

Lutheranism in the United States
Part II: Three Champions of American Lutheranism
Pr. Arthur C. Bergren

Rev. Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg

Born: Eimbeck, Germany in 1711

Education: University of Gotingen

Ordained: Leipzig in 1739

Rev. Johann G. Francke: Offered a 3 point parish in America

23 September 1742: Stepped off the ship from Germany at Charleston, South Carolina.

In South Carolina, he experienced the institution of slavery. Quoting Muhlenberg, *"This is a horrible state of affairs, and it will entail a severe judgement."*

Motto: Ecclesia Plantanda, Let the Church be Planted!

Oversaw Growth and Buildings:

Tulpehocken 1743

Providence 1745

Germantown 1746

New Hanover 1747

Philadelphia 1748

Tireless Worker of the Lord

August 1748 – Ministerium of Pennsylvania – First Synod

6 Swedish & German Pastors Gathered

24 Lay Delegates

Created a Organization, Authorized a Hymnal

Created an American Lutheran Church, not a European Extension

Mulhenberg: *"A twisted cord of many threads will not easily break.*

There must be unity among us."

Meet Annually

Critical: Lutheran Church needed infrastructure

1749: 12,000 Germans Immigrated

1771: 81 Congregations in Pennsylvania

1783: 5 Districts

1786: New York Congregations break off and form own Synod

Mulhenberg's Family

General John Mulhenberg – Revolutionary War General

Frederick Mulhenberg – 1st Speaker of the House

Henry Mulhenberg – Scientist, College President

Legacy: Let the church be planted.

Rev. William Alfred Passavant

Born: 1821 in Butler County, Pennsylvania

Education: Jefferson College, Gettysburg Theological Seminary

American Church Historians refer to 1849-1893 as "The Passavant Era"

Established Social Services Everywhere and for Everyone

1849 Pittsburg – University of Pittsburg Medical Center

1863 Milwaukee – Sinai Samaritan Medical Center

1865 Chicago – Northwestern Memorial Hospital

Numerous Orphanages, Homes for the Aged

Institution of Protestant Deaconesses

Compassionate Man of God

"The Lord will provide. I am going out to get some money and will be back for dinner." He returned with a man shaking with fever. *"The Lord has not sent us money, but he has sent us one of His people to be cared for."*

"The Church is not merely a sheepfold, but a workshop...How necessary, when death robs children of its natural protector, that the Church of the Redeemer should stand in its place."

Denomination Founder

1845 Pittsburg Synod
1848 Publisher/Editor of the Missionary
Thiel College, Greenville, Pennsylvania
1867 General Council
1891 Chicago Theological Seminary (Maywood 1910, LSTC 1967)

Died on January 3, 1894

Obituaries appeared all across the nation

Legacy: ELCA: 2nd Largest Provider of Non Governmental Social Services.

Rev. Beth Platz

First Woman Pastor of European Descent Ordained in North America
Graduate of Gettysburg Theological Seminary

Lutheran Church Women of the Lutheran Church in America (LCA)

1970: Annual Convention

Pass a Resolution to memorialize the National Assembly

Ordain Women

LCA

Passed such a resolution and changed its constitution

American Lutheran Church (ALC) approved women's ordination
later in 1970

22 November 1970

Elizabeth Platz was ordained

Served at Lutheran Campus Ministry, University of Maryland

Taking Pr. Platz Journey:

4 March 1979

Lydia Rivera Kalb is the first Latina woman ordained.

26 August 1979

Earlen Miller is the first woman of African descent ordained.

22 January 1990

Ruth Frost and Phyllis Zillhart are the first open members of the LGBTQ community ordained.

Because of ELCA policies on same gender relationships, the congregation that called them was sadly disciplined.

St. Francis was suspended for 5 years

Then the congregation was expelled in 1996.

In 2010, Frost and Zillhart were formally received back into the ELCA after the 2009 changes in policy to welcome the LGBTQ community on the roster

12 June 1992

April Uring Larson is the first woman of European descent elected as a synodical bishop in the ELCA.

7 June 2001

Margarita Martinez is the first woman of color & first Latina woman elected as a synodical bishop in the ELCA.

5 November 2004

Phyllis Anderson is the first woman of European descent to serve as a president of an ELCA seminary.

12 December 2009

Dolores McKay is the first woman of Middle Eastern descent ordained.

14 August 2013

Elizabeth Eaton is the first woman of European descent elected as presiding bishop of the ELCA. Eaton is reelected on the first ballot in 2019

5 May 2018

Patricia Davenport is first woman of African descent elected as bishop in the ELCA.

1975 there were 32 women pastors in the predecessor bodies of the ELCA

In 2015, there are 4552 women pastors in the ELCA

While much progress has been made, more is required.

Men are more likely to be lead pastors,

While women are more likely to be associate pastors.

As of 2016, only 119 out of 145 churches in the LWF ordain women.

As of 2016, women pastors made 86% of what
their male counter parts made.

32% of women pastors experienced sexual harassment.

While 6.5% of men pastors experienced sexual harassment.

Women of color face a disproportionate wait time for their first calls
In comparison to their white counterparts.

Legacy: Our daughters and granddaughter now live and learn in a church that is dedicated to welcoming women as full partners and equals, thanks to Elizabeth Platz.