

From  
whence  
we came

(A concise history of St. John's Lutheran Church.)

Concord, N.C.

*By*

*Frances Summey Goins*

Dedicated  
to the  
Glory of God  
and to the  
Church Members  
of  
St. John's Lutheran Church

COVER

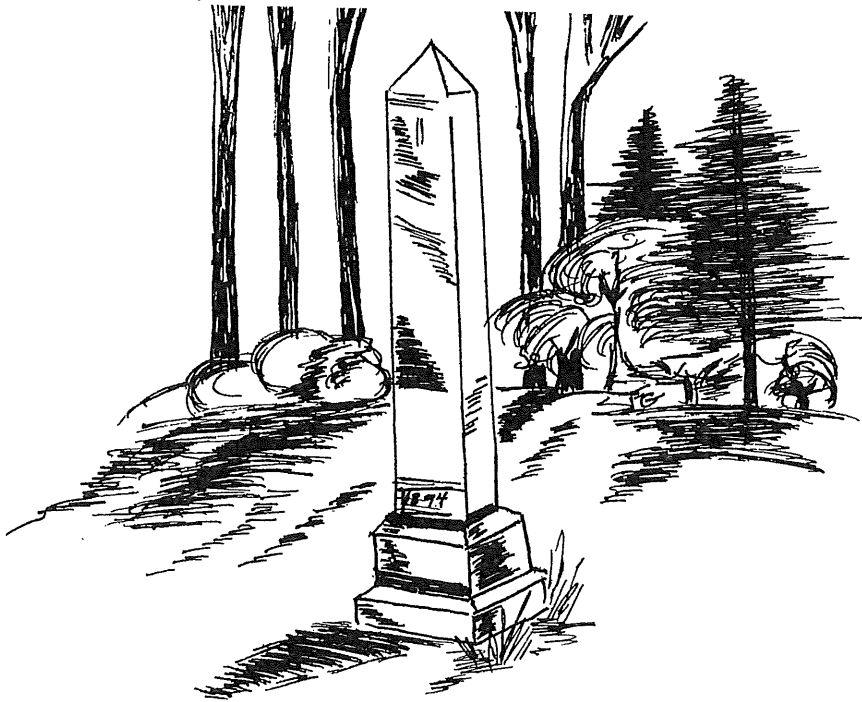
The Gospel of St. John soars heavenward as an eagle's wings, so it is that the emblem of John is the high-soaring eagle. John rises to loftiest heights in dealing with the mind of Christ.

August, 1976



St. John's congregation was first known as the "Dutch Buffalo Creek Church" because the members settled near this creek. The first graveyard and church building were on this creek about two miles from the present church. This rough, unhewn pine log meeting house was very plain and used as both church and school. This German congregation of Lutherans dates its origin about 1745. We are grateful for the German Reformed ministers who kept the fire of faith in their Lutheran brethren, our forefathers.

On Thanksgiving Day in 1894 a very special service was held at the site of this original location of Dutch Buffalo Creek Church. A stone monument was unveiled both to mark the location of the first house of worship and to honor those buried there. Rev. J. Q. Wertz, newly arrived pastor of St. John's, and Rev. G. H. Cox, D. D. conducted the services. They were assisted by Dr. B. S. Brown, Sr., pastor of



Holy Trinity, Mt. Pleasant and Rev. Paul Barringer, D. D., pastor of Bethel German Reformed and St. James Church, Mt. Pleasant. Mr. Harry Cline, an active member of St. John's, attended the dedication service eighty-two years ago as a lad of four.

The congregations increased and so it was decided to build another house of worship about three miles west. This larger, pine log church was built about one-half mile east of the present church and on land now owned by Mr. Harry Cline. The spring they used near the creek still has good water.

A new chapter unfolded in the year 1771. The Lutheran members of Dutch Buffalo Creek Church decided to build a church of their own. A site was selected in the area which is now the St. John's cemetery. Captain John Paul Barringer was the building committee of one and Daniel Jarrett was the contractor. This was a frame building which was quite presentable-looking according to local standards and the church interior was decorated with rather fine cabinet work. The church was built chiefly at the expense of Captain Barringer. The congregation showed their appreciation by having a raised, enclosed pew constructed especially for the benefit of Captain Barringer and his family and located it in a prominent place in the church. Captain John Paul Barringer exemplifies the spirit of these early settlers in their attachment and devotion to their church and that for which it stands. St. John's Lutheran Church was now the official name although it was known by its old name for many years afterward.

St. John's Lutheran Church had a building and a congregation, but all efforts to get a Lutheran minister failed. St. John's tried in vain to get a minister from Pennsylvania from where the settlers had emigrated. There were none to be spared. There were no schools or seminaries for the education and training of Lutheran ministers. The only hope for a Lutheran minister was the mother-country in Germany and so it was that the members agreed to send to Germany for a minister and a schoolteacher. Knowing that letters and petitions would accomplish little, the newly-organized Lutheran congregations in N. C. resolved to send a delegation who could make personal appeals to the Lutherans in Europe and could describe the needs of the N. C. churches and answer questions concerning them. Thus in the year 1772, Christopher Layrle from St. John's in Mecklenberg County (now Cabarrus) and Christopher Rintelmann from Organ Church in Rowan were commissioned to go at their own expense to Germany. They were instructed to apply to the Consistory of Hanover because at that time the Province of N. C. was under the government of the king of England, who, at the same time, was Elector of Hanover.

