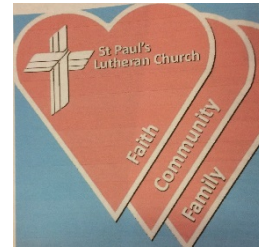
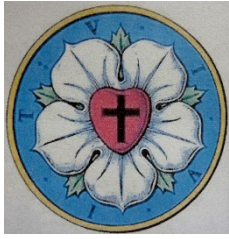


HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GAMBRILLS AND CROFTON, MARYLAND 2017





Preface

Two very important events happen in 2017 for St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Crofton and Gambrills! The first is a celebration for all Protestants in that 2017 is the 500 year celebration of the Reformation. October 31st, 1517, is commonly recognized as the beginning of the Reformation because on that day, Martin Luther posted 95 points for debate on the door of Wittenberg Cathedral, arguing against what he considered to be the Church's corrupt and unbiblical practice of selling indulgences. The theological convictions of Luther and other early reformers that shaped the Reformation are often referred to as The Five Pillars of the Reformation – Word alone, Faith alone, Grace alone, Christ alone, and Glory to God alone.¹

The second important event is that St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Crofton and Gambrills is celebrating its 70th year in 2017! This makes it the perfect time to share the church's history and information about its congregational mission, activities, and outreach initiatives. Historical documents reflect that previous church histories were written in 1987 and 1997. Highlights from previously written histories are incorporated into this update. This is a living document. Additions, deletions, and changes to reflect a more concise and accurate history are welcome and should be forwarded to St. Paul's Council President.

A sincere *THANKS* goes out to all who provided input to this document, especially to Kate Hausner, Jane Felsentreger, and Andrea Krepps for their written input; to Bill Corwin for many of the current photos used in this document; to Kate Hausner who graciously reviewed and provided suggestions to this document; and to the many church members that have, over the years, given freely of their time, talents, and finances to enhance this church and its mission.

Janice Christensen

¹ Martin Luther's Table Talk, page 1.

HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF CROFTON AND GAMBRILLS, MARYLAND 2017

Fifteen charter member families started the church in June 1947². They held their first service the last Sunday of June, in the home of Edward Gerstner, across from where the church presently stands. Services were conducted by the late Reverend Emmanuel T. Finck, pastor of the First Lutheran Church of Odenton³. The property where the church now stands was donated by the late Russell Bartgis, first charter member of the church.⁴

On October 12, 1947, St. Paul's cornerstone was laid. It was a gift from Henry Merkel, Inc. of Baltimore. Placed in the stone were a list of all charter members, a list of those on the Building Committee, a copy of the incorporation papers, then-current copies of *The Southern Maryland Times*, *The Maryland Gazette*, and *The Lutheran Witness*, along with several coins.⁵ In December 1947, the original structure was dedicated.



² Per the 1987 history write-up, the 15 charter members were: Mr. & Mrs.: Ed Gerstner, Russell Bartgis, Frank Hasselberger, W. Eutsler, F. Machande, Edward Gertz, M. Thompson, J. Long, Saunders; Mr.: Henry Gertz, Jr., G. Roy Gertz; Mrs.: Howard Lerch, Emma Sandberg, J. Thompson, C. Brewer; and Miss Sadie Nelson. However, news clippings from the "Crofton Courier", dated April 19, 1977, state that there were 24 charter members.

³ Rev. Finck served St. Paul's as their minister from 1947 to 1960.

⁴ Reference 1947-1987 history.

⁵ Reference 1947-1987 history.



The structure was built by Warner Eutsler, a charter member. It was a low-level building with a tarpaper roof and an asphalt floor. St. Paul's "downstairs" level was where the church carried on all its activities for the first 12 years.⁶ The Reverend Mr. Luerson, of Baltimore, and the Reverend Mr. Collins of St. Paul's Lutheran, Glen Burnie, along with Pastor Finck, headed a procession, singing "Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty". Mr. Eutsler handed the keys to Pastor Finck. The ministers and vestry stood in front of the chancel to present the Bible, altar-ware and silver offering plates. The congregation and all its activities operated out of this structure until 1959, when the Gambrills Lutherans completed the superstructure which is currently the formal body of the church.⁷ The structure was completed with a \$25,000 loan to add to over \$7,000 previously raised by the church.⁸

In July of the same year, the Ladies' Aid was organized. Morning and Evening Circles were formed and the Ladies' Aid performed fund-raising activities to supply their church with necessary items to furnish the building, specifically the kitchen, with items such as coffee urns, curtains, flatware, banners, and books.

⁶ Reference Crofton Courier, April 19, 1977, page 10.

⁷ Reference 1947-1987 history.

