

Chapter IV

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Houses of Worship

Religion has always played an important part in the life and growth of America, and here in Springettsbury it is no different. From early times, as people moved into the area they brought their own religions with them.

Many groups worshiped in homes until a more permanent place could be found. There are now over 24 houses of worship in Springettsbury Township. Some had very early beginnings in the area. Many have come to this growing community in the last half-century.

Stony Brook Mennonite Church

There were many Mennonites who lived in and around this area as far back as 1738. A Strickler family founded the Stony Brook congregation at the time. Later David Witmer became the minister and services were held in homes. A church was built which bore the name Witmer, after the family. This church was built on what is now Stone Ridge Road. A second church, built in 1803, not far from the first church, was enlarged and remodeled over the years. It was later closed and disassembled in 1913. The material was used to build a church closer to the Pike (Market Street)

and the trolley line. At this time there was a split in the church and another building was erected in Stone Ridge Road. This one was known as the "Lower Church."

The churches remained in use until 1978, when the "Upper Church" was closed. The "Lower Church" remains active with Rev. Lloyd L. Hollinger as the present minister to 107 members in his congregation.

Mt. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church Mt. Zion United Church of Christ

Two churches in the area share an early history: Mount Zion Evangelical Lutheran and Mt. Zion United Church of Christ. We trace their roots back to 1844 when people of the area met in various homes to hear the preaching of Rev. Martin.

Thanks to the cooperative efforts of the Lutheran and Reformed parishioners, Mt. Zion church erected their first building in 1851.

In 1852 Rev. F.W. Vandersloot came and organized the Reformed Congregation. As two congregations met in church, services were held at different times for each. Thirty-eight years later, a brick structure replaced the frame one, until early in the 1900's when the church building was struck by a cyclone and had to be rebuilt. The original plot of ground contained only one acre. Subsequently six additional acres were purchased, and a large cemetery laid out.

The two congregations occupied the church until 1955 when the Mount Zion Evangelical Lutheran (Reform) Congregation voted to dissolve the Union Church and become a full time congregation on its own, continuing to use the same building to better serve the needs of their growing congregation and community. The bell, which now rests in the front of the sanctuary, is from the 1890 structure.

The Rev. Henry Herbener is the present minister to approximately 550 members.

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ congregation purchased the parsonage at 1818 North Sherman Street. Hively Sunday School on Sherman Street granted the congregation permission to use the chapel for worship services until they secured their own church building.

In 1956 the Clayton Spangler tract on Ridgewood Road was purchased and a log house standing on the property was removed. Christmas Eve, 1957, saw the Mt. Zion Congregation worshipping in their new sanctuary for the first time.

Installation of the stained glass windows in the front of the sanctuary in 1979 was a crowning achievement, as over the years many fine improvements have been made to the church.

The Rev. James M. Walters became pastor in 1976. They have a membership of 610 today.

Yorkshire United Methodist Church

The Evangelical Association initially met at the Methodist Episcopal Church on Stone Ridge Road, but in 1878, fire destroyed that building. A new one-room frame structure was erected on the same ground, where services were held every two weeks.

In 1894, a division occurred within the denomination and a sister church from Hellam bought the property. The congregation remained but the name changed to Stoney Brook United Evangelical Church. A few years later the sister church sold the property back for \$20.

At one point in the history of the church, membership fell to only one member.

By 1925, the congregation had outgrown the one-room church and erected a building at First Avenue and Edgewood Road. The following year they named their new church the Yorkshire Evangelical Church. In 1946 the name was changed to Evangelical United Brethren Church.

In 1953 a decision was made to erect a new sanctuary across the road, retaining the existing church building for Sunday school use. It wasn't until 1958 that the new building was completed. The church was a colonial style brick structure with a 108-foot high tower

An educational building was added in 1987, the old church building demolished and that property sold.

The following year saw another name change, to Yorkshire United Methodist Church, 125 Edgewood Road.

In 1989 renovations were made, the sanctuary enlarged and additional rooms added.

The Rev. Roland E. Garvin came to the church in July of 1990 as the senior pastor to a congregation of 950 members. Pamela Cianciosi Kinter is their associate pastor.

Pleasureville United Methodist Church

United Brethren preachers began holding meetings in the community as early as 1855. These meetings were held in private homes and especially the home of Dr. George Conn on Pleasant View Drive. In 1860, Dr. Conn and other trustees were appointed to build a church in Springett. The first building was one 30 feet square room at the present church site, at 2606 N. Sherman Street, where Rev. J.B. Jones was the first pastor. Named the Sardis church, after the church mentioned in Revelations 3:1-6, the church has had many structural changes over the years, always growing larger. It also underwent many name changes. Its present name was adopted in September 26, 1960. Rev. Steven Livermore is presently pastor of their 417-member congregation.

