

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 35, NUMBER 3

AUTUMN 2024

2024 Fall Annual Program & Meeting Recap

The Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic's Fall program was held on October 12, 2024, in Valentine Hall on the Gettysburg campus of United Lutheran Seminary. As advertised, the program featured a joint meeting between LHSMA and the Lutheran Historical Conference, which concurrently was holding its biennial three-day conference in Baltimore, Maryland, from October 10-12. Day Three of the conference featured a visit to Gettysburg where LHSMA served as host for LHC's scheduled panel of speakers.

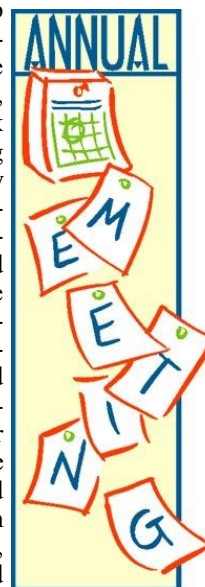
Meeting under the overall conference theme of "Lutherans Uniting and Dividing," the Saturday session began at 10 AM with a brief welcome by LHSMA Vice President Mark Oldenburg, then moved on to a panel of three speakers. Dr. Harvey Huntley, a trustee from the James R Crumley Jr. Archives at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina, made the first presentation on a current documentary project by the Crumley Archives, entitled "Unsung: A Chronicle of Black Lutherans in the South." The documentary features oral history interviews from members of three historically Black southern Lutheran congregations, including Lutheran Church of the Ascension in North Columbia, SC; Frederick Evangelical Lutheran Church; and St. John's Lutheran Church, Charleston, SC. According to the Crumley Archives website, it tells the history of Black Lutherans in the Southern United States as one not tainted by the sin of slavery, but as a story of faithfulness, hope, restoration, and empowerment. Rev. Richard B. Baumann, president of the Lutheran Historical Society of Eastern Pennsylvania, offered the second presentation on "Decline, Demise and Fragmentation of Lutheranism in Eastern Pennsylvania: What Does this Mean?" The final presentation of the morning, delivered by LHSMS emeritus President Stephen Herr, dealt with "Milton Valentine: The General Synod's General Theologian."

At the conclusion of the morning papers around 11:45, the gathering enjoyed a boxed lunch catered by LHSMA in the coffee shop area of Valentine Hall. At 12:47, as members

of LHC participated in optional tours of the Region 8 Archives at the Wentz Library or a van tour of the Gettysburg battlefield, the LHSMA membership reassembled in the Valentine lecture hall for the annual business meeting, also chaired by VP Mark Oldenburg. Following opening devotions by board member Sean Titus, the meeting established a quorum, and members approved the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting. Mark Oldenburg then presented the report of the Nominating Committee for board elections. The slate of candidates included Stephen Herr, Kevin Hepler, Mark Oldenburg, Victoria Jesswein, and Paul Tomkiel. There being no further nominations from the floor, the membership proceeded to approve the ballot as presented. Mark Oldenburg then presented some prepared remarks by Society president Matthew Riegel, who was unable to attend the meeting, secretary John Deeben set the deadline to submit material for the fall newsletter, and treasurer Lee Knepp distributed copies of the financial report covering the period from January 1 to October 2, 2024. Under committee reports, Steve Herr noted for the Wentz Prize that the committee received no submissions for the 2024 prize.

Under new business, meeting guest Richard B. Baumann spoke about the status of the Lutheran Historical Society of Eastern Pennsylvania. The operating status has been uncertain for quite some time, and Baumann, who now serves as the de facto president, noted that Eastern Pennsylvania is still alive but currently in limbo due to the unexpected loss of several key leaders. He expressed optimism that Eastern Pennsylvania would be able to resume activities in the near future. The annual meeting adjourned at 1:13 PM.

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Several speakers presented for Annual Fall Program
- President Riegel encourages all to advance the appreciation of Lutheran history
- Board emeritus member, Don Housley, taught generations of students at Susquehanna University
- Membership renewal reminder
- Members encouraged to consider a Life Membership to LHSMA

By John Deeben

President's Corner - Autumn 2024

[Editor's Note: The President's message for this issue reprints the greetings to the attendees of the LHSMA annual meeting on October 12 that he shared in absentia.]