⁸ Reference Crofton Courier, April 19, 1977, page 10.

On the last Sunday of December 1947, the Sunday School was established. Records reflect that the Men's Club and Vestry became active in 1948⁹. Also, the church's constitution was accepted by the Missouri Synod. Because the church did not have a full-time pastor, it was decided to hold fall and winter services in the afternoon, with Sunday School classes following. Spring and summer services were held in the evening. At this time, members traveled to First Lutheran in Odenton, for Lenten and Advent services. Since both congregations shared the same minister (Reverend Finck) they shared many items and activities.

In April 1949, the first confirmation class was received into the church. In 1953, St. Paul's became a sponsor of the Lutheran Hour. During the next several years, the church continued to acquire items for the sanctuary, such as a runner for the center aisle (1956) and an organ (rented in 1957, with payments going towards its purchase). By 1958, St. Paul's decided to build a superstructure onto the original basement. The project cost was \$32,383.58. In November 1959, St. Paul's new structure was dedicated. This included the addition of the upper floor.



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In May 1960, the church's beloved Pastor Finck passed away. Over the next several years, two pastors from First Lutheran Church, Odenton, served St. Paul's part-time: Reverend Walter E. Koller, from 1960-1962, and Reverend John L. Beck, from 1962-1965.

In 1961, the Altar Guild was formed, and a Junior Society of about 20 children was organized. In 1962, Vacation Bible School classes began. Also, in this same time period (of 1962-1963), a new constitution and by-laws were accepted by the voters. The church applied for and was officially received into membership of the Missouri Synod.¹¹ The official name of the church was changed to include the name "Crofton" along with "Gambills."

In 1965, St. Paul's received its first, full-time minister, the Reverend James R. O'Connor. Reverend O'Connor was a new graduate of the Missouri Synod's Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He served from

⁹ Per a history written in 1972, notes reflect that the Vestry was active through 1959. The Ladies Aid was active through 1972.

¹⁰ Photo taken during 1977 write-up of St. Paul's 30th anniversary celebration.

¹¹ Reference 25th Anniversary history.

1965 until 1968 when he accepted a Navy commission. Also in 1965, due to the influx of new members, the church began having two Sunday services, but after some time, it reverted to only one service. Later, in 1985, the second service was re-instituted. Additionally, that year the church began publication of a newsletter.¹²

In 1966, installation of an electric cable in the kitchen was accomplished. An organ was purchased from Kitts for \$2,500. The Sunday School library was started (with 100 books) under Clela Schlesinger and grew to more than 400 books by 1972. In 1967 chimes were installed in the church (a memorial gift from John Abend, Sr.) and ladies began attending Voter's meetings! In 1968, the Vestry decided to make the financial needs of the church known by printing the previous week's offering in the weekly bulletin; every member visitation was started; an Evangelism Committee, a Couples Club, and a Planning Committee were formed.¹³

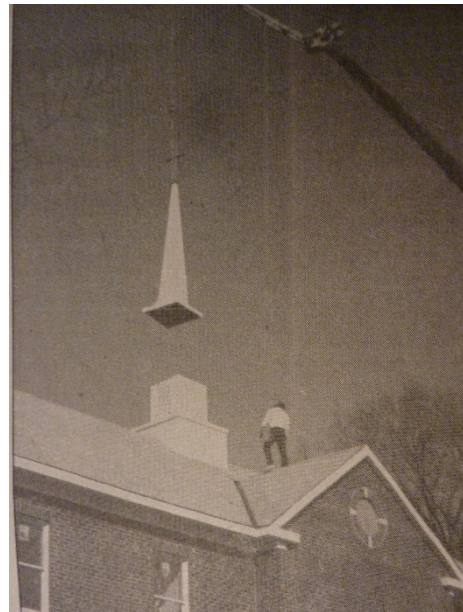
In 1969, the Reverend James Stilwell became St. Paul's minister and spiritual leader. To accommodate Pastor Stilwell and his wife's arrival, the church purchased a Crofton home, which was used as the parsonage until its sale in 1984. The equity from the parsonage was put in the church's Building Fund for the new addition dedicated on June 7, 1987. Also in 1969, an epiphany service with burning of Christmas greens began.

In 1970, Mrs. Stilwell organized a Children's Choir, which literally grew into an adult choir. In 1972, St. Paul's celebrated its 25th anniversary and in 1977, St. Paul's celebrated its 30th anniversary. A major structural event occurred in the late 1970's. Initiated because of a need to increase the efficiency and livability of the basement, renovation was done to install a new dropped ceiling and to remove old paneling. The walls were insulated and new paneling installed, resulting in a comfortable, multifunction room.

