

ELSIE SINGMASTER

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Year Book

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The Lyons-Bernville Lutheran Parish

ST. MATTHEW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH,
Macungie, (Lehigh Co.) Pa.

ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH,
Lyons, (Berks Co.) Pa.

ST. TIMOTHY'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH,
Mohrsville, (Berks Co.) Pa.

ST. THOMAS' UNION CHURCH,
Bernville, (Berks Co.) Pa.

REV. RAYMOND CLINTON MILLER, M.A., Th.M.,
Pastor and Editor

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A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE LYONS-BERNVILLE LUTHERAN PARISH

By Rev. Raymond C. Miller

The Lyons-Bernville Lutheran Parish was formerly called the Lyons Lutheran Charge or Parish and consisted of the following six congregations: Lyons, Pleasantville, Mohrsville, and Strausstown, in Berks County; Macungie and Upper Milford, in Lehigh County. At present the parish consists of four congregations: St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Macungie; St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lyons; St. Timothy's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mohrsville, and St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran (Union) Church, Bernville.

The Charge was originally formed by the sainted Rev. Alfred A. Croll in 1868 and consisted of congregations organized by him at Lyons, Macungie and Pleasantville, together with the Mohrsville Church, which was established in 1864. Salem's Evangelical Lutheran Church, mountains south of Macungie or Upper Milford, was at first only a preaching station, but was established as a separate organization in 1872. Strausstown was not added to the charge until 1878. The Charge was formed as the result of a great revival of religion during the ministry of Rev. Alfred D. Croll. In the year 1862 he assumed charge of six rural congregations: Lobachsville, Delong, St. Peter's, Hereford, Long Swamp and Hill Church, Berks County, and was a member of the Synod of Pennsylvania. He did very efficient work for five years. He believed in revival meetings and prayer meetings and revolted strongly against the growing rigid type of Lutheranism, and consequently he aroused opposition on the part of his members and clerical brethren. Rev. Croll finally withdrew from the Synod of Pennsylvania in March, 1868. He began to gather those who were in sympathy with him into new organizations. At Mohrsville the entire congregation followed him. He was instrumental in gathering five congregations numbering approximately 200 persons and was received into the East Pennsylvania Synod in September, 1868, with which the present charge is still affiliated. A period of great religious fervor followed and during the next six years hundreds were converted. Contributions grew and they supported their pastor from the very beginning without Synodical Missionary aid. New buildings were erected and a goodly number of young men entered Lutheran institutions to prepare themselves for the Christian ministry.

The tremendous labors of Rev. Croll soon broke down his frail body, and with the words, "Is this dying? No, sweet living", upon his lips, he went to his eternal reward on June 19, 1876, at the age of 38. This left his flock shepherdless and was a severe blow to the membership, which had now increased to 355. The long illness of their shepherd, the long vacancies and comparative short pastorates of succeeding pastors, the wide separation of the churches, have to some degree depleted the membership, and yet only recently a renewed interest seems to have been displayed by the membership. This has been manifested in particular by St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Lyons, and St. Timothy's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mohrsville. These two congregations have completely remodeled their plants so that they look very beautiful and are up-to-date for the work which they have been called to do.

ST. MATTHEW'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, MACUNGIE, LEHIGH CO., PENNA.

This congregation was organized in 1868 by approximately a hundred persons who separated from Solomon's Union Church under the leadership of Rev. Alfred D. Croll. In 1869 a fine brick church building was erected, accommodating 440 worshippers and cost \$6,500.00. The land upon which the building was erected was donated by Mr. James Singmaster. During the pastorate of Rev. J. A. Singmaster this congregation, Salems, Upper Milford, and Fogelsville formed the Macungie Evangelical Lutheran Charge (April, 1885 to September, 1886). After Rev. Singmaster's resignation it was reunited with the Lyons Charge with which it has been affiliated ever since. During the pastorate of Rev. E. Daron (1878-1880) a frame annex was erected, which is at present used for Sunday School purposes. Mrs. Elsie Singmaster ^{Lewis}, famous author and lecturer, Gettysburg, Pa., daughter of the late Rev. and Mrs. J. A. Singmaster, is a former member of this little congregation. The congregation is proud of these sons who have gone into the Christian ministry: Rev. John Alden Singmaster, D.D., LL.D., Henry Singmaster, ~~Professor~~ Professor of Systematic Theology and President of The Gettysburg Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa. Rev. Raymond C. Miller, the present pastor, is a son of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Allentown, Penna., of which Dr. Singmaster was pastor (1890-1900), and studied Theology under him during his Seminary days in Gettysburg. Dr. Singmaster was a member of the East Pennsylvania Synod for a period of 48 years. He was its president (1897-1899); its secretary (1880-1881), its treasurer (1893-1895), and frequently its representative in the General Synod. He passed away in Gettysburg on Monday evening, February 22, 1926, at the age of 74 years.