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THIRTEEN PASTORS AND  
110 BIRTHDAYS...

Mary Frances Mauney

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THIRTEEN PASTORS

and

110 BIRTHDAYS

to

THE GLORY OF GOD



*St. John's Lutheran Church*

Cherryville, N.C.

1881-1991

*"His Truth Endureth To All Generations"*



THIRTEEN PASTORS

and

110 BIRTHDAYS

to

THE GLORY OF GOD

This small volume, dedicated to the Lutheran Pastors who have so nobly served St. John's, is hereby presented as a gift to the church in honor of her 110th Birthday by four members of the congregation:

Mr. & Mrs. Keith Lohr

Mr. & Mrs. D.R. Mauney, Jr.



Life Sketches

Written by

Mary Frances Mauney

A most interesting journey  
into the past - as I  
studied the lives of  
these men -  
Mary Frances Mauney  
1991

Pastors of St. John's Lutheran Church  
Cherryville, N. C.  
and  
Dates of their service

|                                       |           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| The Reverend Marcus Lafayette Little  | 1881-1891 |
| The Reverend Luther Lindsey Lohr      | 1891-1893 |
| The Reverend John Jacob George        | 1893-1899 |
| The Reverend Robert Henry Cline       | 1900-1903 |
| The Reverend Ernest Houseal Kohn      | 1903-1909 |
| The Reverend John Calvin Dietz        | 1909-1912 |
| The Reverend Benjamin David Wessinger | 1913-1924 |
| The Reverend Charles Adolphus Linn    | 1924-1927 |
| The Reverend William Gurley Cobb      | 1927-1951 |
| The Reverend Leroy Cauble Trexler     | 1952-1958 |
| The Reverend Charles Edward Bernhardt | 1958-1968 |
| The Reverend Jack Everett Smith       | 1968-1981 |
| The Reverend Harold Gilbert Skinner   | 1982-     |



Marcus Lafayette Little, first pastor of St. John's, was a pioneer in missions and a forerunner in education in the Piedmont section of North Carolina. During his short life of forty-two years he was a pastor to ten Lutheran congregations and the founder of five high schools. A proponent of higher education, he founded and became the first president in 1885 of Gaston Co-educational College in Dallas. The college later became known as Gaston Female College. With other Lutheran ministers the Reverend Little helped found Lenoir College which was later renamed Lenoir Rhyne College.



Pastor Little died February 16, 1891 in a train wreck while on his way to Hickory with a document relating to the projected college. Had he lived, more than likely he would have become the college's first president. Today, one hundred years later, a scholarship endowment at Lenoir Rhyne College honors the Reverend Marcus L. Little.

A native of Catawba County, Marcus Little was born October 17, 1848, the son of Peter and Harriet Louisa Little. After graduating from Catawba College, he studied under the Reverend J. H. Smith and was ordained in 1876 by the Tennessee Synod. On May 4, 1871 he married Candace Mary Almetta Hermon of Newton. Eleven children were born to this union.

In October 1881, Reverend M. L. Little organized the first church in the village of Cherryville. The Lutheran congregation consisted of forty-one charter members. The Reverend Little continued as pastor of St. John's for a period of ten years. During this time he entered fully into the life of the people. Newborn babies in the congregation were often given the name Marcus. The Reverend Little was made a director of the town's first and only cotton mill, the Cherryville Manufacturing Company. He ably served his congregation in a small, plain wooden church which stood where the present St. John's House of Worship stands today. In 1889 he organized the first Sunday School at St. John's.

Other neighboring Lutheran churches served by Pastor Little included: St. Marks, Lutheran Chapel and Antioch in Gaston County; Trinity, Bethpage, Daniels and Emanuel in Lincoln County; and Sardis in Catawba County.

The Reverend Little is buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Hickory, North Carolina.

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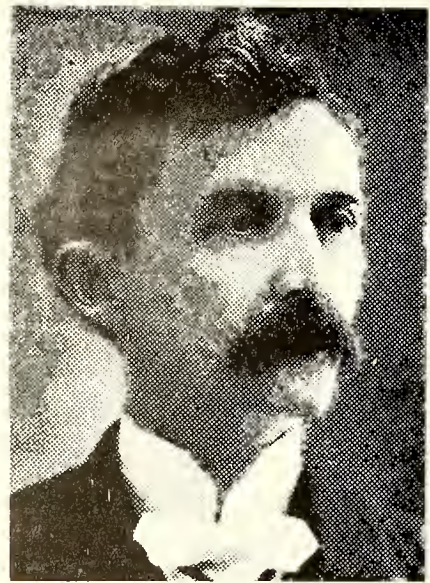
"Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Matthew 16:18



1892 - 1893

Luther Lindsey Lohr, second pastor of St. John's, was a student of literature as well as the scriptures. An educator as well as a pastor, the Reverend Lohr worked closely along side Reverend M. L. Little as they taught and preached in the pioneer congregations of Lincoln, Gaston and Catawba counties. Pastor Lohr taught at Gaston College from 1887 until 1891 when he became co-principal of the college. He served for ten years on the board of Lenoir College in Hickory. In 1914 the college conferred the D. D. degree upon him. For four years he served as president of the Tennessee Synod and for three years as secretary of the Susquehanna Synod.