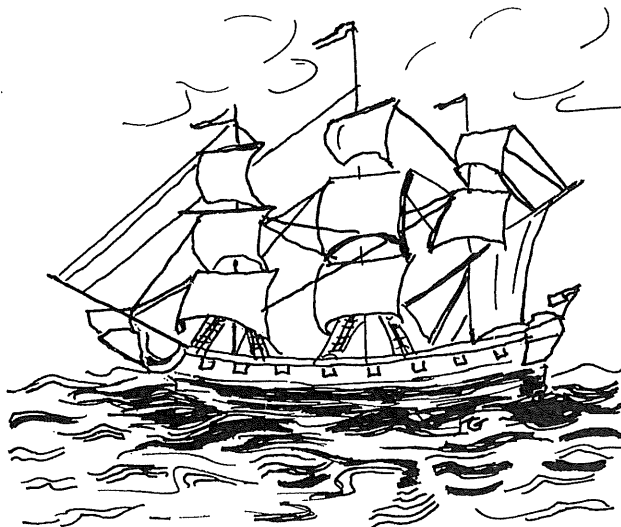
Gov. Tryon of N. C. wrote a letter of recommendation to the "Society for the spread of the gospel in foreign parts" at London. With this and a petition requesting a pastor and a school teacher signed by sixty families and other necessary credentials, the commissioners left their homes in 1772. These two men rode their horses

to Charleston, S. C. and made a safe voyage to England where they were most graciously received and well-treated. The Missionary Society heartily endorsed their cause. The commissioners let it be known they desired a preacher and a schoolteacher and "such books by means of which a current of fanatic writings, then flooding the country, might, at least in a measure, be checked."

The king of England and many English noblemen gave liberally of their means and St. James' Lutheran Chapel in London gave them a handsome amount of money for that day, in all amounting to more than eight hundred dollars. With money and books, Layrle and Rintelmann continued on to Hanover, Germany. Here, besides offering of money, they were given Bibles, hymn-books, Catechisms and other books. Most important of all was that their petition for a pastor and school teacher was readily granted by the Consistory of Hanover. Rev. Adolphus Nussmann was officially called and commissioned as pastor and Mr. John Godfried Arndt as school teacher by the consistory. Both had attended Goettingen University and it is here that Rev. A. Nussmann received instruction in Lutheran theology as he was converted to the Lutheran faith from the Franciscan Order of the Roman Catholic Church.

The commissioners effected more good than this, for by their faithful representations of the conditions and needs of the churches, the Lutheran congregations of N. C. were placed under the supervision of the Consistory and the University of Goettingen. These institutions promised assistance and more ministers and teachers, however, the Revolutionary War interrupted these promises.

The Rev. Mr. A. Nussmann and Mr. J. G. Arndt came to N. C. by way of London where it is important to note that a sincere and lasting friendship between Pastor Nussmann and Dr. Velthusen of the Helmstaedt Mission Society was effected.



These two men arrived in N. C. in 1773 after having landed in Charleston. North Carolina had its first Lutheran preacher and pastor to locate permanently within her boundaries and the Lutheran Church was especially fortunate in obtaining the services of so learned, devoted, and self-sacrificing a Christian minister as Adolphus Nussmann who preached his first sermon on the second Sunday of August, 1773.

For more than a year Pastor Nussmann gave primary attention to Organ and St. John's, Salisbury while serving St. John's, Cabarrus and other groups as opportunity allowed. Mr. Arndt had immediately began his work of instructing the children of Organ Church and two years later was ordained a Lutheran minister.

Dr. Velthusen, on the basis of a letter from Pastor Nussmann, stated, "The strongest and most prominent of these congregations is the one on Buffaloe-Creek, Mecklenberg Co. It received Mr. Nussmann at once in a friendly manner, and consists of none but members of the Evangelical faith." In 1774, A. Nussmann moved to Cabarrus County and became the first regular pastor of St. John's. Pastor Nussmann entered a land grant in his own name in the year 1783. The land lies one mile southeast of the church. It consisted of two hundred acres on Adam's Creek.

Three years after Rev. Mr. Nussmann arrived in N. C. the Revolutionary War began. This cut off all support from Europe. Pastor Nussmann's congregation was loyal to the American cause and so they suffered many hardships. Many men were wounded, died in battle or in British prisons. The British armies were not directly in the area of St. John's, but the Tories robbed and plundered which caused many not to absent themselves from home on Sunday. Pastor Nussmann, as well as other ministers, struggled through this dark period and faithfully discharged his duties as time and circumstances permitted.

On October 22, 1782, three church council members--Jacob Fegert, Marx Haus, and Jacob Thieme--paid fifty shillings for one hundred acres of government land and entered it "in trust for the congregation of Dutch Buffalo Meeting-House." This tract included the land on which the church had already been built. These men acted wisely and with forethought for the land is now very valuable.

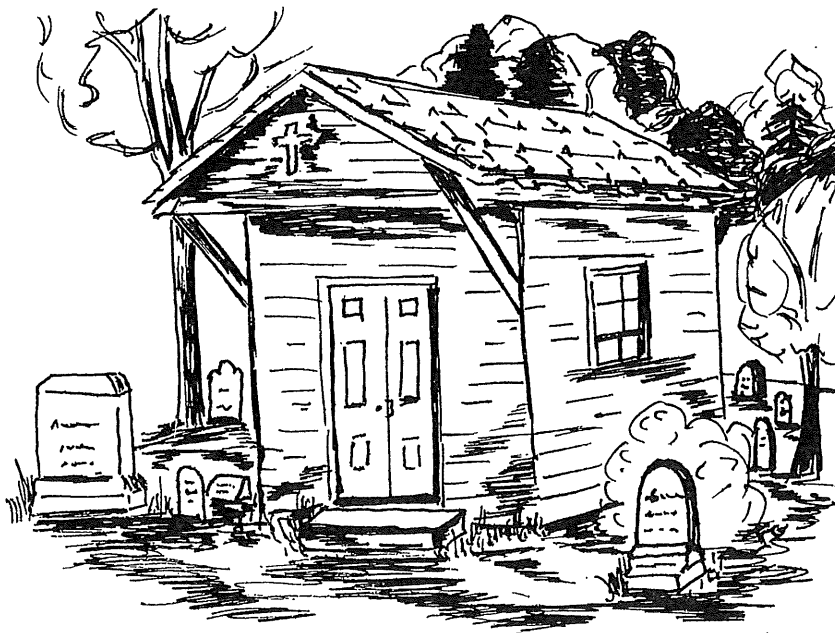
Just before the close of the Revolutionary War, the pastor of St. John's wrote a constitution which was adopted by the congregation. It is written in Nussmann's own hand in German script. This constitution was translated at the request of Dr. John B. Moose, a son of St. John's, who has many relatives who are active members in the church today.