In 1981, the Stephen Ministry Series was instituted at St. Paul's. This program is designed to train lay people to assist the pastor in ministering to others in such crisis situations as birth, death, moving, marriage and retirement. In 1982, a new pipe organ was installed. Funding for the pipe organ was primarily accomplished through donations. In 1987, shortly after celebrating its 40th year, St. Paul's dedicated its grand new building addition, which housed two levels of classrooms, meeting rooms and offices, as well as a spacious new foyer. The old basement, having been used throughout the years for everything from church services to serving suppers, was transformed into a Fellowship Hall with the addition of large, contemporary windows and wall-to-wall carpet.

¹² Reference 1947-1987 history.

¹³ Reference 25th Anniversary history.



The actual dedication of the completed renovations took place on June 7, 1987. The renovation included a new steeple, a picture of its placement was recorded in *The Capital*, May 30, 1987.

In December 1993, after much input and consideration, St. Paul's Mission Statement was created: "We are a community of people with many gifts and talents, united as one with other believers, to serve our Lord Jesus Christ and to spread the Good News of the Gospel." Also created at this time was the church's logo: "Keeping the faith...sharing the faith...living the faith...in our community, in our world."¹⁴ The Quilters group was started in October, 1993.¹⁵

In February 1997, the church dedicated two important improvements to St. Paul's: a new sign at the entrance, which announces St. Paul's services and special events to the community; and the installation of a full-service elevator, which eliminates the barrier of the stairs, thus accommodating those with special needs who wish to join in worship and fellowship.¹⁶ Also during this timeframe, the parking lots were paved. By November 1997, using St. Paul's Birthday Fund, the church had a redesigned and installed communion rail, new red paraments, refinished candlesticks and offering plates, all of which were dedicated on the church's 50th anniversary, October 26th. In 1998 a new Worship Committee was formed. The purpose of the committee was to maintain the status quo for the worship service while the church had an interim pastor. The committee was responsible from the beginning of the prelude to the end of the postlude.¹⁷

In 1999, Rev. Thomas Krepps was called to be St. Paul's pastor. Small groups started in 2000; the concept was to form small groups of 6 to 12 individuals of like interests to get to know one another, care for each other, and to move forward in service.¹⁸ Also, a new worship service, informal in nature, was started. In 2003, the following projects were completed: building and installation of box lighting (increasing brightness in the sanctuary by 260%); installation of new dimmer switches; repainting of the entire sanctuary ceiling and walls; installation of concrete pads and picnic tables; refurbishment of the front sign; and construction of the storage shed (400 square feet of storage space).¹⁹



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¹⁴ History written for period 1947-1997, page 3.

¹⁵ Per Memo from Dorothy Holston dated approximately February 2001.

¹⁶ History written for period 1947-1997, page 4.

¹⁷ St. Paul's News Brief, dated August 1998.

¹⁸ St. Paul's News Brief, dated spring 2000, Pastor Krepps' letter to the congregation.

¹⁹ December 7, 2003 Congregation Meeting minutes. Funding for the sanctuary lighting and shed were covered by memorials, member contributions, and Celebrate Life Ministries contributed one-half of the shed costs.

²⁰ Photo taken from the church's 2004 Church Directory.

²¹ Photo of shed as it appears today, 2017.

In 2005, the church property was improved by planting Leland Cyprus trees on the property border; repaving the parking lot; refurbishing the lighted sign in front of the church; replacing the heating and cooling units, as well as replacing and calibrating the thermostats. A Narthex cabinet was built.²² Final payment of the mortgage for the addition to the church was made in April (retired 16 months early due to making additional payments to the principal each month). In 2006, a center stair handrail was built, the Fellowship Hall was upgraded and electricity was run to the shed. Active small groups, including the Woodworkers, Ladies' Night Out, Ladies' Breakfast, Empty Nesters, Book Club, Men's Group, LWML, Quilters, and SPY (St. Paul's Youth), continued to be a success to aid in the connection of the "church family", and the church continued to grow each year by 15 to 30 members. In 2008, the MaryAnne and Jake Folk Memorial Scholarship Fund was started, with the intention to promote and provide opportunities for higher education to active youth of St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

During 2009, the Altar Guild purchased new communion ware. Audio visual equipment was also purchased. Both items were funded from the Virginia Bowler fund.²³ To improve communication, a TV/video was installed in the Narthex and running by the first weekend in Advent. Also, the Woodworkers built a coffee bar for the Fellowship Hall.²⁴ In September of that year, a major upgrade/renovation was completed on the Fellowship Hall and a new piano was purchased for the Fellowship Hall.²⁵



²² December 18, 2005 Congregation Meeting minutes.

²³ Council Meeting minutes for 2009.

²⁴ Congregational Meeting minutes, dated December 13, 2009.