The Annual Meeting of our Society is taking place on a grand day, a joint session of the Lutheran Historical Conference and our Society's Annual Program. To crown this, one of our own members, The Rev. Stephen Herr, is presenting a paper on one of the great theologians of Gettysburg Seminary, Milton Valentine.

I am not happy about missing the day. It is bad enough that I am missing the Annual Meeting & Program; that the topic of the LHC is "Lutherans Uniting and Dividing" makes it worse, as this is a topic of

special interest to me. I envy you all, for while you enjoy the lectures and camaraderie of your fellow historians (professional and avocational), I will be in a denominational meeting in Chicago. The irony does not escape me.

Our Society had a busier than usual year. In addition to the 2023 Annual Meeting & Program, we managed to pull off, in conjunction with Gettysburg College and Christ Lutheran Church, a conference on Samuel Simon Schmucker.

Roughly eighty attended the full-day conference featuring papers by several of our members and others. The response of the attendees was

markedly positive. Special thanks must be extended to The Rev. Stephen Herr and Dr. Michael Birkner for their efforts to make the conference a success. Work is now underway to publish the papers.

Add to this the work required

to hold the joint session with the LHC, and one cannot doubt the vitality of our Society. We, however, will want to think about how that workload is distributed as it is falling most heavily on a few shoulders.

And, now, a closing paraenesis:

- have a great meeting;
- invite kindred spirits to join The Society (or at least come to our events);
- ask yourself, "What can I do to advance the appreciation of Lutheran history?"; and
- don't forget to pay your dues.

The Rt. Rev.

Matthew Lynn Riegel,

S.T.M., President

Lutheran Historical

Society of the Mid-Atlantic

On the Commemoration of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, A.D. MMXXIV

West Virginia Western Maryland Synod, ELCA

304-680-5388; riegel@wv-wmd.org

<http://WV-WMD.org>

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LHSMA 2024 - 2025 Board of Directors

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Adapted from the Sunbury Daily Item

Board Emeritus Member Don Housley Passes Away

LHSMA emeritus board member Dr. Donald Housley, 84, of Selinsgrove, passed away Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024, at Geisinger Medical Center, Danville surrounded by family.

He was a great man in an old-fashioned way, teaching generations of students at Susquehanna University, leading the construction of a new science building in his role as Dean of Arts and Sciences, and writing several books about local history. He was also kind, funny, beloved by his family, friends, and the Susquehanna community.

He was born June 3, 1940, to Donald and Rosina Housley in Indianapolis, Indiana. He received an undergraduate degree from Houghton College in western New York, his master's in history from the University of Connecticut, and his Ph.D. in history from the Pennsylvania State University.

He joined the faculty of Susquehanna University as a history professor in 1967, serving as Assistant Dean of the Faculty for four years and Dean of Arts and Sciences for eight years. He was elected Professor of the Year by students in 1971 and received the Lindback Foundation Award for distinguished teaching in 1972. He was appointed the Degenstein Distinguished Professor of History in 1998 and retired from the position in 2004.

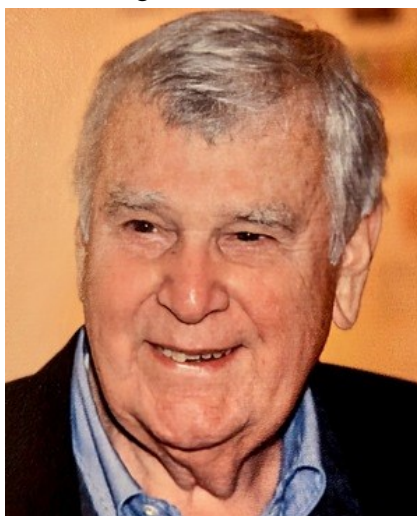
While at Susquehanna, Don started the university's first "teaching cell" - a small, cross-disciplinary, multi-generational group of faculty who met regularly to discuss pedagogy. This led to the creation of Susquehanna's Center for Teaching and Learning.

Don memorized the names of all his students by the second or third day of class and could still remember many of them even after 20 years of retirement. He took his role as an advisor seriously and helped many students during his decades at the University.

