

Dear Friends,

The mission of the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society is to stimulate and cultivate interest in the continuing legacy of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. To accomplish this, we collect and preserve historical material and will also share periodic updates on our work to make information and resources accessible to all.

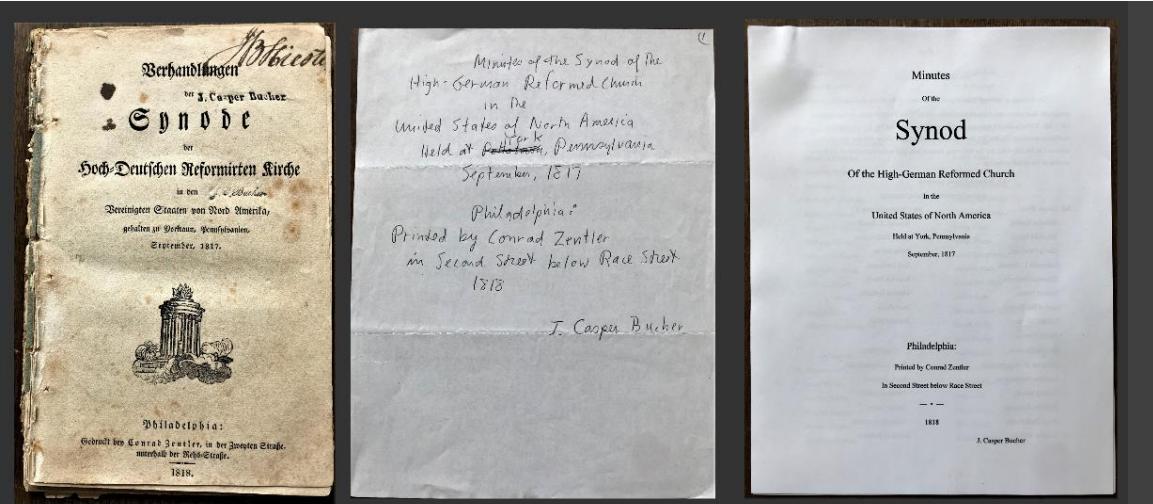
This update is the inaugural edition of our new form of communicating with you, our dear supporters and friends, the exciting work and progress that is taking place at the Society. Look for future editions that will be coming your way!

### **Translating the Past**

What do you do if the primary documents in your archives are in a language other than English? Have them translated, of course.

One of the characteristics of the early German Reformed Church of the United States was its use of the German language in its services and official documents, including the meeting minutes of the various synods and classes. The Society has the privilege of preserving many of these documents from the 1800s.

These pamphlets were printed and distributed a year after the meetings took place. They provided not just the minutes of these important meetings, where much of the higher business of the church took place, but they also contain statistical information about the individual classes within the church. Unfortunately, the only copies of some of these pamphlets in the collection were printed in German, making research a bit more of a burden. To improve the use of these documents, we have been translating them into English.



Above: The front page of the 1817 Synod minutes starting with the original text, the handwritten translation, and the finished transcription.

With staff, volunteers, and a generous grant from the Rhoades and Carpenter Foundation, we have been slowly translating these booklets into English to make them more accessible for research purposes.