²⁵ September 16, 2009 Council Meeting minutes.

In 2010, new water and septic systems were installed, and the kitchen, downstairs hallway and classrooms were painted. Also, whiteboards were installed in classrooms and the upstairs air conditioner was serviced. Pastor Krepps also received a new microphone. (Most of the upgrades/improvements were funded by the Bowler Fund.) During the summer, a new church website was launched and in September, a Men's Group was started with ten members. There were three Sunday services. The Quilters pledged \$25,000 for local charities and the church Council voted to split the amount between The Lighthouse Shelter and Habitat for Humanity. Additionally, \$3,625 was spent for new choir robes. Advent by Candlelight was started. The LWML group disbanded²⁶ and Helen's Helping Hand Lending Closet was established.²⁷

The third service (11:00) became an informal service, called Rejuvenate, in the Fellowship Hall in 2011. It included confession, prayer, and a creed. Also in 2011, the bathroom floors were replaced and the sanctuary wood floor was refinished. In September, the Fellowship Hall was upgraded with electronics; new pew cushions were purchased; and wireless phones were placed in the offices, conference room and kitchen.²⁸

In 2014, the church roof was replaced. Amendments to the church constitution ((1) position of the treasurer to be a permanent paid position instead of an elected position; (2) Elders may lead both communion and non-communion services if the elements have been previously consecrated by the pastor; and (3) extending who can lead a congregational meeting if both the president and vice president aren't available) were drafted and approved. As part of an Outreach effort, T-shirts and bags with a newly designed church logo were made available for purchase. The church established an on-line/electronic capability for offerings; and the congregation produced a pictorial directory of church members. In August, the church replaced the HVAC in the Sanctuary; and later that year, the large tree in the parking lot was removed when the parking lot was repaved.



In October, the church installed new front doors – a gift from Dot Holston.²⁹

²⁶ Information extracted from monthly 2010 Council Meeting minutes and Congregational Meeting minutes dated June 6, 2010.

²⁷ St. Paul's Epistle, summer (June & July) 2010.

²⁸ Information taken from 2011 Council Minutes.

²⁹ Information taken from 2014 Council Minutes and Congregational Meeting minutes.

In late 2015, John Segelhorst and Del Jenstrom built and installed a storage box for the altar paraments. A closed circuit TV project in the church's narthex was wired. In 2016, the church undertook a complete kitchen renovation. A contract was issued for \$45,050 which covered better storage, a center island, shelving, basic cabinets and overhead cabinets, a new pantry, new basic stainless stove, granite countertop, ceramic tile flooring, updated electrical work, painting, lighting, water filtration system, double-oven and proper hood. A youth chime group was started in February and the pastor's sermons began being posted to the church's website. The youth movie room was repainted and new blinds were installed in the offices.

Photos of the new kitchen.



In 2017, year to date, the Sanctuary ceiling was repaired and painted, and a new air conditioning unit was installed in the secretary's office. In August, a new church organist started. The pictures below show the church building as it looks today.



³⁰ Photos of the church exterior courtesy of Bill Corwin.



THE CHURCH'S SANCTUARY

As previously mentioned, St. Paul's new building was dedicated on June 7, 1987. This section briefly addresses the items we see as we worship in the Sanctuary.



The Sanctuary Lamp



For almost 32 years, the sanctuary lamp has been hanging in the church. The Sunday School gave the lamp to St. Paul's in 1977. The lamp was refurbished (cleaned, polished and lacquered) and rededicated on March 15, 2009 in memory of MaryAnne Folk. A brass plate with the dedication details hangs on the furnishings plaque in the back of the church.³¹

The Peace Candle

The peace candle is the small votive candle on the altar. In 2003, the congregation of Prince of Peace Presbyterian Church received a peace candle from Hope Presbyterian Church of Baltimore and passed a peace candle to St. Paul's. The peace candle "concept" dates back to 1985, when a Presbyterian minister visited the Soviet Union and was approached by an elderly woman who pressed a small sum of money into his hand and asked that he do something for world peace. After much thought, the minister purchased a small votive candle and placed it on the communion table, lighting it as a symbol of peace during the worship service. In the fall of 1986, the congregation decided to pass the light of its candle on to 100 other churches. Since that time, its light has travelled to thousands of congregations all over the world.

³¹ Information on items in the Sanctuary was provided by Kate Hausner and Mary Jane Felsentreger.

The Kneelers

The cushions on the altar chairs and the kneelers (the cushions at the altar rail) were made by the hands of the church's Needlepointers in the early 2000's. They were designed by Laurie Segelhorst and after the needlepointing was done, she made each piece into the kneeling cushions used today. Needlepointing the cushions was a two-year labor of love to create nine kneelers for the communion rail, two chair seat covers, and two bench cushions, completed in 2003.



