

# The History of Huff's Church

## 1760 – 2020

Huff's Church was founded as a Union Church. This year we are commemorating the 260th anniversary of the founding of the Lutheran Congregation and the United Church of Christ (Reformed) Congregation. We recognize that from the beginning, and continuing today, the construction and maintenance of the church buildings, as well as all organized groups, involve joint Lutheran-UCC participation. This has been a 260-year living example of ecumenism at work. With the help of God, this spirit will continue here at Huff's Church.

### **Pre-Church History**

The earliest history of Huff's Church is shrouded in the mists of time. Exact dates, names, and events of the founding of our Congregations are not available, though there were Lutherans, Reformed and Mennonites meeting in the Huff's Church area by 1760, perhaps even earlier.

Previous Huff's Church commemorative write-ups began with the Home Worship and Schoolhouse Eras. We are going to present some of the background history of the events, the people, the Hereford area, and the Congregations, as we attempt to give one an idea of conditions and life in the time our Congregations began in the Colonial America of the 1760s.

### **Pennsylvania German Immigration**

A great American Immigration began in 1683. In March 1681, William Penn became Proprietor of Pennsylvania when King Charles II deeded the lands of Pennsylvania and Delaware to him as payment of debts owed to the Penn family by the Crown. Pennsylvania's frontier barely moved beyond Philadelphia during the Seventeenth Century. Those already in Pennsylvania in 1683 preferred trading and commerce or trapping and hunting to the arduous labor of farming. Penn established as a priority, the settlement of the interior lands. Especially needed were farmers. Penn's mother was German, so he was well acquainted with the industrious, pious, and yet oppressed people of the Rhine Valley.

The people of Germanic Europe were ideal candidates for Penn's Holy Experiment. The Palatinate was noted as a garden spot of Europe, but almost incessant warfare had devastated the land, killed livestock, decimated the people, and caused many of the survivors to be destitute. Also, there were many religious factions in Germany, as an outgrowth of the Protestant Reformation. There was no nation of Germany, but rather a hodge-podge of states, cities, and places like Baden, Wurtemberg, Pfaltz and Hanover, to mention a few. Each had a separate ruler and he made his own rules about religious tolerance. Many factions were persecuted, sometimes even unto death. Thus, when Penn extended the invitation to come to Pennsylvania, many thousands eagerly left their homeland and came to a land that offered religious freedom, economic opportunity, and freedom from the constant military oppression of the European Political System. Many later went on to Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, Georgia, and New York, but Pennsylvania was the colony that allowed the greatest degree of religious freedom in Colonial America. Remember, in 1760, this land was not yet the United States and that our ancestors were English subjects no matter where they came from.

### **Hardships of Passage**

Many of these Colonial Germans paid a heavy price for their freedom. The crowded conditions, poor food, disease, and general hardship on shipboard were too much for many, with some paying the ultimate price. Among the survivors, many were penniless. Many had run out of money before they departed from Europe as the trip up the Rhine River was an ordeal. Tax and toll collectors caused deliberate delays and extracted all they could before allowing passage. Yet these hardy people came.

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Once in America, those with kind friends or relatives might begin anew, but for most it was a continuation of bad times. Those in debt were sold into servitude, usually seven years, but some served double terms to pay for the passage of a relative who did not live to pay his or her own way. Quickly though, they rolled up their sleeves and got busy. Many paid their debts and within their lifetimes became landowners. Certainly, all left their children in a far better condition. Such was the background and fabric of the typical person of Huff's Church area of 1760.

After the American Revolution, many Pennsylvania Germans moved on from areas of original settlement: to Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Kansas, California. In fact, most states to our West were settled in part by secondary Pennsylvania German migrations. Most had huge families and were tied to the soil, so as lands opened, they followed. Some genealogists state that 10-12% of all Americans can trace ancestry to Colonial Germans. Here in Pennsylvania, the Germans merged into the "Pennsylvania Dutch," offering a rich, identifiable cultural island in America. Huff's Church is in the heartland of Pennsylvania Dutch Country, and our church was founded by these hardy and industrious people. America in 2020 is, of course, far less provincial than in the past, and Huff's has been a Church for all people as long as anyone can remember. Nevertheless, even after 260 years, the descendants of these Colonial Germans remain very much a part of Huff's Church.

