

# NEWSLETTER

## Save the Date:

### *LHSMA Spring Program*

**Tuesday, April 25, 2017**

The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic will hold its Annual Meeting and Spring Program on April 25, 2017, on the campus of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (LTSG). The event will once again be held in conjunction with the Seminary's Spring Academy. Of particular note, this will be the final Spring Academy event before the pending merger of the Gettysburg and Philadelphia Lutheran seminaries.



In anticipation of the upcoming 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the Society's program will center on the Spring Academy's general theme of "Reformation is Local!" and will explore how American Lutherans celebrated past Reformation anniversaries, and provide guidance for congregation leaders who are preparing their own local celebration. Watch for more specific details on speakers and registration materials in early 2017.

## *Board Meeting Actions*

*By John Deeben*

The board of directors of the Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic met at Valentine Hall on the campus of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg on August 31, 2016. President Steve Herr reported that the annual spring meeting had the highest turnout in recent years. Due to the pending merger of the Gettysburg and Philadelphia seminaries, the board officers will review the society's future relationship with the new seminary to ensure continuity of the society's current business arrangements, especially the holding of the prize funds, the society's mailing address, and meeting sites. Future programing in tandem with the new seminary will also have to be reviewed. Under committee reports, the following action item was approved by majority vote:

- A motion to table action to expand the society's membership area to additional synods in Region 7, pending further research by the Membership Committee.

The Historic Site Recognition Committee reported that a recommendation for a new site will be made at the January meeting. The Wentz Prize Committee received three submissions and will make a recommendation before the board's January meeting. Under New Business, President Steve Herr reported that he will remove information about the suspended Youth History Contest program from the society's website.

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Lutherans planning for 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Reformation*
- *President Herr recognizes members Sue Hill and Judy Simonson*
- *New board member Jill Ogline Titus teaches history courses at Gettysburg College*
- *Member Paul Teigen reviews Lutheran churches organized during the 19th century in the District of Columbia*
- *Aviator Charles Lindbergh born in Detroit, Michigan, to a Swedish Lutheran family*

## President's Corner - Autumn 2016

With our nation's annual observance of a day of thanksgiving in a few weeks, it is appropriate to



share some words of thanks. At its May board meeting the board of directors conferred board emeritus status on Susan Colestock Hill for her long and outstanding service on the board. Susan chaired the society's program committee and under her leadership the organization explored a wide array of topics including Justus Falckner, Daniel Alexander Payne, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Lutherans and Slavery, Women and Eastern Lutheranism, and Faith on the Firing Line. Susan's own scholarship and research on Elsie Singmaster Lewars enhanced appreciation for this important figure in early and mid-twentieth century Lutheranism. I invite you to join me in offering your thanks and appreciation for Sue's faithful and fruitful service to the society and its board of directors. Recently Sue assured me she will continue to participate in society programs and events. When you see her be sure to thank her or send her a note at

[suehill10@comcast.net](mailto:suehill10@comcast.net).

Likewise I want to thank the Reverend Judith Simonson who recently completed her term of service on the board of directors. Due to ministry demands and other commitments Judy recently resigned from the board of directors. Her involvement these past few years helped raise awareness of the society in the Allegheny Synod (ELCA). In addition her work with the program committee helped the observance of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War by exploring how Lutherans met the needs of soldiers returning home at the end of the Civil War and during the Vietnam War and the conflicts in the Persian Gulf. Judy too will continue to participate in the society. When you see her, please thank her for her service or email her at [judithsimonson@aol.com](mailto:judithsimonson@aol.com).

In Paul's letter to the church in Corinth he wrote, *I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him,*

*in speech and knowledge of every kind—*

We the Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic give thanks to God for these two women who have contributed much to the mission of the society.

In this season of Thanksgiving I give thanks for the efforts of the board and society members, for the witness of this host of Lutheran saints throughout the mid-Atlantic

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region who have made such wonderful contributions furthering the appreciation and understanding of Lutheran history and Lutheran witness in this area.

I encourage you to stay connected to the society's work through our webpage. Join us for the annual program next April. May you all have a blessed Thanksgiving!

Sincerely in Christ,

**Pastor Stephen Herr,**  
**LHSMMA President**

October 31, 2016  
Reformation Day

*Be a sinner, and let your sins be strong (sin boldly), but let your trust in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world. — Martin Luther*

### LHSMMA 2016 - 2017 Board of Directors

#### Board Members

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*President*  
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Philip Teigen  
Jill Ogline Titus

