

Schwenkfeldian

Spring 2021

A flower does not think of competing with the flower next to it. It just blooms.

THE Schwenkfeldian

Editor's Note

You may notice that we've made some changes to freshen up the look of our magazine and make it easier to read. Do you have suggestions? Feel free to contact us anytime at info@schwenkfelder.com.

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Legend holds that the dogwood tree was once very large, like an oak tree, and because its wood was strong and sturdy, it provided building material. According to the story, it was the dogwood tree that provided the wood used to build the cross on which Jesus was crucified. Because of its role in the crucifixion, it is said that God both cursed and blessed the tree. It was cursed to forever be small, so that it would never grow large enough again for its wood to be used as a cross for a crucifixion. Its branches would be narrow and crooked--not good for building at all. At the same time, however, the tree was blessed so that it would produce beautiful flowers each spring, just in time for Easter. To remember God's promise to the tree it is said He gave it a few traits. The petals of the dogwood actually form the shape of a cross. Upon close examination, it can be seen that the blooms of the tree always have four petals. The middle of the Dogwood flower has a tight group resembling a "crown of thorns." And the tips of each of the petals are indented, as if they bear a nail dent. There are even colors in the petals that bring to mind the drops of blood that spilled during the crucifixion.

Schwenkfelder Clothing: Living Humbly in God's Will

By David W. Luz, Executive Director Emeritus,
Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center

In the September/October 1958 *Schwenkfeldian*, Andy Berky, then Director of the Schwenkfelder Library and an active leader in The Schwenkfelder Church, wrote an article entitled, "A Glance at the Clothing Once Worn by the Schwenkfelders in Pennsylvania." This article is a good summary of the social, cultural, and religious background regarding the clothes that our forebears wore. Berky provides the rules or guidelines regarding apparel at three different points in Schwenkfelder history: just prior to their immigration to Pennsylvania in 1734, shortly after their formation of a Schwenkfelder Society in 1786, and at the time formal bylaws for the Society were published in 1852.

Three points of these rules or guidelines drew my attention:

1. Clothing should be simple, modest, and comfortable.
2. Clothing should not be up to date with current fashions, nor should the clothing be so out of date that wearing it drew attention to the wearer.
3. Clothing should reflect a humble heart.

While the article by Berky was well worth reading and quite informative (you can receive a print or digital copy from *the Schwenkfeldian* editor or by contacting Joanne Jalowy at the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center), it still left me curious about what clothes they wore in Silesia before and when they immigrated. This article is the result of my search for an answer.

The quick answer, I discovered, is that we do not know what their clothing was like at the time of their migrations in the 1730s. Germany was not a country as we know it today,



Christopher Schultz from 1934 pageant. This image is an example of how the Schwenkfelders in 1934 presented the clothes of 1734. The shoes and hairstyle of the 16 year old are, of course, 20th century. The stockings and pants are a fair representation of what was probably worn. The coat-like top, however, reflects a tailored Russian shirt, called a kosovorotka, rather than the homespun, handmade, simple linen pullover shirt most likely worn by the rural Schwenkfelder immigrants.

but rather various regions with their own distinct dialects and customs, including customs related to their clothing. While there exists paintings and descriptions of peasant clothing in other parts of Germany, I could find no descriptions or paintings of the clothing of the people living in rural villages in Lower Silesia. Additionally, it is good to note that unlike in Silesia where their clothing was easily influenced by other Schwenkfelders living nearby, in Pennsylvania they were spread over a wide area and lived among many varied people. All aspects of their lives in this New World, and in particular the clothes they wore, came under social and societal pressures beyond what the group could control. So, my curiosity shifted.

After discussions with Candace Perry, Curator of Collections, and Allen Viehmeyer, Associate Director of Research, at the Heritage Center, I moved my focus to trying to understand better, the way the Schwenkfelders as a church or faith community viewed clothes in official documents. We are truly fortunate to have a complete copy of all the minutes of General Conference meetings of the Schwenkfelder Society from when they formed as a Society to their becoming The Schwenkfelder Church in 1909. However, the minutes are written in German.

And not the German we use today, but rather an archaic form which is more challenging to translate correctly. Plus, they are not always written in complete and articulate sentences and phrases, especially as we get into the 19th century, reflecting the transition of everyday communication from German to English. So, I asked Allen Viehmeyer, who has extensive training, to review the minutes and find any references to clothing for me over the years. What follows are Allen's findings translated by him.

Fall General Conference Minutes, November 6, 1786

Given for additional consideration: Whether clothing is going beyond the current standard and whether something should be done about it? Since several complaints had been offered for consideration, all were read out and it was decided to accept them and try to act on them. The content is as follows: 1) that new fashions, accessories, and patterns, which are obviously worn to appear ostentatious to other people and to bring attention to themselves and in so doing, these people are guilty of prideful behavior. In that case we should extend a hand in faith saying that such behavior is frowned upon and must be abandoned. 2) As to the cut of the clothing, people should conform to that which is worn consistently by ordinary, common, respectable people where they live (no longer considered the latest fashions). Do not try to suppress something new as it gradually appears among us. Everyone should be allowed some freedom in this and should not be scorned or mistreated because of it. 3) and because the consumption of so much expensive foreign wares in this country has become common even among us which is inappropriate for rural people and their manner of living, such things are not only wasted but many families completely or partially collapse due to malnourishment. This is also how new clothing fashions come to be imitated with splendor and pride. To intervene in this ravaging evil, the following is hereby approved according to the 14th paragraph in the Proposal of Useful Principles, namely that the members of the [Schwenkfelder] Society and their families should prefer to use what they, with God's blessing, can grow for their food and what things they can make for themselves with proper diligence, and that they should diligently remind one another of doing so.

Fall General Conference Minutes, October 29, 1831

There was also a proposal to consider whether the attire and the new fashions were not going too far, which they admittedly were, and then the conclusion in the conference minutes held

in Goshenhoppen, November 6th, 1786, were read aloud. Then there was a brief discussion about how every house father in his own family should, as diligently as possible, seek out and put a stop to this vice of pride.

Fall General Conference Minutes, October 15, 1842.

In seeking someone in Germany who could help me understand what the Schwenkfelders wore in Lower Silesia before the migration, our friend in Görlitz, Germany, Margrit Kempgen contacted Christiane Biedermann, Schlesien Bayern Foundation-MMIX- Schatzmeisterin (Treasurer). Known for her knowledge of German clothing, she wrote the following in an email:

The [decorative folk] costumes [we think about today] in Silesia mostly originated after 1800. Our Silesian costumes are mostly from the period around 1840/1850, to narrow down to a specific time frame would be very difficult. Our costumes are not found in pictures and writing before this time (1840/1850). Before that, the authorities had strict dress codes as to who was allowed to wear what. The rural population mostly had earth-colored and natural white clothing (sack linen), the cheapest thing there was, made from natural fibers [flax and wool]. Then there were the craftsmen with their guilds. The urban population stood out here, but was divided into citizens and servants. Here there was the blue linen cloth for the common people, woolen cloths and possibly even velvet and silk cloth for the rich townspeople. "City air makes you free ...", the rich citizens wanted to show off their wealth, and so at some point the restrictions on velvet and silk fabrics were lifted. In France, there were specially made blue silk fabrics for Louis XIV that no one else was allowed to wear. It was similar with the authorities all over Europe.

The question was raised whether there should be a discussion about the dress or fashion. Then a short passage from Dr. J. J. Rambach's *Moral Theology*, page 1825; was read aloud. This passage dealt with the duties towards ourselves, and reads as follows: If clothing is not to be misused, it must 1) be comfortable, preserve the body and health, 2) be comfortable, to prevent evil desires. Therefore, those limbs must be covered, the sight of which can arouse unchaste passion; It must 3) be in accordance with the social class, that is, one may wear clothes like other Christians and reasonable people of our class who are very concerned with modesty and humility. A Christian should 4) select his clothing according to the circumstances, e. g., that on a public day of honor he dresses differently than when mourning, 5) also follows the custom of the time and place if it does not consist of anything sinful or conflicting against discipline and respectability. He should not suggest any sanctity by wearing the oldest fashions in clothes, while taking care not to imitate every new fashion, nor should he attempt to create new fashions. Such is the nature of Christian simplicity in the use of clothing, etc.

Fall General Conference Minutes, October 13, 1849

Then those present were given some of the drafted main points or basic rules from the Conference minutes from the years 1782 and

1783, wherever those godly instructions were given, as to what should be the goal of a religious society, i.e., how it should unify communal obligations, both in doctrine and in life, so that the honor of God and the prosperity of the neighbor are promoted: 1) by worship duties in public as well as private practice of our teachings, and how the youth might be taught Christian doctrine and 2) by building commendable good behavior in life's journey, so that one might comply with the principles of pious ancestors in all things, both in the spiritual and in the physical, especially in clothing where great progress has been made, which we should seek to stop.