### Religions of Pennsylvania Germans

William Penn's first German Colonists were largely from the more persecuted sects: Quakers, Schwenkfelders, Dunkards, Mennonites and others, who in Europe often had to move about to avoid jail or even death. It is interesting to note that one of these early Colonial Germans, Francis Daniel Pastorius (1651-1720), offered the first public outcry against slavery. Penn's Colony was probably closer than any other to resemble the America that was to follow the Revolution.

After 1700, more and more immigrants arrived from groups which had a degree of religious acceptance in Europe. The great majority in this period were Protestants, but a few Catholics and Jews came too. Those who had religious tolerance in Europe were looking to continue their religion in America, but many wanted a chance at political and economic freedom as well. Thus, by 1710, and especially after 1725, the great majority of arrivals were either Lutherans or Reformed, with Lutherans being about half of all who professed a faith.

### Colonial Lutherans

The Lutheran Church was introduced to Colonial America in 1638 in New Sweden, an area south of Philadelphia. This, of course, was before Penn and Pennsylvania. This Church flourished for a time, but later, due largely to lack of pastoral support from Sweden, the Church faltered and merged with the English Episcopalians.

With the growing numbers of German Lutherans after 1700, the Lutheran Church was re-introduced to America. Various congregations were founded starting with Falkner's Swamp, about 1702. Another early church that plays prominently in Colonial America was St. Michael's in Germantown. Many more quickly followed, and most population centers, such as Reading and Lancaster, had Lutheran churches by about 1750. Two early Lutheran pastors deserve special mention: Rev. John Casper Stoeber (1707-1779), who helped found so many individual churches and Rev. Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg (1711-1787), who organized and strengthened the Church in so many ways. Pastor Muhlenberg's sons, also pastors, deserve mention as early Lutherans. Peter Muhlenberg served with distinction as a

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Revolutionary War general and later as a U.S. Congressman. His brother Frederick was leader of the Pennsylvania Legislature and called the state convention to ratify the U.S. Constitution. Later he was the first speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. The Muhlenbergs played a key role both in the establishment of the Lutheran Church in Colonial America and in the establishment of the United States as a nation.

Shortly after his arrival, Rev. Henry Muhlenberg wrote of conditions in rural Pennsylvania. While he was not discussing the Huff's Church area, he well might have been. About 1740 Lutheranism in America was in a sad way. Aside from the few established congregations in population centers, there were few ordained pastors and the scattering of the population across a wilderness made life difficult for the few who did serve. Pastor Muhlenberg described the typical Lutheran group of the 1740s as being without a church building, or if they did have a building, it was of logs with a dirt floor and no pastor. He also mentioned that Indians would attend some services.

One person most immigrant groups had in their midst was a schoolmaster. It was he who usually preached and conducted pastoral acts in the absence of an ordained pastor. An ordained pastor would visit periodically, though there were as few as 40 ordained pastors to serve all the areas settled by German Lutherans, and even in 1740s this included a large part of Pennsylvania and large areas of Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas and elsewhere. Only gradually did regular pastoral leadership emerge, and doubtlessly thousands of Lutherans went to other faiths, or simply gave up the faith. Despite all this adversity, Pastor Muhlenberg estimated that there were just 20,000 Lutherans in Pennsylvania in 1740, but by the end of the Revolution there were over 75,000. Indeed, we owe much to these early overworked heroes, but we also owe much to those unnamed who were strong enough to keep the faith alive in wilderness areas such as the Huff's Church area of 1760 and earlier.

### Colonial Reformed

The Reformed movement began in Europe and was welcomed in Pennsylvania along with the other religious groups. In 1710, Rev. Samuel K. Guldin (1664-1745) arrived in Philadelphia and was the first Reformed minister in the new world. He and his family subsequently settled on a farm in Oley, Berks County. He preached in houses, barns, and groves because church buildings did not yet exist.

The organization of the Reformed Church was a gradual one. These early pioneers worshiped in private homes for many years. They were led by pious lay leaders who led the people in prayer and praise, read passages of scripture, and gave sermons. The first Reformed Congregation in Pennsylvania was organized in 1720 at Falkner Swamp and the first church was built in 1726 at Skippack with the Reformed Church of Germantown being built in 1733.

