

1700'S - A TIME FOR BEGINNING

The history of the congregation of St. Paul's Lutheran Church is a story of people and their faith.

It is a story that begins in the middle. It is the story of refugees who fled from their German homeland near the Rhine Valley called Palatinate in the middle of their lives.

They fled to England and Holland from the conquest and persecution of King Louis XIV of France. Queen Anne of England sent these refugees to America. This is quoted from official British records of 1709: "The Rev. Joshua Kockerthal and other poor Lutherans came to London from the Lower Rhine Valley area of Germany praying to be transferred to some of your majesty's plantations in America; in number, 41, 10 men, 10 women, 21 children; in the utmost want being reduced to the miserable condition by the ravages committed by the French, when they lost all they had. It is proposed to settle them on Hudson's River where they can be made useful in the production of naval stores and as a frontier against the French and Indians."

And so these refugees came over to America in a Man of War with fourteen other Lutherans as part of the government relief program. They settled in Newburgh.

It is important to note that before that, in 1695, Henry Beekman, a Kingston judge, petitioned Queen Anne for a patent of land in Dutchess County lying in what is now Rhinebeck and was then Sepaskenot, an Indian name, across the Esopus Creek. He received two patents, one in 1697, one in 1703.

Other refugees came too. Three thousand Palatines came with Governor Hunter and landed in New York. These groups settled along the Hudson River, on the east and west sides.

In 1712, the naval store failed and as the Palatines were left on their own, they moved up and down the Hudson Valley. The West Camp settled in Saugerties. The East Camp started in Germantown and then headed to Ryn Beck. Judge Beekman gave a deed to his son in 1713, and granted 124 acres for the High Dutchers. These High Dutchers arrived in 1714 to the Ryn Beck area.

As the people who were here drew together, a union was formed of the Lutheran and German Reformed at 'Pinck's Corners' (north of 9 and 9G) to build a log cabin church. It was 1715.

And so therefore, the official history of the congregation of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Red Hook goes back to 1715 with the descendants of the refugees who settled in the Hudson Valley. The Church was known as the "German Church of Ryn Beck."

By 1718, there were 35 families of 140 people in Rhinebeck, whose area went north to the Columbia County line and south to Staatsburg. The church also served as a school. A small village grew around the church which was the focal point of the community.

In 1729, disagreement arose between the two congregations which resulted in a split. The Reformed Church bought the Lutheran's share and remained in the log church. The Lutherans bought land further north and built the Stone Church, named St. Peter's.

In 1784, the German Reformed Church incorporated as "The German Reformed Zion's Church of Ryn Beck." In 1796, they relocated to the village of Red Hook where St. Paul's now stands. They built a frame church by 1802.

At the close of the 1700's, the two churches are still separate. So far, St. Peter's has had 8 pastors and the Reformed has had 11.