

Churches in the Shenandoah Valley

St Stephen's Lutheran Church
15737 Back Rd
Strasburg, VA 22657



A brief History

October 23, 1842: Original church building consecrated as St. Stephen Lutheran and German Reformed

1860: Began building the second church building to replace the original which was undersized and starting to deteriorate

1867: Finished the construction of the worship hall, which was delayed by

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the War Between The States, with the dedication November 17, 1867. (This section is still in use.)

1872: Bought out the German Reformed interests and was dedicated as St. Stephen Evangelical Lutheran Church

1930's: Due to a disagreement over switching to another Synod , St. Stephen Church closed it's doors for most of a decade

1940's: Several local families met and worked to get St. Stephen Lutheran Church back to an active congregation.

1969: Built a new brick addition containing four Sunday School rooms and a basement with a kitchen.

1975: Finished the Fellowship hall to have extra seating for various church functions. This was done by enclosing the concrete slab outside of the addition built in 1969.

1980's: Installed wall to wall carpet and stained glass windows, new paneling and sheetrock on the walls, and lowered the ceiling in the Sanctuary.

2009: Renovated the Worship building built in 1867. The new addition and remodeled Sanctuary were dedicated in November 2009. It is now handicapped accessible, with new central heat and air conditioning. The layout of the Sanctuary was reversed, and the two aisles, one on each side of the church, were replaced by one central aisle. The entrance is now on ground level, with a canopy to protect from inclement weather.

These pages were transcribed from the original minutes book:

At a meeting held at Isaac Baker's on the 12th. day of February 1842, of the members of the Evangelical Lutheran and German Reformed Churches in the neighborhood, for the purpose of consulting to build a house of worship, on the lands set apart by Paul Rosenberger & Lewis Baker wherein those congregations respectfully could worship, commune, and manifest their religious desires and praises to the most High-- it was therefore resolved;

1, That they would join hand in hand in the glorious undertaking

2, That they hereby appoint Paul Rosenberger, Joseph Baker, and Lawrence

Hamman a committee of arrangement to make the necessary arrangement to build said Church

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3, That the said Church shall be built speedily and without delay.

A few months only elapsed, and the work was done-- Halleluia Praise Ye The Lord, here follow the names of those who have contributed toward the building of the House of God, with a specification of what each one contributed,

Paul Rosenberger; \$50.00, Also one and one fourth acres of land & two weeks work

Joseph P. Baker; 7 logs & two weeks work

Philip Baker; 7 logs

Rudolph Rosenberger; 5 logs

Lawrence Hamman; \$5.00, 8 logs

Samuel Baker; 1 stove, 6 logs, 204 feet planks

Lewis Baker; \$4.00, 3/4 acres land, 7 logs & 4 days work

Isaac Baker; 1/2 half of shingles, 2 logs

Abraham Rosenberger; 2 days hauling

William Rosenberger; 5 days hauling

John Beiler; 107 1/2 feet plank & 94" scantling

George Miller; all the rafters

Joseph Swisher; all the laths

Peter Hamman; \$ 8.00, 1/2 of the shingles, underlining, & 7 days work

William Stover; \$ 5.00, some gable and plank

Barbara Hamman; \$ 6.00, 75 feet planks & table cloth

Joseph Pifer; \$ 5.00, all the lime

Abraham Pittman; all the nails

(NOTE: Other members listed contributed money)

The Church being completed, arrangements were made for its Consecration.

Accordingly the Trustees, Paul Rosenberger, Joseph Baker, and Lawrence Hamman,

assembled and fixed this time of Consecration to take place on the 23rd day of

October, 1842, the Rev. John Nicholas Schmucker being the Pastor of the Evangelical

Lutheran Congregation, and the Rev. J. S. Kesslo being the Pastor of the German

Reformed Church. The meeting was opened by the Rev. J. N. Schmucker, who delivered

an appropriate discourse in the German Language from Colossians, 3rd Chapter and 17th

verse. He was followed by the Rev. J. S. Kesslo, who delivered likewise a discourse in the

German Language from Psalms 26th and 8th verse. The Church was then Consecrated

and received the name St. Stephen.

Partly from the old house of worship or church of St. Stephen Congregations

(Evangelical Lutheran and German Reformed) having fallen into some decay, and partly

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because the house was too small, the said congregations intended upon the building of a new church edifice, which was accordingly commenced in A. D. 1860, and being interrupted by the great war from 1861 to 1865, was completed in 1867, and was consecrated and dedicated to the service of the Triune God on the Third Sunday (17th day) of November, 1867; on which occasion were present Pastors H. Wetzel & J. E. Seniker of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and G. H. Martin of the German Reformed. Mr. Martin preached on Saturday in the old house from Romans 8:1; and on Sunday Mr. Seniker preached the dedication sermon in the new house from Matthew 16:18, after which Mr. Wetzel, Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran congregation at the place conducted the consecration according to the English Liturgy of the Pennsylvania Synod. On this occasion \$___ were received by contributions; and \$___ were subscribed, but not paid at the time; which amounts were to be applied towards payment of the remaining debt on the church. The new house was dedicated under the name of the old one, that of St. Stephen Church.

*H. Wetzel,
Evang. Luth. Pastor*

*The above mentioned Evangelical Lutheran Congregation at St. Stephen Church, having bought out the right, title, and interest of the said German Reformed Congregation to and in the St. Stephen Church, the said church or house of worship was dedicated as an Evangelical Lutheran Church, under the name of " St. Stephen Evangelical Lutheran Church", on Sunday the 3rd day of November, A.D. 1872. Present Pastor H. Wetzel, J. E. Seniker, George Schmucker, & William M. Sibert.
H. Wetzel, Evang. Luth. Pastor*

Written by Dale Ryman, June 2012

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