Born in Lincoln County on October 1, 1860, L. L. Lohr was the son of Joshua and Emeline Lohr. He received an A. B. degree from Gaston College in 1887, and in 1891 he was ordained by the Tennessee Synod. He later graduated from Gettysburg Seminary.

Thrice married, the Reverend Lohr was first married to Jessie Cora Zinn of Gettysburg, Pa. The couple had four children. His second marriage, December 28, 1907, was to Mrs. Mary Jane Schligel of Williamsport, Pa. Following her death, he married once again, this time Lula Fritz of Hickory.

In addition to St. John's, the Reverend Lohr served in the following nearby churches: St. Marks, Antioch and Lutheran Chapel in Gaston County; Organ in Rowan County; Grace and Sardis in Catawba County; St. Luke, Bethpage, Daniels, Trinity and Cedar Grove in Lincoln County.

Pastor Lohr retired from the ministry in 1931 and returned to Lincolnton where he died August 24, 1937. He is buried at Daniels Church in Lincoln County.

When St. John's proudly observed its golden anniversary, December 13, 1931, Reverend L. L. Lohr, D.D. returned to deliver a special address at the celebration.

\* \* \* \* \*

These are the gifts I ask  
Of thee, Spirit serene:  
Strength for the daily task,  
Courage to face the road,  
Good cheer to help me bear the traveler's load,  
And, for the hours of rest that come between,  
An inward joy in all things heard and seen.

The above lines by Henry Van Dyke appear in the handwriting of the Reverend L. L. Lohr on a handmade Christmas card of long ago.



## JOHN J. GEORGE

1893 - 1899

A man of varied talents, Reverend John Jacob George served for six years as St. John's third pastor. He was born June 15, 1866 to Nelson Benjamin and Isabel Shealy George in Lexington County, S. C. John J. attended Newberry College and Concordia College. In 1892 he received his A.B. degree from Lenoir College (later Lenoir Rhyne College) where he was a member of the college's first graduating class. For one year he did graduate study at Columbia University before he was ordained to the ministry in 1893 by the Tennessee Synod.



The Reverend George came to Cherryville in 1893 to begin his ministry. On July 29, 1896 he married Frances Pearl Mauney, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. S. S. Mauney of Cherryville. Their children numbered fourteen, six boys and eight girls. During his pastorate at St. John's, the Reverend George founded the Cherryville Academy and served as the school's principal. While Pastor George served St. John's, he also served as pastor for two neighboring churches, St. Marks and Bethpage.

In 1890 the Reverend George concluded his gospel ministry in order to enter the world of business. He continued to live in Cherryville where he and his wife, Pearl, reared their large family. Mr. George remained active in the work of the Lutheran church as long as he lived. In 1907 he helped the North Carolina and Tennessee Synods establish a summer school for church workers. He served as a layman in 1921 on the committee to merge the North Carolina and Tennessee Synods. For twenty years he served as a member of the Board of Trustees of Lenoir Rhyne College.

Mr. George became a director of the Cherryville National Bank and president of the Vivian Spinning Mills, Inc. He served as mayor of the town, and for a short period as postmaster. He dealt in real estate in this section and was prominent as a bond buyer handling state, county and municipal building and improvement bonds and loans. Out from Bessemer City on a vast tract of land, he engineered an early real estate development known as "George Town". In 1920 he attended the Republican National Convention in Chicago as a delegate from North Carolina. He did much in his time to develop the town of Cherryville.

John J. George was killed in an automobile-train accident in Kings Mountain on September 16, 1932, at the age of sixty-six. He is buried in St. John's Cemetery in Cherryville.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Everything that is done in the world is done by hope"

-Martin Luther-

1900 - 1903

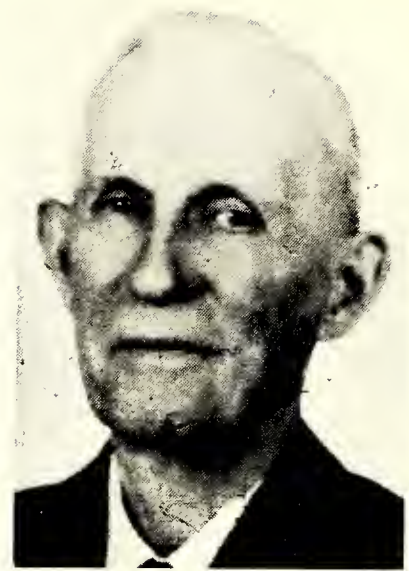
The Reverend Robert Henry Cline, D. D., St. John's fourth pastor, was the son of Eli Davidson Cline and Roxanna Starr Cline. He was born November 1, 1859 at Startown in Catawba county. He received his early education in the schools of Catawba county, and his A. B. and M. A. degrees from Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia. Sometime later his Alma Mater conferred on him the honorary degree of D.D.