Fall General Conference Minutes, October 20, 1860

Another consideration was: The lukewarmness in observing duties towards the youth because of the catechism, as well

as the prevailing new-fangled dress, where some excerpts from the Conference minutes were read aloud about how the community fathers used to be concerned about how the children should be instructed and brought up in Christian doctrine. Likewise, how they should be kept away from all sorts of loose, arrogant people, also how they should behave towards one another in order to ward off all evil. All of this was admitted with regret and declared that we are far behind in these matters. And it was decided: every house father should see to it that his children diligently go to the children's catechism and be more concerned about simplicity by deterring the evil of the newfangled clothing.

In conclusion, these excerpts from the minutes across the years from the 18th and well into the 19th century, point to several things: The Schwenkfelders did not have a dress code or specific form of dress which all needed to follow. Rather, general statements were made regarding comfort, style, and modesty of dress. The specifics of practice or interpreting these general statements, what they wore every day, were left to the decision of each family. The overarching concern was to remain simple and basic. In clothing, as in all aspects of their lives, they were to live humbly in God's will and, in all things, to avoid the sin of pride.

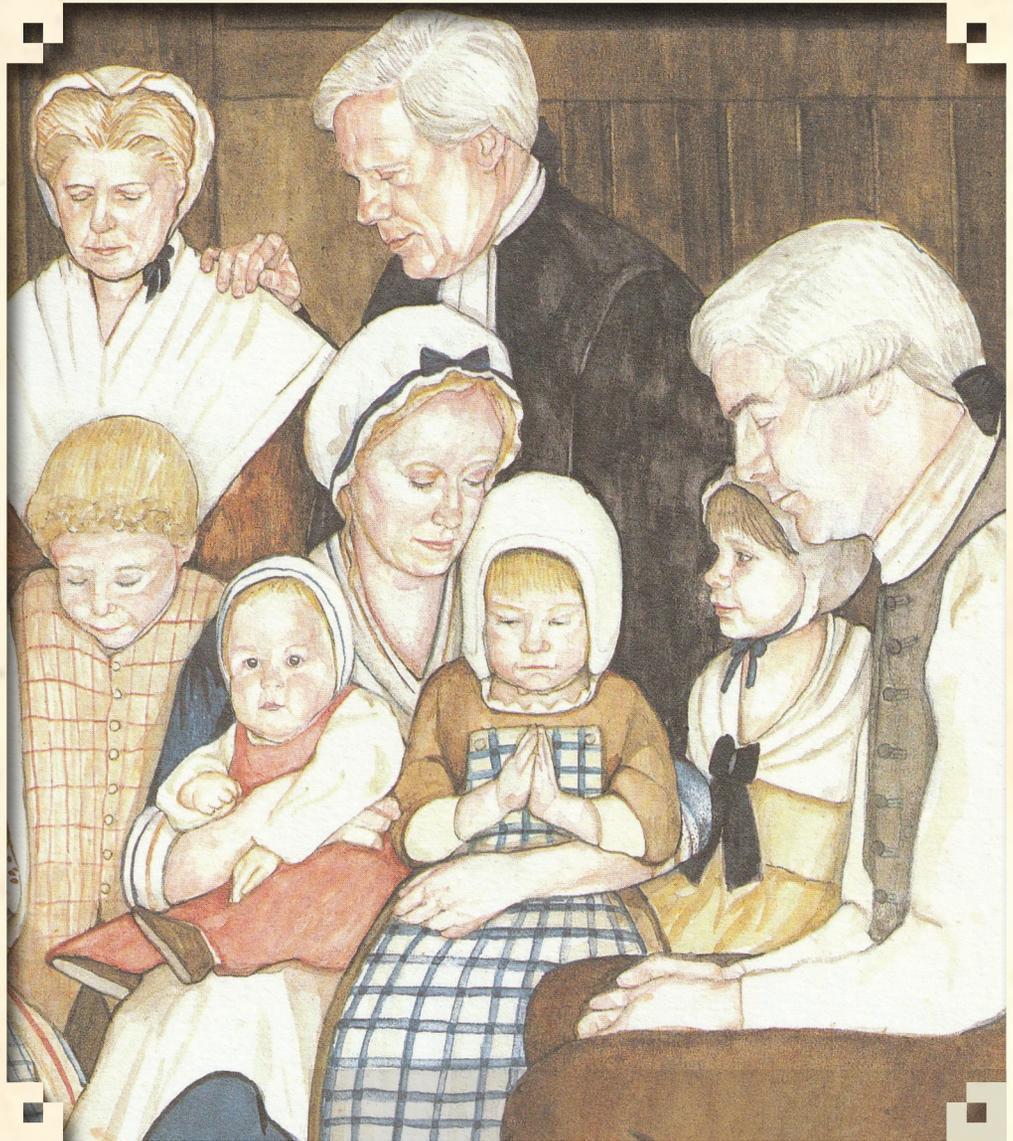


Illustration from A Thread of Faith, pg. 31. The Schwenkfelders depicted in this image are dressed in clothing that was probably more appropriate to their lives in late 18th century Pennsylvania than shipboard during their voyage to the American colonies. They were probably much more plainly dressed upon arrival without the array of color and pattern, and of course, cleanliness on the voyage would have been very difficult.

In his studies many years ago, Allen Viehmeyer had found and noted a quote which provides insight into Schwenkfelder life, dress, and culture in early 18th century Silesia. It is from a book by Johann A. Hensel entitled *Protestantische Kirchengeschichte in Schlesien* (1768) [Protestant Church History in Silesia], p. 738 and refers to Schwenkfelders remaining in ca. 1740s Silesia:

The Schwenkfelder sect in Silesia is now under this mandate and so there is hope that in time those few Schwenkfelders will die out completely, their children won over, and the whole demeanor of these people will change. Their old zeal has weakened almost completely, because they attend social events where the youth enjoy themselves, no longer distinguish themselves, particularly by the very old-fashioned garb and clothing, by which in early times they were immediately recognized, rather they dress like the other farmers in the locality and live with the other Lutherans in a cordial contact. (Translation: Allen Viehmeyer)

THE FACES OF THE SCHWENKFELDER LIBRARY

By Jerry Heebner



The original public entrance to the Schwenkfelder Library from Seminary Street.

The idea of a historical library initially filled with material related to Caspar Schwenckfeld, Schwenkfelders, Pennsylvania Germans and other materials of the region must have been present for a long time, but it wasn't until 1951 that it became a reality. The Schwenkfelders were fortunate to have a generous benefactor, Mr. Wayne C. Meschter. Mr. Meschter, a successful Philadelphia businessman, took it upon himself to have an acre of ground of the Perkiomen School officially deeded to the Schwenkfelder Library Corporation. To the public it became known as The Schwenkfelder Library.

The original building was dedicated on October 27, 1951. The program is well documented in the November 1951 issue of *The Schwenkfeldian*. It was the culmination of an effort that began over a half century before when Howard W. Kriebel began collecting books, manuscripts, and other items connected to the Schwenkfelder immigrants and their descendants. There was always a concern that the objects were vulnerable to decay or destruction. With the goal of constructing a building that could house such a collection, Wayne Meschter made it happen.

The brick and concrete three story building design fit well within the community. From the front of the building that faced Seminary Street, it appeared as a one-story building with a high ceiling that invited one to enter and peruse the contents. A sidewalk led to an interlaced brick patio raised about three feet above the ground level. Shrubs were planted along the front edge of the patio. Six tall windows that were each four panes wide by six panes high allowed a generous amount of light into the entrance hall, the reading room for researchers and the Silesian Room. The entrance hall could be converted to a meeting space, if needed. A large copper sconce lamp was on either side of the double entry doors. The final touch was the words SCHWENKFELDER LIBRARY inscribed in the concrete above the windows and doors along the front facing of the building.

The building's main purpose of displaying and storing all sorts of books, papers and other documents were well served by the elegant 'Greek Revival' building, but it did not have room for the many historical objects that were also a part of the growing collection of furniture, farm equipment, and other

artifacts that the Library Corporation possessed. Those items were stored upstairs above the Perkiomen School Library in less than satisfactory conditions. Access to the wonderful collection was limited to those who could climb a staircase during the limited time a volunteer was available to be on duty.

A capital campaign was begun at the end of the twentieth century to enlarge the Library so that the objects could be housed under one roof making the collection more manageable, more secure, and more accessible. A name change came about because of the extended display. The building became known as the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center. A large parking lot was developed along the right side of the building and a new main entrance was created. Instead of a wall of glass in doors and windows, visitors were greeted with a large brick wall nearly three stories high and thin letters proclaiming the building to be the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center.

The building took on a more modern look. Floor to ceiling glass allowed visitors to see the building interior with its large reception desk. With the addition of an elevator, the total building and its contents were now handicapped accessible. The plan was to have a paved courtyard outside the new building access with a traditional bank barn and horse tie shed enclosing two other sides of the courtyard. This aspect was dismissed at the time but the barn idea was revived later in a more practical location in that it was connected to the main building instead of a stand alone feature. With the new expanded facilities came more visitors. It became a destination rather than a quick visit location.

