

## Churches in the Shenandoah Valley

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church  
4260 Fort Valley Rd  
Fort Valley, VA 22652



### A brief History

For nearly three quarters of a century Fort Valley was served by two Lutheran churches, both on St David's Church Road, with their church buildings being only about a half mile apart. At one time there had been only one congregation, Saint David's, but over a period of time the members had developed differing attitudes on church doctrine and other issues. These differences had led to a split in the late nineteenth century with the result being one part of the congregation withdrew to form the Mt. Zion Lutheran Church and to build another building about a half mile south of the St. David's

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church building.

Gradually throughout the middle of the twentieth century, relations between the two congregations improved and members began to realize that with one stronger congregation they might better witness to their common Lutheran faith and traditions than could two smaller congregations. The first steps toward reunion were to hold joint worship services and a joint Sunday School, alternating between the two churches. This cooperation led to meetings and plans for a merger of the two congregations.

At separate called meetings of the two congregations held on February 7, 1965, both congregations voted to approve a merger. These meetings were followed on the same day by a joint meeting of both congregations at which time the members chose the name, Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, for the new congregation and voted to affiliate with the Virginia Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, later to become the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The Reverend Gordon Zirkle, who served as pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Front Royal and had been serving as a supply pastor for St. David's congregation would also serve as pastor of Faith congregation for several years until his retirement. Later the Reverend Gerald Wise, who served as pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Woodstock, came each Sunday to conduct services for us. In the early 1970's the congregation entered into an arrangement with the Virginia Synod, whereby the Reverend Wayne Williams, director of the Caroline Furnace Lutheran Camp, would serve as a supply pastor on a regular basis. This arrangement would continue until our congregation was able to call our first full time pastor.

In late 1979 the congregation issued a call to the Reverend L. Crockett Huddle as our first full time pastor and he began serving as our pastor December 1, 1979 and would serve here until 1991. With the arrival of pastor Huddle the congregation purchased a house on King's Acre Lane which would serve as a parsonage until our present pastor, Shelby DePriest built her own home on Seven Fountains Road and the parsonage was sold. The Reverend James Heneberger served as full time pastor from 1993 until 1997 and James Ritchie served as pastor from 1998 until 2001. Pastor Shelby DePriest accepted our call and began serving as full time pastor in April 2002 and is still serving in July 2012.

From the time of the organization of Faith congregation, our members had a strong desire to build a new church building, and a building fund was started almost immediately

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after the merger. It would be several years however, before the congregation felt that sufficient funds had accumulated and we decided to proceed with building plans and to borrow money to complete the building program. Carl Golladay, a member of the congregation, and his wife Marie donated a tract of land on the east side of Fort Valley Road and ground was broken for our new church building on Sunday, April 15, 1973. C.E. Thompson and Sons of Edinburg would serve as the general contractor with various members of the congregation helping by donating labor on many occasions. The first services in our new building were held September 8, 1974, and a dedication service was held March 9, 1975

In 1993, Faith Lutheran Preschool was started under the direction of Ginger Neal. The preschool was first held in two Sunday School rooms of the church. During the tenure of Pastor Ritchie an addition consisting of a parish hall, a larger kitchen, new bath rooms and an area designed especially for the preschool was designed and constructed by F.D. Neal Construction. A ribbon cutting and dedication service for this addition was held on Sunday, October 1, 2000. Since 2005 the parish hall has served as a meeting place for the Fort Valley Senior Center which meets at the church twice a week. A member of Faith, Anna Walter, is the Director of the Senior Center.

Faith Lutheran Church has been truly blessed through the years by the leadership of our various pastors and the selfless service of its members. The mission of Faith Lutheran Church is to share the love of Christ by providing worship, Christian education, fellowship, service, witness and stewardship to our congregation, community and to all in spiritual or physical need.

Written by Charles Lichliter, July 2012

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