

A Memorabilia of 2011

What a year 2011 has been, full of highs and lows and endless days of routine — just like every other year. And yet two features stand out to make 2011 a most memorable year.

Years from now we Moravians will be able to look back to 2011 as “that other year of celebration.” And I hope we will be able to add, “. . .and that is when we began another big spurt of growth like Pappy Christian Lewis Rights and Edward Rondthaler in the 1800’s.”

The year’s big celebration of course was the very first ever Moravian Festival, which was held September 10 at **New Philadelphia**. More than 5,000 attended, which is almost a third of the whole Southern Province. Not since we filled Winston-Salem’s old Memorial Coliseum for the Quincentennial in 1957 have we had so many Moravians gathered in one spot. A 5-K run raised \$9,000 for Sunnyside Ministry and the festival itself raised more than \$14,000 for the Provincial Board of Cooperative Ministries. All in all, from the mayor on down, everyone had a grand time at the Moravian Festival. And as one bishop noted, “This is just what we need — the opportunity to unite in a common cause when we are not voting on something.”

Another big celebration took place this year, the 11th Moravian Women’s Conference, which was held June 23-26 in the Charlotte neighborhood. More than 400 Moravian women from around the world were drawn to the four days of workshops, worship, prayer, and friendship. “Stepping Out of the Boat” (Matt. 14:22, etc.) was the theme as participants were encouraged to put their trust in Christ and venture beyond their comfort zones. The conference’s Holy Communion gave firm confirmation of how much Moravian women have already stepped out of the boat. Thirty ministers — deacons, presbyters, and bishops — served the Communion, all dressed in their white surplices, and every one of them was female. That’s a long way from 33 years ago when the Southern Province ordained its first woman minister in modern times.

Along the same line, the Southern Province is now host to the Unity Women’s Desk, the Moravian Unity’s new resource to address women’s issues worldwide. The idea arose in the Women’s Consultations stretching back to the first consultation held at **Kernersville** in 1995 and through the efforts of the Rev. Patty Garner, who is serving as volunteer director of the Unity Women’s Desk. Stop in at Cedarhyrst, the Province’s headquarters in Salem, and visit with Sr. Garner in her spacious staircase landing “office.”

While celebration is a standout feature of 2011, the year’s second great feature is implementation as the Southern Province remakes itself following the decisions of the 2009 special Synod and the 2010 regular Synod. Gone are the old Board of Evangelism and Home Missions and Board of Christian Education. In their place is the Board of Cooperative Ministries, serving congregations and Regional Conferences of Churches to develop and maintain a high level of health and growth. To achieve that, several Provincial positions are being discontinued and others created, all with the goal of enhanced service for the churches and their members.

Another aspect of implementation is the Regional Conferences of Churches, 12 groupings of the Southern Province churches sharing heritage and proximity. Pulpit exchanges, joint services, combined outreach and mission have become a regular feature of the various Regional Conferences. As an example, the South Wachovia Regional Conference, consisting of **Enterprise, Friedland, Immanuel-New Eden, Pine Chapel, and Union Cross**, held a “Summer Gathering” on August 20 with a potluck dinner, fellowship, and a variety show featuring a new group ominously named the “Pathetic Parsons.” And just this Advent the Peters Brook Conference (**Ardmore, Bethesda, Calvary, Christ, Fries Memorial, and Morning Star** Fellowship) came

together for a Christmas giving tree at Cleveland Homes Center and a lovefeast at Homestead Hills.

While the Southern Province stepped into new opportunities with implementation of its new structure, continuing agencies had their share of mission and service.

Laurel Ridge, our Moravian mountaintop, enjoyed a bustling summer with more than 700 youth attending camp or mission service and almost 200 adults volunteering as counselors, programs leaders, etc. Response to the “Feed My Sheep” campaign has allowed Laurel Ridge to begin construction on a new summer camp kitchen, and Friends donations have helped provide new floors in the Birches cabins and lodge and a new copier in the camp office. It’s true. Laurel Ridge holds a special place in our Moravian hearts as our mountain home which seems to be just a little bit closer to the Lord.

Director Tommy Cole reports that 2011 was an exciting, busy, and eventful year at **Sunnyside Ministry**, the Moravian Church’s outreach in southeastern Winston-Salem. Interior renovation and refurbishing begun in 2010 have been completed, but, oh dear, already because of increased need, Sunnyside might be outgrowing its enlarged facility. “Without so many faithful donors and volunteers,” Br. Cole tells us, “we could not begin to provide the services we do to those in our community who find themselves in crisis situations.” Some 230 volunteers from 60 churches (not just Moravian) conducted over 6,700 interviews with clients seeking assistance, gave out over 5,000 grocery orders to more than 15,000, provided clothing to over 11,000, paid over 2,600 housing and utility bills for families, supported 14 college students with scholarships and laptops, and still operated the longest running free medical clinic in Forsyth County.

