

† HOLY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HILL OVERLOOKING ROBESONIA †

HOW, WHERE, WHAT, HOW MUCH? A little more EARLY history to set the stage for St. Daniel's congregation and first church building! 🙏

King Charles II of England signed a charter in 1681 granting the territory that was to become Pennsylvania to William Penn. William Penn was strongly interested in colonizing the New World and establishing a sanctuary for persecuted Quakers, a religious sect to which he belonged. In 1711, Penn bequeathed 10,000 acres to his daughter, Leticia. This tract, known as the Manor of Plumpton, contained what is now known as the town of Robesonia and surrounding territory. The grandson of William Penn further divided this tract. On August 29, 1728, he granted to William Allen, Jr., the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, a tract of land in Heidelberg Township totaling 2,762 acres. It was on a portion of this "Allen Tract" that the Church in Heidelberg would be built in 1751.

The German forebearers of the Heidelberg congregation had settled in the region of Tulpehocken and had established farms. On May 30, 1751, the Heidelberg congregation came into possession of portions of three adjoining farms on the Allen Tract in order to build a church.

One of the tracts, given by Johannes Artz, measured 1/2 acre and 7-1/2 perches. (A perch of land is an old unit of measurement typically defined as 16.5 feet long.)

The first church building appears to have been erected on the Artz tract. This site is in the northwest corner of the property. The greater part of the old graveyard is also located here.

The Declaration of the Trust in the case of the land received from Johannes Artz was "to be for the Benefit, Use and Behoof of the poor of said Lutheran Congregation at Heidelberg, aforesaid forever, and a place to erect a House of Religious Worship for the Use and Service said congregation and, if occasion shall require, for a place to bury their Dead."

On May 24, 1751, members of the congregation made a contract with Andrew Dietz and John Michael Dietz, masons of Lancaster County, to perform the masonry work of the first church building. The church walls were to have the following dimensions: length 40 feet; width 36 feet; height 20 feet. One shilling, 6 pence in Pennsylvania currency was to be paid for each perch of masonry, and double pay allowed for the foundation. This contract provides evidence that the first church building was a stone structure and not a wooden or log building as was commonly supposed and customary in early church buildings of that time.

A second agreement was made on June 29, 1751 with Frederick Kobel, who was to make 2 door frames, 8 window frames, and a gallery two pews deep on the long side of the church and three pews deep on the short side. He was also to erect a stairway, set the purlins for the rafters, and construct a vestibule on the outside of the door. For this work, he was to receive 11 pounds Pennsylvania currency.

Another contract was made on June 18, 1753 with Christian Betz, Master Joiner, who was to receive 24 pounds Pennsylvania currency for whatever carpentry work was yet to be done in the church.

The cornerstone of this, the first building, was laid in 1751 and the building was probably completed in 1754. In order to finance the construction, the congregation solicited donations from the membership. A collection was made at the time of the laying of the cornerstone.