Longstown United Methodist Church

Longstown Church formerly called the Telden Church started in a small schoolhouse near its present site on Carol Road. In 1857 the schoolhouse burned down and the community built a union meetinghouse in its place. After other denominations stopped using the building, the United

Brethren Church began using it exclusively. In 1899, during J. Lower Grimm's pastorate, the vestibule, cupola and bell were added to the original structure. Additional renovations include a basement, built in 1961, to add classrooms and restrooms.

The Longstown congregation, formerly called the Longstown E.U.B. Church, merged in 1968 with the former Methodist Church to form the United Methodist Church.

Rev. Donald N. Hurley became pastor of the church in 1989.

St. John Lutheran Church and School

On October 27, 1873, Rev. Hermann H. Walker held a meeting and church services at the York Court House with 14 people attending. This was the beginning of St. John Lutheran Church. In 1875 they built a church on West King Street and opened a school. In need of more space, the Christian Day School in Springettsbury was opened in 1959. In 1961, church services were held in the school and also at the West King Street location. The church moved to 2580 Mt. Rose Avenue in 1967. They now have 900 members. Rev. Dennis Quackenboss is their current pastor.

First Church of the Brethren

In 1883, the Codorus Church of the Brethren, located near Loganville, decided to start a mission church in the York area. In 1884 their church was built at King and Belvedere, with Rev. S.S. Blough as their first pastor. The Codorus Church continued to help and support the York church until 1895. At this time there was a separation and the newer church was called the First Church of the Brethren.

Their new building was built at the first York location in 1900, with an education annex added in 1923.

With the need for expansion came plans for relocation. The church originally bought land at what is now called North West Plaza. An architect convinced them not to build there because of the by-pass for Rt. 30. The east end of York was a growing area and so the church bought land in Haines Acres.

In 1965, they broke ground at 2710 Kingston Road and moved into the newly built church in 1966. The Rev. Guy West was pastor.

The Brethren Church membership will celebrate their 25th anniversary at this location in 1991.

Rev. Howard A. Miller is present minister to a congregation of 675.

Ohev Sholom Congregation

Services prior to 1902 were held at the homes of Isaac Trattner and Frank Rosenbaum except on high Holidays when a hall was rented for this purpose.

In 1902, participants from these two groups united as one congregation, and erected a building at Water and Princess Streets. At this time the name was to be called Ohev Sholom (Lovers of Peace.)

Starting from a very small congregation, they flourished, establishing a Sunday school in 1905, and renovation the synagogue 28 years later.

In 1953, Ohev Sholom adopted the Conservative ritual, becoming affiliated with the United Synagogue of America.

In 1967 they broke ground for a new building at 2551 Eastern Boulevard, which contains a sanctuary, library, classrooms and a chapel for daily services.

Rabbi Kenneth S. Cohen is currently serving the congregation.

Advent Lutheran Church

The Elmwood and East York areas were a growing community and the Lutheran Synod surveyed the area to see if there was a need for a Lutheran Church. As a result of the survey, Sunday school classes were started at the Elmwood and Heistand School in 1924.

A small frame chapel was built on East Market and Oxford Street. Church services were held and the two Sunday schools were merged.

The church was chartered 5/23/26 with 14 members. Their first minister was Dr. Edward Rubel.

A colonial style brick building replaced the frame chapel and over the years two more additions have been added.

Dr. Frank Seilhamer now ministers to a congregation of over 1,600 members at 1775 E. Market Street.

North Hills Bible Church

On July 16, 1939, worship services were held in an elementary school as a new church was forming. The group continued meeting at the school on North George Street and 8th Avenue until the church building was completed on Poplar Street. This became the West Poplar Street Church of God. Growing in size, the church on 1951 moved to a new building at 1951 North Hills Road and the name was changed.

Rev. Keith Mosebrook is pastor of their 85-member congregation.

York Church of Christ

During World War II, a couple that were members of the Church of Christ moved into the York area. They started holding worship services in a small store on South Albemarle Street. In 1946, their group had 5 members.

As the attendees at services grew in number, there was need for more space and they purchased a small building at 1290 Lancaster Avenue. Rev. Halley Smith was the first pastor from 1947 to 1952.

This was the only Church of Christ sanctuary in a 50-mile area. Worshippers were known to come from Harrisburg, Hershey and Lancaster.

Through the growth of this church another Church of Christ was encouraged to open in Glen Rock.

In 1968, the York church moved to their 150 S. Manheim Street address, where Rev. Allen McKinney is currently pastor to 150 members.

