

🌿 HOLY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HILL OVERLOOKING ROBESONIA 🌿

THE CHURCH GROWS

The second church building was built between 1814-1817.

When the cornerstone was placed on May 1, 1814, the church at Heidelberg, also known as the “Eck Kirche” or “Corner Church,” was given the name St. Daniel’s. This was in honor of the Pastor at the time, Rev. Daniel Ulrich, who served the congregation from 1811-1853.

The church building was made of stone and was 52 feet long x 46 feet wide. It was located at the intersection of present-day Big Spring Road, N. Church Street, and St. Daniel’s Road. After the devastating fire in December 1976 that destroyed the church, the Memorial Garden currently stands where the second church building was located.

In his 1908 book of church records and history about the Lutheran Congregation of Heidelberg (St. Daniel’s), Michael A. Gruber (a descendant of original member Henry Gruber) noted the layout of the interior of the church: there was a central aisle that led from the eastern to the western door, which was met by another aisle leading from the southern door. Between the central aisle and the northern wall, starting from the east, were: pews for the elderly men with front row reserved for elders and deacons; the altar with elevated pulpit against the northern wall; and pews for girls and young women. On either side of the aisle leading from the southern entrance were the pews for married and elderly unmarried women, with stairways to the gallery at the eastern and western walls. The gallery occupied 3 sides of the building: the eastern for boys and young men; the western for men in general; and the southern which had the organ in the central portion with tiers of pews on each side. [WOW!!!]

There was a retaining wall on the property, a portion of which still survives today in the Memorial Garden, even after the 1976 fire.

Another relic from that church building hangs on the wall in our current office wing: a 6-pane fan window that was located above the entrance door on the west side of the building. Refer to the photo with the men standing on the retaining wall which shows the door.

The building was remodeled numerous times. The 1849 renovations came at an expense of \$1,342.59. Extensive repairs were also made to the building in 1883 during the pastorate of Rev. Aaron Finrock. Remodeling and renovations also occurred in 1911 and 1964, though today’s edition of Holy History includes details and photos from prior to the 1911 remodel. (Watch for more info on the 2nd church building in future editions!)

Another interesting detail: On August 5, 1876, permission was given to a Reformed Congregation to hold religious services in the building for the sum of \$1 per year. The “St. Daniel’s Reformed Congregation” held their first service in the church on Christmas 1876 and continued to worship there until 1905 under Rev. Thomas Calvin Leinbach and later assisted by his son, Rev. Edwin W. Leinbach. Having a desire to worship in a more modern church building of their own, located in town, the Reformed Congregation eventually built a church on West Penn Avenue in Robesonia. The church was known as St. Paul’s Reformed Church, later as St. Paul’s United Church of Christ, and currently as the United Church of Christ of Robesonia (home of our wonderful current Visitation Pastor, Rev. Mary Etta Mest!). Their last service in the St. Daniel’s building was on February 19, 1905. Before August 5, 1876 and after February 19, 1905, only Lutheran congregations have worshipped at St. Daniel’s.

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 2 – The Church Grows. Additionally, amazing photos and text were taken from the *Lutheran Congregation of Heidelberg* by Michael A. Gruber.

#StDaniels #StDanielsLutheranChurch #EckKirche #CornerChurch
#OnTheHillOverlookingRobesonia #RobesoniaPA #1751StDaniels2026 #275thAnniversary
#HolyHighlights #History #OurHistory #SecondChurchBuilding #RevDanielUlrich
#MichaelGruber #UnitedChurchOfChristOfRobesonia



Joel Kantner (L) and John Moyer (R) standing at the crossroads in front of the second church building. Photo taken around 1876. Photo from "Lutheran Congregation of Heidelberg" by Michael A. Gruber.

ST. DANIEL'S CHURCH.

Photograph by C. G. BLATT,
Bernville, Pa.
Taken about 1876.