In less than two decades, it wasn't the modernization that had taken place that became the driving force moving forward. It became apparent that the expansion that had taken place around the year 2000 would only be a teaser. We had added more exhibit space, more administrative space, more book and manuscript storage space, a better educational space, an improved meeting room space with a small kitchen, an orientation room, an inviting gift shop, a public research area and a larger boardroom. The display and storage space was quickly becoming scarce and the elusive barn that had been in the plans was still missing from the campus.



The new public entrance as of year 2000

Another capital campaign was begun to correct these deficiencies and with it another change in the face of the building. This time the only face that didn't undergo change was the parking lot side of the building. The most dramatic effect was achieved along the street side or the original front entrance. The brick patio was enclosed in two stories of glass that proudly displayed the engraved SCHWENKFELDER LIBRARY letters that had greeted visitors when the edifice first opened. The copper light sconces were restored to their original gleaming color and the room became the setting of the new boardroom. The nighttime lighting accents the beauty of the original design.

The wall facing eastward received a design in the bricks to make the solid wall more interesting. The back side of the building which was rarely seen by the public now received

a new face lift of a different type. A typical Pennsylvania German bank barn was constructed using a combination of some materials from an actual 19th century barn with those of today. This new feature on the property will house some farm equipment to help visualize the tools that were used in the previous centuries. It also offers a secondary egress to the museum where two gallery floors add a lot more display space. There is much more expansion room to store the anticipated influx of more historic materials. People donate items that have been handed down in their



A night-time view of Board Room from Seminary Street

families and not always well preserved. The Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center offers a place for long time preservation of these objects that meant so much to their ancestors.



The Pennsylvania bank barn now on site

Schwenkfelder Ministerium

By Rev. Dr. Drake Williams

Ordination and other responsibilities

The Schwenkfelder Ministerium is the gathering of all Schwenkfelder ministers who have standing within the General Conference of Schwenkfelder Churches. This includes ministers who are ordained, licensed, or may be granted admittance for a special reason. It is the Schwenkfelder Ministerium that recommends for ministerial standing (ordained, licensed, and conference care) to the General Conference. It is also the primary vehicle for discussions of theology and Schwenkfelder thought to be considered within the denomination.

The qualifications for becoming an ordained minister are the following: the candidate must have completed an accredited Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent, been examined by his/her peers in an ordination council, have reputable character, and be called to serve by a church in the General Conference of Schwenkfelder Churches. These qualifications will be evaluated at an ordination council which consists of all other Schwenkfelder ministers as well as the moderators from each of the Schwenkfelder Churches.

If a minister is being called to a serve at a Schwenkfelder Church, it is possible for the Schwenkfelder Ministerium to recognize a prior ordination from another ordaining body, provided that the candidate has achieved an accredited Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent and has reputable character. An ordained minister is able to minister the word of God regularly, officiate at weddings and funerals, preside over the Lord's Supper, and conduct baptisms. Such a person is recognized as having the "reverend" title.

The examination process for an ordained minister involves the candidate providing a statement of faith, a description of Christian calling, a resume, letters of recommendation, and a letter from the church stating its desire to call the candidate. On the date arranged, the examination will take place over the candidate's understanding of Scripture, doctrine, and the understanding of Schwenckfeld and the Schwenkfelders. It is an oral exam that may last several hours.

The qualifications for being a licensed minister are the following. The candidate will be on his or her way to completing an accredited Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent, have reputable character, and be serving in a church in the General Conference of Schwenkfelder Churches. Such a person may be able to minister regularly the word of God, officiate at weddings and funerals, preside over the Lord's Supper, and conduct baptisms if an ordained minister is not present. A licensed minister's standing is reviewed each year through the Schwenkfelder Ministerium.

A person under conference care is a student who is involved in his or her study for the ministry. The person should be enrolled in an accredited seminary. This one should provide written notification each year for wanting to continue in studies on the way to serving in the ministry. Financial assistance may be able to be granted for study.

The Ministerium is the body that recommends these credentials (i.e., ordained, licensed, and conference care) to the Moderator of the Executive Council. The Conference grants the credential upon the recommendation of the Schwenkfelder Ministerium.

Besides presiding over ministerial credentials, the Schwenkfelder Ministerium meets monthly to discuss matters pertaining to worship, teachings, education, and Schwenkfelder tradition. It operates by general consensus in the spirit of the Radical Reformation which values the prompting of the Spirit in the heart of a Christian in relation to historic Christian doctrine and Schwenkfelder beliefs. Precise agreement on every single issue is not necessary. Understanding as well as finding some agreement is the pathway forward.

History of the Ministerium

The Ministerium has existed from the time of incorporation of the General Conference of Schwenkfelder Churches in 1910. While the words "Schwenkfelder Ministerium" are not written into the papers for incorporation, its activities and its recognition can be seen to be operative from that time.

About twelve years before incorporation, the Schwenkfelders did not speak about a Ministerium or even a committee of ministers gathering to evaluate credentials. In the Revision of the Constitution and By-Law Spring Conference 1898, ordination was something that was held within the local church. This is evident by Chapter 4, article 1, which says, "... it is a prime duty of the church to make provision for the office of the gospel ministry and to elect persons to this office who know, live, and expound the true Christian doctrine ... the local church shall assemble either in regular or in special district conference and in the fear of God reverently proceed and to elect prayerfully a person or persons to such office." Article 4 of the same document states that "a licentiate may become a full minister by a majority vote of the members of the local church."

By the time of the Report of the Revision Committee on Church Manual in 1910, ministers no longer were solely appointed from within a particular congregation. In Chapter VI, article 3, it says, "It shall be the duty of General Conference to

of The Schwenkfelder General Conference

officially license those to preach the Word who give evidence of special usefulness in bearing witness to the Truth." Clearly, a group beyond the individual church was looking to this evaluation of ministers. Article 5 of this church manual further reads, "It is expedient that they, who would enter the work of preaching the gospel, give proof of their gifts and fitness for said work, unto the pastors of the local churches who shall in council discern and judge of their qualifications."

Ministerial standing was subject to the General Conference. Article 6 of the same document reads, "A Licentiate may become a full minister by the vote of General Conference or by a majority vote of the members of the local church whom he serves after he has fully shown fidelity, love, and zeal in the work and has given evidence of soundness in Christian doctrine. As soon as convenient after election to the full duty and privileges of the ministry, the local church may conduct ordination services, and thus in a becoming manner induct the minister into his office." With ministers being elected for an unlimited time (Article 8), it can be assumed that the evaluation of ministerial candidates was taken seriously.

The ordination service of Levi S. Hoffman who became the minister to Towamencin and Worcester Meetinghouses and later the Central Schwenkfelder Church illustrates the shift that was taking place from congregations determining ministerial standing, to a group of Schwenkfelder churches determining this. In that service on September 18, 1910, Rev. O. S. Kriebel delivered the ordination message. He comments about the changes taking place.

Our fathers for many years, when there was need of additional ministers of the gospel, were wont to gather in solemn assembly and, after prayer and deliberation, to cast their ballots for those whom they thought best qualified for such work, and this was usually considered by those called as a sufficient reason to accept the call, because it was regarded as a call from God; the call from God being expressed through the judgment and consciences of his servants assembled for such a purpose. But there came a time when the men who were thus called felt that their own judgement and consciences could not approve of the call.

Here we see a possible doubting of the calling of an individual who solely relies on one's own instincts. Calling along with confirmation from others in the denomination was the new pattern as Rev. O. S. Kriebel then proceeds to describe.

However strongly men may be urged by their fellowmen to enter upon the gospel ministry, or however much confidence his fellowmen may possess in his ability to enter upon such work, in the last analysis it must be a matter of conscience and solemn judgment before God to fully determine the call. And we have every reason to believe that our young brother, whom we have the privilege of ordaining for the gospel ministry today, has not only been called by his own friends and associates and those who know him best, because of their belief in his qualifications for this great work, but also by the higher and more solemn call from above, approved and sealed by his own conscience. We rejoice, therefore, today that we have every reason to believe that our young brother has been called from above to this great work, that he has been called to a high and holy calling, and that it is our privilege to put our seal and commendation upon this call already recorded in heaven and to rejoice with him in the large opportunities for service and for work in the world that are opening up to him at the beginning of his ministerial career.

As the service continued, Rev. Harvey K. Heebner then gave the charge to Levi Hoffman as he takes the responsibility of becoming a pastor. In his remarks, he represents the Conference and declares Levi Hoffman to be ordained saying, "By virtue therefore of the inward moving of God's spirit upon your soul, and the call you have received from men, we now declare you a fully accredited and ordained minister of Christ; and that there now belong to you all the rights and privileges pertaining to the office of an ordained minister in our denomination and in other protestant bodies through the world." Similar ideas would be repeated a few years later in the ordination sermon delivered by Rev. Harvey K. Heebner for Robert Godschall in 1915.