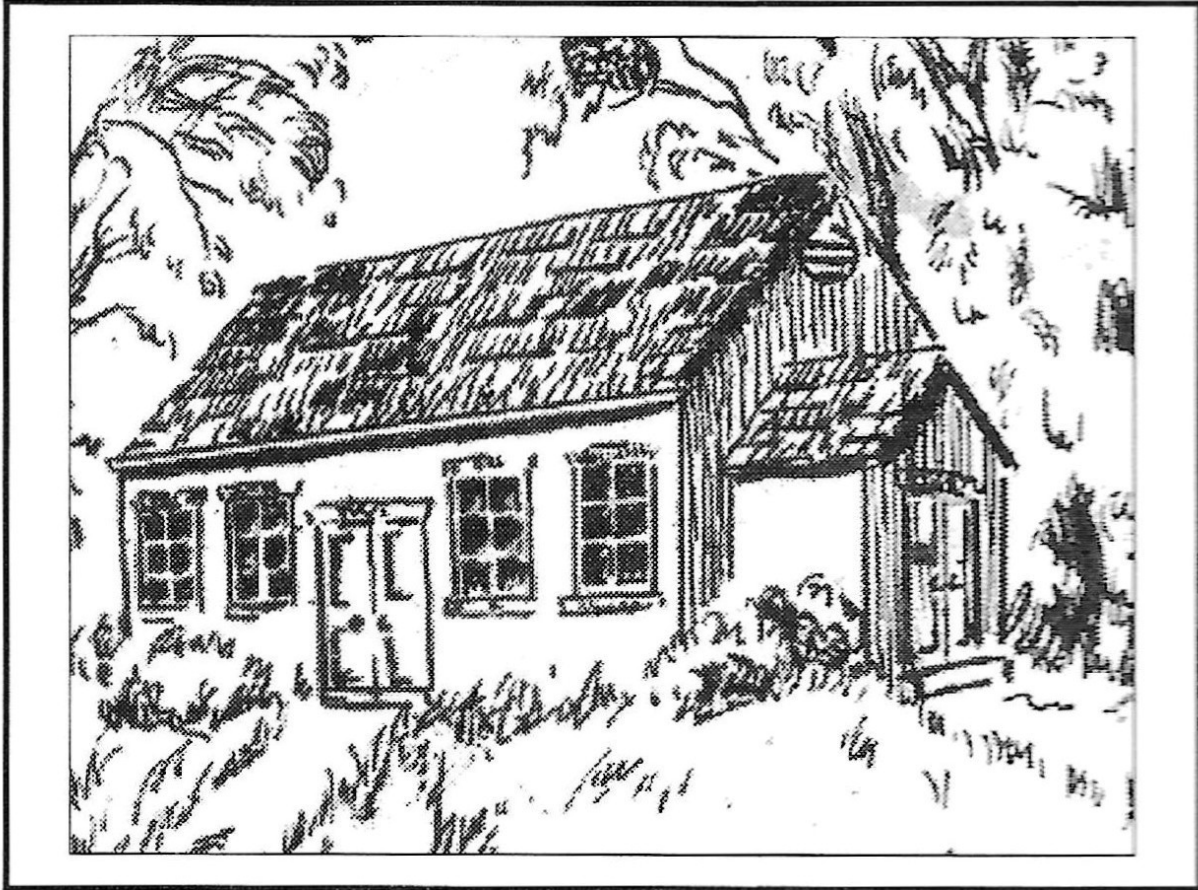
The first church cost approximately \$90 in Pennsylvania currency at the time.

What an amazing and enduring history we share!

Follow this space throughout the year for snippets of St. Daniel's history from 1751 to 2026.