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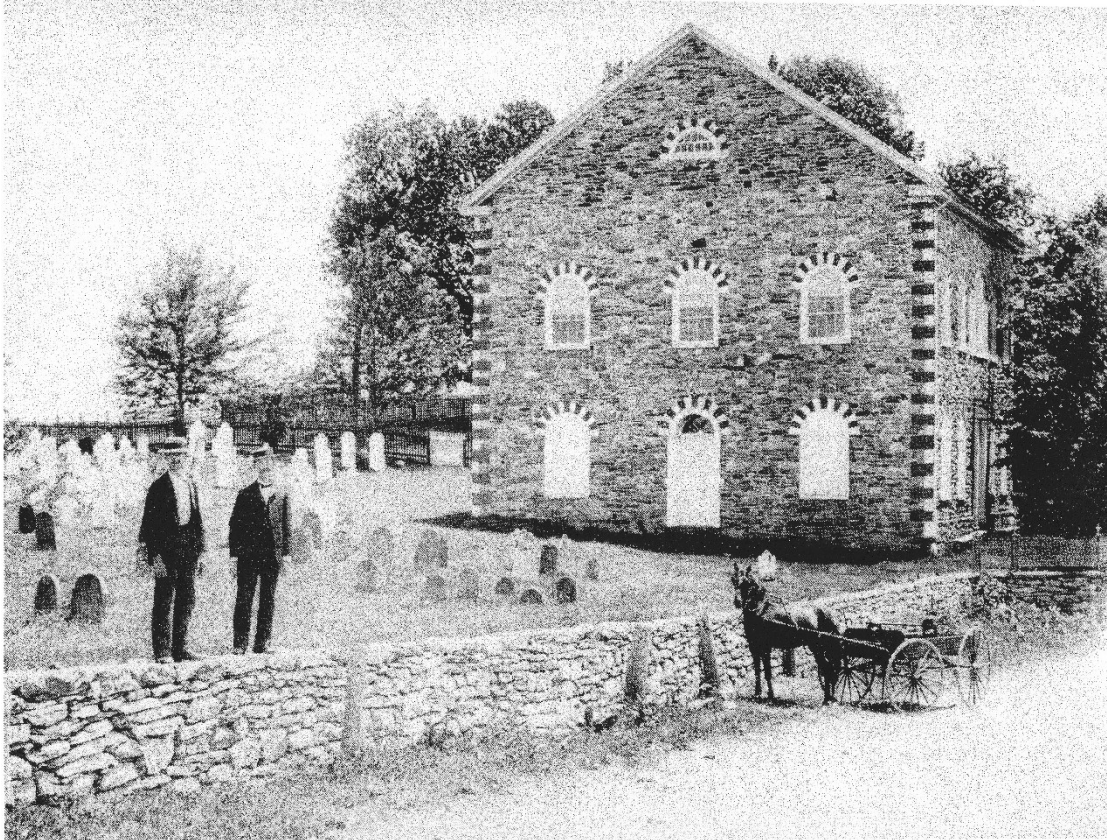
View of the church some 30 years ago, showing the crossroads, the retaining wall, and the shade trees that had been set out a year or so beforehand.

The camera pointed very nearly north, and the southern and eastern sides (fronts) of the building are shown. The eastern front is the gable.

The two men shown standing on the crossroads are John Moyer (to the right) and Joel Kantner (to the left).

The plan of the interior of the church building is as follows:-- A central aisle leads from the eastern to the western door; this aisle is met by another leading from the southern door. Between the central aisle and the northern wall, starting from the east are -- (1) Pews for the elderly men with front row reserved for elders and deacons; (2) Altar with elevated pulpit against northern wall; and (3) Pews for girls and young women. On either side of the aisle leading from the southern entrance are the pews for married and elderly unmarried women, with stairways to the gallery at the eastern and western walls. The gallery occupies three sides of the building: (1) The eastern for boys and young men; (2) The western for men in general; (3) The southern has the organ in the central portion with tiers of pews on each side.

Description of the previous photo and of the church, from the *Lutheran Congregation of Heidelberg* by Michael A. Gruber.



John Moyer and Joel Kantner standing on the retaining wall of the second church building, near the oldest section of the cemetery. Photo taken in 1886.



A relic from the second church building hangs on the wall in our current office wing: a 6-pane fan window that was located above the entrance door on the west side of the building. Refer to the door in the previous and next photos. Photo taken June 24, 2024.