### Hereford Area History

The settlement of Hereford Township followed the general settlement pattern of the Pennsylvania Germans. The eminent Berks historian Montgomery, writing in 1886, stated that Hereford Township was first surveyed and settled in 1732 by Schwenkfelders who, in general, arrived a few years before most Lutherans and Reformed. We also know that by 1734 the Hereford Furnace was operating. By 1759 there were 105 taxable citizens here, and if one allows for wives and children, there were perhaps 525 people in the area at the time of Huff's Church's founding. Undoubtedly, there were Lutherans among these, giving considerable support to the date 1760 as our founding date.

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How was life here in the Hereford area in 1760s as our congregation was born? In a word, difficult! This was a frontier area, and three persons had been killed and a boy carried off just a few years earlier in a 1756 Indian raid. Imagine having no roads, electricity, farm equipment, chain saws, and telephones, running water or even fuel, except hand-cut wood. Clothing had to be made from hand-woven fabric, then cut and sewn by hand. Add to that only primitive medicine, with diseases such as diphtheria, tuberculosis and typhoid exacting an annual toll. Even childbirth killed many. Indeed, it required the help of God to survive in so hostile a setting but survive and prosper they did!

### **Pre-Church Summary**

We have presented but a small part of the history of the Pennsylvania German Immigration, the founding of the Lutheran and Reformed Church in Colonial America, and we have attempted to give a small idea of the difficulties faced by our pioneer ancestors at the time of our Congregation's founding. We now leave the background history and turn to an era where we can be specific.

### **The Home Worship Period**

Referring again to Rev. Henry Muhlenberg's writings on conditions in rural Lutheran groups, we can rather safely assume that groups of Lutherans and Reformed met in private settings, perhaps with a lay person, such as a teacher, in charge. This would likely have been the means of continuing the faith prior to 1760.

We are almost certain that congregational life here at Huff's began between 1740 and about 1760. Although we have no direct church records to prove this, and a check with synod and conference reveals nothing further, contemporary history tradition and circumstance overwhelmingly lead us to this conclusion. The Reformed Congregation at Huff's recognizes 1744 as the year of their organization, and the Lutheran Congregation recognizes 1760 as theirs.

One of the strongest proofs indicating an early congregation is our churchyard cemetery. Unfortunately the oldest graves have field stone or wooden markers without inscription, but the fact that over 200 interments were made there before 1815 points to the fact that it would require a population of perhaps 1,000 to fill such an area in that time frame. That cemetery, though filled with our dead forefathers and silent as the grave, speaks volumes to us today.

Of the interments made in the churchyard cemetery, two are of special interest, those of Johann Friedrich Huff, Sr. and his wife Susanna. Their stones were in High German and stated that Mr. Huff was born in Germany in 1734. The couple married in 1757 and had 14 children -- one of whom was Frederick Huff, Jr., after whom our church is named. Frederick Huff, Jr. is interred in row 4 of the churchyard cemetery.

### **The School House Period (1760-1815)**

While conditions and populations in rural areas did not always allow for the immediate erection of a church building, we do know that the early settlers always had a teacher in their midst, and the erection of a schoolhouse and education was an early priority in all areas settled by Pennsylvania Germans. Indeed, one of the primary functions of the early school tied into the church closely, and that is the necessity to know the German language. All services in this period were in High German, and this continued at Huff's through much of our history. Indeed, it was 1914 until English was first used, and as late as 1941 about one service in four was conducted in German.

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Enough history of the School House Period has come to us that we know we had two schoolhouses. The original history of Huff's Church is unique in that the people built two schoolhouses. The second schoolhouse continued in use, as a school, until the Public-School System was established in 1834.

During this School House Period, the congregation probably continued to rely heavily on lay pastors, though family Bibles, baptismal certificates and histories of neighboring congregations inform us that the congregation did have some formal pastoral support. Sources state that Rev. Jacob Friedrick Schertlein, Rev. Philip Jacob Michael, Rev. Daniel Lehman, Rev. Doerring, Rev. Wertman and Rev. Jacob Dechant served in this early period, though again exact dates are not available. Rev Dechant apparently was serving at the end of this era.