The St. John's Constitution is the only written record of Pastor Nussman's labors other than the Helmstaedt Reports. Together they indicate his faith, aims, and ideals. Through the Constitution

he makes an effort to provide the ministrations on the church and religious education for all. The pastor binds himself and his successors to the teachings of confessional Lutheranism. The liturgy to be used was the one in the German Lutheran Court Chapel of St. James in London and the Marburg Hymnbook, used in Pennsylvania, was introduced. The document provided an obligation to be signed respectively by pastors, deacons, and school teachers, by which they "testify" in promise of faithful service and to obey the Church Order. This Constitution, conceived by Pastor Nussmann, was and is important to the life of St. John's Lutheran Church.

The war was over, the St. John's congregation had been thoroughly re-organized, and the need for a better house of worship was felt. On November 16, 1784, a resolution was passed to rebuild the church. It was erected "on the same site where the old one stood" and was dedicated July 4, 1785 by Reverend A. Nussmann. This church was much larger than the three former ones. It was of a frame structure, constructed of the best material to be had, painted red, and became known as the "Old Red Meeting House". Captain J.P. Barringer's elevated pew was transferred to this building which was the best house of worship in the county when built.

This year on August 8, 1976, a Service of Re-dedication will be held. This Historical Committee, with Sarah E. Walker as chairwoman and the members of St. John's Lutheran Men, located part of the 1785 church building, salvaged the better timbers, and from these, built a small chapel. Vyron Petrea and Brice Bost were in charge of the building. It is in the cemetery near its original location. It, too, is painted red and has split shingles hand-made from a red oak tree from the church property.



Another subscription, taken about 1785, allowed the church to purchase a large, gilt silver goblet from Pastor Nussmann. This goblet was used for Communion services and was definitely still in use at St. John's as late as 1872.

After the war, in 1787, an exciting and worthwhile effort was made again by Pastor Nussmann to have the church placed in connection with the Church in Germany. Reverend Nussmann had a threefold object in re-establishing communication: St. John's had ninety pounds sterling on deposit in Europe, devotional books and German school books were greatly needed, as well as German ministers. The church council met September 30, 1787 at Pastor Nussmann's home for they and the congregation feared the actions of its members during the Revolution had caused the money to be forfeited. The council resolved that if the money could still be appropriated to the welfare of the congregation, "that the money should always be considered as a fund belonging solely to the church; that from the interest...the yearly salary of the pastor shall be supplemented; that no part of the principal shall be touched without the consent of the donors." (This fund had accumulated in 1843 to fifteen hundred dollars, and was then all used, contrary to the above resolution, in erecting the church edifice in which the members of St. John's Church worship still today.)

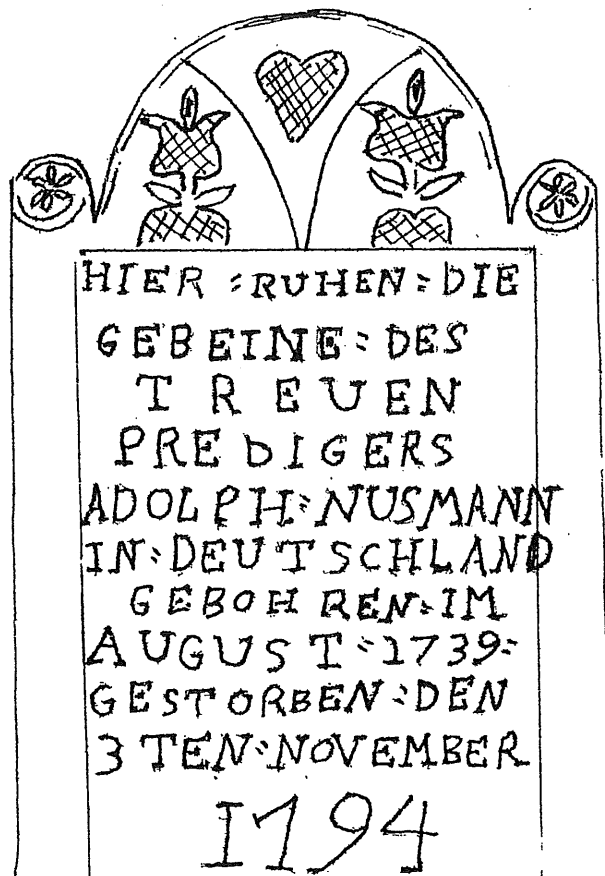
The pastor of St. John's was instrumental in the arrival of other ministers sent over by the Helmstaedt Mission Society. Since Pastor Nussmann had stressed the need of a catechism, the result was a second edition published in 1788 in Germany and given the title "North Carolina Catechism". These were shipped to N. C. to be studied and used by St. John's members and other Lutherans in the state.