When one looks at later writings in *the Schwenkfeldian*, it is obvious that the Schwenkfelder Ministerium was operative from the time of incorporation in 1910. In the October 1955 edition of *the Schwenkfeldian*, Irma A. Schultz reports that 600 persons gathered at the Central Schwenkfelder Church on a Sunday afternoon to honor Rev. Levi S. Hoffman, minister of the church, on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of his ordination into the Christian ministry. He was also recognized for his "45 years in the Ministerium of the Schwenkfelder Church" by Wayne C. Meschter. This reveals that the Ministerium was in existence from 1910, the same year as the incorporation of the Schwenkfelder Church.

Current Events... 100 years ago

by Jerry Heebner

So how do you make a non-story relevant? You change the subject. If there is nothing about a pandemic when you expect there to be a mention of it, how about investigating what was happening in Schwenkfelder Church a century ago. Well now, there is more to report about events of 1921 that bear reviewing.

A list was printed in *The Schwenkfeldian* of all Schwenkfelder Church members who had served in military during the war (WWI). They included 62 church members – 9 were from Palm District, 7 from Norristown District, 8 were from Middle District which included Lansdale, Towamencin & Worcester churches, and 38 from Philadelphia District.

The Schwenkfelder Church as a whole sponsored Flora K. Heebner as a missionary to Shansi, China. Miss Heebner faithfully wrote letters to her brother, Rev. Harvey K. Heebner, and each was published in *The Schwenkfeldian*. It didn't hurt that Rev. Heebner was the acting editor of the publication. The designated regular editor, Samuel K. Brecht, was working full time on the Genealogical Record. Her letters described a famine that was occurring in some parts of China. It seems that women and children were often affected with starvation. The Schwenkfelders through Flora were

supporting these refugees to the extent they could afford. Rev. Paul Corbin arrived as a representative from the Shansi mission in China and preached at several churches, including the Palm Church on February 20, 1921. Only 11 church members attended because that was the total number who plowed through a blizzard to get to church and Sunday School that day.

At the Spring General Conference held in the Towamencin Church, the membership numbers reported were as follows: Philadelphia 373; Norristown 137; Palm 262; Middle 483; and Lansdale 81 for a total of 1,336. Sunday School membership at that same time

was 1,875 and giving from the prior year went from \$17,204 to \$36,319! The Schwenkfelder churches were growing in giving and in membership. Interest in Sunday School was bolstered by county and state conventions. Contests for building attendance were encouraged.

Two hundred church members attended the morning and afternoon sessions of General Conference with a lunch served by the Ladies Aid Society. It was reported that the fifth volume (of nineteen) of the *Schwenkfeldianorum* had been received and was ready for distribution and the proof of the seventh volume was waiting to be received from the printer in Germany. The prospect of producing a new Catechism for all Schwenkfelder Churches was underway. The Committee on Catechism, comprised of all Schwenkfelder ministers, was determining the format of the final product.

The founder of Christian Endeavor, Dr. Francis E. Clark of Boston, Massachusetts, came to Palm Schwenkfelder Church as a guest

Pandemic? What Pandemic?

The Coronavirus (or COVID-19) has impacted almost the whole world, hence the designation pandemic. Another pandemic took place a little over a century ago in 1918-1919 and was referred to as the "Spanish flu" although its origin may have been in Kansas, USA. I thought it might be interesting to read how the Schwenkfelders of that time handled the outbreak. After reviewing the time frame 1918-1919, I could find no reference that the church, the members, or any of the church activities were affected by the flu. Obviously, one cannot read every issue cover to cover, but skimming the headlines and delving into reports from the churches indicated no reaction to the flu. There was one notice of a cancellation of class due to whooping cough in early 1918. One story that did present itself over that time frame was the involvement of Schwenkfelders in World War I. Efforts to curb expenses and letters from those who had enlisted in the service were printed in the pages of *the Schwenkfeldian*. The most surprising revelation was that the pastor of the Philadelphia Schwenkfelder Church, Rev. Harvey Heebner, left the pulpit for 6 months to serve with the Red Cross in Newport News, VA.

speaker at the Perkiomen Valley C.E. Convention. He spoke at both the afternoon and evening sessions. The evening session attracted about 1,000 people, requiring some attendees to stand outside. Clark would later write of his wonderful reception by the Schwenkfelders and their generosity toward mission appeals in Christian Endeavor World.

The compilation progress of the *Genealogical Record of the Schwenkfelder Families* was a regular feature in *The Schwenkfeldian*. In April they found a descendant of the first immigrant, George Schultz [E1], was in the consular service in India. Prof. Howard W. Kriebel was assisting in organizing the families by generation and numbering the families. The project, begun in 1917, was turning out to be a much larger endeavor than originally envisioned. The committee to collect family information had been in operation for four years and had determined that it was time to close the files and finalize the compilation. They lamented that it was impossible to ferret out some family connections and other individuals were unwilling to contribute information that they had. Mounting expenses were also a concern. They were in the process of organizing material to be sent to the printers for proofing before assembling the final copy. There was a concern that it might have to be printed in more than one volume due to the abundance of information that had been gathered.

Editor, Samuel K. Brecht, stated that some people were unaware of their Schwenkfelder heritage and wanted to receive more information about the Schwenkfelders. It also spawned interest in genealogy within families. People who had exhibited little to no interest in their relatives were now communicating by exchanging letters to each other. Even within the active Schwenkfelders, a group of individuals began to see an interest in forming an organization comprised of Schwenkfelder descendants.



The Society of the Descendants of the Schwenkfeldian Exiles was formed with 125 charter members in 1921. It was to be independent of the Schwenkfelder Church. As interest in the development of the updated Genealogical Record was building, the group recognized that there were Schwenkfelder descendants throughout the United States and even in foreign countries. It was thought that chapters of this Society could be formed across the country wherever a sufficient number of Schwenkfelder descendants existed to support such a group. The major requirement was that a member had to be able to trace their ancestry back to an immigrant who had arrived in Philadelphia between 1731 and 1737. The membership dues were \$3.00 per year and had to be paid in advance of joining.

A seasonal weather report for the year was included in the pages of *The Schwenkfeldian*. It began with a glowing report of blossoms appearing on cherry, apple, peach, plum, and berry trees/bushes two weeks earlier than normal, followed by an icy blast of cold air that killed the early growth. June came and with it, scorching heat. "Then occurred the midsummer miracle. The rains descended in the eleventh hour, and the deeply rooting crops sprang forth as if by magic." The report continues, "The God of Harvest still lives. What are His providential withholdings and dispensations but evidences of ways and thoughts as high as the heavens above."

Rev. Oscar S. Kriebel took a three-month leave of absence to travel about northern Europe. He did not fail to keep his congregation and all the other Schwenkfelder churches apprised of his exploits. A lengthy letter appears in the August and September issues of *The Schwenkfeldian*. The Kriebels sailed from New York to Yorkshire, England, by way of Iceland. The ship that was to take them to cities in Norway scraped some uncharted rocks around 11:30 at night. Some of the passengers dressed and spent the rest of the night in deck chairs – probably thinking about the Titanic tragedy. He later learned that his ship had passed near icebergs after it left Newfoundland in Canada on crossing the North Atlantic Ocean. Kriebel mentioned that the people of Norway seemed very serious and never smiled or grinned.



Cruise ship *Emperor of India* for Atlantic Ocean crossing.

The steamer they were on approaching Scotland encountered heavy fog as it approached Edinburgh, Scotland, and the day was filled with frequent foghorn blasts as they approached the port of disembarkation. They took a side trip to Aberdeen, Scotland, and called it the granite city as they could not find one frame or wooden building there. Being from farm country back home, he described the farms, crops, and houses. Oscar names all the tourist stops that they visited in London and the suburbs, places that are popular with tourists to this day. The next leg of their journey was from London to Paris, a three-hour flight. That may seem long but they traveled by airship (dirigible) and had nine other passengers. He said that they put cotton in their ears before liftoff to help deaden the roar of the propellers. They flew between 1,000 and 2,000 feet and could

even discern people that looked like tiny specks on the ground.

Their hotel in Paris was near the Louvre Museum. Oscar, once again, names all the famous tourist sites that people visit to this day. He feels that it must be the most beautiful city in the world. He names the Palace of Versailles as the grandest monument to human vanity found anywhere in the world. We have all had experiences like the following one that Oscar relates in his letter. He went to the American Graves Registration Bureau to get permission to visit the Romagne Cemetery in the Meuse-Argonne Region to observe the graves of Perkiomen School graduates who were buried there. The chaplain who would normally handle such requests was busy, so Rev. Kriebel was assigned to the assistant, a Miss Harriet Keim. As he was registering, he wrote his hometown as Pennsburg. Keim asked, "Pennsylvania?" Oscar inquired how she knew Pennsburg was located in Pennsylvania. "Oh," she said, "my home is in Reading, and I've been to Pennsburg, so I ought to know."