The School House Period of our church is concurrent with the American Revolutionary War Period and the years of our Nation's birth. The names John Gregory (1751-1835), Frederick Kerchner (1750-1828) and John Thompson (1764-1816) are some names we can find of Revolutionary War veterans in our cemetery. Undoubtedly there were others, but time has faded their memories.

### **The First Church Period**

A better day dawned when the congregations grew strong enough to erect their first church in 1815. In a sense, this was really their second house of worship, for they had also been preaching services in their schoolhouse. During this time period, records were kept, which are still well preserved.

An account of the corner-stone laying of the first church and the Articles of Agreement then drawn up are still available. This document ends with the words: "Done in Hereford Township the 30th of May 1814." It was signed only by Rev. Jacob William Dechant, although the paper speaks as though the pastors and the building committee had all signed it. We learned from other reliable sources that the following men were the building committee: David Rauch, Conrad Fegely, Jacob Gehris and Jacob Frey. The Trustees of the congregations at the time were: Conrad Fegely and Jacob Gehris, to whom the deed was made on December 30, 1818, more than four years after the cornerstone was laid.

Frederich Huff, Jr. and Barbara (Fink) his wife, for five shillings sold 1 acre and 104 perches. This was a part of a large tract of 339 acres and 133 perches which Jacob Bower, Esq., High Sheriff conveyed August 10, 1789 to Henry Hoffman, who with his wife Elizabeth by assignment conveyed the same to Frederich Huff on February 2, 1790. This must have been the Johann Frederich Huff, Sr., for the Indenture goes on to state that he in turn sold, on January 27, 1812 of this large tract, 7 acres and 36 perches, together with other lands to his son, Frederich Huff, Jr. party to our deed. Although "5 shillings" are mentioned to make the deed legal, it was really a donation.

Mr. William A. Huff, of Greensburg, PA, a brother's grandson of the donor of the church lands, traced the genealogical tree of the Huffs, and he finds that they came from Germany and that they belonged to the knighthood and nobility of that country. "It is noted in the Vienna Tables of Genealogy, as the generation which was famous among the Bavarian knighthood and nobility." This benefaction, the Huff gift to Hereford people, baptized the Hereford congregations, as it were, with a new name, the name of Huff. Hence, we have the two names of which we may be equally and justly proud. The name Hereford is English and Huff is German--a justification for being bilingual.

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This benefaction and the presence and activity of this family gave name to the Huff Village, to the Huff Church and to the community. Let us follow this generous example for the good of humanity. The Church of 1814 and 1815 was of stone, square in appearance, with square windows of small panes, high, with three galleries and other characteristics of the old-time church. It had a "wine-glass pulpit" with a sounding board over it. This Church, having been repaired several times, remained in use until 1881 when it was razed.

In 1865, the pipe organ was introduced. Built by the Krauss Organ Co. of Palm, PA, it was installed in the first church. It was stored in a barn during construction of the present building and was reinstalled in 1883. It was placed in the rear gallery of the second-floor sanctuary.

The following is a description of one of the methods used to pay the mortgage on the first church, a lottery. This was held about 1827 with Samuel Gregory as manager of the affair.

### Expenses:

Cost of selling 2,186 tickets (6-1/2 cents each) = \$142.09  
Berks County Share = \$61.14  
Prizes awarded = \$2,385.00  
Total Expenses = \$2,588.23

### Income:

\*2,186 tickets sold @ \$1.50 each = \$3,279.00  
Less expenses and prizes = \$2,588.23  
Net Income = \$690.77  
\*Ticket #1341 appeared altered from \$25 to \$75 and was settled for \$25.

George Rohrbach sold 1,166 tickets and John Rush sold 1,019 tickets, with 331 remaining unsold. Prizes ranged from \$3 to \$393.60, with John Jackson winning the largest prize of \$393.60. These figures appear small, but when we consider that a man worked for \$5-10 a week (farm hands for much less), the amounts are large, and the \$690.77 profit was equivalent to perhaps \$40,000 in terms of today's money.