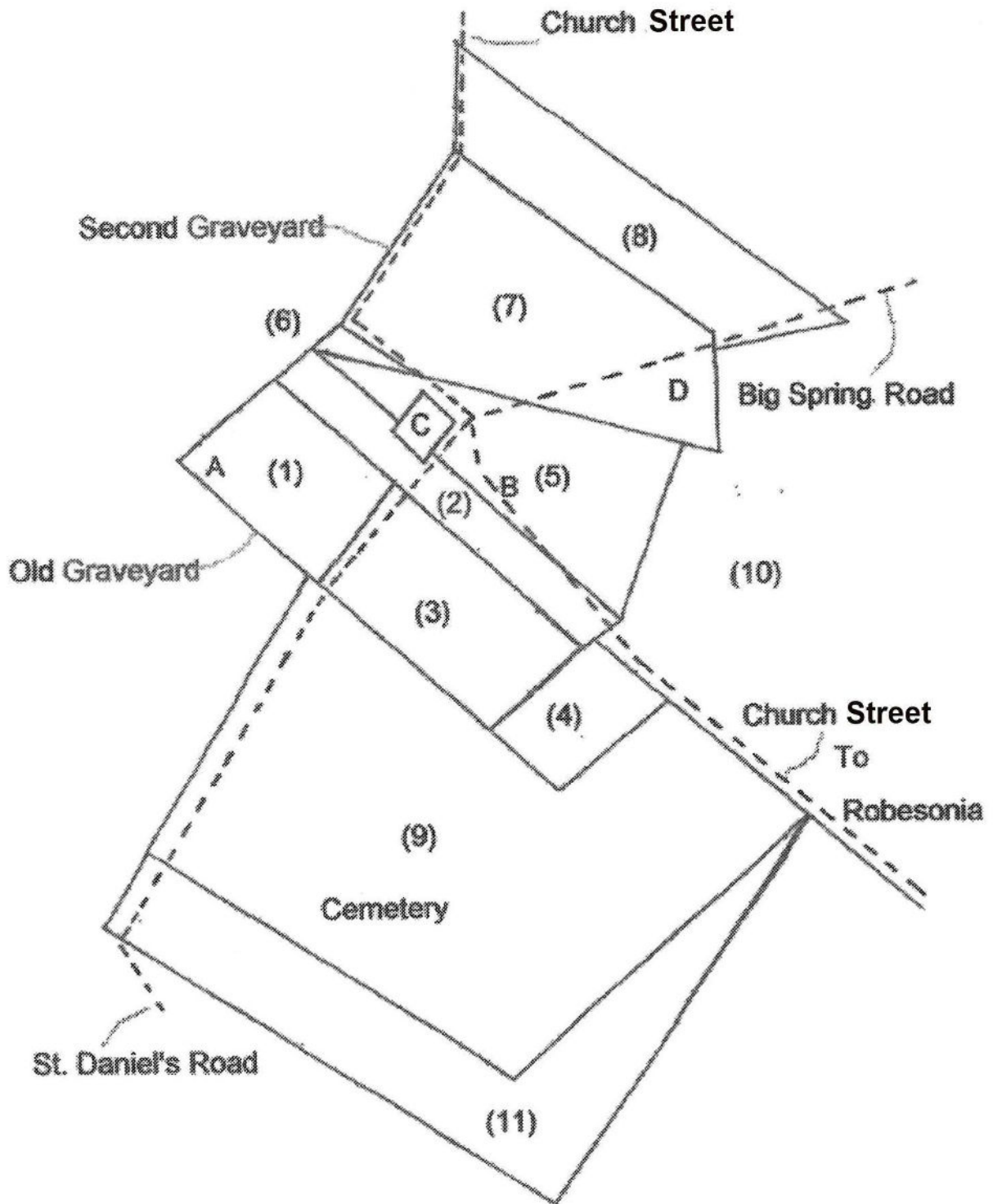
Historical details taken from the 'Saint Daniel's Evangelical Lutheran Church "Eck Kirche" 1751-2001' church history book written by the St. Daniel's History Committee in celebration of the 250th anniversary. More detail regarding this topic is found in Chapter 1 – Beginnings – Church Land and Chapter 2 – The Church Grows – Construction of the First Church, 1751.

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Artist's concept of the first St. Daniel's Church building

CHURCH LAND



Church Land: Diagram shows approximate locations of the various parcels of land that were donated or purchased to form the extent of St. Daniel's property. **Numbers** indicate the prior owners as follows: (1) John Artz, 1751, 0.5 acre and 7.5 perches; (2) Michael Schauer, 1751, 0.5 acre; (3) Abraham Lauck, 1751, 0.75 acre and 0.5 perch; (4) George Lauck, 1773, 53 perches; (5) Ludwig Fisher, 1813, 150 perches; (6) John Eckert, date unknown, 6.5 rods by 2 rods; (7) John L. Fisher, 1847, 1 acre and 96 perches; (8) Joseph Wenrich, 1866, 1 acre; (9) Adam S. Valentine, 1880, 4 acres; (10) Mary E. Brown, 1901, 7 acres; (11) George Valentine, 1908, 1 acre and 150 square rods. Portions of tracts 9 and 10 have been transferred to the Heidelberg Cemetery Association. (12), (13) Oliver Moll (not shown). **Letters** indicate the location of buildings: (A) probable location of the first church, 1751; (B) old schoolhouse and current sexton's quarters; (C) second church, 1814, and current Memorial Garden; (D) third (current) church, 1978