The Kriebel's itinerary was to take them on to three weeks in Switzerland, but no letters are printed from there. Perhaps they felt that they would arrive about the same time as any letter. They departed for the return to the United States from Cherbourg, France, on September 14, 1921. Rev. Oscar Kriebel arrived back in Palm, PA, in time to attend the 187th Schwenkfelder Memorial Day, Gedächtnestag. In the months to follow, he would be called upon to talk about his European tour several times.

That day, September 24th, after an opening prayer and hymn, began with an Historical Sermon by Rev. Harvey K. Heebner. Rev. Robert Gottschall followed with a message about "Spiritual Religion" and the morning program was wrapped up by Rev. Levi Hoffman who talked on the subject of "The Salient Traits of Schwenckfeld." The afternoon session found Rev. Oscar Kriebel speaking on what we, as Schwenkfelders, had for which we should be grateful. Next, Dr. Elmer Krauss, the guest speaker from Maywood, IL chose the topic of "Schwenckfeld's Personal Influence in Bringing Souls to Christ." Dr. Elmer Johnson gave the concluding address of the day on "Silesian Home Life and Customs." The speeches all appeared in their entirety in the October 1921 issue of *The Schwenkfeldian* and took up 20 pages of text. It must have been a long day for those that sat through the six speeches.

As Christmas 1921 was nearing, a gift suggestion announcement appeared in *The Schwenkfeldian* recommending the purchase of Christmas Seals. The Seals, or stamps, sold for 1 cent each and the proceeds would go to support the care of tuberculosis patients.

In 1919 the program was taken over by the National Tuberculosis Association. Its successor today is the American Lung Association and the focus of the campaign has shifted from tuberculosis to lung diseases like asthma. Sadly, the greeting inscribed on the seal no longer reads "Merry Christmas" but "Season's Greetings." The stamps though, are still selling 100 years later.

It is hard to imagine what life will be like 100 years from now. Even 50 years boggles the mind. Model T Fords were rolling out to towns everywhere in 1921 and 50 years later, the United States had landed a man on the moon!



A Fond Farewell



When I was asked to write this article, I wondered how I was going to sum up 22 years of working with Dave Luz. A lot of institution-changing events took place during these last two decades, and as a team here, we were able to

take the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center (SLHC) from a quiet, inward looking institution to what I personally hope is a vibrant, welcoming organization with much to offer, not only to Schwenkfelder descendants, but all members of our community. And that was due in large part to Dave's leadership as Executive Director.

I first set foot in the old Schwenkfelder Library in October 1998. Though I grew up in Berks County, I knew nothing of the Schwenkfelders, nor of the Upper Perkiomen Valley. It was a balmy fall day when I pulled up to the building for my interview, which was still then its rather stern-looking self; it seemed to me something of great importance probably went on behind those massive front doors. But then I met Dave, who was very much the opposite of the building – friendly, outgoing, and enthusiastic. Though I wasn't sure exactly what was going to happen at this new job, I knew it was going to be intriguing and challenging.

What I soon learned about Dave was that he loved to laugh. He would literally double over with laughter. This was a very good thing because I love to entertain. Far from being the kind of pastor I was accustomed to growing up – quiet and reserved – Dave was the polar opposite. Since my previous position had been with the Kentucky Derby Museum, I was a little apprehensive about working for a pastor, but Dave put those concerns to rest. We laughed and laughed!

Hunt Schenkel, our archivist who started at SLHC not long after me, remembered this episode (which I can't read about without laughing):

I have been trying to remember the time the staff gave presentations at Salford meeting house (ca 2000-2001, very early in our time here) and in the van on our way home, Becky Kummerer, our administrative assistant at that time, said something to Dave about Fred Schlicher [pronounced schlicker], a gentleman who frequently visited the Library. Dave thought she said, "French liquor" and acted like he understood her story when French liquor made no sense at all. When we all realized she meant Fred Schlicher and he did not understand, we all started cracking up. I wish I could remember the details, but it is a good memory.

Hunt also shared impressions of Dave in his ministerial role:

That same day, at the service in the meeting house, Dave, led the hymn singing. Being Episcopalian, I had never been to this type of informal, non-liturgical service before, but Dave reminded me of a charismatic, evangelistic preacher from the deep South as he led the assembled congregation with hymnal in hand and calling out the next song off the cuff.

Dave became involved with the SLHC while it was on the cusp of serious change.

Peter Erb, our Associate Director of Theology, wrote these memories of Dave's early years here:

I first came to know Dave in the 1970s when he was pastor at the Schwenkfelder Church in Lansdale and then the one at Palm (or was it the other way round? – Rev. Martha was at Palm until 1972, I think, and Dave was there after). But he was with us at the Library well before this time and while selling exotic fish and other little beasts (yes, do not leave this out) in Harleysville. Thereafter, he was a great and special help to all of us during the Library's 1984 250th anniversary celebrations of that year. He was particularly appreciated by all the participants from Europe, whom he took on a special tour of the area. They continued to write to me after the conference about that day journey.

In any case, he was around the Library a great deal of time before he came on as the Director/Administrator, Chief Honcho, whatever his position was when he took over, and I will be the first to say, not only "saved" the place (I mean this), shifting its focus slowly from its primarily genealogical and Schwenkfelder scholarly areas – the latter mostly of interest for a small group of international scholars – to its primarily local historical and artifactual directions. In this he carried on and developed the work which had been earlier begun by Dennis Moyer.

Dave was very well-versed in the traditions of the Schwenkfelder community and its families. His association with the older members during his time with the churches and at the SLHC gave him the ability to bridge the gaps between the generations, having known the parents who were here when the 1950 Schwenkfelder Library was built, and their children and grandchildren. One particular family was the descendants of Wayne C. Meschter, who funded the construction of the 1950 building including his son Kyrel, who served as President of the Board of Directors for many years, and then, Kyrel's daughter Louise Meschter Tritton who lent her expertise to the board for several years.

to Dave Luz

By Candace Perry

Louise wrote of Dave:

As Executive Director, Dave demonstrated a unique appreciation for the history of the Schwenkfelders, both in Europe and in Pennsylvania. He understood how to nurture the many wonderful and quirky relationships that make the SLHC what it is today. Whatever he was working on, Dave welcomed me with a broad smile, a chuckle, and an update of the latest project when I stopped in for a visit. As a descendant of immigrant Melchior Meschter, through Wayne C. Meschter who helped to found the Library, and my father, long-time trustee W. Kyrel Meschter, I am most grateful for Dave's skilled stewardship of the SLHC over the years of his tenure.

Other Board members have known him for many years, since he was growing up at Central Schwenkfelder Church or as a young pastor at Palm. He was a fixture in the Schwenkfelder community.

Current Board president George Meschter has this to say:

I have known Dave since we were kids, having fun with our Christian Endeavor group at Central Church. Dave's passion and enthusiasm are contagious and his "get-it-done" approach is in everything he does. As an Executive Director, Dave developed into an effective leader, and along with the amazing people he hired, built the Heritage Center into the treasure it is today.

Longtime Board member Evonne Glenn added:

When calling the SLHC, I always appreciated Dave's jovial greeting. He made everyone feel welcome and was always happy to have a conversation with you whether he was busy or not, and this was my experience over the 40 years I have known him. I call him a pleasant "People Person" and a loyal friend.

Those of you who are not familiar with the behind-the-scenes work here at SLHC probably don't know about Dave's organizational skills, which should be the stuff of legend. From the building projects to symposia, the Penn Dry Goods Market, and bus trips, he was able to figure out the moving parts of these projects and keep things going forward. Dave did an extraordinary job overseeing two building expansions while he was Executive Director. Nowhere, however, were his talents for organization more on display than with the European tours that he somehow magically produced. Over the course of many years, Dave has taken groups of eager Schwenkfelder descendants (and other interested folk) to the homeland in Poland and Germany allowing them to discover their roots and tread the same paths as their ancestors. His

leadership in cementing ties to our homelands will benefit the Schwenkfelders for years to come. These trips have created a lifetime of memories for all.

Amy Kriebel Portzline, a current Board member, wrote:

Dave was a highlight of each day on the Schwenkfelder Heritage Tour when my father, Martin Kriebel, and I went the summer of 2019. He always had a quip and a smile to offer! I'm so glad that I got to know Dave during that incredible trip.

continued on page 14



Board member Becky Clemens McBrien remembered:

On our Heritage trips his favorite saying was always, "Super!" in his wonderful booming voice. He was called our fearless leader and as he walked us all over Poland and Germany - his saying was always, "just a couple more blocks." One tour participant said, "Rick Steves has got nothing on us, we know how to tour using only back roads!" And finally, he was called by the group on many occasions our cheerleader and captain.

Traveling is probably Dave's most favorite pastime, and that's probably why the tours are such a success. In his personal life, he has visited so many incredible places with his wife Joanne. It's hard to keep track of them all.