The **Moravian Music Foundation**, reports Director Nola Reed Knouse, saw a busy year filled with publications (12 in the Moravian Star Anthem Series!); the production of *TUMFUATE!* a compact-disc recording from the first Moravian Women’s Conference in Tanzania (2008); and the recording and editing a CD of Moravian sacred vocal duets for release in 2012. The first “Moravian Music on the Mountain” weekend was held at Laurel Ridge last February with 50 participants from some 20 congregations, and a second such weekend is planned for March 2012. Four doctoral students began research projects at MMF this year, and we anticipate their findings bringing old music to new life. MMF is working with an Interprovincial committee to produce a collection of “Newly Written Moravian Songs” to be published in 2013; submissions are still being welcomed! “We are working hard,” Director Knouse continues, “on preparations for the 2013 Moravian Music Festival (July 14-20, 2013, in Bethlehem), and have reworked the Festival website (www.MoravianMusicFestival.org). A most exciting acquisition came our way in the fall, as we were able to purchase a first-edition print of the score of Haydn’s *Creation*, owned by Moravian composer J. F. Peter and dated (in his hand!) 1807. 2012 promises to be busy with Festival preparations, recordings, concerts, and who-knows-what else!”

Yup, that’s Nola Knouse — always upbeat with an exclamation point to top it all off. Meanwhile, staid old **Moravian Archives**, the Moravian Music Foundation’s “roommate” in the Davis Center in Salem (“we’re in the graveyard”) continued its sojourn in the mission field with not one but two more volumes of *Records of the Moravians among the Cherokees*, covering 1802-10. This is tremendous stuff — accounts of our Moravian missionaries to the Cherokee Nation with personal insight, frailty, and adventure tossed in. We’re up to 1812, the beginning of war years, in editing volume 4 of *Records: Cherokees* with publication date set for this spring. If you don’t have your copies, they are available at Moravian Archives in Salem (“we’re in the graveyard”) at a cheap \$40 apiece including tax. End advertisement.

You think times are bad? Not at Salem College, which this fall welcomed its largest first-year class in more than a decade for a total enrollment of 1,100. For the seventh year in a row *Money* magazine placed Salem in its top 10 “best buys” among women’s colleges. Not bad for the little nursery school for Salem’s daughters begun by Sr.

Elisabeth Oesterlein in April 239 years ago. And be prepared in its 240th year to hear of big plans of growth for Salem Academy & College.

Now rounding up our Memorabilia for another event-packed year, we again turn to the churches with their members as the heartbeat of the Province.

No major new constructions were begun in 2011, though **Union Cross** and **Oak Grove** continued long-range projects as available funds allowed. Refurbishing existing buildings was the watchword in several churches. **Grace** remodeled its fine Mount Airy granite church building and discovered beautiful original hardwood floors beneath old carpeting. **Hopewell** is enjoying multiple uses — heart-healthy walks, basketball, fellowship events, showers, birthday parties, etc — in its fine new building which it calls its Christian Life Center. Mindful of conservation as a form of stewardship of the Lord's bounty, **Leaksville** installed new energy-efficient windows (with new blinds) in several rooms at the church. **Trinity** set about sprucing up its Reich Fellowship Hall complete with comfy new chairs. And **Moravia** launched a campaign to raise \$20,000 for new fire-rated front doors plus seven stained glass windows with Moravian themes.

In tight economic times, ways and means of fund-raising have become a hot topic among the churches. **Kernersville** has gone high-tech with the opportunity for us to donate by credit card on its web site through PayPal on the Internet. In addition, Kernersville went *very* upscale in support of its summer youth mission program with an elegant five-course gourmet dinner of crab-stuffed chicken breast or filet mignon, all served up by “chef” Don Winters. It was a huge hit. (Psst, ministers, how are your cooking skills?) For its \$20,000 renovation **Moravia** is making use of a “Little’ Blue Jug” campaign to collect loose change. And as churches face budget shortfalls, perhaps we should be mindful of this declaration from **Friedberg’s** Board of Trustees: “Continually reducing the amount of spending to bring people to Jesus and growing our congregation is not a good thing.” How true, how truly scriptural.

As a historical note, sad to say, the Peachtree property that was **Immanuel** Moravian Church for more than 90 years early this year passed into other hands. Calvary Baptist Church now owns it as part of its Latino ministry.

Of course we cannot end a Memorabilia of such a “celebration” year as 2011 on a down note. So let us recall **Prince of Peace**, which on November 30 had its 25th anniversary. Since it was organized in 1986, it has grown from just 100 members to more than 400 communicant members representing over 20 nationalities and an average attendance of 300. That’s an inspiration for us all to follow. Looking to the New Year, 2012, we see **Oak Grove** will have its 125th anniversary on September 25, **Trinity** its 100th anniversary on July 14, and **New Beginnings** and the united **Immanuel-New Eden** their 10th anniversaries on May 19 and October 7 respectively.

And finally back to earlier this month, on December 15 our seventh oldest church, **St. Philips** (which will have its 190th anniversary next May 5), celebrated the 150th anniversary of its second church building, the beautifully restored brick building at the foot of Church Street in Salem, with other member churches of the Salem Creek Regional Conference of Churches, **Home, Messiah**, and **Trinity**, joining in during the anniversary and Christmas lovefeast. May this spirit of harmony and unity of purpose accompany us many “celebration” years ahead as we follow the leading of Christ our Savior.

— Richard W. Starbuck
Moravian Archives
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