### History of Huff's Union Church Buildings The Second Church Period (1881-1990)

On June 5, 1881, the large marble cornerstone was laid for our present church. The old cornerstone of May 30, 1814 was placed underneath it. The first church was razed in 1881, and, with the stones from the old church building, the first story of the new church was built on the same location. The superstructure was built of bricks which were manufactured by a Macungie brick works. All the interior woodwork was made by Reading Planing Mill. The proportions of the church are 90 by 60 feet.

On November 7, 1881, the ground floor was dedicated by the Rev. N.S. Strassberger. On May 13-14, 1883, the completed new church was dedicated. Preachers for that services were the Rev. L. Groh, Dr. H.A. Keyser, Rev. Augustus L. Dechant and Rev. G.F. Spieker. Three thousand people were present for the two-day service dedication.

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The Sanctuary is on the second floor, high in ceiling, with wide galleries on three sides. The old Krauss organ and choir loft are opposite the pulpit at the east end. The ground floor is divided into several departments -- a large Sunday School room, one for the Nursery department and one for the meetings of council members. The church has a fine bell tower and steeple, which houses a bell weighing 2,200 pounds. It was made in April 1883 by McNeeley and Company, West Troy, N.Y. The entire cost of the building was estimated at \$20,000. The Rev. Eli Keller, D.D. made a note to the effect that about \$3,000 of gratuitous labor was bestowed.

A bronze plaque with the names of the 1881 Building Committee is in the upper vestibule. Committee members were John Rush, John Geisinger, Charles N. Gery and Samuel Bittenbender. John Rush was a farmer and a miller, he owned the old Crum farm. John Geisinger was a farmer and a shoemaker and owned the Elton Bechtel and Beckner farms. Charles Gery was a storekeeper in Seisholtzville and operated hotels in both Harlem (formerly Perryville) and Seisholtzville. He also served as postmaster at Seisholtzville. Samuel Bittenbender had the farm just on the Hereford side of Seisholtzville, but he became the wealthiest of any of the members of the building committee because on his property was the Bittenbender Iron Mine at Seisholtzville. In the 1890s he donated \$3,000 in gold to the Church to pay off the remaining debt of the 1881 Church building.

The Krauss pipe organ is Huff's most prized antique possession. It was built in 1852 by John and Andrew Krauss of Palm, PA, at a cost of about \$950. Their home is still standing on Route 29 near the American Legion post. The organ was installed in the ground church and upon completion of the present edifice it was moved to the rear gallery of the second-floor sanctuary. The organ has two manuals, sixteen stop knobs and a thirteen-note pedalboard, which is unusual. It was restored by Thomas Eader of Ellicott Maryland at a cost of \$4,500. Rededication services were held on October 13, 1974. The organ is still in use today.

In 1924 the interior of the church was painted, and the slate and wooden steeple was removed from the bell tower. Earlier, a similar steeple, in a nearby church, had collapsed, causing extensive damage. It was decided to remove the steeple from Huff's Church to prevent a similar incident. During demolition, it was determined that the steeple was not in danger of collapsing, but since demolition had already begun, the steeple was removed.

In 1930 the church was wired for electricity and fixtures were purchased, and in 1931 an electric generator was installed. The chandeliers, which grace the center aisle of the sanctuary, were donated by prominent families of the congregation.

In 1953 the interior of the church and Sunday School rooms were renovated and painted by Charles Calbi of Bethlehem. The chancel was enlarged, the old spindles of the altar rail were reused, and matching spindles made to complete the altar railing. The chancel was changed from a pulpit-centered to an altar-centered one, with the antiphonal choir stalls, floors were sanded and refinished, new carpet installed, hallways and doors refinished, ceiling coated with plaster all for a cost of \$20,000. The walls and ceilings of the church were beautifully frescoed and embellished by oil paintings of the Lord's Supper and Jesus in the Temple at the age of 12. In the pulpit recess is an oil painting of the Ascension. In 1954 two stained glass windows were installed in the pulpit recess. The north window depicts Christ knocking at the door, and the south window depicts the Good Shepherd. Rededication services were

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conducted on April 4, 1954, with the Rev. Dr. Henry H. Bagger as guest speaker. Various interior improvements have been made since then to maintain our historic church.