Board member and former Board president, Jerry Heebner, related a funny story about Dave's traveling adventures:

It was a mule that put Dave on a diet. He wanted to ride a mule down into the Grand Canyon and no mule was willing to take anyone over 200 pounds that distance. So - Dave had to slim down, which he did, and therefore he got to take that ride that few of us ever want to take.

Oh, those finicky Grand Canyon mules! I frequently called this Dave's "nuts and seeds" diet. Sorry, Dave, if that was too much information!

Our current Board president, George Meschter, commented:

Dave is very adventurous and he is always planning his next trip. I love to hear all about those experiences because they are not just a tour of the Grand Canyon. No, it is to watch the Northern Lights at midnight in the middle of an ice cap in northern Iceland or watching unique wildlife in the Galapagos Island or a weeklong bicycle ride with his daughter to Pittsburgh. Dave is always fun to be with and have remarkably interesting conversations.

Two decades is a long time to work together, and you become another sort of family as a result. Hunt, Allen Viehmeyer, several members of the Reinhart family, and I have been with SLHC a very long time, and I hope the more "recent acquisitions" as we say in the museum field, Joanne Jalowy, Beth Twiss Houting, and Bruce Seidel will stick around too.

This is due in large part to Dave's leadership, his ability to be a guiding hand yet hands off, that made seeking out greener pastures unnecessary.

Allen Viehmeyer related this story:

I shall be forever grateful to Dave for making it possible for me to join the staff. At the turn of the 21st century, I was thinking about my retirement from Youngstown University and what I was going to do in my retirement years. I wrote to the Heritage Center, without knowing that Dave had become the Executive Director, and inquired about joining the staff. Dave, it seems, contacted Peter Erb to find out who I was and if the inquiry was legitimate. After consulting with Dave, I applied in 2002 at the university for a sabbatical leave. Spending my sabbatical year at the Heritage Center would provide an opportunity for me and the staff to get to know one another. My time here in 2003 - 2004 was especially fruitful and rewarding. It was very clear to me that spending my retirement years at the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center could be very fulfilling. Two years later, in May 2006, Dave and Hunt drove to Ohio to help load a U-Haul truck with my possessions, which Dave then drove, moving me to East Greenville. Dave was not only my representative for the final walk-through of my new apartment, but he also picked out and saw to the installation of my new refrigerator. Thanks to Dave, my years working at the Heritage Center have been very satisfying.

Bruce Seidel, our "new kid" added this:

While Dave was very capable in providing direction/leadership of the organization as Executive Director, he also was wise to allow volunteers and staff members room to make the work they did their own.

Though we, as staff, miss Dave, he left us in very capable and excellent hands with our new Executive Director, Beth Twiss Houting. We can build on the foundation that we all built together over the last 20 years. Good and safe travels, Dave, to wherever your retirement takes you and Joanne. We look forward to hearing the stories when you come home! And definitely having a few more laughs.



Sharing these important life events
with our Schwenkfelder family.
December 2020 through March 2021

MARRIAGES

HORN – STIVES – Brian Horn to Jessica Stives in Manheim, PA, January 23, 2021. (Palm)

BIRTHS

ALTHOUSE – Cecelia Aurora, daughter of Taylor Althouse and Jessica Stezenko, December 9, 2020. (Palm)

BEATRICE – Anna Louise, daughter of M. Samuel and Tori (Henry) Beatrice, March 7, 2021. (Central)

NELLETT – Madison Mae, daughter of Christian and Kimberly (Curl) Nellett, January 28, 2021. (Central)

SEESE – Scarlett Elisabeth, daughter of Matthew and Kristen (Gunning) Seese, February 11, 2021. (Central)

SYLVESTER – Luca Alfie, daughter of Evan and Natalie Sylvester, December 24, 2020. (Olivet)

WILLIAMS – Seva Singh, son of Christian and Tarminder Williams, February 1, 2021. (Central)

BAPTISMS

NELLETT – Madison Mae, daughter of Christian and Kimberly (Curl) Nellett, March 21, 2021. (Central)

DEATHS

BEARD – E. Grace (Custer), age 94, of Frederick, formerly of Red Hill, wife of the late Bernard B. Beard, January 15, 2021. Inurnment will be at Palm Schwenkfelder Cemetery. (Palm)

CLEMENS – Frances G. (Doak), age 80, of Towamencin Township, wife of Kenneth W. Clemens, January 22, 2021. Services January 26, 2021; interment at Garden of Memories in Worcester. (Central)

DAVIES – Natalie A. (Lare), age 79, of Worcester, wife of John H. Davies, January 22, 2021. Interment at Union Cemetery in Hellertown, PA. (Central)

DAVIS – Edward Russell, age 84, of Phoenixville, formerly of Worcester, husband of the late June (Muir) Davis, February 28, 2021. Services March 12, 2021; interment at Garden of Memories in Worcester. (Central)

HEEBNER – Joyce A. (Yoho), age 88, of Hatfield, formerly of East Norriton, wife of David A. Heebner, February 27, 2021. (Central)

INGERSOLL – Jacqueline A. (Fetterman), age 82, of Lansdale, wife of the late Guy Ingersoll, January 12, 2021. (Olivet)

LEWIS – Marilyn (Stoughton), age 89, of Lansdale, formerly of Lower Salford Township, wife of the late Andrew L. Lewis, Jr., December 7, 2020. Interment at the Garden of Memories in Worcester. (Central)

PLAGER – Doris J. (Burfield), age 80, of Worcester, wife of David Plager and the late W. Douglas Bradley, December 29, 2020. Interment at Garden of Memories in Worcester. (Central)

SCHEID – Margaret “Peg” Moyer (Rothenberger), age 103, of Harleysville, formerly of Worcester, wife of the late Robert W. Scheid, January 15, 2021. Internment at Towamencin Schwenkfelder Cemetery. (Central)

SHERMER – H. William, age 85, of Frederick, husband of the late E. Jane (Newton) Shermer, January 10, 2021. (Palm)

VOGELS – Alma (Harter), age 91, of Lederach, wife the late Gerard Earle Vogels, December 1, 2020. Services December 7, 2020; interment at Garden of Memories in Worcester. (Central)

WHITE – Doreen (Kriebel), age 73, of Beavercreek, OH, wife of Howard White, February 14, 2021. (Palm)



CHURCH NEWS

Find what's been happening in the Schwenkfelder community.



Central Schwenkfelder

2111 Valley Forge Rd., Lansdale, PA 19446
610-584-4480

www.centralschwenkfelder.com

Worship: 8:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 10:45 a.m.

Church School: 10:15 a.m.



Olivet-Schwenkfelder United Church of Christ

619 Township Line Rd., Norristown, PA 19403
610-539-7444 • www.osuccpa.com

Worship: 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m.

Church School: 9:00 a.m.

Schwenkfelder Missionary

29 Tulpehocken St.
Philadelphia, PA 19144
215-334-4658

Worship: 10:45 a.m.

Church School: 9:30 a.m.

CENTRAL

The pandemic forced Central Schwenkfelder Church to find creative ways to reach out to the community and its homebound members in a socially distanced fashion for the 2020 Christmas season. In December, Central offered drive-by live Nativity scenes on the grounds of the church property. After scanning a QR code on a smart phone, guests slowly drove a course, starting in the main parking lot, through the Garden of Memories and ending at the front of the church. Along the course, volunteer church members staged several scenes of the Christmas story, including the angel appearing to Mary and Joseph; Mary with the baby Jesus in the manger (including shepherds and a live donkey!); and ending with a scene depicting the story of the Wise Men. Guests remained in their cars and listened to corresponding Gospel verses for each scene. The elaborate sets and costumes were worked on by volunteers from Central, including Jeff Benham, Keith Maurer, and Don House. Jeff Ost implemented the use of the smart phone app to provide the audio simulcast to each scene. Vice Moderator Andy Ramsey reported that the display drew over 250 cars over its four sessions the weekend of December 12-13.

COVID also prevented Central from carrying out its annual Christmas Caroling tradition. So instead, this December the BOCE organized a card shower for the congregation to write and send Christmas cards to homebound members and those in nursing care or assisted living communities. Cards with addressed and stamped envelopes were placed in Fellowship hall, and church members selected cards from a card tree to write a note and mail a card or two. The process was well received and proved to be a new, successful approach to outreach during the Christmas season.

In personnel news, Brian Neuenschwander tendered his resignation this fall. After a short vacancy in the position, James Stevenson was hired as the new Director of Youth Ministry. James has been leading the Wired & Crave meetings on Sunday nights for youth grades 6-12 at the Central Community Center.