Dr. Cline was married to Sara Alice Cline of Catawba county, February 23, 1886 and to this union were born eight children. The Reverend Cline was ordained to the Gospel ministry by the Tennessee Synod in November 1885 and was privileged to serve in the ministry for more than sixty years. His labors were spent in the Synods of North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. He was a preacher, a teacher and a builder--he built six churches and seven parsonages.

During Dr. Cline's pastorate at St. John's in Cherryville he built one of his six churches. For two decades the congregation had worshipped in its small frame structure. More room was needed to carry on the work of the church. God's Little House was torn down and in its place a second church building constructed of brick was erected at an approximate cost of \$3,000.00.

Other area churches in North Carolina served by Pastor Cline include the following: Sardis in Catawba County; St. Paul, Cedar Grove and Trinity in Lincoln County; and St. Marks in Gaston County.

In 1915 Pastor Cline returned to the Virginia Synod where he remained until his retirement in 1934 in Roanoke. The Reverend Cline died on January 3, 1951 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Roanoke, Virginia. He was ninety-two years old at the time of death.



\* \* \* \* \*

"O God, our help in ages past  
our hope for years to come."

1904 - 1909

St. John's fifth pastor, the Reverend Ernest Houseal Kohn, was a most active participant in synod affairs. He helped plan the merger of the North Carolina and Tennessee Synods. From 1898 to 1899 Dr. Kohn was secretary of the Tennessee Synod and from 1899 to 1900 he served as its president. Later he was elected North Carolina Synod's first statistical secretary, a position he held for years.

Born on November 7, 1863, in Little Mountain, South Carolina, Ernest H. Kohn was the son of Aaron Hamilton and Martha Elizabeth Kohn. In 1885 he earned his A. B. degree from Newberry College and in 1893 he graduated from Philadelphia Seminary. In the same year he was ordained by the Ministry of the Pennsylvania Churches. Quite a well educated man, the Reverend Kohn also held the A.M., Ph.D., and the D.D. degrees.

Dr. Kohn married Catharine Ehrhardt of Philadelphia on May 16, 1895, and they had six children.

The Reverend Kohn served in the Southwest Virginia and Tennessee Synods, the Pennsylvania Synod and the South Carolina Synod. From 1904 until 1909 the Reverend Kohn served churches in North Carolina. During this time he was pastor at St. John's as well as pastor at Bethpage, St. Paul and St. Marks. While Pastor Kohn served the Cherryville church, the congregation of St. John's built its first parsonage. It was located on East Main Street and owned in conjunction with St. Marks. The two story frame house was used as a parsonage until 1921.

Under the guidance of Pastor Kohn, the Ladies Guild (St. John's first women's group) was organized on May 4, 1904 with Mrs. E. H. Kohn, the pastor's wife, serving as president and Mrs. John J. George, a former pastor's wife, serving as vice-president.

In 1946 Dr. Kohn retired in Mt. Holly. He later moved to Gastonia. He died on November 11, 1950 at the age of eighty-seven. He is buried in Mt. Holly, North Carolina.



\* \* \* \* \*

Therefore, my beloved brethen, be steadfast,  
immovable, always abounding in the work of  
the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor  
is not in vain.

I Corinthians 15:58

In 1909, St. John's called its sixth pastor, John Calvin Dietz. Born on March 3, 1876, in Catawba County, the Reverend Dietz was the son of Washington Marion and Susan Jan Propst Dietz. He attended Lenoir (later Lenoir Rhyne) College and received his A. B. degree in 1898. He entered Chicago Seminary and graduated with honors in 1900. The D. D. degree was awarded him in 1936.

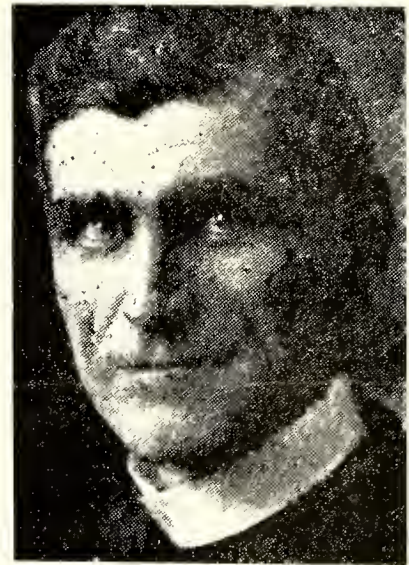
Dr. Dietz was ordained in 1900 by the Tennessee Synod. Later that same year he married Minnie Rose Rudisill of Maiden. Two children were born to the couple.

The Reverend Dietz was actively involved as temporary chairman of the 1921 merger convention of the North Carolina and Tennessee Synods. He was duly elected in 1923 as the second secretary of the United North Carolina Synod, an office which he held for fourteen consecutive years. For a number of years he served as a member of the Board of Trustees of Lenoir Rhyne College.