In 2007, the Donald D. Housley Scholarship Fund was established by W. Talbot Daley '76 in recognition of the impact of Don's teaching and his ability to inspire generations of students and convey the importance of history in a diverse and interconnected world. Don was an extraordinary and highly respected teacher as well as a great mentor to other teachers. In recognition of this, Don was the first recipient of the Susquehanna University Teaching Award in 1972, and it was named in his honor 45 years later as the Donald D. Housley Teaching Award.

In addition to his many years of service to the university, Don was also a benefactor, regularly supporting the Department of History, the Dr. John H. Longaker History Prize and the Housley Archive Fund, as well as campus lectures and student scholarships.

As a professional historian his focus was local, and he wrote books about Snyder County (Snyder County:



From Pioneer Days to the Present), Susquehanna University (Susquehanna University: 1858-2000: A Goodly Heritage), and The Geisinger Health System (Make it the Best: A History of Geisinger Health System, 1912 to 2001). He published articles in the Snyder County Historical Society Bulletin and Pennsylvania Heritage. He also served as secretary of the Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic. He was an active member of the Selinsgrove History Association, and recently gave a lecture on the history of the Selinsgrove Fair at the Susquehanna University Downtown Center. He wrote the historical information about many buildings in Selinsgrove, which can be accessed through QR codes for a self-guided historical tour of the downtown area.

Don's faith guided him throughout his life. He was an active member of Sharon Lutheran Church for close to 50 years, serving on the board, assisting services and spearheading efforts to help those in need. He served proudly on the social ministry committee, acting as the chairman for many years. He participated in mission trips to Costa Rica and Nicaragua for Susquehanna students and led historical walking tours each year for Selinsgrove elementary students. He sang with the Susquehanna Chorale and performed with the group at Carnegie Hall. He worked for many years with Habitat for Humanity, serving both in leadership roles and with hammer in hand building homes for local families. Don believed in putting his faith into action in many large and small ways that truly defined his character. He was both a great leader and a humble servant. He was an avid fan of golf, baseball, and the world champion Boston Celtics. His dog Callie made him laugh every single day.

Don is survived by his beloved wife, Grace; children, Dave and Debbie; grandchildren, Kate Curran, Peter Cooper, Nick Cooper, and Benny Housley; daughter-in-law, Lori Wieder; son-in-law, Joe Cooper; and sister, Judy Brandi. He was preceded in death by brothers, Tom Housley and Tim Housley.

Managing Church Records, Part VII: Programmatic Material

By John Deeben

The following information on how to manage church records is based on guidelines© developed by the ELCA's Office of the Secretary. More information is available on the ELCA website at www.elca.org.

Church Archives



Programmatic materials are produced by the congregation to assist its programs and promote its activity, document the life of the parish and tell the congregation's story: these materials can include: 1) Congregation histories; 2) Membership directories, including picture directories on computer disc; 3) Newsletters; 4) News releases; 5) Program and training material produced by the congregation; and 6) Audio and visual materials such as photographs of the congregation's events. The congregation's website may also contain: Promotional material, Membership directory, Sermons, Podcasts, Blogs, Audio visual materials, and Programmatic material created by members.

Remember that digital files never survive by accident! Today, all of these documents are created - and

may be used - electronically but are preserved as paper documents. It is inevitable that hardware, software, and file formats will change. Use quality photographic paper to print out copies of pictures for the congregation's archives. The congregational website is a constantly changing program delivery platform. Because the website may contain unique information about the life of the congregation and its community, some effort should be made to preserve this record. The membership directory must be password protected.

These types of materials should be placed in the congregation's archives. You may wish to see if an archival site is collecting snapshots of your congregation website, such as <http://www.archive.org>. If you find no archiving service, print out snapshots of unique Web delivered material to be preserved in the congregation's archives.

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Membership Renewal Due

Dear Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic Members and Friends:

This is your friendly reminder that membership renewals for 2025 are now due. Payment of annual dues (\$20 per household or institution) is requested between January 1 and March 31, 2024; however, we accept new members anytime! Please feel free to use the membership form in this issue to renew or join.

