

Christiana

Salisbury

Christiana Lutheran Church is located in Rowan County, one mile southeast of Granite Quarry on US Hwy 52.

The organization of the church in this community came from the outgrowth of a very definite need for a more centralized place of worship. Poor roads and harsh winter weather made traveling to Organ, St. Peter's, St. Matthews, Union, or St. John's churches very difficult. The community wanted a convenient church in their area. Through the work of seven devoted families and under the leadership of the Rev. Simeon Scherer, pastor of Union Lutheran Church, Christiana Lutheran Church was formed January 22, 1871.

The organization began in the home place of Nathan and Jane Brown with the following persons listed as charter members: Nathan Brown, Henry Brown, Daniel Frick, Moses Lingle, Charles Lyerly, Adam Miller and Miles (Milus) Miller. This home is still standing in front of the present cemetery on the Brown property. The original location of the house was on the other side of Hwy 52 in front of Erwin Middle School.

The first officers of the congregation were John Adam Miller, elected to serve as Elder for four years and Nathan Brown, elected to serve as Elder for two years. A year later, in 1872, Henry Brown and Daniel Frick were elected to serve two years.

On March 24, 1871, R. L. Brown, then a licentiate of the North Carolina Synod, was given permission by the President of the Synod, Rev. Whitson Kimball, to supply the congregation, complete its organization and build a church. A building committee was appointed on March 25 consisting of Charles Lyerly, Moses Lingle and Daniel Frick. Until the church could be built, the small congregation met in the home of Nathan Brown.

Approximately 5 ½ acres of land was purchased for the amount of \$25.00 from Nathan Brown, his wife Jane Brown and his mother, Amy Brown upon which to erect the church. The cornerstone of the new church was laid July 25, 1871 by President Kimball, assisted by Rev. Samuel Rothrock, Rev. Simeon Scherer and Rev. R. L. Brown, but the building was not completed until 1874 with neighbors and friends assisting in its erection. The dimensions of the frame structure were 53 feet long by 35 feet wide and faced the old Gold-Hill Salisbury Road (Old US 80).

An artist's remembrance of the church interior depicts the altar at the front of the church flanked by two large chairs. A pulpit was located on the left side and the entire altar area was surrounded by a round fence-like enclosure. Above the altar was a picture of the open Holy Bible and God's "ever watchful" eye. These illustrations simulated the ones in the churches in Germany as remembered by the founding fathers' ancestors. The original deed to the property as signed over to the church by the Brown family is framed and located in Christina's church archives. This deed was presented to the church in memory of Paul Brown Fry by the Michael Brown Historical Committee on October 28, 1990. Record of this deed, which was witnessed by Daniel Frick and Moses Lingle is to be found in Deed Book #45, page 673 on file in the Rowan County Courthouse, Salisbury, North Carolina under the date of March 27, 1871.

No record has been found of any application or issuing of a charter for the congregation.

Among the members of the first confirmation class was: Carson Brown, Margaret C. Brown, Lawson Rudolphus Lingle, David Carson Lingle, Lewis Lyerly and David Maxwell Lyerly.

During the early history of Christina Church, she was connected with other congregations as a pastorate, with other churches in the area sharing their ministers. Hence, the pastor was only at the church for two Sundays a month. Christiana has been associated with St. Matthews Luther's Union, Wittenberg and St. James Lutheran Churches in at least five different pastoral charges. Since 1918, Christina has been self-sustaining and has had the full time services of a pastor.

The original church building stood until 1898 when it was replaced by a larger frame structure to house the growing congregation. This facility was 65 feet in length by 50 feet in width. The cornerstone was laid September 17, 1898 by Rev. C. A. Rose, Rev. R. L. Brown and the pastor, Rev. C. A. Brown. It was dedicated by the Rev. Brown on January 1, 1899. The sermon for this occasion was delivered by the President of the North Carolina Synod, Rev. L. E. Busby.

An artist's remembered concept of the interior of the church pulpit area of 1924 shows the pulpit centered before the altar. Above the altar was once again placed the All-Seeing Eye of God. Below the eye was a triptych showing the Star of David, the Holy Bible and a descending dove. A second triptych showed a palm tree (like a Tree Planted by the Water), a fishing boat on calm water (Be Ye Fishers of Men) and a lone sheep grazing (The Lost Sheep Away from the Fold).