On November 29, 1981, the congregations celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the present church building. The guest speaker was Judge Forrest Schaeffer, Jr., President Judge of the Courts of Common Pleas of Berks County. Judge Schaeffer was a former member of the U.C.C. congregation.

There was no steeple for 64 years after it was removed in 1924. One of the congregation's senior members believed a spire pointing toward heaven was an essential feature of a church building. With that as an inspiration, and having lost his wife, Arlene, in May 1987, Earl H. Moyer set out to replace the steeple in her memory. Shortly after her death, the plan to remember her with a steeple emerged. Campbellsville Industries of Kentucky constructed the steeple at a cost of \$15,000. On March 18, 1988, a crane set the one-piece forty-foot aluminum steeple in place. It is topped with a four-foot cross with spotlights around its base, which light the steeple at night for all to see and appreciate.

### History of Huff's Union Church Buildings

#### The Second Church Period (1990-2020)

In 1994, a committee was formed to renovate and enlarge the church. Working with Wallace and Watson Architects of Allentown the committee redesigned the church building to include a three-story elevator, additional Sunday School rooms, a choir room, and a library, along with emergency stairwells to evacuate the balcony areas of the sanctuary. The project was broken into three phases. Phase I was the septic system, new boiler, renovations to the ground floor of the Church and one stair tower to the balcony. Phase II was installation of the elevator, and Phase III was renovations to the sanctuary and the second stair tower to the balcony.

#### Phase I – Renovations to the Ground Floor

In June 1997, design work began on a new septic system by Pany Lentz and Engineering Company of Allentown. Perk testing was performed by Hereford Township in March 1998 and with this additional information, the final design was completed and approved in September 1998. In June 1999, Carl Bales Excavating of Huff's Church began site preparation of the building site and installation of the septic system, at a cost of \$61,189. Serfass Construction Co. of Allentown began remodeling the ground floor of the church building. The ground floor of the church was divided into classrooms and handicap bathrooms. Air conditioning was also installed. This portion of the project cost \$315,095. Carlos Leffler, Inc. of Sinking Spring, installed a larger boiler, remodeled heating pipe runs to accommodate the new boiler and larger building, as well as an air handler and exchanger, at a cost of \$94,249. Wallace and Watson Architectural fees for this phase of the project totaled \$64,320, bringing the total cost of Phase I to \$534,853. This phase of work was completed in June 2000.

#### Phase II – Installation of a three-story elevator

In April 2001, architectural design work began on Phase II, with construction beginning in February 2002. Using the same architects and construction company, work continued until August 2002. This phase saw a wheelchair ramp installed, installation of louvers and new glass storm windows on the bell tower, along with waterproofing of the bell tower bricks by Hudak Waterproofing Company at a cost of \$59,434. The construction of the elevator shaft and installation of the elevator cost \$297,108. A sound system was purchased and a glass wall, placed along the top edge of the balcony wall overlooking the

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second-floor portion of the sanctuary. This safety feature was donated by a church member as a memorial. The total cost of Phase II was \$425,724. This phase was completed with the bell tower waterproofing in October 2002.

### Phase III – Renovations of the Sanctuary of the Church

Planning for Phase III got under way with the signing of a contract with Wallace and Watson Architects in August 2004. The construction drawings work cost \$21,659. The actual work began in May 2005 with the relocation of the well by T.M. Mayer Well Drilling. After the well was moved, Serfass Construction began building the second stair tower and connecting rooms in May. This work cost \$360,969.

The interior work began in April 2005, with the removal of the pews by Frederick and Emily of Mount Joy and the chandeliers by Thayer Smith Company of Parkersburg. The paintings on the front walls of the sanctuary, which are on canvas, were carefully removed and taken to Diamond Decorating of Bethlehem for restoration. The removal of these items cleared the way for Serfass Construction to begin refurbishing the sanctuary.

The chancel area was redesigned and rebuilt with a free-standing altar in the center and the altar railing pulled back to open the access to the chancel. The sanctuary floors were sanded and refinished. The walls and ceiling were covered in wallboard. Air conditioning duct work was installed in the ceiling, along with new light fixtures and motorized hangers for the chandeliers. The walls and ceiling were repainted, the canvas paintings were replaced, and the 22-karat gold trim was applied. In October, the project neared completion with the reinstallation of the pews with pew pads. The refurbishment of the pews cost \$44,480. Carpeting was installed down the aisles of the sanctuary and on the balcony. The chandeliers were hung on their motorized hangers and the refurbished altar was returned. The total cost of Phase III was \$748,224.