The gospel ministry of Reverend J. C. Dietz reached into three different states: North Carolina, Indiana and South Carolina. He returned in 1909 to his home state where he pastored St. John's, Cherryville. Other neighboring churches pastored by Dr. Dietz were: Bethpage, St. Paul, Salem, St. Luke and Emmanuel in Lincoln County; and Holy Trinity, Grace, Bethel and St. Marks in Gaston County.

During Dr. Dietz's pastorate at St. John's, the Childrens' Missionary Society was organized. The Society's first major project was aid in support of the Reverend A. J. Stirewalt, missionary to Japan.

Dr. Dietz retired in 1944 in Gastonia. He died on February 12, 1954 at the age of 88 years. He is buried in Gaston Memorial Cemetery in Gastonia.



\* \* \* \* \*

"The church's one foundation in Jesus Christ her Lord  
 She is his new creation by water and the word  
 From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride  
 And with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died."

"We are Gods house of living stones."



1913 - 1924

St. John's, Cherryville was the Reverend Benjamin David Wessinger's first church in North Carolina. His first three churches were located in South Carolina.

The Reverend Wessinger's ministry in Cherryville as St. John's seventh pastor, 1913-1924, covered the World War I period. During these eleven years under Pastor Wessinger's spiritual leadership, St. John's grew in faith and in numbers. While at St. John's, the Reverend B. D. Wessinger assisted in organizing Ascension Lutheran Church in Shelby.



Benjamin David Wessinger was born October 24, 1878, near Chapin, South Carolina. His parents were David F. and Julia C. (Frick) Wessinger. In 1889 he received his A.B. degree from Lenoir Rhyne College. He then attended Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia where he completed his studies in 1903 and was ordained by the Tennessee Synod. Later in the year, November 10, 1903, he married Nancy Virginia Caughman of Lexington. Four children grew up in the Wessinger home, one of whom was adopted.

The Reverend Wessinger, a man of great vigor, was a builder as well as a minister of the gospel. In 1922 he oversaw the remodeling of St. John's Church at an approximate cost of \$20,000. The balcony in the sanctuary was removed and new oak pews and a heating system were installed. A new tower was added to the front on the southwest corner of the church, and the tall tower on the southeast corner, (part of the original construction) was remodeled. Sunday School quarters consisting of seven classrooms and a robing room were added at the rear of the church. A pipe organ, which was a special gift to St. John's, was installed. During this same period the congregation spent an additional \$20,000 in the erection of a brick two story parsonage on the corner opposite the church.

In 1924 Pastor Wessinger left St. John's to become pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Florida, where he retired in 1936.

At Kure Beach, N. C., the Reverend Wessinger conducted services in a community chapel for two summers before the organization of Kure Memorial Church in 1951. He was president of the Tennessee Synod from 1918-1921 and later served as the first president of the Florida Synod. He was a member of the governing boards of Lenoir Rhyne College and Newberry College. A writer in his later years, he contributed frequently to church papers. In 1931 Pastor Wessinger returned to Cherryville to preach the sermon for the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the founding of St. John's.

The Reverend Benjamin D. Wessinger died December 11, 1951 at Lakeland, Florida. He is buried at St. Thomas Church near Chapin, South Carolina.

\* \* \* \* \*

"We plow the fields and scatter the good seed  
on the land,  
But it is fed and watered by God's Almighty  
hand"

CHARLES A. LINN

1924 - 1927

Charles Adolphus Linn, eighth pastor of St. John's, was born October 27, 1890, at Mt. Pleasant, N. C. His parents were the Reverend Josephus Adolphus and Mary Cordelia (Miller) Linn. He received his A.B. degree in 1915 from Roanoke College in Virginia and his B.D. degree in 1918 from the Philadelphia Seminary in Pennsylvania. He later received his S.T.M. degree and his Ph.D. from Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. Newberry College in S. C. bestowed the D.D. degree upon this exceptionally fine man.

C.A. Linn was ordained in 1918 and on June 12, 1919, he was married to Jennie Holmes Snider of Salisbury. Their daughter, Mrs. Jennie Linn Pitts, was the couple's only child.

Pastor Linn served in the following churches: Wildwood, N.J. 1918-1920; Macon, Ga. 1920-1922; Holy Trinity-Mt. Gilead, Mt. Pleasant, N.C. 1922-1923; St. John's, Cherryville 1924-1927; Ascension, Savannah, Ga. 1927-1947.

The Reverend Linn served for several terms as president of the Georgia-Alabama Synod and was the first full time president of this synod from 1947 to 1950. He served as chairman of the ULCA Committee on Church Papers from 1935-1950. He did research and on the spot study of the Saltzburger Settlement on the Savannah River in Georgia. He was the author of the History of the German Friendly Society of Savannah, Ga. Dear to Pastor Linn's heart were the three years 1947-1950 he served as vice-chairman on the original Board of Directors of Lutheridge in Arden, N. C.