The first ecclesiastical assembly of the Lutheran Church in N. C. was held at St. John's May 20, 1794 with five Lutheran ministers. Pastor Nussmann was the Senior pastor and the purpose was the ordination of the first English Lutheran minister in the state, Rev. R. J. Miller.

St. John's was the center of Lutheranism for the county. Her pastor not only went out on missionary visits to other counties, but ministered to the people regularly over a fifty mile radius. Rev. A. Nussmann had supervision of the entire N. C. Mission of some twenty congregations. Out of St. John's sprang a number of other congregations all of which were faithfully and regularly supplied with the word and sacraments by Pastor Nussmann until, out of necessity after his death, new and separate churches were organized. This dear pastor's labors in N. C. extended over more than twenty-one years and twenty of these were with St. John's.

Rev. A. Nussmann and Elizabeth Rintelmann were married Aug. 8, 1774 and they had three children before his wife died. Pastor Nussmann then married Barbara Layrly, daughter of Christopher, and to

them were born four children. Barbara re-married some years after her husband's death. This pioneer minister departed this life November 3, 1794 surrounded by family and friends. He was aged fifty-five years and three months and was severely missed by both family and church. The original blue stone slab, inscribed in German and marking his grave, is now preserved within the church.



The list of St. John's Lutheran pastors is long, but all twenty-seven have labored in the love and spirit of the Lord as the two pioneer pastors, A. Nussman and C. A. G. Storch. This pastor, who succeeded Pastor Nussmann, was a very able and respected pastor. He was the leader of the Lutheran Church in the South for many years and served St. John's twenty-two years ending in 1821.

In 1806, St. John's was said to be the strongest congregation in the state. She was received into the N. C. Lutheran Synod October 20, 1806 at Organ Church.

In this same year the first of many congregations which have gone out from St. John's, Bethel, Stanly Co., established itself. Others are St. Stephen's; Trinity, Concord; Mt. Hermon; Holy Trinity; Mt. Olive; Cross of Christ (Prosperity); the new organization of Cold Water Lutheran; and St. Martin's, Cabarrus Co. Many of St. John's members helped to make strong other churches in the area.

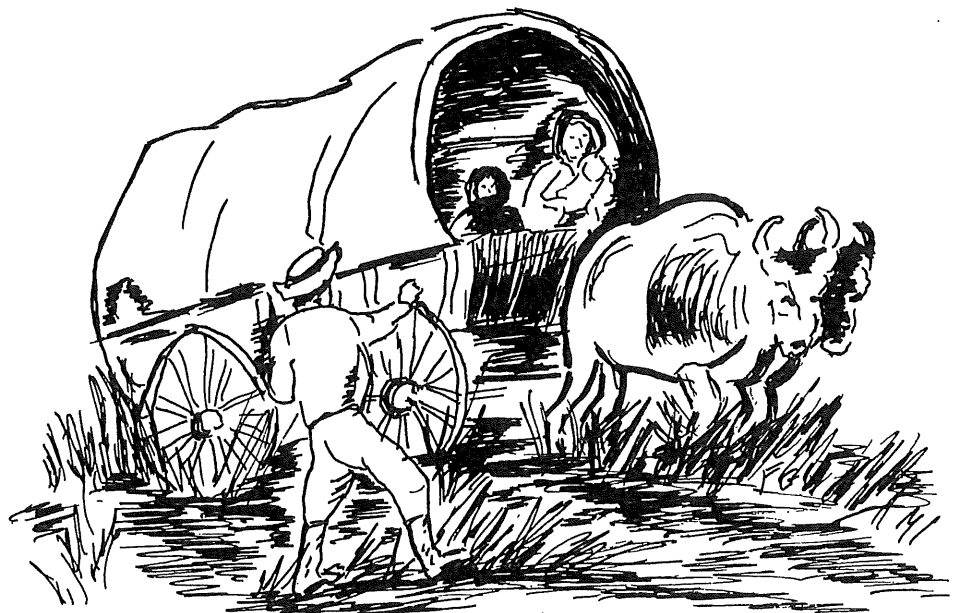
The Sixteenth Convention of the N. C. Synod met on April 25, 1819 and it was the first time for St. John's to host the Synodical Convention.

St. John's was regularly having Sunday School in 1832 - one at the church and several scattered throughout the large congregational boundaries. Reverend L. C. Groseclose found the Sunday School had been dropped during the troubled times of the Civil War and he re-organized it in 1867. Today it meets each Lord's Day before the Church Service and classes are held for every age.

Reverend Daniel Scherer was pastor here for ten years beginning in 1821. A large number of persons from St. John's, Cabarrus Co. and other N. C. Lutheran churches settled in Illinois Territory so he joined them as a missionary pastor. Pastor Scherer established, in 1834 at Hillsboro, Ill., the first Lutheran church, St. John's, in the state and was received in full connection with the N. C. Synod.

When pastor of this church, Reverend Henry Graeber, wrote: "The Formula recommended for the Government and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church was unanimously adopted by this congregation in the beginning of the year 1838..." On May 17, 1839, he confirmed one boy and one girl in the German language and thirty-nine (thirteen boys, twenty-six girls) in the English. Two years later sixteen males and sixteen females were confirmed in the English language and none in German. (This seems to mean the demise of the German language in this church.)

From the confirmation rolls of 1844-1852, we find that many of these young people later "Removed to the West". Among surnames so marked are Beaver, Harkey, Barringer, Cress, Fink, and Mason.



We had as guests in 1974, Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Barringer (maiden name Blackwelder), who were on their honeymoon and were from Illinois. They were visiting the church, cemetery, and other landmarks here because their great, great grandparents left here and journeyed together by wagon to Illinois during the middle 1800's.