On May 11-15, 1904, under the pastorate of Rev. N. D. Bodie, the annual convention of the North Carolina Synod was held at Christiana Church. In 1925, while Rev. H. A. Trexler was pastor, the church was remodeled, new chancel furnishings and two transepts (wings) with ten classrooms were added to the building.

A parsonage was built and completed in 1931 at the cost of \$4,000. On Sunday July 19, 1931, Dr. J. L. Morgan consecrated the new parsonage and a program followed in the afternoon.

On June 25, 1933, Miss Lucille Lyerly, a member of Christina Church, was consecrated a deaconess at the Motherhouse, Baltimore, Maryland. On March 11, 1945 while the congregation was assembled for Sunday School, the church caught fire. Sparks coming from the flue of the central stove ignited the wooden shingles of the church. The congregation was warned and exited the church without anyone being burned. The only injury was to a man who cut his arm while breaking a window to save some of the artifacts of the church. Items known to have been saved were: pews, hymnals, record books, a pulpit, a reading stand, a piano, a pump organ, and brass candlesticks. While the church smoldered, the congregation reassembled to hold a worship service in the grove where the present church now stands. The Rev. Paul G. Kinney, pastor, led the service. On March 18, 1945, the congregation voted unanimously to rebuild. On November 18, 1945, Pastor Kinney, assisted Dr. J. L. Morgan, President of the North Carolina Synod, and other church officials broke ground for the new building. Pastor Kinney laid the first brick for the new building on April 12, 1946. The new church would be brick of a Gothic design, 125 feet 10 inches in length by 43 feet in width, with an educational department 87 feet 4 inches by 44 feet 6 inches. This construction would allow ample space for church and Sunday School auditoriums and

space for at least twenty-five classrooms. Wagoner Construction Company, under the supervision of L. Ray Cauble, was contacted to build the facility.

The congregation held services in Granite Quarry School building and at Wittenberg Lutheran Church during construction of the building. The first worship service was held in the basement of the new church on February 23, 1947. On November 7, 1948, the cornerstone was laid for the new place of worship by the pastor, Rev. Kinney, Dr. V. R. Cromer, President of the North Carolina Synod and Dr. G. W. McClanahan. This church with its furnishings, cost approximately \$120,000 and was dedicated free of debt, April 17, 1949 by Pastor Kinney, Dr. G. W. McClanahan, Dr. J. L. Morgan and Dr. P. D. Brown. Special services for the blessing of furniture of the church were held under the direction of Rev. W. Gilmer Boggs, pastor, on September 9, 1950. Included in the new church was a library which was started by Hayden Lingle with his WWII Prisoner of War compensation check. This library was maintained for many years by Miss Beulah Lyerly and became known as one of the finest church libraries in the North Carolina Synod.

In 1953, under Rev. W. Glimmer Boggs, a Fellowship Hall was built and the church grounds were improved at a cost of \$12,400. In 1955, the access roads to the church were paved at a cost of \$2,700. The growing congregation found a need for more Sunday School rooms, so on April 20, 1958, the congregation voted with the Rev. George A. Phillips, Pastor, to enlarge the educational space with an adjoining building. The building committee consisted of P. H. Lyerly, Chairman; L. Ray Cauble, Roy Lingle, Carl Cross, Robert P. Hoke, Odell Lingle, Mrs. Kyle Brown (Georgia), Mrs. W. J. Ritchie, Jr. (Doris), Mrs. E. L. Lyerly (Jennie); and Mrs. J. D. Thomas (Callie).

On June 15, 1958, ground was broken for the new Educational Building and a special offering for the building was received of \$5,060.80. This building, which adjoined the main church would house four children's departments and fourteen class rooms. On April 10, 1960, Dr. F. L. Conrad, President of the North Carolina Synod, delivered the sermon and held a consecration service for the opening of the \$45,238 building. The church library was moved from the main church area to a larger room in the new building. On November 13, 1960, a reception room was furnished in the narthex of the church where restless babies could be tended. The room was equipped with speakers so that you would be able to listen to the service. This room became known as the Bride's Parlor.

In February, 1968, a new well was drilled at a cost of \$2,000. Boy Scout Troop #317 was organized in December 1967. Also this year, Christiana elected to participate in the Rowan Co-Operative Christian Ministry. Interim Pastor Harold Rhoads developed the St. Andrew's Altar Guild in 1969 for high school age boys. These young men assisted with festival processions and other regular Sunday duties. 1970 was a year of several firsts-the first Newsletter, the first Christmas tree, the first pictorial directory.