The following paragraph is an excerpt from the History of St. John's Lutheran Church written by C.A. Linn when he was pastor of the congregation.

"On the roll of the church at present there are about 275 members. The annual budget is approximately \$4,000. The total amount raised during the past year for all causes was a little more than \$10,000. The enrollment in Sunday School is 230. Besides the Sunday School there are among the live organizations of the church, a Luther League, a Ladies' Guild, a Women's Missionary Society, a Light Brigade, a Senior Choir and Junior Choir."

While at St. John's, Dr. Linn wrote quite a descriptive History of the Town of Cherryville. A man of many gifts, he also wrote an operetta portraying life in Cherryville beginning with reconstruction days which followed the Civil War. He penned the lyrics for the operetta's theme song "Cherry Blossom Time in Cherryville", which he set to an old tune. The song was sung on various occasions during the celebration of the City of Cherryville's Centennial and also during our nation's Bicentennial Celebration.

In 1931, Pastor Linn returned to Cherryville as did Pastors Lohr and Wessinger. The three joined with the congregation in celebration of St. John's fiftieth anniversary. "Historical Sketches" was the title of the Reverend Linn's address.

Dr. Charles A. Linn died September 11, 1950 in Atlanta, Georgia. He is buried at Salisbury, North Carolina.



\* \* \* \* \*

"O' Jesus, shepherd, guardian, friend  
My prophet, priest and king  
My Lord, my life, my way, my end  
Accept the praise, I bring"



WILLIAM G. COBB

1927 - 1951

St. John's ninth pastor, William Gurley Cobb, was born December 30, 1887 in Guilford county. The son of John Calvin and Mary Emma (Starr) Cobb, he was educated at Elon College, receiving his A.B. degree in 1911. He attended Southern Seminary in Columbia, S.C. and in 1927 received his B.D. degree. He later did graduate study at the Chicago Seminary. The Reverend W. G. Cobb was ordained in 1914 by the North Carolina Synod.

On March 3, 1916, the Reverend Cobb married Emma Lillian Akard of Sullivan County, Tennessee. The marriage was blessed with seven children. The couple's two sons later became ordained Lutheran ministers and two of the couple's five daughters married ordained Lutheran ministers.



During his lifetime the Reverend W. G. Cobb served churches in three synods: Halston Synod of Tennessee, 1914-1917; Southwest Virginia Synod in Virginia, 1917-1922; in the N. C. Synod, he served from 1922-1954 in the following churches: Salem-Grace, then Salem alone and Lenonan in Rowan county; Zion-Bethlehem-New Jerusalem in Catawba county; St. John's, Cherryville, 1924-1951; St. David, Kannapolis, 1951-1954.

In 1954 Pastor Cobb built a home out from Cherryville where he and his wife retired in name only. Again Pastor Cobb became an active member of St. John's and a source of inspiration to the entire community. In 1957 he developed and organized Our Savior Lutheran Church in Dallas. The Reverend Cobb compiled a history of St. John's Church and served as assistant pastor of St. John's during the church's Seventy-fifth anniversary year. He did regular supply preaching in the surrounding area until the Sunday before his death.

From 1914-1917 the Reverend Cobb served as secretary for the Holston Synod in Tennessee. He was a member of the Committee on Merger of Holston, S. W. Virginia and Virginia Synods. He served on the board of the Lowman Home in White Rock, S. C. 1928-1942 and on the board of the Children's Home in Salem, Virginia 1942-1953.

During the pastorate of W.G. Cobb at St. John's, the congregation celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. An educational building including a Sunday School auditorium and nine classrooms was completed in 1937. In May 1951 an annex to the building containing a kitchen and additional classrooms was dedicated. Student Assistants Marion Starr, Gilmer Boggs and Keith Beam rendered effective work in the parish. In 1949 Miss Barbara Yount was called to the congregation as its first full time parish-worker. Miss Yount served until 1951.

In June 1939, the Annual Convention of the United Evangelical Lutheran Synod of N. C. was held at St. John's. During the session Pastor Cobb's Silver Anniversary in the ministry was celebrated and his elder son, John William, was ordained as a minister of the Lutheran Church.

While Pastor Cobb served St. John's, the local Brotherhood instigated a church building program at Chapel Hill. A lot was purchased by the congregation and much equipment was given by individual members. Later the congregation of St. John's supplemented the salary of pastors at Chapel Hill.

The Reverend W. G. Cobb died May 12, 1960 at the age of seventy-three. He is buried in the cemetery of St. John's Church, Cherryville, N. C. The spiritual presence of Pastor Cobb is still strongly felt at St. John's. Four of his children along with their respective families are leaders in St. John's congregation today.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Come follow me", the Savior spake."

LEROY C. TREXLER

1952 - 1958

The tenth pastor to serve St. John's was Leroy Cauble Trexler, a native of Granite Quarry. He was born on August 9, 1922, the son of William Roedel and Carrie Cauble Trexler.