For those members who have already renewed, we send you a very big **THANK YOU!!**

Don't want the hassle of remembering annual dues? Then we encourage you to consider a one-time payment of \$250 for a **LIFE MEMBERSHIP!** Both annual and LIFE memberships provide important financial support for the essential activities of the Society, including our annual meeting, scholarly programs, awarding of the Wentz and Biglerville prizes for worthy Lutheran scholarship and publications, recognition of historic Lutheran sites, and Congregational Heritage Workshops, to name a few.

Friends, if you are not a member or have received a complimentary or trial membership, we encourage you to **COME JOIN US!** We are very happy to welcome you! LHSMA is very appreciative of the involvement and support of our current members, and we are always eager to greet new members!

*Friendly
Reminder*



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

Featured Lutheran:

Rev. Peter Rizer (1812–1886), Battlefield Chaplain

By John Deeben

The Rev. Peter Rizer was born in Maryland on May 7, 1812, a son of Martin and Ann Catharine (Doward) Rizer. Educated at the Cumberland Academy and Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary, from which he graduated in 1832. Rizer was well-polished and compassionate—indeed, as part of his examination for licensure in the Maryland Synod in 1833, Rizer delivered a public address on “The Moral and Intellectual Qualifications of a Gospel Minister” - qualities that would position him well as an observer of the coming war. After receiving his preaching license, Rizer was formally ordained as a Lutheran pastor in 1834. He initially served a parish in Boonsboro, Maryland, in 1832–1833, and then became a Lutheran missionary to the Cherokee Nation in South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia for eight years, cultivating fledgling congregations in Monroeville, Flatt Creek, and Bogue-Chitto Creek in Alabama. Rizer then served Lutheran parishes in Cumberland, Indiana, Dayton, Ohio, and Somerset, Pa., before relocating to Sunbury in Northumberland County, Pa., in 1859.

As the primary Lutheran clergyman in the Sunbury area, Rizer served not only as pastor of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, the main Lutheran congregation in Sunbury, but he also covered the pulpits of St. John’s Lutheran Church in Northumberland and the Eden Evangelical Lutheran Church at Plum Creek in neighboring Upper Augusta Township. His position as a public figure brought Rizer into contact with many prominent members of the community, most notably James Cameron of Milton, the younger brother of Pennsylvania politician Simon Cameron (who would go on to become Abraham Lincoln’s first secretary of war). When the Civil War began and Cameron was tapped to become colonel of the 79th New York (Highlanders) State Militia due to the strength of his family’s Scottish heritage, he immediately offered Rizer the position of regimental chaplain. Rizer resigned his collective pastorates, immediately went to Washington, DC, and was mustered into service by Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas on June 20, 1861. The regiment had already been enrolled on May 29 in New York City.

Rizer chronicled his military service in a series of letters addressed to his hometown newspaper, the *Sunbury Gazette*. His correspondence showed Rizer to be one of the steadfast defenders of the Union cause. In no uncertain terms (and with his own strong emphasis), Rizer

vowed to “maintain our NATIONALITY, our UNITY, and the INTEGRITY OF THE BEST GOVERNMENT ON EARTH.” He also declared the superiority of the Union’s martial power: “The prancing of noble steeds, the bristling cannon, the sound of the bugle, and the long files of infantry, together with the thousands of baggage wagons, ambulances, and show the undreamed-of power of this wonderful Republic of the United States.” His abiding faith in God, however, shined perhaps the brightest. Often invoking divine assistance, for both the nation as a whole and for his own personal safety, Rizer observed on one occasion, “God grant that this wicked rebellion may soon be put down,” and on another that “I felt that I had embarked in the sacred cause of duty, and that I could trust God for his protection.” He also made it a point to emphasize how the Confederate cause was anathema to God’s will: “We are going to try to put down treason and rebellion, which is contrary to God’s law, and subversive of the best government on earth. Let us then be true to our God, true to our country, and march fearlessly on in the discharge of our duty, land wherever we may.”

