

HISTORICAL REMINDERS

In a year-long celebration of the 140th anniversary of St. Mark's, every month we will add some reminders of our rich history.

Reminder for December 2009:

ST. MARK'S - A CENTRAL MEETING PLACE - St. Mark's is host to the new David's Kingdom child care and other organizations who meet here, continuing a long tradition of more than a century of serving as the central meeting place for many church and civic groups. Back in the 19th Century, the United Synod of the South was organized in 1886 at St. Mark's downtown. When it closed in a merger in 1918, the last session of that synod also was held at St. Mark's. More recently, starting in the early 1920s, more than 35 annual conventions of the Virginia Synod were held at St. Mark's.

Reminder for November 2009:

Seven members of St. Mark's have entered the ministry during our 140-year history. Pastor L. S. G. Miller was the son of Pastor L. G. M. Miller, who served at St. Mark's in the 1870s and again in the 1890s. The younger Miller was a missionary to Japan for 31 years and he also served churches in Georgia and Mississippi. Pastor James R. Stephenson served as a regional mission developer and at churches in North Carolina and West Virginia. He lives in retirement in Hickory, N.C. Pastor William "Bill" Parsons served congregations in Augusta County and Woodstock, Connecticut and New Jersey. He died several years ago. Pastor Luther Mauney Jr., son of the late synod president Dr. J. Luther Mauney, served as chaplain at the Medical College of Virginia. He lives at Smith Mountain Lake in retirement. Pastor Fred Guy moved from a North Carolina church to Trinity, Newport News. Pastor Bill Van O'Linda served at Holy Trinity, Wytheville, and in Florida before retiring and moving to Richmond. Pastor Matthew Henning serves at Community of Grace, Grayson, Ga. Pastor Mark Duncan serves a Presbyterian congregation in Louisiana.

Reminder for October 2009:

Common Service introduced at St. Mark's in 1888: In a little-known but significant event, a St. Mark's pastor, the Rev. J. E. Bushnell, "was the first pastor in the United States who introduced the common service into his congregation," according to Our Church Paper, published in New Market on Nov. 21, 1888. Pastor Bushnell explained that the Common Service was successfully introduced at St. Mark's on the 8th Sunday after Trinity, July 22, 1888. He said 100 copies of the new book were secured.

Reminder for September 2009:

In 1981, just 28 years ago, St. Mark's was recognized as national Church of the Year by Guideposts Magazine. Dr. Normal Vincent Peale, editor of the magazine and a national church leader, came here to present the award at Roanoke Civic Center. The award was given for an outreach program of refugee assistance, regular services for the deaf, hosting the Free Clinic and operating a food pantry and clothes closet, all under the leadership of Dr. George K. Bowers, Pastor from 1965 to 1985.

Reminder for August 2009:

Our present St. Mark's church, the fifth building of the 140-year-old congregation, was dedicated on Oct. 11, 1953. The contractor was Martin Brothers. The Building Committee was led by J. R. Hildebrand, chairman. The only living member of that committee, working more than 56 years ago, is George Buchanan. The M. P. Moller organ from the

old church on Campbell Avenue was rebuilt and its 987 pipes were placed in the ceiling of the nave in the new church.

Reminder for July 2009:

FOURTEEN PASTORS HAVE SERVED ST. MARK'S - During the first 140 years of St. Mark's ministry in and near downtown Roanoke, 14 pastors have served the congregation as we have worshiped in five church buildings. The Rev. Stephen Repass of College Lutheran in Salem, conducted the first services in a schoolhouse on the site of the present state office building on Second Street, SW, starting in 1869. Repass was followed by Pastors E. E. Sibole, L. G. M. Miller, William J. Smith, J. E. Bushnell, J. A. Huffard, Oliver C. Miller, L. G. M. Miller (a second time), Thurston O. Keister, J. Luther Seiber, J. E. Stockman, George K. Bowers, Charles Easley, John Hawn and Timothy Anderson.

Reminder for June 2009:

ST MARK'S HAD A LEADING SCOUT TROOP - For over half a century, about 800 boys, members and friends participated in St. Mark's Boy Scout Troop 25, one of the leading troops in the Blue Ridge Scout Council. The troop is no longer active. Troop 25 conferred 57 Eagle and 38 Pro Deo et Patria (For God and Country) awards. Longtime Scoutmaster Ray Welch and Woodrow Bailey, neighborhood commissioner, received the Lamb Award, highest adult scouting honor of the Lutheran Church. In the 1950s, the Blue Ridge Council recognized Troop 25, organized July 29, 1918, as the oldest continually active troop in Roanoke. Three Blue Ridge Council executives--James Moyer, Joe Davis and H. R. Seitz--were members of St. Mark's.

Reminder for May 2009:

Our present church was built by Martin Brothers for a cost of \$307,223 and dedicated on Oct. 11, 1953. The move from an old church on Campbell Avenue and Third Street, downtown, was led by the late Dr. J. Edgar Stockman, a retired Air Force chaplain, who was pastor of St. Mark's from 1945 to 1965. That cost, little more than the expense of our columbarium landscaping project, did not include the organ, stained glass windows and furnishings.

Reminder for April 2009:

Did you know that the newly landscaped park at the southwest corner of Campbell Avenue and Third Street in downtown Roanoke was the site of St. Mark's Church for 51 years? The old red, brick church was used for many important Virginia Synod services. The nave was upstairs, on the second floor. After we moved to our present Franklin Road location, the old church was razed in 1956 and a furniture store and later the Roanoke Police Department occupied that corner before that building was removed.

Reminder for March 2009:

St. Mark's first services were held in 1869 in a school house, across Second Street from Greene Memorial United Methodist Church in downtown Roanoke, led by Pastor Stephen Repass from College Lutheran Church, Salem. Four years later, in 1873, the new congregation built its first church, believed to have been the first church in Big Lick (Roanoke's earlier name), near the rear of the Higher Education Center on North Jefferson Street. The building was used for about 10 years.