Zion Mennonite Church

In 1954, a group of people looking for a more progressive mission outreach left the Hartman Street Mennonite Church in York City to form a new church of their own. During the first year they met at the YMCA for Sunday services.

Under the leadership of the first pastor, H. Frank Leaman, they bought ground at 1550 East Street. The men of the group worked on weekends and evenings to build a basement structure with a temporary roof.

Services were held in the basement until 1960, at which time the sanctuary on the first floor was completed. In 1968 the first floor sanctuary was enlarged, also a library, pastor's study and classrooms were added.

The congregation has grown from the original 27 members to 102. Rev. Warren Tyson, the present pastor, answered a call from the church in 1988.

Eastminister Presbyterian Church

In 1956, the York Council of Churches did a survey in the east end area, which showed the need for a Presbyterian church.

First Presbyterian Church passed on this information to the Presbytery and the Board of National Missions in downtown York.

The Board of National Missions dispatched a representative to find a suitable building location for a new church, also initiating the call for a new minister.

A young minister, Rev. Raymond Rossnagel, who with his family then moved to the York area, answered the call.

The former home of Colonel Mahlon Haines was purchased in 1957. Vesper services were held outdoors during the summer until the 4-car garage could be converted to a chapel for indoor services.

Petition to the Presbytery for an official charter was signed in December 1957 with 157 names affixed.

A new church building was erected at 311 Haines Road in 1962 with the education building following in 1971.

The Haines house is used for minister's studies, meeting rooms and general offices. The parlor and dining room have been furnished in keeping with the Georgian architectural period of the building, while the former garage has been converted to the young wing and summer chapel.

Two more ministers (Rev. Bruce Cadenhead and Rev. Kathy Willoughby) have been added, but Rev. Rossnagel remains senior pastor to a congregation numbering more than 1,350.

Bible Baptist Church

In 1959, the Arch Street Baptist church held its first service at North Duke & Arch Street in York City. Rev. Robert E. Shockley was the minister. The church was chartered in 1961, when the name was changed to Bible Baptist church.

With a membership of about 54, they bought land in Springettsbury Township, using volunteer help and the labor of pastor Shockley to build the new church on its present 1550 E. 11th Avenue location in 1963. The church membership has grown to about 200. A gymnasium was added to the building in 1982. Their present pastor is Rev. Kevin E. Trout.

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

As the results of a survey, the Board of American Missions of the Lutheran Church found a mission possibility in 1965. A committee was formed to find a meeting place, with the first service being held at the Springetts Fire Hall in Nov. of 1965, having 129 people in attendance. Robert E. Krommer was their first and for the next three years Sunday services were held in the fire hall. The present church was built in 1968. Their current pastor, Rev. John C. Bernheisel, was called in July, 1986, and leads a congregation of over 140 today.

Saint Joseph Catholic Church

In 1908, Father George Breckel, pastor of Immaculate Conception Church, took a census of East York and found almost 300 Catholics living in that area. There was authorization at this time to build a chapel in East York. A year later ground was broken on Sherman Street and Raush Avenue, where a frame structure was erected.

For the next few years, Saint Joseph's existed as a mission of Saint Mary. In 1913, Saint Joseph's became an independent parish with Father Wittman as its first pastor. The next year saw a new school and hall constructed on the site.

In 1953, as the parish continued growing, the original church was torn down to make room for larger church and additional classrooms.

It was decided in 1965 to build a new school on Diocese-owned ground already within the jurisdiction of Saint Joseph Church. This property was at 2945 Kingston Road in Haines Acres area.

By 1967 the school was completed. Its auditorium/gymnasium is used for Sunday Mass.

Under the leadership of Father John Daya, plans are being made to build a new church, on the same Kingston Road property, in the near future.

Emmanuel Baptist Church

In 1967, a group of people held Bible Study meetings in homes, leading to the formation of Emmanuel Baptist Church. Later services were held in the old Springettsbury fire station. Pastor Harry Anderson came in 1977 and under his leadership their church building was erected at the present 245 Pleasant Acres Road address. At that time the church was part of the American Baptist Convention.

Seven years later, they became an independent church and called Pastor Bob Toniie, who continues to minister to this church.

Faith Missionary Church

The church was started as a Bible study group in 1976, meeting in the home of Don Rohrs. It became incorporated in 1978. Two years the Congregation called later Rev. Donald Severance, the present minister.

November, 1981, Faith Missionary Church moved to their present address, 1401 Williams Road.

King James Bible Church

In 1979, a group of people began meeting in private homes for Bible study. Rev. Glenn A. Brown met with this group once a month to administer Communion services.