Reverend John D. Scheck was shepherd to the St. John's flock during the church's centennial year. He left us some interesting information: "On July 27, 1843, the Church Council...met to consider building a new house of worship. In consequence of the death of Reverend Graeber shortly after, all operations were suspended until the call and settlement of the present pastor (Scheck). Aug. 25, 1844, the council...with a large majority of voting members...determined unanimously to build...of brick, dimensions 75 x 50 in the clear...let to contract Feb. 10, 1845 to W. A. Weddington and David Isenhour at \$3000 and the rock for the foundation wall delivered at the building by the Congregation free of expenses to the bidders. Supposed to be worth \$500. The names of the Building committee elected by Cong. were: John Bost, Christopher Melchor, Daniel D. Ridenhour, George Cline, and John Fisher. John Bost died...succeeded by son Simon...John Faggott, Adam Barnhardt. The names of the deacons: John Ritchey, Simon Bost, Moses Blackwelder, Matthew Petrea."

A list of subscribers for the building of the new House of Worship in October 1845 shows one hundred ninety-two names, pledging from one to fifty-five dollars each. A list of forty-six names show those "who hauled rocks for the foundation of our church" and lists from one-half load up to five wagon loads brought by each.

Our present spacious brick church was dedicated August 22, 1846 before a very large assembly. It was said to be at that time the most commodious house of worship in western N. C. The dimensions were 80 x 55 feet. It was quite substantial as shown by its use even today. The brick were made on church land just to the north of the building. The members gave liberally of their time and money. The fund which had been secured in Europe in 1772 was used at this time, too. The pulpit was in the west end and a gallery was in the east end. The cornerstone was laid before a large group of people. A Bible, hymnal, various papers, writings, and several five dollar gold pieces were put into the cornerstone. Then bricks were laid as high as the workmen had time before dusk. This was searched for in 1975. William Petrea had told his son, Vyron, in 1937 that the cornerstone was covered up in the wall to the right of the stairway leading to the basement of the old educational building. It was not located.

The first parsonage that St. John's owned was with Bethel and was built in 1858 in Mt. Pleasant. The planning committee consisted of Rev. Bernheim, Matthew Petrea and Adam Blackwelder. "All male members and female members who are heads of families were allowed to vote on the location." In 1879, a two-story white frame house was built by St. John's with Archibald Cline, Cong. Treas.; Matthew Petrea, Chrm. of Building Comm.; and Mr. W. W. Safrit, Contractor. The committees were appointed from the "four districts" of St. John's. A separate building, now used as a church tool shed, was erected in 1895 as the pastor's study. It stood beside the parsonage. The present comfortable, brick parsonage was built in 1950 on the same

site after the old one was disposed of at public auction. The garage was added in 1953. Pastor Shipton served the church at this time.

The March 1858 council minutes show that thirteen candidates were examined for confirmation; prayer meetings were to be held at Mt. Pleasant, Fink, Cline, and Hunt-Hill school houses; John Fisher gave a Bible, hymnal, and ornamented pulpit cushion.

In 1859, the election of the new pastor was by vote of "all male communing members who have subscribed to pastor's support and all widows in full communion who have done the same."

The Civil War, as all wars, caused perilous times. Six young men were confirmed August 25, 1861, five more on September 1, and two more young men on March 23, 1862 - all "before going in the army." Various surnames were Penninger, Rinehart, Misenheimer, Barringer, Ritchie, and Sayfret. These were the darkest days in the history of St. John's church. Among the burials listed by Pastor Anthony are the names: Misenheimer, Barringer, Blackwelder, Barnhardt, Smith, Ritchey, Safrit, Bost, Barrier and Walker who died at battlefields such as Sharpsburg, Culpepper, Gettysburg, Pt. Lookout, Plymouth, Richmond, Petersburg and Ft. Harrison,

Reverend Groseclose felt the Civil War had a demoralizing influence on St. John's and every other church. Following the war he wrote, "the membership was very cold in religious matters, many were indifferent, and some seldom or never attended...few have family worship, the Sabbath School and weekly prayer meetings had been given up."

The Jubilee of the Reformation was to be held in October, but very rainy weather caused two postponements until the second Sunday in December. The youth tastefully decorated the church and the address was given by Rev. Prof. Lewis Bikle. A free-will offering "as a token of our gratitude to Him for the blessings of the Reformation" showed an awakened benevolent spirit. One hundred seventy dollars was received. This was for the "erection and endowment of a Theological Seminary in the South." Today sixteen young men have entered the Gospel ministry from our church and a Fund is kept for those today who receive a Call into full-time church work.

A protracted meeting followed the Jubilee which was continued to December 30 when a heavy sleet and snowstorm suspended the meeting. Reverend Groseclose wrote that during the meeting, "I was assisted by Rev. G. D. Bernheim, 4 sermons; Rev. L. A. Bikle, 3 sermons; Rev. W. Artz, 5; Rev. C. Bansemer, 2; Rev. D. Dreher, 3; Rev. Mr. Lemonds (Methodist), 3; Rev. N. Aldrich, 1; Rev. T. Moser, 1; and I preached as many as the rest put together; making in all some forty-four sermons. There were about seventy conversions. During this meeting the Book of Worship was introduced...the meeting closed with a meeting of the Western District Conference which administered the sacrament on Sabbath Dec. 29." He wrote in de-

tail of a "sacramental meeting held at St. John's April 11, 12 Easter Sunday. Brother D. Dreher preached Saturday 11:00 A. M. For want of a full turn out, the preparatory services were put off till Sabbath morning 10:30. Sat. night I preached from the words, 'It is finished...'. At 9:00 Sabbath morning we met for prayer a half hour. Afterwards I baptized seven children. Preparatory services were read...after a short intermission, the regular services were introduced liturgically after which Bro. Dreher preached to a house full of attentive hearers from Matt. 26:26-28...very good...a truly Lutheran sermon. After the Synodical collection was taken - amounting to thirteen dollars a recess of one hour was given, after which the congregation assembled for the holy communion...180 communed."