Leroy Trexler attended Lenoir Rhyne College where he received his A.B. degree in 1943. On September 27, 1945 he received his B.D. degree from the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, S. C., and later that same day he was married to Mable Shealy of Columbia. The Reverend Trexler and his wife were blessed with two sons and one daughter.

Ordained on October 7, 1945 by the North Carolina Synod the Rev. Leroy Trexler served the following churches in N. C.: Good Shepherd, Goldsboro, 1945-1949; Mt. Hemmon, Cabarus county, 1949-1951; St. John's, Cherryville, 1952-1958.

Upon leaving St. John's in 1958 the Reverend Trexler became pastor of St. Paul's, Sarasota, Florida, a mission under development. During his seven years as pastor of St. Paul's he directed the building of a Fellowship Hall, an Educational Building and a Sanctuary. He then returned to South Carolina Synod where he served as pastor of St. Paul's in Columbia for the next eleven years. In 1976 he became pastor in a suburban Lutheran Church in the neighboring town of Lexington. He returned to the Florida Synod in 1978 to serve at St. John's, Hollywood, Florida where he remained until he was called in 1981 to develop a new congregation in Boca Raton. This group of Lutheran believers organized by Pastor Trexler named their new church "The Good Shepherd". In 1982 the Reverend Trexler returned a second time to S. C. where he became pastor of Wittenburg Church in Leesville.

Reverend Leroy Trexler retired October 7, 1986 on the same date of his ordination forty-one years earlier. The Trexlers built a home out from Cherryville and again became members of St. John's. During the past five years Pastor Trexler has done regular supply preaching in the surrounding area. He has served as an interim pastor for Bethpage and for St. Mark's.

It was during the pastorate of Reverend Trexler that St. John's observed her Seventy-fifth Anniversary in 1956 with a week long (September 23-30) celebration. Other memorable highlights during his pastorate included St. John's first Congregational Dinner held at the Carlton Club House. It was on this occasion, February 27, 1958, that St. John's launched her "Venture in Faith" campaign to build a new church and educational building. Under the able leadership of Adrian Amstutz, St. John's was the first church in the South to use Lutheran Laymen's Movement Fund Raising Services. Under the guidance of Pastor Trexler the Grace System of Giving was adopted by the congregation and the three women's groups of the church: "The Ladies Guild", "The Ladies Missionary Society" and "The Clara Sullivan Missionary Society" were merged into six circles with membership rotating every two years.

During Pastor Trexler's years at St. John's the women of the congregation established a church library which received national recognition in the monthly magazine, "Lutheran Woman's Work". A Week-Day Church School program was introduced for the youth. Lutheridge formally opened its doors and the young people at St. John's attended camp there for the first time. A member of St. John's became president of the Luther League of America.



\* \* \* \* \*

"Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim"

1958 - 1968

Charles Edward Bernhardt, eleventh pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, was born December 18, 1921 in Rowan county. His parents were Ira Leo and Maggie Elizabeth (Parks) Bernhardt. Upon receiving his A.B. degree in 1942 from Lenoir Rhyne College he entered Southern Seminary in Columbia, S. C. where he received his B.D. degree in 1945. He was ordained that same year by the North Carolina Synod. On September 15, 1944 he was married to Gladys Irene Boggs of Claremont. One daughter and two sons were born to this union.



The Reverend Charles Bernhardt served the following congregations in the Tar Heel State: Christ-St. Luke, Stanley, where he built a parsonage; St. John's, Asheboro; St. Matthews, Wilmington, and St. John's, Cherryville (1958-1968).

After leaving St. John's, Pastor Bernhardt served three congregations in the South Carolina Synod. He first served as pastor of Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church in Columbia, 1968-1975. He accepted a call in 1975 to Martin Luther Lutheran Church in Charleston where he served as dean of the synodical district in which Martin Luther was located. In 1984 he became pastor of Pine Grove Lutheran Church in Lone Star where he remained until December 30, 1987, when he retired from the ministry after having served forty two years. For seventeen of these years, 1971-1988, he served on the board of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary.

Much was accomplished during the Reverend Charles Bernhardt's pastorate at St. John's. On October 22, 1961 the congregation held its last worship service in old St. John's Church which had been built at the turn of the century. The weather-worn walls were torn down and a large contemporary St. John's Church was erected on the same site. Harlon E. McClure FAIA, Dean of the School of Architecture of Clemson University, was chosen as the architect for the building.

For one and one half years Sunday School and Worship services were held in Cherryville's East Elementary School. On May 19, 1963 following the laying of the corner stone, the congregation entered their beautiful new sanctuary for the first time.

Four years later, April 2, 1967 the congregation dedicated another handsome structure, a modern three-story educational building which matched the sanctuary. The combined cost of the sanctuary, office wing and educational building was approximately \$875,000. During the six year building program, St. John's diligently continued her mission both at home and abroad.

In 1981 Pastor Bernhardt returned, as did Pastor Trexler, to share in St. John's Centennial Celebration.

