

NORTHERN KENTUCKY VIEWS PRESENTS

HISTORY OF
ST. MARK'S EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH
NEWPORT, KENTUCKY

Excerpted From

History of the Indiana-
Kentucky Synod

By

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**NEWPORT, Kentucky
(Campbell County)**

ST. MARK'S 1897

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Newport, Kentucky had an unusual and rather precarious beginning. Most of its original members were one-time members of the St. John's United Church of Christ congregation who had broken with that church and formed a congregation called "The Independent Martini Evangelical Protestant Church." By 1897 their small community of faith had a fine brick house of worship, but also a seemingly unmanageable debt. Hence they decided to seek a new lease on life as a Lutheran congregation. Accordingly, on October 20, 1897, they adopted a General Synod-prescribed Lutheran constitution, approved their new name, and called the Rev. Frank C. Longaker as their first pastor. A year later the Miami Synod of the General Synod admitted the new church to membership in that body.

Despite the support that they received from the Home Mission Board, the new congregation was in serious financial difficulty from the start. In fact, they soon failed to make scheduled mortgage payments on their church building. Therefore, their property was advertised for sale by court order in June, 1903. However, the last-minute assistance of friends in the community helped them to save their church. And, by 1905, when Pastor Longaker ended his eight-year ministry, St. Mark's had 189 communicant members and was self-supporting.

Fortunately, Pastor Longaker's successor, the Rev. H. W. Hanshue, took an active interest in evangelism. But for the diligence of this leader, St. Mark's might not have been able

to sustain its work in the face of renewed economic pressures. It was during Pastor Hanshue's stay, in 1907, that twelve ladies of the congregation founded the Women's Missionary Society.

The church's next two pastors both died while serving the congregation. Pastor Lewis J. Motschman began a seven-year ministry in 1912 and helped St. Mark's to reduce its debt from \$10,980 to \$6,800, despite the disruptive effects of World War I. He passed away on May 19, 1919. Later that year, the Rev. Cornelius J. Kiefer, D.D., assumed the duties that he was to carry on until his death on December 31, 1927. An inspiring individual, Pastor Kiefer assisted the congregation to eliminate its original debt; to build and pay for an \$8,500 parsonage at 730 Park Avenue; and to make \$25,000 worth of improvements on their church plant. These refinements included the renovation of the old sanctuary, the installation of a new organ, and the construction of a new Sunday school building—all of which were dedicated on May 27, 1927.

Throughout the years of the Great Depression and during the early months of World War II, the church was under the guidance of the Rev. David M. Funk. Pastor Funk's administrative talents were recognized when he was elected the first secretary of the newly-formed Kentucky-Tennessee synod in 1934. He conducted an aggressive evangelism program which produced significant gains in the congregation's membership before his resignation in July, 1942.

Between the fall of 1942 and the beginning of 1963, when St. Mark's was assigned to the Indiana-Kentucky Synod of the LCA, the congregation's activities were directed by a succession of six pastors. The longest term was that of the Rev. Day B. Werts, a former military chaplain, who served from the fall of 1946 until 1951. During his stay, in 1947, the church building was completely redecorated.

After 1962 the church found it necessary to adjust its ministry to basic social and economic changes in the neighborhood it served. As many long-time residents moved out of this community and were replaced by new groups, the congregation experienced a decline in active, communing membership. However, steps were taken to meet this challenge and opportunity when St. Mark's became involved in the Board of American Missions' urban church program in 1969. Meanwhile, in connection with the celebration of their 70th anniversary, in 1967, the congregation renovated their worship facilities at a cost of \$10,000.

Membership as of December 31, 1970: 259 baptized, 172 confirmed, 120 communing.

Previous synodical affiliations: Independent, 1897; Miami Synod of the General Synod, 1898-1920; Ohio Synod (ULCA), 1920-1934; Kentucky-Tennessee Synod (ULCA), 1934-1962.

Pastors who served this congregation: Frank C. Longaker (1897-1905), H. W. Hanshue (1906-1911), Lewis J. Motschman (1912-1919), Cornelius J. Kiefer (1919-1928), David N. Funk (1929-1942), Richard H. Trojan (1942-1946), Day B. Werts (1946-1951), Allan Hauck, TH.D. (1951-1953), Wilbur L. Harmony (1954-1958), J. Edward Dinkel (1958-1960), Joseph P. Platt (1961-1965), Thomas Hunter (1965-1970), Dwayne P. Daehler (1970-).