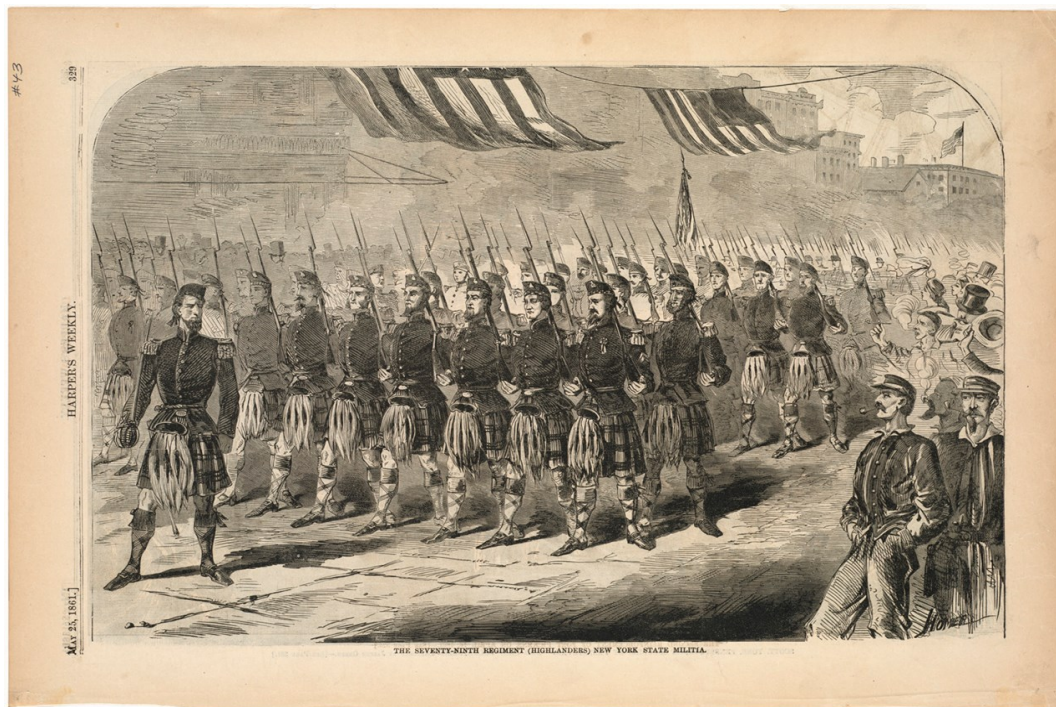
Rizer joined the 79th at Camp Lochiel near Alexandria, Virginia, in early July, when the regiment was organized into a brigade under Colonel William T. Sherman along with the 13th and 69th New York, 2nd Wisconsin, and a battery of the 3rd U.S. Artillery. As part of Brig. Gen. Daniel Tyler’s First Division in Irvin McDowell’s Army of Northeastern Virginia, the 79th New York participated in the first major military operation of the war that culminated in the Battle of Bull Run (First Manassas). After crossing the Potomac into Confederate territory on July 7, the 79th moved on July 16 toward the railroad junction at Manassas. On Sunday morning, July 21, McDowell began his general movement against the Confederate forces gathering at Manassas. Sherman’s brigade remained in reserve until the afternoon, when they were sent to recapture lost Union guns on Henry House Hill at the southern end of the Confederate line. With Sherman sending his regiments into the fight in piecemeal fashion, the 79th advanced alone after an unsuccessful attack by the 2nd Wisconsin. Initially repulsed and taking severe fire, the 79th charged again until a barrage of musketry cut down Colonel Cameron, the first regimental officer of that rank to fall in battle.

(Continued on page 7)



Featured Lutheran: *(Continued from page 6)*

Rizer witnessed the battle from an abandoned farmhouse. In the aftermath, he was called upon to minister to the wounded. In one of his letters to the *Sunbury Gazette*, Rizer described in detail how he tended to one of the 79th's gravely wounded officers: "After the battle, when the road to Fairfax Court House was lined with retreating soldiers and civilians for miles, I heard myself called to a carriage about 10 o'clock at night. I soon learned that Capt. Laing, of the 79th was there, dangerously wounded with bullet holes in his neck, side and left arm. He was supported by several men. As he wished to speak with me, I was obliged to mount up on the wheel, and by holding my ear close to his mouth, learned from him that he wished me to visit him next day at the Infirmary, in Washington city, and to inform Gen. Cameron that he had brought with him off the battle field the sword of his brother, our lamented Colonel."