In October 1871, the pastor had five catechetical classes - one at Bear Creek (6 persons), Mt. Pleasant (7) and three within bounds of St. John's. The forty from St. John's classes were confirmed at Conference.

Up until 1879 the congregation had been renting the church land for money and in April 1879, they resolved to "rent hereafter for grain." In August 1880, they resolved "to put a renter on the church land with the privilege of staying several years." The council resolved to "move the old school house and fix it up for a rent house." In 1967, the farm buildings were demolished and the land was rented.

By 1882, St. John's was in arrears in paying the pastor and other debts. The council voted that "each member pay a specified amount towards the support of the gospel; that a male member pay \$1.50 and a female 75 cents, and resolved to be more particular in regard to discipline of the church as touching drunkenness and other kinds of immorality." There were two hundred eighty-eight active members in May 1882 and services were held three Sundays a month. In December of that year the council resolved "to pay Pastor Petrea no less than \$400 and no more than \$450 a year; during the Divine Service one or two officers to sit back among the young of the congregation...to secure good order; and purchase sacking to carpet the church aisles."

"Rev. F. W. E. Peschau addressed our congregation on the subject of Luther and the Reformation. At the close of his English address he made a short address in German. A German sermon or lecture had not been heard in St. John's for many years and perhaps will never be again." The date was November 13, 1883.

The church was remodeled in 1888. The slave gallery was removed, the pulpit moved to the east end, side doors were closed and made into windows, a new door opened in the west end, and partitions added in each end for rooms. More than five hundred dollars was expended. The new furniture was of the best. It was the handiwork of Matthew Petrea and several of these church furnishings are still in use here today. The re-dedication on Feb. 10, 1889 was to a large audience and Rev. S. L. Keller preached from

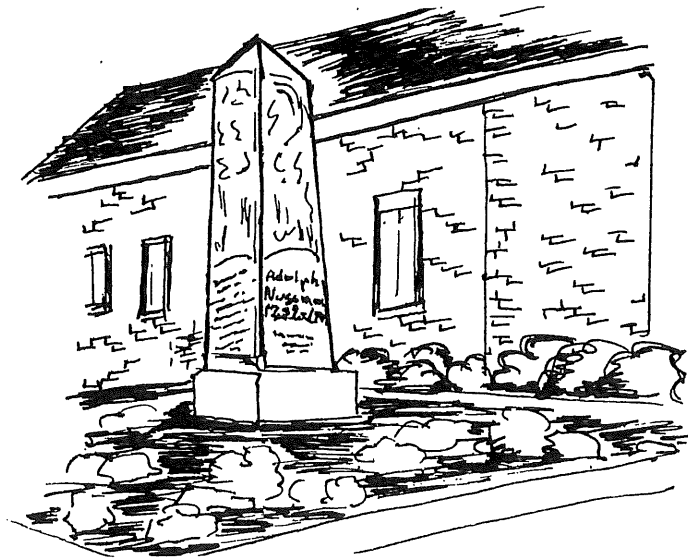
Habakkuk 2:19,20. Divine Services were held every Sunday and the Common Service was introduced "in the face of decided opposition."

The North Carolina Lutheran Synod met here May 3-8, 1889. Two noteworthy events took place: delegates to the United Synod of the South were to meet in Wilmington; the Alpha Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Freedmen in America was formed in the Library Room of St. John's. There were four Negro pastors and their congregations organized into a Synod.

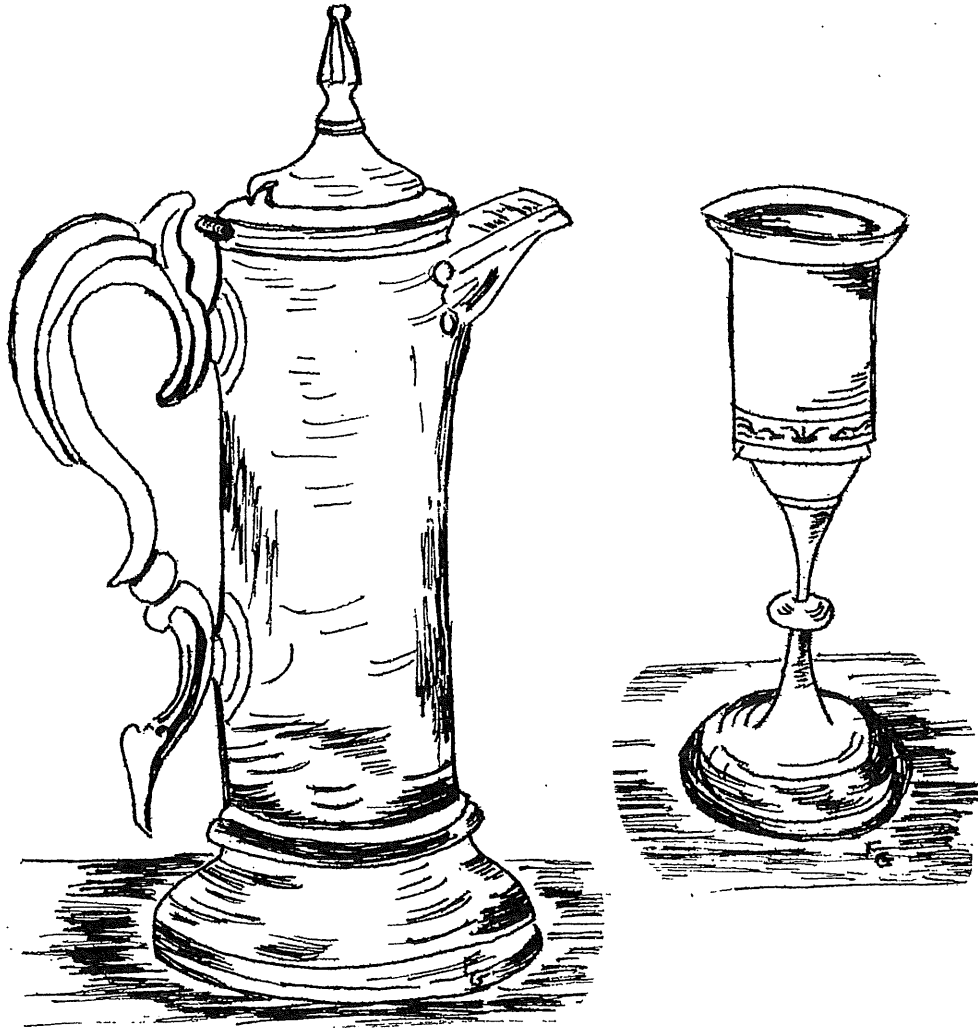
On the eve of the Twentieth Century, December 31, 1899, Pastor Steffey led the congregation in a midnight Watch Service. Older church members remember the cold weather, the crowds around the two big stoves and pews full of sleeping children. These stoves were replaced by a wood-fired floor furnace about the time of Rev. R. T. Troutman's ministry. Mr. Marvin Petrea tended the furnace. 1953 saw it replaced by an automatic oil furnace.