On November 20, 2005, a church service of rededication was held. The total cost for the three phases of this restoration came in at \$1,708,800.

In 2009 air conditioning units were installed and connected to the existing duct work, through a bequest from Melvin Heffner.

### **Rohrbach Memorial Chapel**

In 1940, the Rohrbach Memorial Chapel was erected in memory of William F. and Amanda Y. Rohrbach by son David Rohrbach. It was presented to the joint congregations. Equipment for this building was donated by the Ladies Aid Society, the Sunday School, the Young People's Society, the Church Council, and other individuals. Since then, many improvements have been made to upgrade this fine facility. The building is presently used for Sunday School classes, the instruction of catechumens, meeting space for various church organizations, and the auditorium is used for Lenten services. For many years the Chapel was also the location for the annual Rohrbach Family Association reunion. In 1979 the Rohrbach Historical marker, previously located on the Gus and Anna Bales farm, was relocated on to the Chapel lawn. In 2019, after many years of patching, the original slate roof was replaced. Moyer Roofing of Quakertown did the work, replacing the slate roof with a painted steel standing-seam roof at a cost of \$40,000. The Memorial Chapel is used for fund-raising activities and is available for private family functions.

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### Memorial Park

On May 5, 1937, the church purchased the Abraham Benfield farm from his estate. The farmland lies immediately across Huff's Church Road from the church building. The farm included a farmhouse and barn along with 81 acres of land. In 1941, the farm buildings and the 58 acres of land, more distant from the church, were sold to William S. Frederick. Twenty-three acres were retained, which became the Benfield Cemetery and the picnic area, now known as the Memorial Park. In 1943, buildings were purchased for the Park, including the band shell. Improvements have included modern bathroom facilities and a refreshment stand. The park is used for annual picnics and other fund-raising activities, outdoor worship services, and is available for private family reunions.

### Church Office

In 1958, the School House, erected in 1878, was purchased from the Hereford Township School Board for \$2,650, which also included its bell. The Ladies Aid Society paid for this purchase. Prior to 1982 the building was used as a Scout and community center. On October 10, 1982, the refurbished schoolhouse was dedicated as the Huff's Church Schoolhouse, The Dr. Charles and Catherine Fox Memorial. A marble stone bearing this inscription was placed on the front wall. The cost of the reconstruction of the building was \$32,332 with the primary labor provided by church members. Reconstruction materials for the building cost \$26,837 which was paid through a memorial fund established in the names of Dr. Charles and Catherine Fox. The repair of the steeple and the replacement of furnishings, which cost approximately \$6,700, were sponsored as memorial gifts by members and friends of the congregations. The building is presently used as offices for the Pastor and the Secretary, and for small church meetings.

### Huff's Union Church Organizations

**THE WORSHIP & MUSIC COMMITTEE** works within the realm of the Union Church. It designs worship services, plans special celebrations, recommends improvements to the music program, and oversees the work of the various choirs.

**THE BUDGET COMMITTEE** prepares budgets, recommends distribution of benevolence funds, provides stewardship education, and recommends the areas in which time, talent, and money should be spent.

**THE FAMILY LIFE COMMITTEE** assumes responsibility for the planning and providing of fellowship opportunities. Fellowship events include covered-dish luncheons, cake and coffee socials, etc.

**THE LADIES AID SOCIETY** is an organization of the Union Church begun in April 1935. It provides opportunities for people to contribute their time and talent through fund-raising activities. They published a 50th Anniversary Cookbook in 1985. Jennie Winzer was the first President of the organization and was present for the 50th Anniversary Celebration. During its eighty-five-year history, the Ladies Aid has been the most successful church organization in terms of loyal service and fund-raising activities. Oyster pie, chow chow and red beet sales in the Chapel and picnics in the Memorial Park are some of the activities the Society leads. All funds are used for the ministries of the congregations. The Society recognized its 85th Anniversary in 2020.

