

September  
25, 1932

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY  
Southern Parkway, at Evelyn Avenue  
Ivan Heft, Pastor

18th Sunday  
a. Trinity

**IMPORTANT::** THE CHURCH SERVICE NEXT SUNDAY IS AT 10:45 A.M., AND AT THIS HOUR FROM THEN ON. The schedule: Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., Church Service, 10:45 A.M.

HOLY COMMUNION will be celebrated at the Service of October 9th, at 10:45 a.m.

The SENIOR & ALPHA LUTHER LEAGUES will meet Friday night at 8, at the Church.

The LADIES OF THE PASTOR'S GUILD wish to thank all those who so kindly helped toward the success of their Chicken Supper on Friday just past.

"THE FIRST CHURCH IN THE FIRST STATE IN OUR UNION"

A few days ago there came to the Pastor's desk a leaflet with an excellent cut of a very beautiful Church. The Church is apparently an old Colonial Church, and those familiar with the history of the Lutheran Church in America will at once recognise it as the Church built by Swedish Lutherans in Delaware some 234 years ago. And yet this Church, old as it is, is not the first Church built on this particular site, as those same Swedish Lutherans had here built, many years before this, the first Lutheran Church ever to be built in America. In the year 1698, however, they replaced their old structure with the present more substantial structure of stone, which the passage of over two centuries has but served to beautify and make more venerable.

In the year 1787 Delaware ratified the constitution of the United States, being the first of all the original colonies to do so. Accordingly Delaware is rightly claimed to be the first state in our Union, and as this Lutheran Church was the first Church to be built by any denomination in what is now the State of Delaware, it may justly be called the first Church in the first State in our Union.

The Lutheran Church in America has a history of which we can well be proud. Other Churches have noble heritages as well as ours, but none need lay claim to a nobler. Ours is the first purely American Church, that is, the first Church to become independent of European ecclesiastical control. This was done 41 years before the original colonies formed themselves into a nation, and our Church is the only American-controlled Church that antedates the birth of our country. We were an American Church before the United States of America was a nation. All other American Churches have come since the founding of our nation, and of course, there are some Churches in this country not yet independent of European control.

The roots of the Lutheran Church in the American continent go back much farther than this. The first distinctive statement of faith of any Protestant Church is the Augsburg Confession, the confession of the Lutheran Church, given out in 1530. Even before the year 1530 Lutheran refugees from Europe had settled in South America in what is today Brazil. When, long months after its writing, news of the Augsburg Confession came to these pioneers, they immediately adopted it as their own statement of faith, thus linking themselves at once with the Reformation movement in the Europe from which they had come.

The Lutheran Church is the first Protestant Church in the world; she is the first Protestant Church on the American continent; she built the first Church of any denomination in the first State of our Union.

We have placed in the Bulletin Board in the Sunday School room the picture of this early Church for those who wish to see it.

Sunday, October 2nd, is Promotion & Rally Day in our Sunday School, and Loyalty Crusade Offering Day in our Church.

## ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF NELSON COUNTY, KENTUCKY

Not far from the Old Kentucky Home there is an old Church whose walls have seen and whose churchyard still proclaims the life that the immortal creation of Stephen Collins Foster sings. The Church was originally known as The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nelson County, Kentucky, but for slightly more than a hundred years has called itself St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nelson County.

The St. Paul's Lutheran congregation is more than 130 years old. Exactly when it was organized is not known, but at the time of the building of its present house of worship, its Pastor stated it to be more than 30 years old, and this building was begun in 1853 and finished in 1854.

The century old building is of brick, and replaced a former structure built of logs. The old records of the congregation tell how a congregational meeting was called for Monday morning, August 12, 1853, at 8 o'clock, for the purpose of tearing down the old building, and how the congregation met at the appointed time. Among the members that aided in the tearing down of the old and the erecting of the new, was a group of darkey slaves who belonged to the Church of their masters. And neighborhood folk still tell how these slaves dug the mud from Cox's creek and moulded it into brick for their new Church.

While some of these darkey members joined the Church of their own initiative, as for instance did "Daniel" during a "protracted meeting commenced the 20th of May, 1845", almost all of them were brought to their baptism by their masters. And not only were adult slaves brought to baptism, but tiny babies also. "Napoleon" was but three weeks old when Alfred and Phoebe, "slaves belonging to the estate of Amos Smith", brought him to be baptized, and "Synthis" was five months old when, on the same occasion, "Syrus" and "Mariah", slaves of the same estate, brought her. The adult slaves were not only baptized members of the Church, but also communing members, and they not only communed with their masters before the War between the States, but during and even after it. Even when the legal fetters were dissolved that had bound them to their masters, the stronger tie of love still bound them, and the old records show how these slaves, who of course had no surnames before the War and were simply listed as possessions, assumed the family names of their masters. Thus Simmons' Ann becomes Ann Simmons, Hays' David becomes David Hays, Bard's Mary becomes Mary Bard, and so on with the other slaves, some twenty or more in number. Some of these same slaves lie buried in the old churchyard, and there, with their beloved masters, sleep the eternal sleep in Christ Jesus their Saviour.

When the new Church was built the congregation elected two "building superintendents" who had supervision of the building as well as of the finances. After the dedication these men reported that the building cost \$265.06, toward which \$261.12 $\frac{1}{2}$  had been pledged. Of this sum \$250.18 $\frac{1}{2}$  was paid by January 21, 1854, when a special collection amounted to \$7.18 $\frac{1}{2}$ . The small remainder necessary to pay all bills was advanced by the superintendents, who were reimbursed shortly after dedication.

Many historic names are found on the ministerial roll, or elsewhere in the records, particularly the communion lists. There were giants in those days, and leaders of the Lutheran Synod of the West, and the Synod of the Southwest, whose focal point was often here in Kentucky, labored or worshiped in the old Church.

In 1911 the Olive Branch Synod of the Lutheran Church committed the care of this venerable congregation to Bethany Lutheran Church of Louisville, and the old work is now being revived. All the Lutheran Churches of Louisville and Jefferson County are preparing to celebrate, on Reformation Sunday, October 29, 1953, the Centennial of the laying of the old cornerstone on October 23, 1853.

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The St. Paul's Lutheran congregation is more than 150 years old. Exactly when it was organized is not known, but at the time of the building of its present house of worship, its Pastor stated it to be more than 30 years old, and this building was begun in 1833 and finished in 1834.

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