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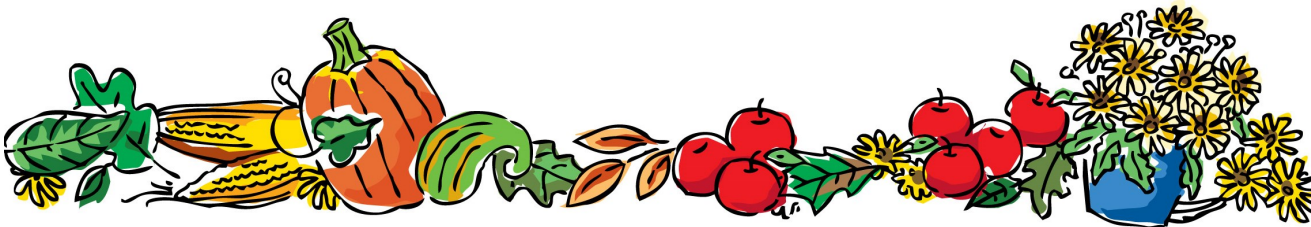
## Meet New Board Member: JILL OGLINE TITUS

By Jill Ogline Titus

Jill Ogline Titus is Associate Director of the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College, where she teaches courses in modern American history, public history and African American history and oversees the Institute's public history initiatives. From 2007 to 2012, she was Associate Director of the C.V. Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland, where she taught courses in African American history and historical fiction, and served as co-director of the "Roots of a Nation Teaching American History Grant Project" and director of the "History on the Waterfront" interpretive tour program. Prior to joining the staff of the Starr Center, Jill worked seasonally for the National Park Service, including stints as a ranger at Independence National Historical Park and a curatorial assistant at Gettysburg National Military Park. While serving as a historian with the Northeast Regional Office of the National Historic Landmarks Program, she helped create the Sites of Conscience Project, which encourages stewards of historic properties to make their sites centers of civic dialogue.

Jill received her Ph.D. in History from the University of Massachusetts in 2007. Her research interest focuses on 20th-century African American histo-

ry, civil rights and public history. She is particularly interested in the intersection of African American history and public memory. Her articles and reviews have appeared in *Journal of Southern History*, *The Public Historian*, *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, and *The American Scholar*. Her first book, *Brown's Battleground: Students, Segregationists, and the Struggle for Justice in Prince Edward County*, was published by University of North Carolina Press in 2011 and was a finalist for the Library of Virginia Literary Award. She is currently working on a project exploring the links between interracial educational transfer programs and northern civil rights activity, c. 1950 - 1970. A lifelong Lutheran, she is a member of Trinity (Codus) Lutheran Church in Jefferson, Pa, where her husband serves as pastor.



## MISSION AND PURPOSE

### LHSMA's Purpose:

The mission of the Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic is to preserve, to document, and to stir interest in the rich Lutheran traditions which are the foundation of the church. Specifically, the Society intends to foster knowledge and use of Lutheran history in the synods and congregations and among individuals.

### The Society carries out its mission by:

- Encouraging the collection and preservation of archival materials;
- Stimulating interest in synodical and congregational history;
- Assisting scholarly research;
- Publishing a newsletter; and
- Maintaining communication with others active in the field of Lutheran church history.

## A Historical Note on “When is a Congregation?”

By Phil Teigen, Kensington, Maryland

“When is a congregation?” A. R. Wentz asked in his 1938 history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Frederick, Maryland (p. 43; see source note below). His rhetorical question caught my attention recently while preparing a chronology of Lutheran churches organized during the nineteenth century in the District of Columbia. (I’m using here the words *found, establish, organize, and birth*, synonymously.) When can a congregation be said to have been established? With the regular preaching of a Lutheran pastor? With a baptism or the celebration of the Lord’s Supper? With the installation of an ordained, or licensed, pastor? By taking possession of property? With the construction of a church building?

I needed an answer because the Lutheran congregations I am studying hold varied and contradictory understandings of their births. Wentz’s persuasive answer came in Chapter 4, “A Congregation Begins, 1738.” Here he systematically explored the question of how to date a congregational birth and applied it to the complicated prehistory of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Frederick. Although Wentz focusses on one congregation, his answer to the question “When?” is generalizable to Lutheran congregations in the District of Columbia, and, I believe likely, well beyond too.

Using argument-by-definition, Wentz distinguishes the multiple meanings of the word *church*: “The word Church . . . may refer to any one of three things. It may mean the universal body of Christian believers, the ‘holy Christian and apostolic Church,’ as we call it in the creed. Or it may be a particular branch or denomination of the universal Church, such as the Presbyterian Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church. Or it may mean a local congregation, such as Fourth Methodist Episcopal Church of New York, or Trinity Reformed Church of Philadelphia, or St. John’s Lutheran Church of Baltimore” (p. 43). He then applies them to German immigrants settling in and around Frederick. They brought with them “their faith and their fellowship and their invisible communion with the saints of all times and places” (p. 45). This was the Church in the first sense. “When the Lutherans who had come to the vicinity of Frederick heard the preaching of the

Word and received the sacrament, the Lutheran Church as a denomination was there” (pp. 45-6). But this was not a Church in the third sense. What makes a church in this sense “is the formal organization of a local congregation (p. 46),” formalized, that is, by the election of, for example, officers, deacons, elders, trustees, or, *Vorsteher*, as the Frederick Germans called them (p. 53). “A building is not necessary for a congregation” (p. 53): property and a building may exist before a congregation formally organizes; conversely, a formally organized congregation may await years before obtaining property and/or erecting a building. (By the way, the ubiquitous John Caspar Stoeber, Jr., served as midwife at the birth of Frederick Lutheran Church in November 1738).