The Baptismal Font



The Baptismal Font was given in 1951 as a memorial gift in memory of a charter church member, Mr. Russell Bartgis.

The Memorial Gifts Plaque



Gifts given to the church are listed on this plaque located at the Sanctuary entrance.

The Parament Chest

The parament chest that's positioned just outside the sacristy door was designed and constructed by John Segelhorst and Del Jenstrom in 2016.³²

³² Information on the banners, parament chest, kneelers was provided by Kate Hausner. Photos were provided by Bill Corwin.

The Banners



Banners are displayed on the wall behind the altar, on a side wall, and on the walls at the back of the sanctuary. They change with the liturgical season. During Advent and Christmas, a Christmas tree and Advent banner (dedicated in 2016 in memory of Laurie Segelhorst) are put up behind the altar. The Epiphany banners displayed following Christmas and until the beginning of Lent were designed by Sue Senasack and Kate Hausner and made by Donna Larkin in 2011. During Lent, a grape vine wreath and a Lenten banner are put up (designed by Sue Senasack and made by Donna Larkin). Starting on Easter Sunday and going through the summer and fall until Advent, green and gold banners (given in memory of Dr. Richard Hartzell in 2006) are displayed. The Baptismal banner that hangs over the parament chest was dedicated in memory of Laurie Segelhorst in 2016. Banners hanging in the back of the sanctuary include Easter, Christmas, and other worship banners. They were designed and made by Jackie Abend and Donna Larkin. The St. Paul's banner in the back of the church was designed by Laurie Segelhorst and made by Donna Larkin, Laurie Segelhorst, Sue Senasack and Kate Hausner.

The Candle Sticks on the Altar

The candle sticks were dedicated in November 1992 – a gift from Janet Villwock in memory of her mother, Johanna Nyberg.

The Organ



In the early 80's, St. Paul's had an old electronic organ, with obsolete vacuum tubes, non-standard pedal board, and lack of presets to change smoothly from one sound to another, and generally too small for the church. As the organ needed frequent repairs, a committee began to explore options and costs for its replacement. By February, 1982, \$3,500 had been raised; however, replacing the organ would cost \$20,000 for a new electronic organ (projected life span of 10-20 years) or \$33,000 for a new Wicks Pipe Organ (projected life span of 50-60 years). That summer, an amazing thing happened. A Pentecostal church in Baltimore decided to give up their pipe organ in favor of synthesizers, guitars, and percussion instruments. Their good, but old Moeller was for sale for \$5,000. However, it needed another \$5,000 to move and install it at St. Paul's. The committee and Council felt that the church was asking a fair price so St. Paul's agreed to pay the asking price. Additionally, St. Paul's had \$4,165.63 in the organ fund. It was agreed that the organ would be moved by December 11th. A crew from St. Paul's dismantled, boxed, and stored 400+ pipes; removed the wind chambers, blowers, the "guts" of the organ. The crew worked every evening, all day Saturday, and sometimes Sunday afternoons from the time the contract was signed (September 11, 1982) with the goal of having the organ working by Christmas. There were many glitches to be fixed before it worked, but by Christmas Eve it was played for the first time and the congregation was ecstatic. A dedicatory concert was held on Candlemas, February 1, 1983.³³

St. Paul's Choral Music³⁴

Since its beginning, St. Paul's has had a rich tradition of religious music. An early series of organists/choir directors organized adult choirs and children's choirs, and periodically added instrumentalists to enhance the services.

An adult choir sang regularly at the late service. Barbara Seidel was organist/choir director from 1985 to 1993; she donated the piano in the sanctuary to the church. Jane Felsentreger was the organist/choir director from 1994-1999. In addition to the late service choir, she started an early-service choir, along

³³ Excerpts taken from St. Paul's Newsletter, fall 2000, *How St. Paul's Got Its Pipe Organ*, written by Nancy Betz.

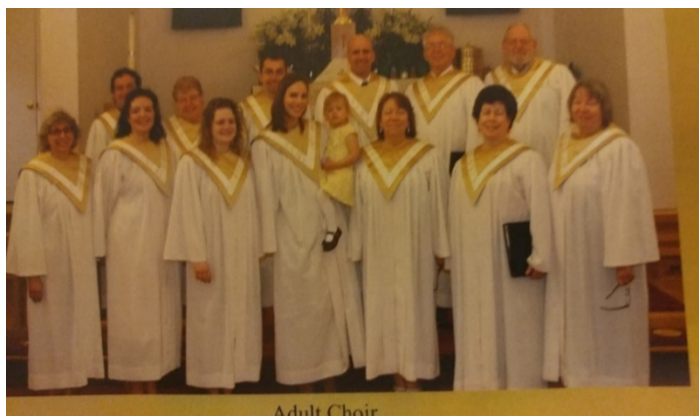
³⁴ Much of this section was written by Kate Hausner and Jane Felsentreger.

with a children's choir. Nancy Betz served as organist/choir director from 1999 to 2005. She directed a women's choir and a men's choir and continued to work with the children.

