

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH,
JEFFERSON, MD.

(JEFFERSON CHARGE.)

Rev. George I. Uhler, Pastor.

This charge receives its name from the place in which the largest of the four congregations that originally composed it is located. The town of Jefferson is situated about eight miles from Frederick, along the state road leading from the latter place to Harper's Ferry, West Virginia. The Jefferson charge was formed about June 10, 1838. Originally the Burkittsville congregation and St. Matthew's, of the Manor charge, were included. The Burkittsville congregation severed its connection in 1858, and St. Matthew's in 1886.



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During these thirty-one years therefore, St. Paul's, of Jefferson, St. Luke's, of Feagaville, and Mount Zion congregations have composed the Jefferson charge. It should be noted that Mount Zion almost from the formation of the charge, was comprised in the same. The beginnings of St. Paul's congregation antedate the

organization of the charge by nearly half a century. As people of German descent mostly comprised the congregations of Middletown Valley, so we may infer with certainty that in the early formation of what is now St. Paul's they were also in a large majority. However a few names of those of other descent seem to be present. But it was a pastor of German extraction whose name is associated with a number of congregations surrounding Frederick in their primitive period, that also apparently ministered first to the Lutherans of Jefferson, viz: Rev. D. F. Schaeffer, D.D., of Frederick, who in the year 1810 conducted services in the school house every four weeks.

What the developments were during the next twenty-five years seems rather obscure. St. Paul's was included in the Middletown charge during the ministry of Rev. J. G. Graeber in that place. That there must have been an increasing activity in the church life not only among the Lutherans, but also among the Reformed, is evident from the fact that an organization was effected by the former in 1825, and that the stone church was jointly constructed by these two denominations in 1827, during the ministry of Rev. Reck, then of the Middletown charge, who, with Rev. M. Wachter, served from the latter place until 1838. The lot on which the union structure was erected was donated by Mr. Henry Hershberger of the Reformed faith. The first officers of the Lutheran congregation were: Captain Henry Culler, Mr. Thomas Thresher, Mr. Abraham Blessing, and Mr. Philip Williard.

The new Lutheran church was begun some time in 1840, during the pastorate of Rev. C. C. Baughman, and completed in 1841, during the ministry of Rev. W. F. Eyster. The lot was deeded to the church by Captain Henry Culler for less than half its real value, \$266. The church, which was of brick, cost \$3,000. The first officers of the church in 1841 were Messrs. Solomon Blessing, Jacob Ahalt, Captain Henry Culler, George Richards, Daniel Culler, Lewis Easterday, and John Willard. The first bell was a gift of the Middletown congregation.

The excellent parsonage and beautiful grounds were purchased in 1850, during the pastorate of Rev. D. J. Hauer, for \$2,000.

The present commodious church building was erected in 1866, during the pastorate of Rev. H. G. Bowers, at a cost of \$16,000. In September, 1874, the rear gable was blown in by a severe storm, causing considerable damage. The church was promptly repaired with the expenditure of \$1,000. The fine bells in the tower, sending out the joyful invitations to the house of God,

were purchased for \$400. In 1897, during the ministry of Rev. S. A. Hedges, repairs, improvements and additions were made, such as new leaded-glass windows, frescoing, painting, light reflector and pipe organ, costing in all \$3,000. The church cemetery has also been recently enlarged and improved with an expenditure of about \$1,000. During the month of April, 1899, a new roof was placed upon the church with the outlay of \$250. With all these material improvements the congregation has grown numerically and spiritually.

Dr. Horine, in referring to this congregation, says, "With the number of church papers and periodicals it reads, we justly infer that the people have an intelligent appreciation of the work of the church at large."

Among the first officers at the time of organization appears the name of J. Phillip Willard. He afterwards entered the ministry. Besides serving a number of charges with unusual success he was also equally successful in soliciting funds for the various operations of the church. Fourteen thousand dollars were secured by him in eleven months for the completion of the endowment of a German professorship in the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. As financial agent for the Lutheran Board of Publication, he secured \$40,000. It was he who originated the idea of the Orphans' Home at Loysville, Pa., and he was its superintendent for twenty-five years. His name has been familiar in that home and the church as Father Willard.

Rev. W. A. Wadsworth is described as a man "of fine intellect, good scholarship and sterling integrity of character." He however suffered ill health and was thus hindered from engaging in the active work of the ministry except for a little time.

Rev. Charles A. Stork, D.D., whose mother was born in Jefferson, usually spent his summers on his grandfather's farm when a boy.

Rev. J. M. Friday was a son of St. Paul's who met a seemingly untimely death. He left his home in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, May 31, 1877, to perform a marriage ceremony in Maryland and upon his returning after the rite was "unhumanly" murdered. But four years were thus permitted to be spent in the ministry.

Rev. M. L. Culler, D.D., now in his eightieth year is also a son of this church. He has now retired from the ministry after a long period of active work. He has held various positions of honor in the church. In 1899 he wrote "The Early History of the Lutheran Churches in the Middletown Valley," to which we are indebted for much of the material of this narrative.

Seldom does it happen that two sons of a minister enter the ministry from the place in which they were born and from the church in which they were reared. This virtually occurred in Jefferson from St. Paul's during the long ministry of their father, Rev. H. G. Bowers, both Rev. George S. Bowers, D.D., and his brother Rev. John Culler Bowers, D.D., entered the Lutheran ministry.

We come to rather a productive period of ministers in this congregation from 1900 to 1905. The first during this time was Rev. Frederick W., son of Rev. J. M. Friday, whose father's sad death is noted above. Rev. Robert W. Doty entered the ministry 1902. He is at present serving a large congregation in Western Pennsylvania. George H. Easterday was ordained in 1904. He later demitted the ministry and is now well located in New York City. Rev. Silas H. Culler was the fourth of those born in Jefferson bearing that familiar name to enter the ministry in 1905.