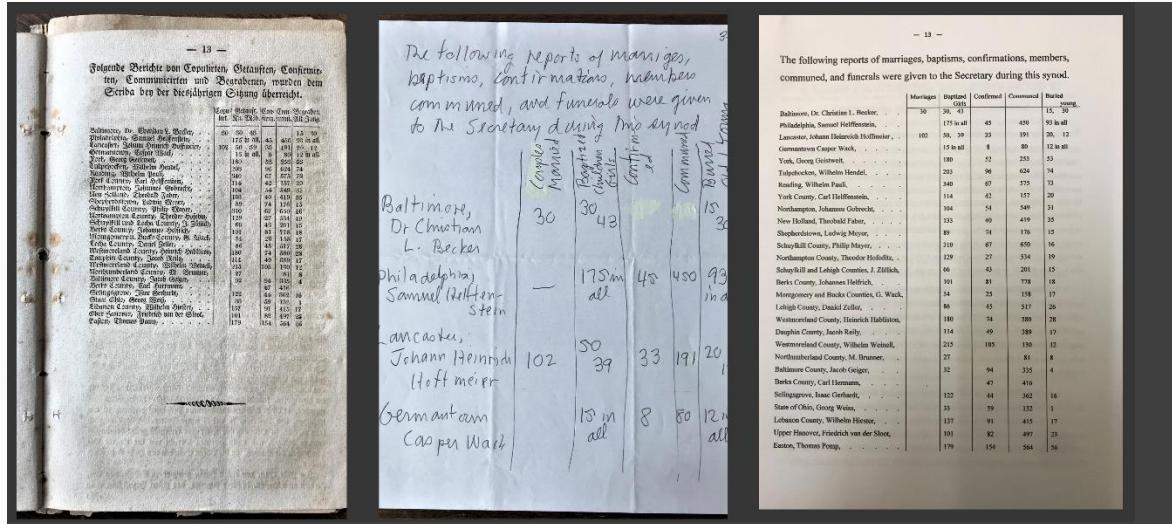
Rev. Robert Hunsicker is one of our volunteers who translates the German into English. His notes are then transcribed into both computer files and hard copies.

"It's an assignment that I have found to be very interesting. One of the challenges has been that there were at times German expressions used that are no longer a part of the current German language."

The project is time consuming and can be expensive. Professional translators can charge up to \$90.00 per hour, but because of the hard work by volunteers like Rev. Hunsicker, the Society is able to present this important material to a much wider audience.

The finished product is not just a translation of the text but we also try to maintain the look and structure of the original document. Below is a chart that breaks down all of the marriages, baptisms, confirmations, members, communed, and funerals according to county.

Look for more updates to come about this important work that is being done at the Society!



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## Heritage Sunday

The first annual Evangelical and Reformed Heritage Sunday is a dedicated day for each church to celebrate and share their unique heritage and continue the traditions of the former Evangelical and Reformed Church. We will celebrate this day on Sunday, June 13, 2021. Resources are available on our website. Visit the [Heritage Sunday](#) page for a sample order of worship, bulletin covers, suggested hymns, and various historical resources.

# CELEBRATING YOUR EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED HERITAGE

The Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society's Heritage Sunday is being celebrated for the first time on June 13, 2021. This date was chosen because it is close to the June 26, 1934 anniversary of the merger of the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America. The following tips below can help you plan a celebration for your congregation.

## TIPS FOR CELEBRATING YOUR EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED HERITAGE

### Heritage Banner

Design a "heritage banner" that incorporates images and symbols of your congregation's past and its hopes for the future.

### Historical Minutes

Write a series of historical minutes to present during worship services throughout the year. They can be about events or people in the life of the church.

### Cemetery Tour

Organize a cemetery tour to learn about some of the founding families of your church.

### Newsletter & Bulletin

Use the church newsletter or bulletin to commemorate the anniversary of significant events in the church's past.

### Church Events

Ask members for pictures from past church events. Use these to create a slide show, display, or narrated video.

### Heritage Hymn

Consult with your church musician or choir leader on the choice of a "heritage hymn" or anthem for your congregation. Or, based on the history of your congregation, draft new lyrics for use with a favorite hymn.

### Oral History

Record oral history interviews with long-time members of your congregation. Transcribe selected interviews and make a booklet of memories to distribute. This may be a project your youth group would enjoy as it draws the generations together.

### Pew Rental

Host an auction to "rent" your pews. Renting pews was a common practice for raising money in American churches before the modern system of pledging. You could designate the money raised for a special cause.

### Consult ERHS

Consult with the Evangelical & Reformed Historical Society on creating a church archives or to donate your valuable records.



Adapted from the Presbyterian Historical Society's website. Found at <https://www.history.pcusa.org/services/resources-opportunities/anniversary-celebration/tips-celebrating-your-presbyterian-heritage>

## Support the Society

The work of the Society is made possible by the generous support of our donors and friends. It is through this support that we are able to continue the work of preserving our artifacts and history as well as making them available to historians, researchers, and genealogists. Consider giving to the Society today and remember to follow us on social media and our website to stay up to date with all that is happening at the Society.

Interested in a planned gift? Contact Alison Mallin at [info@erhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@erhistoricalsociety.org) or by calling the Society at (717) 290-8734 to learn more.

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## REVIEWS!

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