On January 24, 1971, Christiana celebrated its 100th anniversary, being organized January 22, 1871. A history of the church was written, published and given to the congregation members. The Garden of Prayer was dedicated at the Centennial Celebration with Dr. J. Wilford Lyerly and Chaplain (Lt. Col.) W. Gilmer Boggs as speakers. Included in the garden was a monument with the head of Christ carved at the top. On the monument was listed the names of the charter members of the church. A

stone at the base of the monument provided an area for listing the name of each minister who pastored Christiana and their period of service. Two meditation benches and landscaping completed the garden which was located on the spot formerly occupied by the first two frame churches. In addition, new carpet was installed in the sanctuary, the worship area was painted, the roof was repaired, the outside of the church was painted, handrails were installed on all church stairs and more roads were paved. Renovations cost \$11,294.

On August 14, 1972, a new Rodgers 330 electric organ was installed. It was dedicated by the Rev. Harold Rhoads, former interim pastor, and Rev. William Hall, pastor, on September 13, 1972. At a congregational meeting on October 27, 1974, members voted to build a new parsonage to replace the one built in 1931. The foundation was poured on April 16, 1976. The old parsonage was sold to Bernard Peeler in October of 1976 for \$1,800 and was moved by Mr. Peeler off the church property. The new home was built in approximately the same location as the first one built. The Rev. Donald R. Safrit was installed as pastor in April of 1977 and he and his family was the first to occupy the new parsonage. The congregation was invited to view the new home at an open house, June 26, 1977. The cost of the parsonage was \$40,000.

In August 1979, the members of Christiana voted to build a ramp onto the front of the church to make it easier for people to enter who have trouble climbing stairs and for ease of transport of caskets during funeral services. The ramp was completed and dedicated on February 19, 1980. On April 18, 1982, the parsonage was dedicated as the mortgage was burned. The Rev. David Martin, Secretary of the NC Synod, led the service. Also in 1982: The hymnal, The Lutheran Book of Worship was introduced; the church council approved the use of the Educational Building for the Christiana Creative Play center-a preschool for three and four year olds; The Jennie Thomas Bible Class refurbished the exterior of the Fellowship Hall; the pews in the sanctuary were cushioned; and the stained glass windows had protective storm windows placed over them.

In 1984, paneling and chair rail was installed in the basement and the pews in the basement were painted. Carpet was put on the basement floor and hall, up the stairs and in the halls upstairs. A new roof was put on the church, the louvers on the bell tower were covered in aluminum and carpet was placed on the steps at the side entrance. An emergency light was purchased for use in the case of power failure. The Ordination Service for Randall Cauble, a son of the congregation, was held on June 29, 1986 with a reception following the service. The Christiana Educational Building was air conditioned in 1986.

On January 1, 1988, Christiana joined the North Carolina Synod in becoming a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This change came about as a result of the merger between the Lutheran Church of America, the American Lutheran Church and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. 1990 saw the implementation of a new church constitution and the formation of a new Benevolent Foundation. The Benevolent Foundation included the Brad Michael Patrick Memorial Scholarship and the Lena Bangle Lyerly Memorial Scholarship. In December, 1991, Christiana called the Rev. Carl M. Haynes to become pastor and his first sermon was preached the second Sunday in January, 1992.

In 1993, two new church signs were erected on the church's property-one facing HWY 52 and the other facing Old 80 HWY. The signs were dedicated on Palm Sunday, April 4, 1993. A new computer center-computer, work table and two printers- was donated and dedicated on June 27, 1993. During 1993 and 1994 funds were raised to replace the table and chairs in the Fellowship Hall. The church was incorporated in 1994. In 1995, a new Sacristy and Handicap bathrooms were dedicated and a new sound system was installed. With One Voice, a new supplemental hymnal, was introduced in January, 1996. Also this year, the church council approved the use of the Educational Building for the Salisbury Tutoring Academy. In 1998, the lives of two people in East Grand Forks, Minnesota were changed when a flooded river destroyed their home and their possessions. The church helped make a positive change in the lives of Vernon and Bernice Vidden by contributing over \$8,000 to help them rebuild. The Viddens came from Minnesota to accept this gift from the church. This year also saw the gift of another scholarship to be added to the Benevolent Foundation, the Blanche and Hubert Ritchie Scholarship.