The marble baptismal font in the church was given by Mr. and Mrs. W. O. Petrea after the death of a son, Price. He died of typhoid fever in 1922. The burial rolls of this church show that many died because of the fever.

A monument was unveiled on the church lawn to commemorate the life and labors of Adolph Nussmann on November 10, 1935. This was the One Hundred Ninetieth Anniversary of St. John's. Dr. John B. Moose spoke. He said this was a monument to Adolph Nussmann and the church is Pastor Nussmann's monument to the congregation.



In 1936-37, under Pastor L. D. Miller, the three-story educational building was completed. Paul Barringer and James Fisher contracted to move dirt. Then the rains came and the back church wall had to be braced. Logs and timbers were cut from the farm and Mr. Carl Heintz brought his plane from Mt. Pleasant and dressed the lumber. The church members did as much of the work as possible. During this same year the common cup and the wine flagon were replaced by an individual communion service.



December 1943 saw thirty-six of the St. John's boys in the service of their country. World War II was a time of prayer, patriotism and work for all Americans, and the members here gave full share.

The Two Hundredth Anniversary of St. John's was celebrated August 5, 1945 with a Week of Services led by the ministerial sons of the congregation. Dr. Oscar Blackwelder was the Homecoming speaker and the youth presented a pageant, The Opening Bible. Dr. Herman Cauble, now President of the Lutheran Synod of S. C., was the pastor. A booklet was published.

The church nave was remodeled extensively in 1948 and the two center posts were removed. A wide center aisle divided the new light oak furnishings. Seventeen years later, a new educational building was completed. It was added to the south side of the church and doubled the capacity of the church school. At this time, a vestibule with a lounge and a baby cry room were completed in the front of the church. Extensive landscaping was done. The year 1973 saw the church and the older, attached educational building air-conditioned.

The church sits in a grove of beautiful forest pines which are hundreds of years old. This inspired the Mt. Pleasant FFA, under the leadership of Mr. M. R. McLeod, to set out Loblolly pine seedlings on the grounds to the left of the parsonage during 1948-49. The majority of the Future Farmers of America was composed of members of St. John's.

On December 1, 1952, a fire began in the electrical system in the furnace room. Afraid the fire might consume the complete church, all pews and movable furnishings were carried outside. Three fire trucks came, one after the other, just as each ran out of water. It was saved and the church built a pond to the north of the cemetery shortly thereafter.

At the end of this same year the Constitution was revised and the word male was eliminated to read "any voting member of the congregation..." All elected officers of the church up to 1954 were men except for the Music Committee and the Organist. It was not until December 7, 1958 that a woman, Mrs. Guy Cress, was elected to the Council. Mrs. Frank Moose and Miss Sarah Walker were the first women elected as delegates to Synod. This was in 1964.

Outdoor floodlights were given in 1954 and new lights were installed in the nave and dedicated in December 1956. The Service Book and Hymnal replaced the Common Service Book in June of 1958. Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, then the President of the Lutheran Church in America, and Dr. G. R. Whittecar worshipped here in January 1963. Dr. Whittecar was installed as President of the N. C. Lutheran Synod at St. James that afternoon. The pastor, Rev. C. Lee Shipton, edited A History of St. John's Lutheran Church which the church published on its Homecoming September 8, 1963. The Constitution of the Lutheran Church of America was accepted Feb. 14, 1965.

A troubled period of self-study and reason for being was upon the congregation during the latter part of the 1960's. The foundation was firm, the church weathered the storm, and, under the pastorate of Rev. Jack Deal, it began to move forward again.

Improvements were made and gifts were given during these years by those who loved their church. A funeral pall was given in 1965 as a loving memorial. In this same year, Joe Safrit began tending the church and parsonage shrubbery and grounds. A Church Kindergarten was begun in the autumn of 1968 and continued through 1976 when it became a Pre-Kindergarten. The Sanctuary Lamp, given in 1968, was among the many memorials and gifts which help make the worship service more meaningful. The Rodgers Organ was given in 1970 in memory of Tate Nabors, Jr. It replaced the one given by Mr. and Mrs. C. Crowell which is now used in the Fellowship Room. A special desk and the kneeling bench were gifts of love. A processional cross, a dossal curtain and special altar lighting were given in 1972. A fine granite church marker was given as a memorial and is lighted at night. These are only some of the tangible ways the

members show love for His church. Many give of their time in working on various committees, teaching, choirs, mowing the church grounds and keeping the cemetery in good condition. John D. Suther has been the chairman of the Cemetery Committee for years.

