**HISTORY OF THE ARCHITECTURE**

1738: Dedicated substantial stone house of worship, southeast corner S. Duke St. and Mifflin St.

1761: Laid cornerstone for larger house of worship, northeast corner S. Duke St. and Mifflin St.

1766: Completed larger, red brick Georgian house of worship.

1785: Began construction of bell tower and steeple.

1794: Dedication of 195-foot steeple with solid-wood carvings of the four evangelists.

1853: Built parsonage on former site of old stone house of worship.

1853-1854: Renovated interior of Georgian house of worship, reorienting front door from Duke St. to Mifflin St.

1876: Built Sunday school chapel across Mifflin St. from the church, dismantled 1954.

1955: Dedicated colonial-style, red brick parish house on site of former Sunday school chapel.
In the early 1700s, German-speaking Lutherans began building houses in and around the American Indian village that would become Lancaster Town. A visiting German clergyman baptized two children, Anna Maria Lien and Frederick Lingelberger, in 1729. Four years later, the Rev. John Casper Stoever made his initial entries in a “Church Record for the Town Lancaster / Year 1733.”

With the coming of a resident pastor, the congregation turned its attention to the construction of “a substantial stone” house of worship. Completed in 1738, the church with its steeple pointing to the sky gave the fledgling community a sense of identity and purpose. Adam Simon Kuhn, a landholder and local doctor, donated a red satin cloth to cover the communion elements at the administration of the Lord’s Supper. Anna Elizabeth Scheutz, wife of “a very worthy saddler,” presented an embroidered napkin for the baptismal table.

That the Lutheran church held a prominent place in the borough’s activities can best be illustrated in the account of a gathering held on August 11, 1762. On that summer day, dignitaries from at least ten American Indian communities and the Pennsylvania colonial government were in town to conduct a treaty talk, one of many held in Lancaster between 1730 and 1763. Although the negotiators usually met in the Center Square courthouse, the 1762 gathering convened at least one session in the nearby Lutheran house of worship.

The story of Trinity church in the first 100 years after 1762 can perhaps best be told in the spotlight of pastoral leadership. In 1766 the Rev. John Siegfried Gerock led the congregation through the move across Mifflin St. into their beautiful, new Georgain house of worship. More than two centuries later, this structure still enfolds the Lutherans of South Duke Street. Of particular note was the choice of an English architectural style, underscoring the German Lutheran community’s growing comfort with the British colonial government.

Rev. Dr. Gotthilf Henry Ernestus Muhlenberg was the youngest son of the Lutheran patriarch, Rev. Henry Muhlenberg. In 1785 he wrote his father, “I baptized 179, confirmed 72, administered the Lord’s Supper to 627, and buried 48.” That same year, construction began on the 195-foot steeple, eventually making Trinity Church the tallest structure in Lancaster. The addition of the tower’s figures—carvings of the four biblical evangelists—gave the steeple a renown it enjoys to the present time. Dr. Muhlenberg was also a botanist and cofounder with the Reformed pastor, Rev. William Hendel, of Lancaster’s Franklin College. He died in 1815, having served Trinity for 35 years.

Rev. Christian L. F. Endress came to the congregation immediately after Dr. Muhlenberg’s death. Within ten years, people were asking for regular English worship services. Other members strongly opposed the loss of German, forming their own congregation and building Zion Church on the rear portion of land owned by Trinity.

Well known for his ecumenical approach, the Rev. John Christopher Baker served Trinity from 1828 until 1853. During a memorial service for President Zachary Taylor, who died 16 months after taking office, Rev. Baker marched arm-in-arm into Trinity Church with Fr. Bernard Keenan, St. Mary’s Catholic Church, and Bishop Samuel Bowman, St. James Episcopal Church.

The Rev. Dr. Gottlob F. Krotel came to Trinity in 1853. Only 27 years old, he brought a youthful spirit to the church. In those final years leading up to the Civil War, Dr. Krotel was often ahead of his congregation, firmly supporting those opposed to the system of slavery. In May 1862, six months after Dr. Krotel left to take a pastorate in Philadelphia, the General Synod of the Lutheran Church met at Trinity. For the first time, the convention took a public stance, denouncing “the spread of domestic slavery in our land.”

Nearly one hundred years later, the vestry at Trinity acknowledged continuing changes in American church life when they suspended the pew rental system. By that time, women like Mary Elizabeth Weidel had taken their places as recognized lay leaders. Along with countless anonymous women, Weidel made significant behind-the-scenes contributions. These women were Sunday school teachers and members of the Junior Missionary Society. They served on committees that planned church festivals and meals. They came to services Sunday after Sunday, singing hymns and listening quietly to the prayers and sermons that defined Lutheran experience and worship.

During the 1970s, the Rev. Wallace E. Fisher described the changing congregation with these words, “Humbly grateful for its distinguished place in American history, Trinity prefers to stress Christ’s ministry to the contemporary needs of the modern city.” In the 21st century, the people of Holy Trinity echo the Rev. Fisher’s words when they speak of remembering God’s goodness in years past while remaining committed to God’s service in the present day.