Persuaded by Wentz’s clear and systematic exposition of the interrelated meanings of *church*, I now rely on it while preparing an account of the fourteen 19th-century Lutheran congregations in the District of Columbia. Wentz’s gaze clarified some historical events but cast others into shadow. When real estate developers, for example, set aside property for the development of a Lutheran church, did that constitute the birth of a congregation? Among District of Columbia congregations, one Lutheran congregation said *yes*, but another said *no*. If a congregation organizes itself as non-denominational or as non-Lutheran, and later becomes a Lutheran congregation, which event can be called its birth? Not every congregation in the District of Columbia presents a conundrum—but almost all require careful historical investigation to determine exactly when they formally organized themselves as congregations.

In writing this short note, I’m proposing chapter 4 of Wentz’s history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Frederick, as a means for bringing greater clarity and consistency to the early and often murky history of Lutheran congregations. Equally important, I’m trying to bring attention to Wentz the historian, whose work, though completed many years ago, still yields benefits to twenty-first century readers.

Source: Abdel Ross Wentz, *History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Frederick, Maryland, 1738-1938* (1938).





# Lutheran Historical Society Of the Mid-Atlantic

## **Application for Membership/Membership Renewal**

*(Please submit this Annual Membership Renewal form.)*

(Please print or write clearly. Thank you!)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation *(if applicable)*: Please list name, town, and denomination.  
\_\_\_\_\_

I desire membership in LHSMA as a \_\_\_\_ New Member or as a \_\_\_\_ Renewal.

Date of application: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ \$250 Life Membership for an individual or institution

\_\_\_\_ \$ 20 Annual Membership for an individual or institution

(Annual membership is for a calendar year.)

\_\_\_\_ I wish to give a donation to the society (see below for details). Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in the following:

\_\_\_\_ Research

\_\_\_\_ Reading

\_\_\_\_ Publishing

\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Financial gifts to further the work of the Society are always welcome and greatly appreciated. Such gifts may be mailed to LHSMA, in care of the treasurer, Lee Knepp, at the address below. LHSMA is a 501C-3 organization and your gift is tax deductible as permitted by law.*

Please complete this form and your check made payable to LHSMA. Mail to:

Lee Knepp, LHSMA  
P.O. Box 76  
McClure, PA 17841

Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic

61 Seminary Ridge  
Gettysburg, PA 17325

Email: [info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com)  
Web: [www.lutheranhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.lutheranhistoricalsociety.com)

*“Preserving, documenting,  
and sharing the history of  
Lutherans and Lutheranism in  
the Mid-Atlantic and  
surrounding areas.”*

**We're on the Web!**

[lutheranhistoricalsociety.com](http://lutheranhistoricalsociety.com)

**Lutheran Historical  
Society of the  
Mid-Atlantic Newsletter**

ISSN 1049-6424

The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic, in the interest of the preservation and cultivation of Lutheran history in Central and Western Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia, and the Metropolitan Washington, D.C. area issues this newsletter two to three times a year.

Notes of announcements, projects, historical celebrations, genealogical concerns, notes of church or Synodical activities, and notes from other historical societies are solicited.

**Address corrections are helpful.**

**Send replies via email to:**

**Stephen Herr**

[info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com)

**Subject: LHS Newsletter**



VOLUME 27, NUMBER 3

***Featured Lutherans:***

**CHARLES LINDBERGH**

Charles A. Lindbergh was one of the most famous aviators of the 20th century. He is chiefly remembered for successfully flying the first solo non-stop flight from New York to Paris in 1927, which brought him instant international recognition. He used his popularity to promote the development of commercial aviation and U.S. Air Mail. Born in Detroit, Michigan, to a Swedish Lutheran family (his father, U.S. Congressman Charles August Lindbergh, was originally from Stockholm) on February 4, 1902, Lindbergh from his youth displayed a keen interest in “the mechanics of motorized transportation.”



In 1920 he enrolled in the College of Engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, but left two years later to attend flight training school. As a U.S. Army Air Corps Reserve officer, Lindbergh was the recipient of the Medal of Honor, the highest military decoration in the United States. In 1954 he also received the Pulitzer Prize for his book *The Spirit of St. Louis*. Lindbergh died in Kipahulu, Hawaii, on August 26, 1974.

***More Featured Lutherans Needed***

Help us grow the number of Lutheran biographies on our website!

The society's webpage contains a section entitled “Featured Lutherans.” It has short biographies of Lutherans from the Mid-Atlantic region. We would like to include more so visitors to the site can learn more about our Lutheran history and heritage. To submit one, email it to: [info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com). Submissions should be approximately 150 words. Contact Stephen Herr at the above email address if you have questions.

For a sample biography, see the accompanying sketch, above, on famous aviator Charles Lindbergh.