When the 9:45 a.m. service began in 2001/2002 timeframe, it started with recorded music. Ralph Fricke volunteered to play his guitar for the service and soon after, Steve Fogarty joined him. In 2005/2006 Heidi Swanson, who had previous experience with a praise band, joined the group. Under her direction the group grew and a new repertoire of music was introduced and became a part of our worship. "Whatever" from Philippians 4:8 became the Praise Band's name. When Heidi left in August 2012, Wayne MacCrory became the leader. In November 2016, the baton was passed to Michelle Angeli. Under both Wayne and Michelle, "Whatever" has continued to grow in musicians and repertoire.³⁵



From 2005 until July 29, 2017, Jane Felsentreger once again served as organist. Joyce MacCrory served as the adult choir director and the children's choir director. Along with playing the organ Jane also directed the Men's Choir that Nancy began for one year. She continued with the Women's Choir who are known today as St. Pauli's Girls. Joyce resigned in June of 2017 and Jane retired in July of 2017.



³⁵ Information provided by Jane Felsentreger.

³⁶ The Praise Band as it appears today.



GROUPS, FELLOWSHIP AND OUTREACH

As earlier stated, a Ladies Aid was formed in 1947 and in 1948 a Men's Club and Vestry was started. Over the years these two groups functioned in multiple fellowship and outreach activities. The Ladies Aid became the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML). Others are a Quilters group, which was started in 1993; an active youth group called St. Paul's Youth (grades 6 -12) or SPY; a very active and resourceful group of talented woodworkers; and an active Sunday School. These are only a few examples of the many groups that have been a part of St. Paul's history.

When Pastor Krepps became the church's spiritual leader in 1999, he suggested that perhaps, as a fellowship outreach initiative, small groups of individuals with like interests should be formed. One of the groups, Empty/Partially Empty Nesters was formed in 2000. It was the brainchild of Ted Felsentreger and when Pastor Krepps began to talk about small interest groups, Ted immediately thought of a group for adults whose children had left home or were still working on leaving the nest. Eating and socializing are two of the group's most favorite activities. Potluck dinners at various homes, crab feasts, wine tastings, as well as Bunco, and an annual Christmas party have been some of the fellowship activities that this group enjoys. The group also has been involved with service projects. It has sponsored the Anne Arundel Social Services Thanksgiving; given "love boxes" to students from the church that are filled with goodies and study supplies (given to remind the young adults that they are still in our thoughts); involved with Anne Arundel County Social Services "Back-To-School program, just to name a few of their outreach activities. Such outreach has been successful due not only to the Empty Nesters, but also to the generosity of the members of St. Paul's.³⁷

Other groups that were formed included the Needlepointers, a group that took on a two-year project to make needlepoint kneelers and bench seats under the direction of Laurie Segelhorst. But no group can hold a candle to the long standing Quilters group when it comes to outreach efforts. This small group of ladies has made and given thousands of quilts to organizations world-wide and to the military, as well as funded various upgrades to our church and covered some of the church's operational expenditures. Under the direction of Dot Holston and Dorothy Clark, this group's efforts have led to being recognized

³⁷ Information taken from page 8 of the fall, 2006 newsletter.

for their contributions to civic welfare.³⁸ While it is unclear as to the date the Woodworkers were formed, this group of church men, under the direction of Herb Segelhorst, have contributed many beautiful and functional woodworking items that have enhanced our church and functionality. Fellowship opportunities continue to exist with Bible study groups, Ladies Breakfast and Ladies Lunch get-togethers, book club, and Via de Cristo weekends, to name a few .

