

Reformation Lutheran Church  
9283 Congress St.,  
New Market, VA 22844



A Brief History

This site at 9283 North Congress Street, New Market, Virginia, has held four church buildings for three congregations.

In 1793 Davidsburg Church, a Union congregation of Lutheran and Reformed, completed construction of a log church to the west of the present church in the open area of the St. Matthew's Cemetery. Four markers in the grass, engraved "D," identify the site.

The St. Matthew's Lutheran congregation, begun under this name in 1820, built the first brick St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in 1848. No picture of it has been located, but it is known to have had stained glass windows.

In 1889 the second St. Matthew's Lutheran Church building, also brick with stained glass windows and pump organ, was constructed when the first building was declared unsafe by a Harrisonburg architect and builder. The second church had received the impact of shelling from Snow's Battery, located at the northwest corner of St. Matthew's Cemetery, during the Battle of New Market, May 15, 1864. In 1932 the name of the congregation changed to Emmanuel-St. Matthew's Lutheran

## Churches in the Shenandoah Valley

Church and the congregation worshipped one week at St. Matthew's, and the next week at Emmanuel.

Dreams of one large church for a large congregation materialized when Reformation Lutheran Church held its first service in the basement on Christmas Eve, 1955; the 100' by 187' building had not yet been completed by Neilson Construction Company of Harrisonburg, VA. The nave seats 350 people. A Moller pipe organ was installed within the chancel, and a bas-relief sculpture of Jesus, with open arms, appears at the front of the building, facing US Rt. 11. Engraved on it is the invitation of Jesus: "Come unto me all ye who weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

The congregation added a west wing for educational space in 1993 and opened a preschool in 1996.

During the 1990s, twelve beautiful stained glass windows, created by Willett Studios of Philadelphia in coordination with a committee from Reformation, replaced the ivory/tan stained glass of the original Colonial style panes in the nave and reception area. Artist Billie Campbell has made crosses from the 1955 stained glass.

A two-manual, sixteen rank Scantz pipe organ, with 1,000 pipes replaced the earlier Moller musical instrument in 2004.

A lighted Tree of Life brass sculpture, created by artist Sanford Werfel, North Brunswick, NJ, has illuminated the rear wall of the entrance to the nave since 2009.

Reformation Lutheran Church hosts numerous community groups, including Thursday adult meals and Thanksgiving dinner, AA and Al-Anon meetings, scout groups, and concerts by Masterworks Chorus.

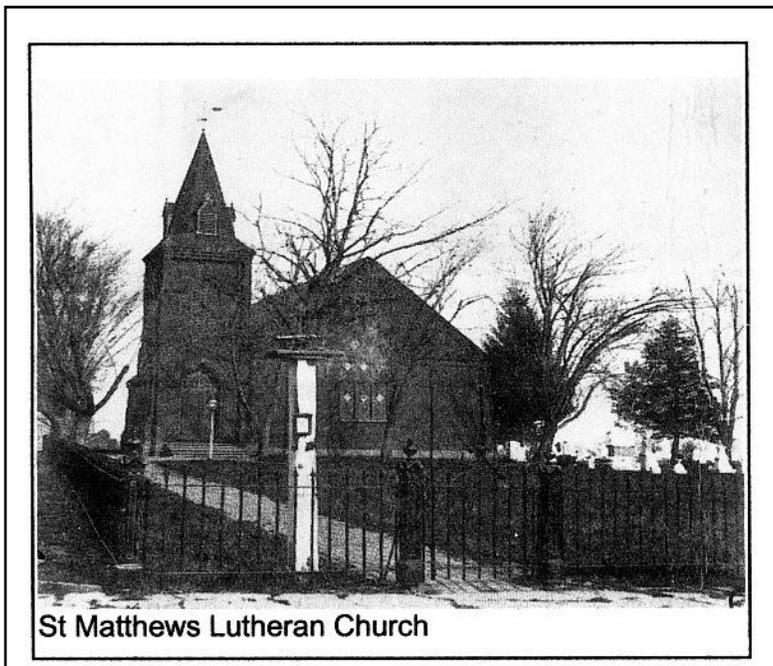
*Written by Nancy Branner Stewart, July, 2011*



# Churches in the Shenandoah Valley



*Shell shocked post*



St Matthews Lutheran Church

## St. Matthew's Church Being Demolished

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Photo by Woods.

This photograph of St. Mat-  
thew's Lutheran Church in New  
Market was snapped just seconds  
before the steeple was pulled down  
late Saturday afternoon, October  
11th. This church, built in 1889,  
has served the congregation  
through the years but now gives  
way for a larger edifice to be  
erected on the same site by Em-  
manuel-St. Matthew's Lutheran  
congregation.

The purchaser of the church  
building will salvage the brick,  
wood and other materials and have  
the site cleared within 60 days ac-  
cording to contract.

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