Phase One of the recreational area was completed in 1973 when a lighted softball field, outdoor tennis-volley ball-basketball courts, a concession stand and covered picnic area were built. 1976 finds Phase Two in progress with a recreation and fellowship building being constructed near the ballfield. The groundbreaking was held April 25, 1976 following the morning worship service. Special participants were Pastor Goins, the president of each church organization, and all members over eighty who desired to break ground on the rainy day.

Education, as well as religion, has been a strong feature among the Germans. The early colonists established schools in all their settlements whenever possible and when a teacher could be secured. This was done at Dutch Buffalo Creek Church which served as a school, also. As in the Fatherland, the catechism was taught along with other basic subjects and the language was German. The Bible generally constituted the reading textbook. The first school on record in Cabarrus County was operated in connection with St. John's Church. It had been running a good many years before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War.

When the third church was erected in 1771, a school house was built immediately west of the church. The house had two rooms separated by a large stone chimney. The teacher taught in one room and lived in the other. (Mr. Martin Ludwig taught the last school session here and a remainder of the chimney could still be seen in 1899.) Pastor Nussman wrote in a letter dated May 1784, "The main school, near the church, consisted in the winter of 1783 of seventy-two children, continued throughout the year, and has a man from Hanover (George Friesland) as teacher. There are two second rate schools, one with thirty-six, and the other with twenty children." (Public education in Cabarrus County began in 1841.)



In 1880, the church council resolved that the old school house be moved away from the new one which many of our present members attended. It was a two-story building with the large room downstairs the school room. St. John's Grange built one large room upstairs for its use, although it was used some as a school room. In the summer, a Subscription School was run. The church land was deeded to the county, but did revert back to the church when no longer used as a public school. The belfrey and additional room and other areas were built about 1912 and as needed. The school bell is preserved in the church basement, and the building served as St. John's Public School until the early 1930's. Then it became the scene of many community and church activities such as fairs, box suppers, ballgames, etc. 1970 saw the plans taking shape for a St. John's Recreation Center. Discussions on preserving the old school house as a historical landmark were underway when it burned on June 21, 1972. The church Pre-kindergarten School, beginning in the autumn of 1976, will be a continuation of St. John's belief in education.

The auxiliaries of St. John's are strong. The forerunner of Lutheran Church Women was organized here in 1885 with Mrs. R. W. Petrea, President. In 1899, there were forty-eight members, and in, 1976, seventy-one. Adelaide R. Cline was the last local president of the United Lutheran Church Women and the first LCW congregational president here (1963).

The Luther League was organized in February 1895 and the pastor, Reverend J. Q. Wertz, was elected as president. There were seventy-five members then and the same number in 1899. Today there are three age groups totaling forty-eight youth below college age. The Luther League has always been strong at St. John's. In 1951, Ray A. Cline was elected President of the Luther League of America after serving as president of the Luther League of N. C. Two beautiful lights with the League emblem were presented to the church in 1955.

Even though the Luther League of America and the Lutheran Brotherhood organizations were dissolved nationally, those at St. John's continue. The Lutheran Men is a small, but active unit of the N. C. Lutheran Men's organization.

St. John's Lutheran Church has supported the Scout Program for many years. Council minutes show that the Scout workers were "commended" in 1961. In 1975, Foy Ritchie, the Scout Master, was chosen as the Central Council Scout Master of the Year. Gary Ritchie is the Assistant Scout Master. The church serves as a sponsor of two Girl Scout Troops, now.

The church's parochial report for the year ending in 1975 shows the following statistics: Baptized Membership 518, Confirmed Membership 403, Confirmed Membership on Active Roll (contributed of record and/or communed) 346, Communing Membership 320, Average Weekly Attendance 270, Sunday School Enrollment 287, Number of Households 208, Number in Military 8, Money Received \$74,225.00, Spent \$53,333.00. Property Evaluation \$472,685.00.

Reverend Ted W. Goins was installed as the pastor by Dr. Ernest Misenheimer on the first Sunday in September 1973. Mrs. Fred Misenheimer has been the part-time church secretary since early 1973. Other paid workers are Bernice Ferguson, organist; Betty Kluttz, Assistant organist; Cindy Blackwelder, Youth Choir Director; Mrs. Pansy Culp, church cleaning; and cleaning of the Educational Buildings by Mrs. Horace Walker and Margaret Carter. Until 1976, Sam Hudson was the custodian of the church grounds.

Homecoming Festivities are to be held on August 7 and 8, 1976. A pageant, *The Light Here Kindled*, written by Sarah E. Walker is being presented under the directorship of Sandy Barnhardt. Also on Saturday, tours of landmarks in the life of this church will be conducted. Members' handicrafts will be on display, as well as activities of the olden days such as quilting, making of apple butter, churning, and corn shelling. A Recognition Service for pastors and sons in the ministry is to be held. The Homecoming sermon is to be preached by Dr. L. David Miller, followed by a picnic in the pines and the dedication of the red chapel in the cemetery.

The Two Hundred Thirty-first Anniversary of this congregation and the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of this nation in liberty is a cause for rejoicing and for serious study of the Bible. As we prepare to enter our nation's Third Century and our Savior's Kingdom, we read in the Book of Acts: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over that which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Therefore watch, and remember...And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." And now "The Lord bless you, and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace" in 1976 and always: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

