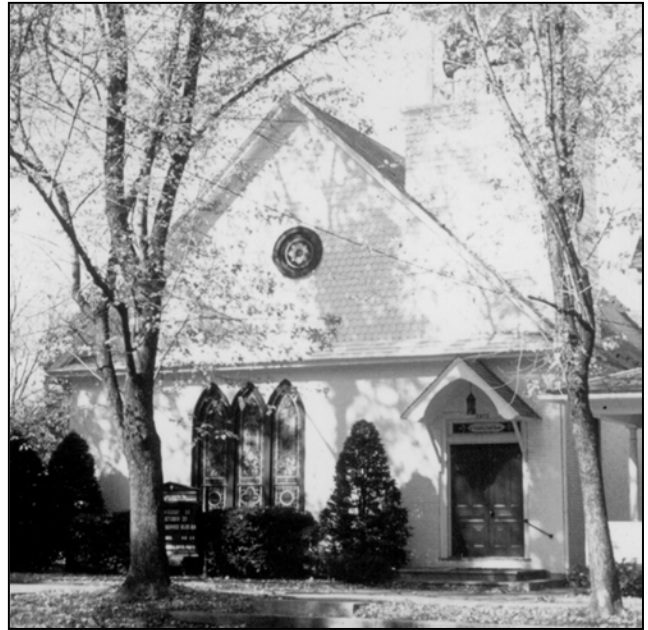


## SAINT JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH IN ESPY

*Making Christ Known along the Great Road* is the history of Saint John Lutheran Church in Espy written by William C. Harrell. The congregation recently celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> year of its founding, 1855-2005. The church is located on the principal thoroughfare in the village of Espy. It parallels the Susquehanna River and was the main road connecting Bloomsburg with Almedia, Lime Ridge, Willow Spring, Briar Creek and Berwick. Presently this road is appropriately named the Old Berwick road



However, it was previously known as Main Street and in the early 1800's property deeds referred to it as the "Great Road."

St. John dates its founding to a charter granted by the Columbia County Court of Common Pleas on December 6, 1855. A copy of the charter is included in the book. Three years later the congregation purchased a lot from Henry Trembly to build its first church. In 1860 Rev. E. A. Sharretts became the first pastor serving fifty-four communing members. In the history of St. John Church there have been twenty-eight pastors. All of the members of St. John since 1860 are listed as well as the names of fifty year members in 2005. People, places and important events are recounted from the congregation and council minutes and notes.

The biographical sketches of pastors who are no longer living were taken from their college/seminary records and/or newspaper obituaries. Clergy who are still living submitted their own accounts.

This treatise is a concise, selective compilation of accounts of the life and times that led to the establishment of the 19<sup>th</sup> century German Lutheran settlements in eastern Pennsylvania, including Columbia County. One of the accounts briefly relates how St. John got its first parsonage. "Pastor Kline [in 1905] took leadership in proposing the building of a parsonage. He designed plans and did most of the carpentry work and virtually all of the painting. Construction began in February, and the Pastor and family moved into the house in November."

Gordon Smith, the current pastor, has contributed insightfully his vision of the future of this ministry, which is found in chapter five of *Revelation*.

This portrayal of history is by no means complete nor was it intended to be. It is written to stimulate the readers' awareness of the rich traditions they have inherited from their ancestral Christian brothers and sisters in this parish.

The author was born and raised in Bloomsburg. Both he and his wife, Mollie, are active members in St. John Church and the Columbia County Historical and Genealogical Society.

Copies of the history may be obtained from the Harrell's by calling 570-784-1750.