**THE SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL**, organized in 1855, is the educational arm of the congregations. Its basic function is to teach the Good News of God's love and to share that news with others beyond our

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congregations. In addition to providing Christian education every Sunday morning, it sponsors a Summer Vacation Bible School and raises money for various mission projects.

**THE CHOIR PROGRAM** includes the following groups: Cherub, Junior, Senior, Handbell and Hand chime choirs. Their ministries of music are shared here at Huff's and in neighboring congregations and institutions. They perform in workshops, at district worship events, and at community celebrations.

**THE CARING AND SHARING COMMITTEE** keeps in contact with our older and health compromised church members. They show the Church's care about them through cards, phone calls, visitations and providing communion to those who cannot attend our Church services.

**THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH PLAYERS** sought to perpetuate the heritage of our German ancestors by performing plays in the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect. In 1975 the first Pennsylvania Dutch Play by Die Huffa Karrich Deutsche Leit was performed. These plays are presented annually, in the fall of the year. On occasion they were also presented in neighboring churches and on local radio stations. Over the 19 years that the plays were performed, more than 30,000 people attended, and raised over \$50,000 used to make many Church improvements. The Dutch Players were discontinued in 1993 due to the dying off of Pennsylvania Dutch speakers.

**THE PASSION PLAYERS** re-enact the Lord's Supper during Holy Week. Visitors from neighboring parishes are always in attendance on these occasions. The Passion Players have also performed in neighboring churches.

**THE LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE** assumes responsibility for planning short, medium, and long-range goals for improvement of the physical facilities, to be placed before the congregation for consideration.

**THE PARK BOARD** is responsible for the overseeing of the picnic grove facilities of the Memorial Park. Organized in 1946, its 5 members represent the various Church organizations using the park. Since fellowship is an important part of our life, the Board plays an important role in the total life of the congregations.

**THE CEMETERY BOARD** oversees the operation and maintenance of the three cemeteries: The (Old) Churchyard Cemetery, the Benfield Cemetery, and the Rauch-Hertzog Cemetery.

**THE ECUMENICAL COMMITTEE's** task is to help the Lutheran and United Church of Christ congregations to maintain, improve, and strengthen their Christian ties. Following the directives of both national church bodies, the Committee's efforts are directed toward greater unity in all areas of our lives at Huff's. God intends the Church to be one and has provided a source for that unity in Jesus Christ.

"There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all." -- Ephesians 4:4-6

# The History of Huff's Church

## 1760 – 2020

**THE SENIOR CITIZENS** organization of Huff's Church was a vital part of our ministry. During its life it provided opportunities for fellowship, enrichment, and travel. Meetings were held twice a month, and membership was open to all senior citizens of the community. The Senior Citizens were discontinued in December 2013.

**THE SCOUTING PROGRAMS** are part of the resources used to reach out to the young people of the community. The total program included units for boys and girls of different ages. By working side-by-side with these programs that teach a child to take care of himself or herself, we add the Christian note of taking care of one another. Individual and family-oriented programs and experiences were offered which nurtured and supported the Christian faith. The Scouting Program at Huff's was discontinued when leaders could no longer be found.

This list does not include the names of all the groups through which ministry is performed at Huff's. Others, whose responsibilities are inherent in their names, include the Altar Guild, the Memorial Committee, the Property Committee, the Library Committee, the Youth Group, and others.

### **Huff's Union Church Today**

Huff's Lutheran congregation and Huff's United Church of Christ congregation live in a union church relationship. Together they share a church building, a chapel, an office, a picnic grove, and several cemeteries. Worship services are held jointly every Sunday. In addition to ministering to its own members, the congregations join with other congregations of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, the Lutheran Church in America, the Penn Southeast Conference, and the Covenant Association of the United Church of Christ to provide outreach to the wider community.

The work of the congregations is governed by an elected Union Church Council. That work is delegated to committees in the following areas: worship, stewardship, education, family life, and social ministry. The Union Council oversees the cooperative efforts of both the Lutheran congregation and the United Church of Christ congregation. The Body of Christ is composed of many members and a vast variety of gifts. This is evident in the large number of organizations that make up our ministry.

***We express thanks to all who are involved in the ministry of Huff's Church!***