OLIVET

As the COVID-19 crisis continued to run rampant through Montgomery County, Olivet-Schwenkfelder was faced with making yet another difficult decision in December. With the numbers once again increasing exponentially in the area, we joined our partner churches and decided to forgo our in-person holiday services. And while it was odd not to celebrate the Advent season with the United Schwenkfelder Choir Concert, the annual Blue Christmas service or the Annual Sunday School Pageant, we did continue our tradition of collecting age appropriate holiday gifts for the current residents of the Bethany Children's Home. A huge thank you to members Leah and Everett Tyson for taking time to deliver the gifts to the home during the pandemic - proving once again that nothing can stop good will and generosity.

Despite the threat of grinch-like weather, our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service was celebrated in the comfort of our own vehicles this year as we listened to terrific music from our choir and our own Megan Williams, along with an inspiring Christmas message from Rev. Leslie Mamas. Many, many thanks go out to the volunteers from the congregation that worked so very hard to keep the tradition going in this difficult and challenging time. We closed out the eventful year of 2020 with a Carol Sing on December 27th.

We began 2021 with both our Parking Lot Sunday Service and our Virtual Services. Despite the cold weather, Rev. Mamas continued to maintain normalcy in the face of the adversity. A big thanks to Leslie, her husband, George, our Director of Music Ministries, Tony Godorecci, and all of our members who take the time to create our virtual content and allow the entire congregation to worship at any time online using Facebook and YouTube.

Olivet-Schwenkfelder continues to utilize the drive-up Blessing Box in our church parking lot. The Blessing Box acts as a free pantry and also contains at-home worship resources, consecrated communion elements and hymn CDs. All are welcome to

drive by and either take items as needed or donate them if they are able.

Our mission work continued in earnest, despite our time apart. In January, we collected new socks, hats, undergarments, gloves and scarves for the Norristown Hospitality Center. During February, the Youth of our church continued the Souper Bowl tradition on Super Bowl Sunday by giving the collected donations to the Norristown Food Pantry and Interfaith. We also collected items such as diapers, snacks and food for the Laurel House throughout February and March.

As we approached Lent, we once again prepared to celebrate a major holiday with the understanding that things might have to be different. As we did during Advent, Rev. Mamas created Lent Blessing Bags. The bags were delivered to all of our members in the Greater Philadelphia Area by volunteers from the congregation and contained home liturgies and consecrated communion (even a little piece of chocolate!).

PALM

“Alone, we can do so little; together, we can do so much” – Helen Keller. Being in community was the essence of the theme uniting the local churches during this year’s Community Lenten Services. Turning outward rather than inward runs through these last few months for Palm. It was announced in December that \$2,432.50 went to the YMCA fundraising campaign held throughout the month of November. Each week, Pastor Nick shared a moment focusing on men’s health while simultaneously funds were raised to help the local YMCA.

In the best interest of communal safety, the health of worship leaders, members and visitors alike, beginning with the Christmas Eve services, Palm returned to strictly on-line worship services through January 3rd. Christmas Eve offered both an afternoon and evening live-streaming option. The number of Christmas Eve luminary requests was higher than ever before, and they surrounded the church and were available to our church families and neighbors for a drive-through experience. Palm returned to both in person and virtual worship but had to change up its “Souper Bowl” Sunday due to the pandemic and the Ladies’ Aid not being able to make soup for the day. Instead of making soup and offering it only within our church family, the congregation was invited to donate canned soup, which was delivered to The Open Link, helping those in our community.

As part of Palm’s community outreach mission, we once again participated in a free community meal at Pennsburg UCC church. The event is sponsored by The Open Link. A

ham dinner with all the trimmings was given out in disposable take-out containers and a record number of over 194 meals were served. Also, the Diaconate is working on creating a meal ministry. As some of our members may find themselves in need - maybe they are recovering from an illness or surgery, or there was a death in the family, or even a happy event like the birth of a baby, and they are simply unable or too overwhelmed to make meals for themselves. Names are currently being gathered of those interested in being a part of this ministry.

After the prayerful work of a search committee, a proposal was put forth to combine the Youth Director position with the Preschool Director position of Palm Country Day School. The committee also suggested changing the name of the day school to The Preschool at Palm Church and it be repositioned as a faith-based preschool offered to our church family and neighbors. The new title for the person who attains this position will be Director of Christian Education. These recommendations have been voted on and accepted by Palm’s congregation. The Director of Christian Education will oversee the curriculum of both the Preschool program of the Day School and the Sunday School program. The Director will be the Head Teacher of the Preschool classes and work in conjunction with the Board of Christian Education, overseeing the Sunday School program in addition to ministries such as Children’s Church, combined Sunday School programs and Vacation Bible School.

Palm’s midweek community Lenten Services wrapped up as the churches joined together for the Good Friday Stations of the Cross Walk. On Palm Sunday, with a sermon title of “Jerusalem Confetti,” it truly was a day of celebration as confetti rained down on the congregation. Easter morning began at 6:30 a.m. as the church family gathered, both live and virtually, to listen to the carillon while watching the sun rise. After the sunrise, Easter Dawn Service was held followed by the regular 10:15 Easter Service. Together - whether virtual or in person - friends, family and community came together to proclaim, “Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!”

MISSIONARY

Pastor Duncan did not want SMC to engage in what had been a nearly inflexible ritual that he had experienced since his childhood: the pastor addressing the congregation on both Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, so Sister Phyllis consented to filling in. Pastor Duncan later stated that “I listened to her rather good presentation.”

Now here comes Resurrection Sunday and we had short poems, lengthy poems,

poems for first to twelfth graders. An announcement was made that since poem reading is on the program if anyone desires to read, just look the poems over and let us know, we’ll add you to the program.

During that service, one of our newest members, a gentleman in his sixties, said “I want to read.” He walked to the table where the poems were and then approached the front of the church and announced that he was not going to read a poem. He was going to read two poems, two lengthy poems.

A few days later Pastor Duncan got a call from the man’s sister who just wanted to thank him for the absolutely wonderful time that her brother had on Resurrection Sunday. “He just will not stop talking about what he felt was genuine acceptance and the opportunity to reconnect with his experience of participating in an Easter service – something that he had not done since childhood and, he is so grateful that someone would give him a bag of candy,” she said.

The man has been to and participated in every Sunday service since then and our services have continued to be flexible and we praise God for it.



Palm Schwenkfelder

P.O. Box 66, Palm, PA 18070

215-679-5321

www.palmschwenkfelder.com

Worship: 10:15 a.m. **Church School:** 9:00 a.m.



Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center

105 Seminary St., Pennsburg, PA 18073

215-679-3103

www.schwenkfelder.com

Mon.: Closed • Tues., Wed., Fri.: 9–4

Thurs.: 9–8 • Sat.: 10–3 • Sun.: 1–4

OUR HERITAGE *In Retrospect*

50 years ago (1970)

Philadelphia

The First Schwenkfelder Church in Philadelphia has been busy with remodeling many areas of the church. They have completed installing stained glass windows and repairing the heating system within the church itself. The parish house also received some care and now has an all-purpose area that can be used for church and community gatherings. With kitchen improvements they are looking forward to having dinners and banquets that can serve up to 150 people. The library is now located on the third floor and serves as a valuable resource for children and adults alike. The nearest library is more than eight blocks away. This resource is home to more than 5,000 volumes for everyone to use.

Central

Central Schwenkfelder Church was focused on a particular mission project in the fall. They were busy raising money to help build two high schools in Nagaland in the northeastern part of India. This project was to take place over a five-year period with a goal of sending \$6,000 a year to The Dimapur Christian Education School for the first three years and then helping out the Wakha Shanchamo Memorial School for the last two years.

Central welcomed a new choir Director in November. Mr. Anderson came with many years of experience which included serving as a Professor of Music and Director of the College Choirs at Eastern Baptist College in St. Davids.



Also in November two young members of church and Boy Scout Troop 133, were honored when they were awarded the Eagle Scout Badge. Pictured are Mr and Mrs. Oliver L. Smith, parents of C. Bradford Smith and John Lawlis and his parents, Dr. and Mrs. John F. Lawlis, Jr.

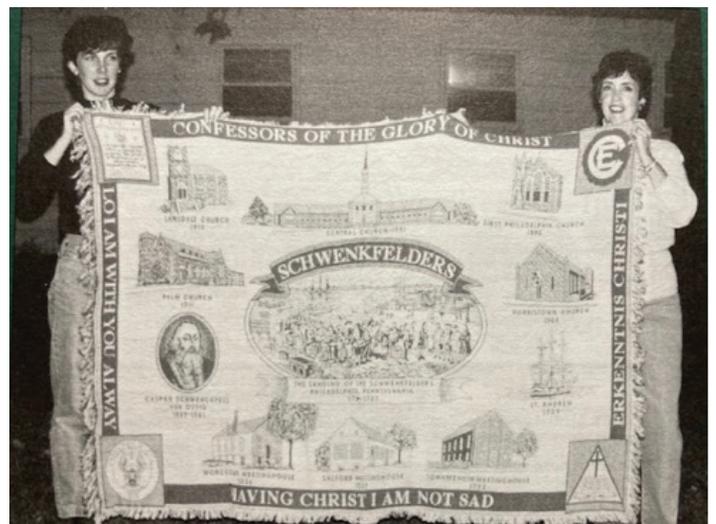
Palm Church

Palm church had a visitor in May of 1970, Dr. Frank C. Laubach. He was very impressed with a particular member of the church, Minnie K. Schultz. He spoke so highly of her, that Palm decided that they needed to honor her. So they held a "This is Your Life" segment to share with others as to why they were impressed with her dedication and service to the Palm church and the missionary field. She grew up in the area and was educated early on at the Goshenhoppen Church and then later at the Palm School. She later went on to the Perkiomen School. She eventually went on to serve as a secretary in the Philippines for the missionary, Dr. Frank C. Laubach. After she came home, she continued to help other missionaries out in the field to meet needs that they had, such as supplies and money. She was honored at the 75th anniversary of the Schwenkfelder Mission Board for all her years of service.