The changes made to the church facility were many in 1999. The congregation was fortunate to be able to put the steeple on our church which had been in the original design from 1946. The steeple came about through a generous donation as did the new carillon that chimes the hours and plays beautiful hymns for the community to hear. This year also saw the installation of the playground for children and the revision of the church's constitution and by-laws. The church assisted victims of the 1999 storm, Hurricane Floyd that flooded the eastern coast. Our former pastor, Rev. Don Safrit, was serving Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Rocky Mount and their area were badly in need. Christiana collected \$2,700 in one offering to buy items to take to the area. The church also assisted when cold weather came by delivering 300 coats and sweaters. The congregational assistance to the flooded area continued through 2000 as special offerings were collected and blankets, children's shoes and clothing, a computer, and two printers were sent.

In 2001, the church celebrated its 130th anniversary with special activities. Pictures from the many years Christiana had been in existence were on display. Old Bible School pictures, pictures of former ministers, LCW (Lutheran Church Women) groups, and newspaper articles were all available for viewing. Also this year, the church voted to support missionaries, Tim and Wendy Freeze in Papua, New Guinea. The church hosted the Baccalaureate Service for East Rowan High School and the Community Thanksgiving Service. A new church committee was created in 2002 – The Archives Committee. The room called the Bride's Parlor was converted for the use of displaying archival information. The room was refitted with up-to-date furniture, new carpet, and new light fixtures from generous donations. An archives workroom was established in the Educational Building for storing and working with materials. An elevator with a covered portico was constructed with the entrance through the Educational Building. This addition was completed in 2003. In this same year, Christiana extended its physical presence to the World Wide Web by launching a new website <http://www.christianaclc.org>.

During Christiana's history several of our church members dedicated their lives to full-time church service. Lucille Lysterly became a Deaconess and was called Sister

Lucille. The following men became Lutheran ministers: Dr. P. D. Brown, Rev. G. H. L. Lingle, Dr. Luther A. Thomas, Dr. J. Wilford Lyerly, and Rev. Randall A. Cauble. As of this writing the congregation has 500 members on roll with 276 communing members. The church has five choirs-Chanel, Praise, Young Believers, Church Mice and Handbell. There are three youth groups-Class Act, C3 and Lion's Den. There are three groups of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (WELCA) and one organization of Lutheran Men in Mission. The church participates in community and world outreach through support of Rowan Helping Ministries, Boy and Girl Scouts Troops, Christiana Creative PlayCenter, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Family Services, Heritage Plantation, Donnelly Home, World Hunger Appeal, Missionary support, Battered Women's Shelter, Red Cross Blood Drive, CROP Walk for Hunger, and Habitat for Humanity.

In the 133 years since its organization, Christiana Lutheran church has surpassed what our forefathers could even imagine. Not only do we have a community church where we can worship, but a ministry that now is worldwide. We are justly proud of the foundation in the Word of God laid by these faithful members who are now a part of the Church Triumphant. The strong religious life presently fostered at Christiana is a result of their loyalty and sacrifices. Let us thank our Heavenly Father for them and the heritage which we enjoy as a result of their dedicated labors.

Pastors

1871	Simeon Secherer
1871-1884	R. L. Brown
1884-1885	J. M. Hedrick
1885	Harry Yarger, Supply
1886-1889	J. W. Strickler
1889-1894	J. Q. Wertz
1894-1900	C. A. Brown
1900	J. L. Morgan, Supply
1900-1903	J. P. Miller
1903-1907	N. D. Bodie
1908-1909	L. B. Spracher
1909-1911	J. A. Linn
1911	B. E. Petrea, Supply
1911-1913	R. R. Sowers
1914-1918	N. D. Bodie
1919-1921	C. B. Miller
1922-1923	H. W. Jeffcoat
1923	E. R. Lineberger, Sr.
1924-1930	H. A. Trexler
1931-1938	G. W. McClanahan
1938-1943	J. W. Iddings
1943-1949	P. G. Kinney
1950-1956	W. G. Boggs

1958-1961	G. A. Phillips
1961-1969	L. Franklin Darten
1969	Harold E. Rhoads V. P.
1970-1976	William E. Hall
1976	Olan Sink, V. P.
1976-1977	Herman Fisher, VP
1977-1991	Don R. Safrit
1991	J. White Iddings, Interim
1992-	Carl M. Haynes