Under the direction of Pastor Krepp's wife, Andrea, the church has taken on special service projects. One of these projects was preparing and serving meals for guests at the Light House Shelter in Annapolis (Ladies "Service" Night Out). Over the years, church members have supported many outreach activities. These have included, but are not limited to: Thanksgiving Sharing and Christmas Sharing; supporting Crofton Christian Caring Council (CCCC) by filling mission/food baskets in the narthex; and organizing and supporting an annual Fall Festival. Also, the church's youth, both SPY and Sunday School, have not only wonderful fellowship but also have undertaken many service and outreach projects (examples include SPY Appalachia Service Project (ASP), Center of Hope, and Sunday School donations to the Heifer International Fund). Under the direction of Andrea Krepps, Youth Coordinator for St. Paul's, St. Paul's youth (SPY) gather together for fun, fellowship and service. The group shares its faith through service in the community and beyond (preparing lunch for the needy, serving meals, sorting Thanksgiving food, wrapping Christmas gifts, watching children during church services, participating in Fall Festival) and also by leading, preparing, and participating in Youth Sunday. The youth grow in their faith during Sunday School, confirmation class, and attending youth retreats both local and national. SPY fellowship activities vary as interests change, but some examples include: Autobahn, Renaissance Fair, Haunted Sunrise Farm, Castle Laser Tag, The Clay Bakers, Millennium Bowling, Sky Zone, pool parties, and mini-golf. Their fund raisers include bingo/silent auction, spaghetti dinner, car washes, flamingo flocking, selling water, pancake breakfast, and rummage sales.

Today, church members are invited to participate in outreach initiatives and fellowship groups, and to attend church meetings to see what activities, projects, and issues are being addressed by St. Paul's. A letter written back in the November 1999 church newsletter by Penny Courtney best describes the Church Council:

The Church Council is the body that conducts the "business" part of congregational life. The board authorizes expenditures according to the budget voted by the congregation, oversees personnel decisions, arranges for building maintenance and upkeep, adjudicates building space usage, directs/plans for fellowship and outreach activities, and dozens of other things (president, vice-president, recording secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary), the Elders, and the Deacons. Pastor is also on the board. Council meetings are held every month and are open to all congregation members, though only elected officers are eligible to vote on issues. Meetings and council business take up about 2-3 hours per month.

The role of the Elders is to assist Pastor in the worship life of the congregation. They chair various activities – fellowship, worship, education, outreach, stewardship – and enlist the help of congregation members to get their tasks accomplished. Elders meet separately and then also attend council meetings.

³⁸ The Quilters received a Mayor's citation from the City of Baltimore in 2003 for their contribution to civic welfare.

Deacons are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the physical plant of the church. They arrange for repairs, painting, or whatever chores are required; they also direct the work on Blue Jean Sundays. Deacons are responsible for ensuring our contracted work (secretary, organist/choir director, cleaning contractor) is performed satisfactorily. They meet several times through the year and attend council meetings as voting members.

To find out more information about St. Paul's Council consider attending one of its meetings. Follow activities of the church by viewing its website: www.stpaulscrofton.com and following on Facebook at www.facebook.com>places>Gambrills, Maryland>Lutheran Church or www.facebook.com/StPaulCrofton/events .

MINISTERS SERVING ST. PAUL'S

The Rev. Emmanuel T. Finck (1947-1960)



Pastor Finck was born in Shelby, Michigan about 1893. He attended Northwestern Seminary of Watertown, Wisconsin. Before coming to Maryland in 1922 (approx.), he served as Pastor of churches in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa. He formed the First Lutheran Church of Odenton where he was pastor for 20 years; St. Paul's where he served for 13 years; Resurrection Lutheran Church at Curtis Bay; and Emmanuel Lutheran Church of Orchard Beach, which named their church after Pastor Finck. During WWII, Pastor Finck served as contact key pastor of the Lutheran Church for service personnel in the area. Pastor Fink also served as Chaplain of the Maryland House of Correction.³⁹

³⁹ Reference 25th Anniversary history.

The Rev. Walter E. Koller (1961-1962)

Pastor Koller was born in Bethpage, New York on September 20, 1928. He attended Pre-theological school at Concordia Collegiate Institute, Bronxville, New York and the Lutheran Seminary at St. Louis, Missouri. He served as student chaplain of Lutheran Mission Society of Maryland 1951 and 1952; did post graduate work at Valparaiso University; was an instructor at California Concordia College, Oakland, California; and was pastor of Rollingwood Lutheran Church, San Pablo, California. While serving at Rollingwood, he was public relation representative and director of Sunday School Teachers' Institute of San Pablo. Pastor Koller also served as chaplain to Maryland State Reformatory for males in Hagerstown and Maryland House of Correction at Jessup, Maryland. He served as chairman of the Correctional Chaplains of Maryland and Editor of "the Mission Reporter" of the Lutheran Mission Society of Maryland.⁴⁰

The Rev. John L. Beck (1963-1965)

Pastor Beck grew up in Hutchinson, Minnesota. He graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, in June 1959 and went to Washington in August of that same year to assume the duties of his first call. He received six years of pre-ministerial schooling at Concordia High School and Junior College in St. Paul, Minnesota, after which he taught for one year at Trinity Lutheran School in Wyandotte, Michigan. After three years at Concordia Seminary, he served as vicar at Grace Lutheran Church, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, where he met his wife, Barbara and married in 1960. He came to St. Paul's from Washington, D.C., where he served for three and a half years as assistant chaplain in the institutional ministry under the auspices of the Lutheran Action Council.