25 years ago (1995)

Central

Easter held many traditional services at Central which included a Cantata, Handel's' Messiah, on Palm Sunday. Drake Williams was honored at a reception for his 10 years of service as the Moderator of the church. Church members treated the community to another performance of the Easter Story at Freddy Hill Family Center. Gardening tips were on display in the spring to prepare members for the Annual Country Fair. Plants were distributed in the hopes that many would be returned to be sold at the Country Fair in September. As with the other Schwenkfelder Churches this spring, members were encouraged to order a Schwenkfelder coverlet. Central held their annual Memorial Day picnic, as well as the Mother/Daughter Banquet.



Peg Clayton and Portia Potts with the coverlet

Norristown

The Norristown church started the year off with a worthy goal to celebrate their 92nd Anniversary of the founding of their church. Pastor Gene Jerge wanted to add 100 new members by the time the 100th anniversary rolled around in eight years. Springtime meant time for many annual events such as: valentine remembrances, soup/salad night, and food collections for Interfaith. The period of Lent brought activities such as the Lenten services that included a dinner after the service on Wednesday evenings. The Pairs and Spares traveled to The Dutch Apple for a show.

Lansdale

Lansdale church held a "Hymn fest" by polling the congregation for their favorite hymns. They sang as many as they could and then enjoyed a meal afterwards. After a long winter they sprang back into action with food collections for Manna on Main St., collecting items for the migrant worker kits and held their Mother/Daughter Banquet. In May, they adopted a new mission statement with the goal of attracting new members. Particular attention was paid to the low numbers in the Sunday School program. The music program was still going strong though and many people enjoyed the sounds of the bell choirs playing in the church service.

Palm

Palm started off the year with nasty weather delaying their Installation of Officers. It was held the next week and included a luncheon. Many activities were held in the springtime and included welcoming Boy Scout Troop 79 to a service, the congregational meeting and luncheon and the Ladies Aid Society meeting where Secret Pal names were revealed. Ash Wednesday started off the Lenten season with weekly participation with other churches in the area holding a Wednesday night service throughout Lent. Palm participated in the 109th World Day of Prayer, "The One Great Hour of Sharing" program and two Prayer and Healing Services. Many church members participated in the 18th Annual Upper Perkiomen Valley CROP Walk. The Womens/Girls Covered Dish Social was held in May.

Philadelphia

Philadelphia also had a rough start to the year. Snow storms kept people away from church for a number of weeks and then when they were finally able to return old fuel oil tanks spilled and filled the church with harmful fumes. The church had to be closed for two weeks until a complete cleanup took place to preserve the congregations' health and safety. The cost of the clean-up was at first thought to be up to \$100,000. But, through much prayer the cost came in lower than estimated. Members celebrated their return to the church and held many seasonal services and meals. The Choir's anniversary was celebrated by welcoming Rev. Vande Davis of Deliverance Evangelistic Church of Philadelphia. He was joined by the choir from the Ebenezer Church of God.

10 years ago (2010)

Central

Ten years ago at Central, the whole congregation was very involved in a large project that would help the church to make a bigger footprint in the Worcester and Lansdale communities. The groundbreaking for the Central Community Center took place on the Anders property near the church pavilion. Co-chairs of the building committee, Ken Clemens, Harris Gramm and Tony Cinelli, were on hand to welcome everyone to the ceremony. This date was significant as it was also the 60th anniversary of the dedication of the Fellowship Hall in the church. Volunteers for the Red Cross blood drives were acknowledged and two of those people, Linda Schmidt and Barbara Rodenbough, continue to this day to help bring people to the church. The church continued to hold many of their annual events including: the Love Feast, the annual pork supper and the Youth Sunday service which was led by high school students on Feb. 6th.

Olivet

The youth at Olivet were kept busy in the spring by preparing and serving homemade soup for their Super Bowl of Caring on February 6th. They earned money for Interfaith and also received food donations as well. Later in the spring they once again made food for the congregation and served a meal of baked ziti. They were under the leadership of Cheryl and Doug Emerson. Sara Posen kept the bakers and candy makers busy throughout the winter and springtime as well. They made and sold Christmas peppermint bark for the Christmas holiday and then the Women's Fellowship held a bakeless cake sale with the funds to go to the Capital Improvement fund and made fudge to support the Migrant Ministry. Olivet also participated in many of their yearly activities which included: welcoming new members in March, collecting items for the Chester County Migrant Ministry, participating in Lent services with other local churches and holding a family night with organized fun and games for all ages.

Palm

The youth of Palm played a central role in many of the activities over the holidays and into spring. The Christmas program was written by Whitney Leh and performed by the children. It was the Christmas story but seen from the perspective of the animals involved. The youth director, Barb Master, helped Whitney to present this program. The youth had many activities to keep them busy during this snowy spring by skiing at Bear Creek Mountain Resort in February. They also were able to go to Liberty University and join thousands of others listening to sermons and Christian concerts. The younger members who participate in the "Jammin' for Jesus" program had a sleepover at the church. They played games, watched a movie and then helped to prepare a pancake breakfast in the morning. The Hoffman family hosted a movie night at their home for children in 2nd through 4th grade. After all the children had their fun, the women of Palm were able to enjoy a weekend retreat in March. The theme was Sweet Life Café. The time spent together included Bible Study, friends, crafts, worship, singing, food and focused on their spiritual needs.

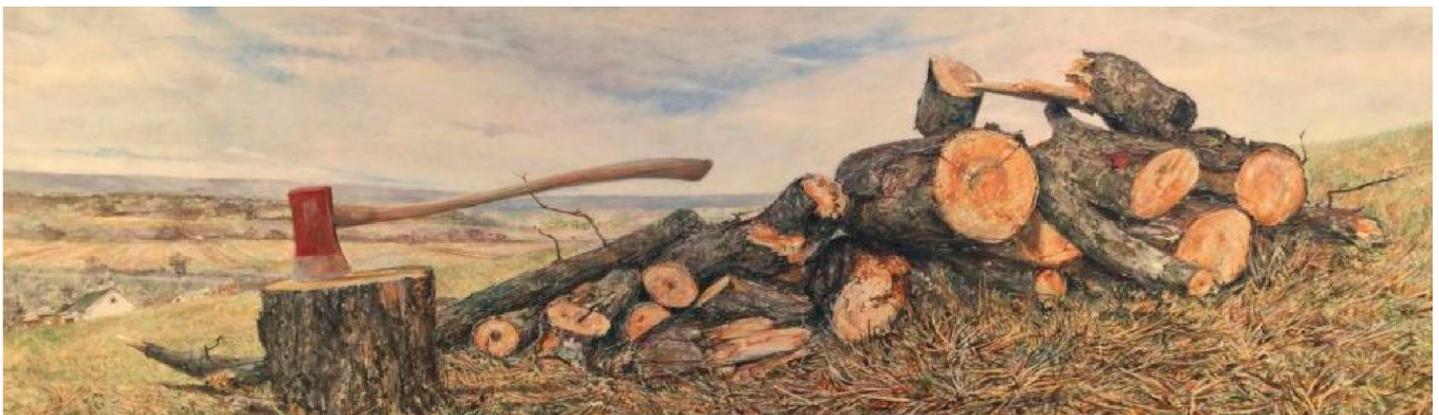
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FARM LIFE

Jonathan Bond

August 1 - September 30, 2021



Exciting New Exhibit and Program at the Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center

Farm Life with Artist Jonathan Bond will be on view August 1 through September 30, showcasing the art of Berks County artist Jonathan Bond. Jon works in various media to produce wonderful, nostalgic views of a way of life that was once common in our region. A visit to the 1826 barn and Schultz Rural Life Gallery at the same time is great compliment to this exhibit.

In addition to Jon's exhibit, on Sunday, August 29, at 2:00 PM, he and popular Berks County musician Dave Kline will be presenting a multimedia program in the Meeting Room. This is sure to be an entertaining—and informative—event, plus you will have to opportunity to purchase an original work from the exhibit or some of Jon's merchandise in our Heritage Shop.

For more info and latest hours, see www.schwenkfelder.com