Since his retirement in 1987 Charles and Gladys Bernhardt have resided at their home on Lake Norman near Lincolnton. They are members of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Lincolnton where the Reverend Bernhardt served for a time as assistant pastor.

\* \* \* \* \*

I was glad when they said to me,  
"Let us go to the House of the Lord"  
Psalm 122:1



1968 - 1981

Jack Everett Smith, born July 2, 1927, in Rowan County, served as the twelfth pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church. He was one of eleven children born to Mack Henry and Mardre (Horne) Smith. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Lenoir Rhyne College in 1948 and his Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. In 1968 he received a Master of Sacred Theology degree from the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina.

Ordained by the North Carolina Lutheran Synod in 1951, the Reverend Jack Smith served St. Martin's, Stanley County, 1951-1952; Cobles, Guilford County, 1952-1956; Grace, Thomasville, 1956-1959; and St. Marks, Asheville, 1959-1968 before coming to St.

John's, Cherryville where he served for 13 years until June 1, 1981. The last church to be served by Pastor Smith was Holy Trinity, Gastonia where he retired several years ago. He and his wife now reside at their home on Moss Lake near Cherryville.

The Reverend Jack Smith was married June 11, 1949 to Christine Heller, daughter of the Reverend and Mrs. Mark Heller of Woxall, Pennsylvania. The Smiths are the parents of four children.

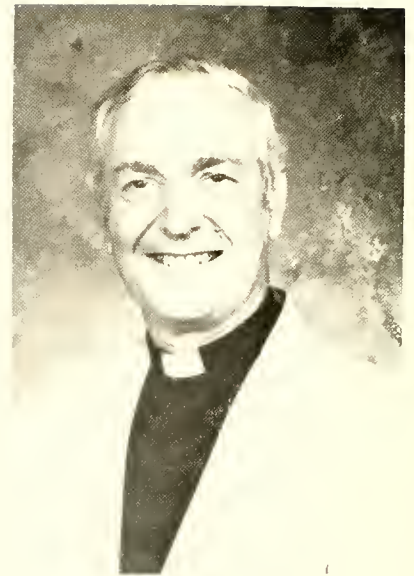
The Reverend Smith has served two terms on the Executive Board of the North Carolina Synod and one term on the Board of Trustees of Lenoir Rhyne College. During his pastorate at St. John's, Cherryville the Reverend Smith ministered to the community as well as to his congregation. He was actively involved in the work of the Cherryville Good Will Center from the time of its inception, serving as chairman, as secretary and as treasurer. In 1979 he was mainly responsible for bringing to Cherryville the Ha Tran family, refugees from Vietnam. After language barriers were surmounted and proper instructions were given, he baptized five members of this family into the Christian faith.

During this period the congregation added to its facilities by purchasing a new parsonage which was dedicated in April 1969. The site of the old parsonage was made into a large parking lot. The property lines of St. John's were extended when the congregation bought an adjoining house and lot formerly owned by Jessie Vandyke. At an October Fest in the Fellowship Hall, October 1, 1976, a mortgage burning ceremony was held celebrating the fact that St. John's new sanctuary and educational building were completely clear of debt. In 1981 a beautiful canopy and bell tower, housing St. John's original bell were added at the drive-in entrance of the church.

Three church workers served the congregation while Pastor Smith was at St. John's: Charles Linder, Parish Educator 1974-1975; Axel Tegtmeyer, Pastor-Intern from West Germany 1976-1977; and Miss Frances Woody, Director of Christian Education 1978-1981.

During Pastor Smith's years of service at St. John's, the church's weekly newsletter was originated, a tape ministry for shut-ins was started, communion luncheons for senior citizens introduced, music by handbell choir rendered for first time, the first beach trip for senior citizens planned and carried out, the new Lutheran Service introduced and sung, plans and preparations made for renovation of sanctuary.

As chaplain of the Centennial Committee, Pastor Smith helped lay the ground work for St. John's year long observance of her 100th Anniversary.



\* \* \* \* \*

"Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only"

James 1:22

In 1982 the Reverend Harold Gilbert Skinner, pastor of Wittenburg Lutheran Church in Leesville, S. C., was called to become the thirteenth pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Cherryville. On July 14th of that year he delivered his first sermon as pastor of a North Carolina parish.

A native of Rocky Mount, Rev. Harold Skinner was born December 20, 1927, to the parents Edgar D. and Lillian Heilig Skinner. In infancy he was received into the church by Holy Baptism and early in life he became a confirmed member of Trinity Lutheran Church in his home community. After graduating from Rocky Mount High School in 1946 he entered Lenoir Rhyne College where he received his A.B. degree in 1952. He attended Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, Maywood, Illinois, and in 1956 earned his Master of Divinity degree. The Reverend Skinner also did additional graduate work at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, S. C.

The Reverend Harold Skinner was married August 1, 1953 to Miss Nancy E. Foil of Kannapolis, (member of Kimball Memorial Church). The couple had three children of their own. In addition to their daughter and two sons, the Skinners look upon as their own a dearly-loved Swedish Exchange Student who lived for a year in their home.

