the real job that these servicemen were doing, securing our personal freedoms (one of which is religious freedom), the two congregations proudly displayed their service flags. These flags, which honored the sons of the congregations in military service, were prominently hung in the church. Another of these flags, honoring all the sons of Lynn Township, was hung at the entrance to New Tripoli, off of Route 309. This flag was dedicated by Rev. Bond, in a ceremony that was attended by many area residents.

The third showing of respect for these servicemen was a joint effort by the church and by the Blue Ridge Trail Council, No. 179, of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In October of 1944, permission was given to the D.A.R. to erect an honor roll across the street from the church, on a small church-owned parcel of land. On November 12, 1944, the honor roll was dedicated. The program involved participation by the public schools of the township, and an address was given by then Assemblyman Franklin Lichtenwalner. The honor roll was then read off by Rev. Leroy Bond.

This monument would stand in that spot for almost thirty years, until an out-of-control vehicle ran into it in the early '90s, causing irreparable damage. By that point in time, the largely-wooden structure had begun to decay. In its place was erected a more permanent stone marker, rededicated November 11, 1984, to honor all those servicemen who had fought for us during World War II.

One interesting sidelight to this monument situation is that this was not the first attempt to have a monument placed in New Tripoli. A letter that was found in Rev. Smith's papers sheds some light on an even earlier attempt. In a letter to Rev. George Smith dated June 14th, 1909, S. H. Kress, owner of the Kress Store chain, writing from his office on Broadway in New York City, alludes to some attempt by Rev. Smith to elicit funds from him to help in the purchase of this proposed monument.

Mr. Kress begs off of this offer by stating, "I rather think I will have to ask you to excuse me in the collection of the funds you are making for a monument in your locality, as I went to considerably more expense than I had originally expected in the Slatington affair since I wanted to see that everything was thoroly (sic) and satisfactorily completed, and there may yet be further demands upon me." What this monument may have been for, or who it may have commemorated, is destined to remain a mystery.