79th NY Highlanders

Rizer also participated with the 79th New York in the Port Royal Expedition in the fall of 1861. After being posted near Lewinsville, Virginia, in September, where they engaged in several successful skirmishes, the regiment was attached on October 21 to the Second Brigade (under Stevens) of Brig. Gen. Thomas W. Sherman's Expeditionary Corps, the Army component of a joint land-naval force under both Sherman and Naval Flag Officer Samuel F. Du Pont. The expedition intended to target the South Carolina coast around Port Royal. The regiment proceeded to Annapolis and then to Hampton Roads, Virginia, where they boarded the Army transport Vanderbilt and embarked for Hilton Head, South Carolina. The expedition was battered by storms, which scattered some of the vessels and caused the loss of the Army's landing boats (effectively eliminating their participation in the planned assault), but on November 3 the fleet reached the entrance to Port Royal Sound. After some preliminary maneuvering, the warships attacked the two forts guarding the entrance to the sound, forcing the Confederates to surrender.

The 79th New York remained in camp near Hilton Head until early 1862, when they returned to the Virginia theater, but by then Chaplain Rizer's service had already ended. Beset by ill health in the southern climate—his condition was sometimes described at the time as the "Hilton Head Fever"—Rizer resigned his chaplaincy on December 9, 1861, and returned to Sunbury to recover. Rizer resumed his former pastorate and became headmaster of the Sunbury Classical Academy for one term, before resigning both positions to take charge of a Lutheran congregation in Manchester, Maryland. Upon his departure, the editors of the *Sunbury Gazette* pronounced a fitting summary of Rizer's lasting regard within the community: "Both as a man and a Christian he will be esteemed wherever he may be located." Rizer continued his ministry at various locations in Maryland, New Jersey, and Oswego, New York. In 1875, Rizer's wife died, rendering a blow from which he never fully recovered. Turning inward, he absorbed his attention with academic pursuits, losing himself in his books and the study of various languages, including Hebrew and German. Peter Rizer's health slowly declined until he finally passed away at the residence of his daughter in Montgomery County, Maryland, on August 25, 1886, at the age of 74 years. He was interred in Loudon Park Cemetery in Baltimore, Maryland.

Lutheran Historical Society of the Mid-Atlantic

61 Seminary Ridge
Gettysburg, PA 17325

Email: info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com
Web: 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

**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.

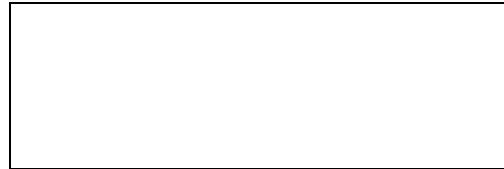
Address corrections are helpful.

Send replies via email to:

Matthew Riegel

info@lutheranhistoricalsociety.com

Subject: LHS Newsletter



VOLUME 35, NUMBER 3

From the Region 8 Archives

Among the diverse holdings of the ELCA Region 8 Archives at the A.R. Wentz Library, Gettysburg Campus, United Lutheran Seminary, are noncurrent records of Lutheran congregations, including historical records of disbanded congregations from five Region 8 Synods, including Alleghany, Delaware-Maryland, Lower Susquehanna, Metropolitan Washington DC, and Upper Susquehanna Synod. In this issue, we highlight the records of the following congregation:

KELLER MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

WASHINGTON, D.C.

(Metro D.C. Synod)

- | | |
|--|---|
| • Account Book 1931-1942 | ◦ 1944-1950 |
| • Building Committee Minutes - 1891-1892 | ◦ 1951-1960 |
| | ◦ 1965-1968 |
| • Corporate Seal | • Papers |
| • Council Meeting Minutes | • Parish Registers |
| ◦ 1882-1897 | ◦ 1891-1922 |
| ◦ 1898-1904 | ◦ 1923-1934 |
| ◦ 1904-1916 | ◦ 1935-1945 |
| ◦ 1916-1931 | ◦ 1946-1968 |
| ◦ 1932-1937 | |
| ◦ 1938-1943 | • Sunday School Record Book - 1903-1905 |

For more information, researchers should consult the guidelines to Research Inquiries for the Region 8 Archives Collections on the United Lutheran Seminary website at

<http://library.uls.edu/subjects/guide.php?subject=region8policies>.