Following his ordination in 1956 the Rev. Skinner first served as Mission Developer and Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church, Cheyenne, Wyoming. From 1958-1962 he was pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, Canon city, Colorado and part-time manager of Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp, Hillside, Colorado. In 1962 he became pastor of St. Michael's Lutheran Church of Greenville, S. C. where he served until 1973 when he became Pastor of Wittenburg in Leesville. During his nine years at this South Carolina parish the Reverend Skinner served as part-time Director of Kinard Conference Center in Leesville.

During the nine years, Reverend Harold Skinner has been pastor at St. John's, the congregation has grown in faith and works. Under the leadership of this dedicated and cheerful natured parson, christian outreach in the community has expanded and fellowship at St. John's has been deepened and enriched.

Under the guidance of Carlton G. Gross, Director of Ecclestial Arts Department, Fortress Church Supply, St. John's recently completed a \$100,000 Renovation Program of the Sanctuary. Many beautiful memorial gifts conducive to spiritual enrichment and worship were given to the church. The Sacristy Committee's Four-year Project of stitching needlepoint covers for the kneelers around St. John's free standing altar is nearing completion.

The cooperation of six retired pastors in the congregation gives additional strength and support to God's work. Two summer interns, Timothy Martin and Paula Bedenbaugh, rendered effective service during the vacation months several years ago. During the year 1990 Reverend Paul Rimmer served as Visitation Pastor. New on the staff in 1991 is Mrs. Bonnie Sanford who is serving as Director of Christian Education. A son of the congregation, Michael Timothy Martain, was ordained July 14, 1991 at St. John's by Bishop Michael McDaniel of the North Carolina Synod.



Each month the Church Calendar is filled with varied activities for all age groups. There are special events and trips for Senior Citizens and for the youth, a tape ministry and programs for shut-ins, dinners for the families, etc.

Today St. John's Lutheran Church stands strong in: Lay Leadership; Christian Education; Youth Ministry; Lines of Communication; Environmental Collections; Community involvement, especially Cherryville Area Ministries; financial support of church institutions and programs, especially Lenoir Rhyne College and Southern Seminary, at home; and World Hunger and Lutheran World Relief abroad.

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#### A Birthday Thought

As we look back on the one hundred and ten years of St. John's history, we, the congregation, are thankful for the lives of our thirteen pastors who faithfully labored to lead us in the paths of Christian service.

These men gave their time, their substance and devotion that Christianity might live in this community and radiate its influence in other sections.

We are grateful for God's guidance and blessings of the past, and we ask his continued blessing on us and our community, as we rededicate our hearts and lives to Him on the one hundred and tenth birthday of our church.

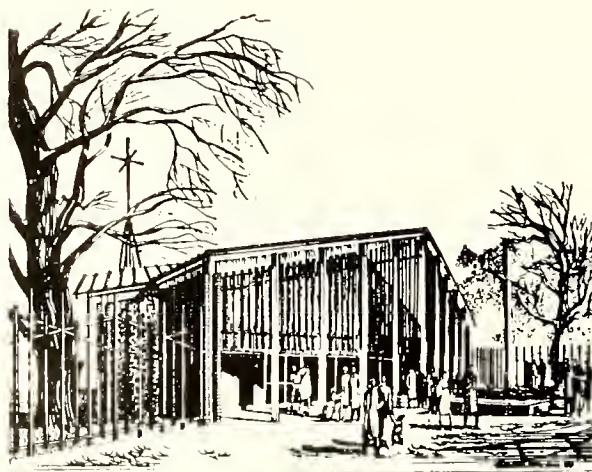
M. F. M.

"Lead on, O King Eternal!

We follow not with fear,

-----Your cross if lifted o'er us,

We journey in its light."-----



*"His Truth Endureth To All Generations"*



## SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to extend a sincere "Thank You" to the many friends who so willingly shared their knowledge of and interest in St. John's Lutheran Church.

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|--|-----------------------------|
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| <u>A History of Cherryville, N. C.</u>   | W. Tabor Robinson (1976)    |
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| Old Issues of the <u>Cherryville Eagle</u>                                       | Fred Houser, Editor         |
| The Rev. Carl Parks, Lutheran Synod of North Carolina ELCA, Salisbury, N. C.     |                             |
| The Rev. Keith B. Brown, Virginia Synod ELCA, Salem, Virginia                    |                             |
| The Rev. David L. Lohr   | Shelby, North Carolina      |
| The Rev. John W. Cobb  | Statesville, North Carolina |
| Mrs. Jennie Linn Pitts   | Albany, Georgia             |
| Marcus L. Little II  | Hickory, North Carolina     |
| Pastors: Leroy C. Trexler  | Jack E. Smith               |
| Charles E. Bernhardt   | Harold G. Skinner           |

TO THE  
GLORY  
OF GOD

## NOTES











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