The next year, they formed an independent church and rented the Stony Brook Old Order Mennonite Church (upper church) on Stone Ridge Road.

They were allowed to install temporary electricity as they held Wednesday evening and Sunday evening services. Rev. Brown was then asked to be their full time pastor.

The church building was purchased in 1982 and some renovations were made. A basement was built to add classroom space and accommodate growth.

Immanuel Evangelical Free Church of York

In 1981 nine people gathered to hold worship services at the Chestnut Street home of Rev. Brian Shelly. As the group of worshippers grew they moved the church services, first to Billy Bud Inn for nine months, then to the Waterford Professional Center, until they purchased the church building on Sherman Street in July 1987. Today's membership is 110, still led by Rev. Shelly, who is also chaplain for this township's fire department.

The history of their church building at 2080 N. Sherman Street dates back to 1913, when it was built on land donated by a farmer named Hively. Called Hively's Union Sunday School, it was central place where people gathered early Sunday morning for Sunday school classes, then departed to their own churches for regular services.

In the 1950's the name was changed to Calvary Wesleyan and the Wesleyan Holiness Denomination operated the church. During their stay, a basement was dug out by hand, to provide space for Sunday school rooms.

The First Freewill Baptist Church was next to occupy the building in 1980, but with only 8 members. They then sold the building to its present owners, the Immanuel Evangelical Free Church of York.

York Christian Church

There were three families living in York, who traveled to Lancaster to attend the Church of Christ. The leadership of the Lancaster church wanted to start a new church and, thinking of the three York families, decided to start one in the York area.

Rev. James Hamer answered a call made through the church. In 1981, with 13 people attending, he held their initial services in York. They met at either the Holiday Inn or the Little Peoples Day Care Center for the first six years.

Then, in 1987, 46 members of the congregation built (with volunteer labor) their new frame church building on eight acres at 1604 Mt. Zion Road, where they presently enjoy an average Sunday attendance of 100, which Rev. Hamer describes as "still growing!"

Eagle Christian Ministries

Pastor Paul R. Repine came from the Lancaster area to start a church. Services were held at the former building of the Christian Missionary Alliance church in Red Lion, in May, 1989, with about 160 people attending. This included supporters from Rev. Repine's former Lancaster ministry, augmented by interested people from this area.

Eagle Christian Ministries moved to their present 4175 E. Market Street address just prior to the end of that year and continues to enjoy a regular Sunday attendance of approximately 150 worshippers, under the leadership of Rev. Repine.

Stony Brook United Evangelical Church

Some of the churches in Springettsbury Township started quite small. A clear case in point is the Stony Brook United Evangelical Church, located on Ridge Road, across from the cemetery.

The lot for the church building was small, and parking facilities were nonexistent. A one-room wooden structure with a whitewashed exterior, the church's front door opened onto an aisle running down the center of the church, where men and women sat on separate sides.

The chancel platform held a pulpit as well as supporting a settee on which the minister sat. In front of the pulpit did wooden chairs flank a small table, and a pot-bellied stove supplied the heat on cold weather.

On either side of the pulpit were "A-men corners," and between the A-men seats and the pulpit platform, cupboards were to be found on either side. These stored supplies for the Sunday school.

Over the wooden benches, light shone from a chandelier lamp above the center aisle, as well as two kerosene lamps on the sidewalls, while a kerosene glass lamp lighted the pulpit.

There was no piano, church organ, or organist, but then there were six original members when the church was organized in 1879. Church records show that those founding members were: Mr. and Mrs. Granville Strickler, Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Strickler, Mrs. Hannah Freed (great-grandmother of Mrs. Anna Lease,) and Mr. Frederick Hauer.

Others living in the surrounding community swelled Church and Sunday school attendance in those earliest days. Some who attended were Mr. and Mrs. Alonza Gladfelter, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Landis, Cyrus Musser, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Miller, Mrs. Alice Singly, Mr. Charles Kauffman, Mr. George Home, and various others who came less frequently than the aforementioned.

Peter Zeigler was the first superintendent of the Sunday school, while their first Minister was the Reverend C.W. Finkbinder. For many years, George Home was the Superintendent, while his daughter, Emma, was secretary for both the church and Sunday school.

In 1926, the building was abandoned and a newer, bigger church building was built on the west side of Edgewood Road, at First Avenue, in Yorkshire. By then, a piano had been purchased and David Dietz was pianist for the worshippers.

The last superintendent was John I. Witmer, who had the satisfaction of knowing that church attendance had indeed risen by more than 300 percent since it had been begun, 46 years previously. During the 1970's, the old church was torn down and since then a private residence has taken its place.