⁴⁰ Reference 25th Anniversary history.

The Rev. James R. O'Connor (1965-1968)



St. Paul's first full-time pastor, received six years of pre-theological training in the high school and junior college departments at Concordia Collegiate Institute, Bronxville, New York. He completed his college education with two years of study at Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne, Indiana. After three years of theological study at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, he was graduated as a candidate for the holy ministry in June, 1965. Between his second and third seminary years, he interned for a year as a vicar in a congregation in Lincoln Park, Michigan.⁴¹

The Rev. S. James Stilwell (1969-1998)



Pastor Stilwell was born on May 28, 1933 in Toronto and reared at Thunder Bay, Ontario, on Lake Superior. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in religion in 1956 from Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina and he obtained his Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1964 from Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois. He has also received a Master of Divinity degree from the seminary, from his work in practical theology. Pastor Stilwell served as Pastor of Way of the Cross Lutheran Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, from 1964-1968. He also served as a vicar at Calvary Lutheran Church, Wrya, Colorado, and St. John's, Vernon, Colorado.⁴²

⁴¹ Reference 25th Anniversary history.

⁴² Reference 25th Anniversary history and Crofton Courier, April 19, 1977, page 11.

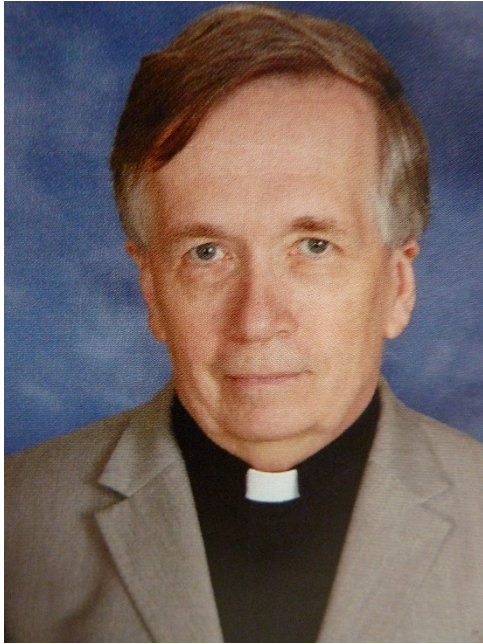
The Rev. Edward H. Birner (1998-1999)



Pastor Birner grew up in Mattoon, IL. He began preparation for the ministry in 1944, at Concordia High School and Jr. College in Ft. Wayne, IN and continued his studies at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO, graduating in 1953. He spent a year of vicarage in Greenbelt, MD. Upon his graduation, Greenbelt Lutheran Church (later named Holy Cross Lutheran Church) called him to become their pastor. He served there until his retirement in 1993. During his ministry, Pastor Birner was active in the Southeastern District of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and also in the City of Greenbelt. After retirement, he served two summers with the Alaska Highway Ministry, and served as interim pastor at First

Lutheran Church in Bowie, Our Savior in Laurel, St. Paul in Glen Burnie, St. Paul's in Crofton, and Galilee in Pasadena, MD. The last three and a half years, Pastor Birner struggled with Parkinson's disease while living at the National Lutheran Home in Rockville, MD.

The Rev. Thomas J. Krepps (1999-current)



Pastor Thomas Krepps was born April 13, 1955, and grew up in College Point, NY, a small suburb of New York City. He received his Bachelor's Degree from York College in Jamaica NY, part of the City University System. Pastor married his wife Andrea in 1978, and he worked as a commercial credit manager until 1987. In 1983, they left New York, so he could begin his seminary studies in St. Louis, Mo. From 1985-86 Pastor served his vicarage at Trinity Lutheran Church, Des Moines, IA. After receiving his Masters of Divinity and graduating from seminary in 1987, he received his first call to serve as Assistant Pastor at Trinity in Des Moines. While in Iowa, Pastor Krepps and Andrea celebrated the birth of their two sons (Stephen in 1987 and David in 1990).

During his time there, Pastor Krepps did post graduate work at Drake University in Developmental Psychology and Marketing. In 1991, he received a call to serve as Assistant Pastor at Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Baltimore. The church also operated a Day School, where his boys attended, and Andrea was very active in helping at the school. In 1999, he received the call to serve as pastor at St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Gambrills and Crofton. While his boys were young Pastor Krepps kept busy coaching them in various sports: basketball, baseball, and soccer. During his ministry he has served on several committee's working to help various aspects of the church's mission and ministry. Pastor Krepps is currently on the District's Student Financial Aid Committee.