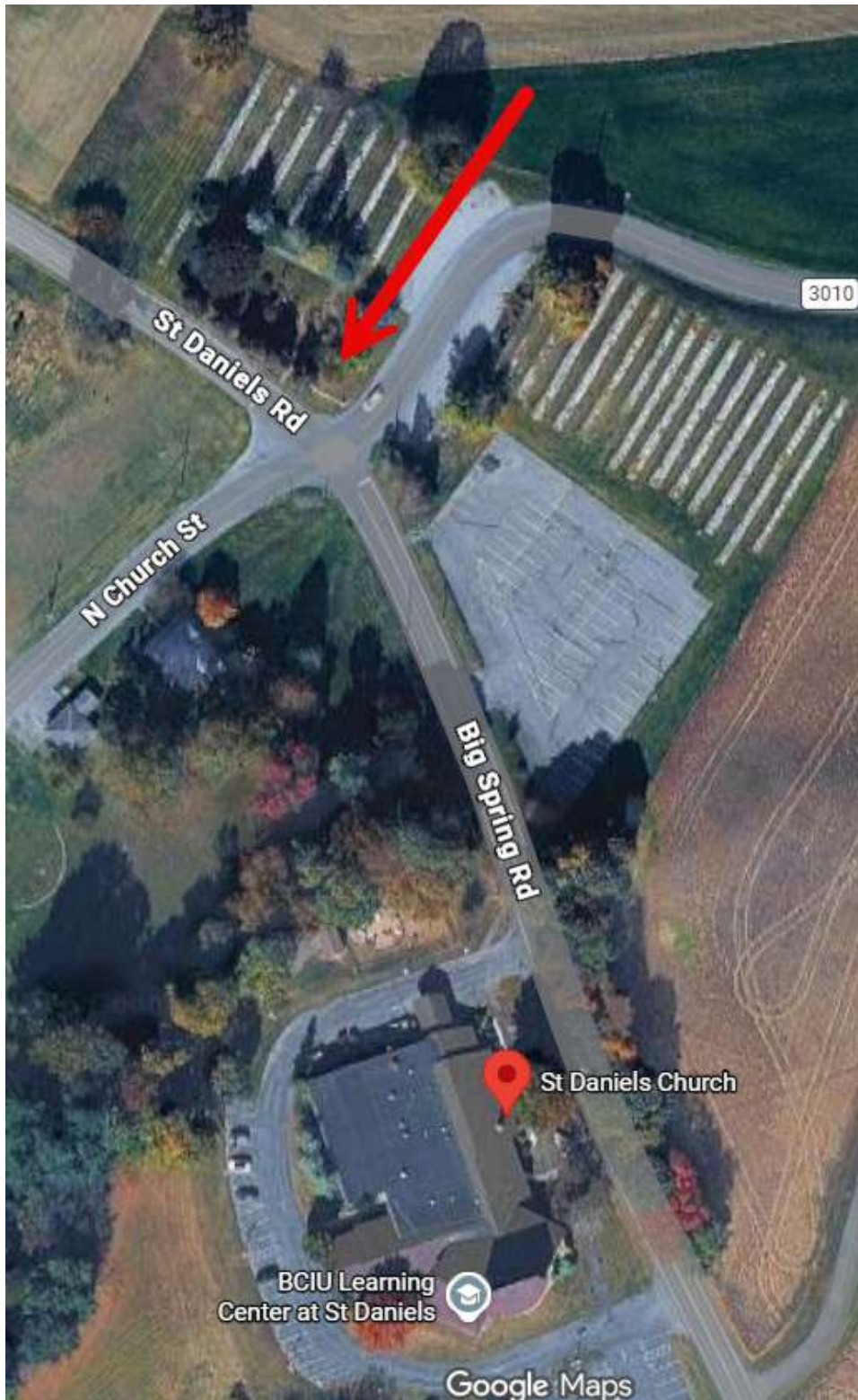
Another view of the church from what would currently be St. Daniel's Road. The present St. Daniel's church building would be diagonally across to the right. Photo from "Lutheran Congregation of Heidelberg" by Michael A. Gruber.



An early 1908 photo postcard by Heffelfinger, Womelsdorf, PA, which shows the southern side and eastern gable of the church, a portion of the old graveyard, and the crossroads. Photo from "Lutheran Congregation of Heidelberg" by Michael A. Gruber.



An easy way to understand the location of the second church building!



A Google Maps view of the past location of the second church building (see red arrow) and the location of the third (and current) church building (marked with text and a red pin).