

HOLY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE HILL OVERLOOKING ROBESONIA

PASTOR DURING A PIVOTAL TIME – REV. EDWARD CLOUGHEN

Reverend Edward Cloughen was our Pastor from October 1, 1976, until August 15, 1988.

The “ough” part of his name is pronounced like the “ough” in “dough.”

Edward Cloughen was born on August 16, 1942, in the Bronx, NY. He was raised in Dumont, NJ, before moving to Reading with his parents. He graduated from Muhlenberg College in 1964 and from the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia in 1967. He was ordained into the ministry on May 28, 1967, at his home church, St. John’s Lutheran Church in Reading. Edward Cloughen and Cynthia Heiser were married in 1968. The Cloughens had two children, Sarajane and Ward Edward. Rev. Cloughen’s resume also included work as an announcer at WEEU radio station in Reading.

Pastor Cloughen began his pastorate at St. Daniel’s on October 1st of 1976, just two months before a fire on December 8th destroyed the church and educational building. The fire was both a terrible disaster and a rallying point for the congregation.

In an interview for the 250th anniversary history book, Pastor Cloughen stated, “There seemed to be various splits in the congregation ... But the fire brought everybody together. We became, in effect, a ‘mission congregation,’ pulling together.” Many members shared responsibility with the pastor for holding services in the Conrad Weiser High School and working on a new building for the church. Leading efforts to build new facilities became a major part of the new Pastor’s work over the next two years. Pastor Cloughen recalled, “I felt that I led the congregation through a trauma, and helped them move into a new phase, and it was very satisfying ... Everybody on the building committee and in the congregation worked wonderfully together.”

Following the fire, the congregation enjoyed increased attendance by both old and new members and moved on with both old and new programs. “Cottage meetings” were organized, in which members met in small groups in private homes. Pastor Cloughen said, “We were able to pick people’s brains as to what the church should be doing ... And we continued to take off from there.”

“Pairs and Spares” was a new fellowship program that flourished with activities such as attending shows, hiking, and Christmas parties for adult members. The youth ministry was bolstered. Support and assistance for other congregations, as well as missionaries, were expanded through the program, “One in Mission.” This all occurred during the years in

which the congregation was paying off a mortgage. The new facilities were dedicated in 1978, and the mortgage was burned only eight years later in a special service with Bishop Wilson E. Touhsaent presiding.

During Pastor Cloughen's tenure, the red "Service Book and Hymnal" was replaced by the new green "Lutheran Book of Worship" in 1978, the administration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion was changed to use bread cubes instead of wafers, joint services were held with other local churches, an active role was taken with the Conrad Weiser Ministerium and the reorganized Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, and a new pictorial directory was completed. Pastor Cloughen also led a comprehensive, 1-1/2 year-long Bible study called "Word & Witness." More than one member has recalled the study as meaningful and memorable, noting Pastor Cloughen's knowledgeable and engaging leadership.

It is nearly impossible to tell the story of Pastor Edward Cloughen's ministry at St. Daniel's without also telling the story of the devastating church fire and the rebuilding that followed, culminating in the third (and current) St. Daniel's church building. That remarkable chapter in our history will unfold over the next several editions of *Holy Highlights*. For now, we remember Pastor Cloughen with gratitude for his ministry and for the qualities so many associated with him – his infectious smile and quick wit, his sincerity and kindness, and his meaningful sermons, made all the more engaging by the warm, polished voice he had developed during his earlier career as a radio announcer.

After leaving St. Daniel's, Rev. Cloughen served 3 other congregations in the greater Reading area before retiring in 2004. Rev. Edward Cloughen died on April 26, 2023, at the age of 80. He is buried in Lehigh Cemetery in Lehigh, PA.

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Reverend Richard Nelson

Rev. Richard Nelson served St. Daniel's as interim Pastor for less than one year in 1988-1989, between the pastorates of Rev. Edward Cloughen and Rev. Ronald Weir.

Some other significant events occurred during Rev. Edward Cloughen's ministry at St. Daniel's:

\* 1977 – Vernon Bright became the first Church Council President who was not the Pastor. His election followed a June 1976 amendment to the church Constitution that changed the longstanding practice of the Pastor serving as Council President. Under the amended

Constitution, “A member of the Church Council shall be President of the congregation and of the Council.”

- \* May 1977 – The parsonage was sold and moved to the Wolfskill family farm.
- \* September 4, 1977 – Groundbreaking ceremonies were held for the construction of the new church building.
- \* June 25, 1978 – The Memorial Garden was dedicated.
- \* October 22, 1978 – The cornerstone was laid for the new church.
- \* November 5, 1978 – The new church building was dedicated.
- \* 1980 – The Sunday School celebrated its 60th anniversary.
- \* 1984 – The sharing of peace was initiated on Communion Sundays.
- \* December 6, 1986 – A ceremony for the burning of the mortgage was held.

Significant US and world events during Rev. Edward Cloughen’s ministry at St. Daniel’s included:

- \* November 2, 1976 – Jimmy Carter was elected the 39th President of the United States.
- \* 1977 – The Apple II, Tandy Radio Shack TRS-80, and the Commodore PET personal computers were introduced.
- \* May 25, 1977 – George Lucas’s *Star Wars* debuted in American movie theaters.
- \* August 16, 1977 – The “King of Rock and Roll” Elvis Presley died at age 42 at his Graceland mansion in Memphis, TN.
- \* July 25, 1978 – Louise Brown, the world’s first “test tube” baby, was born in Britain via in-vitro fertilization (IVF).
- \* October 16, 1978 – Karol Jozef Wojtyla was elected Pope, taking the name Pope John Paul II.
- \* November 18, 1978 – Peoples Temple founder Jim Jones led his followers in a mass murder-suicide at their “Jonestown” commune in Guyana, resulting in over 909 deaths.
- \* March 28, 1979 – An equipment malfunction and subsequent operator error caused a partial meltdown of an atomic reactor at Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Harrisburg, PA.
- \* February 22, 1980 – The underdog men’s US Olympic hockey team beat the Soviets in the “Miracle on Ice” in Lake Placid, NY.
- \* May 18, 1980 – Mt. St. Helens erupted in the Cascade Range in Washington, killing 57 people and thousands of animals and fish and devastating approximately 210 square miles of land.

- \* November 4, 1980 – Ronald Reagan was elected 40th President of the United States. He was re-elected on November 6, 1984.
- \* December 8, 1980 – Former Beatle John Lennon was shot and killed in New York City by an obsessed fan.
- \* January 20, 1981 – The 52 US hostages were released, ending the 444-day Iran Hostage Crisis.
- \* April 12, 1981 – Space Shuttle Columbia launched for the first time, becoming the first reusable manned spacecraft to travel into space.
- \* July 29, 1981 – Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, married Lady Diana Spencer.
- \* August 1, 1981 – MTV: Music Television launched with “Video Killed the Radio Star” by the Buggles being the first music video to air.
- \* September 25, 1981 – Sandra Day O’Connor was sworn in as the first woman on the US Supreme Court.
- \* November 12, 1982 – The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in Washington, DC.
- \* December 2, 1982 – The first successful permanent artificial heart transplant was completed at the University of Utah Medical Center. Dr. William DeVries implanted the Jarvik-7 into patient Barney Clark. Clark died 112 days later, on March 23, 1983.
- \* June 18, 1983 – Dr. Sally Ride became the first American woman in space, on the Space Shuttle Challenger.
- \* August 30, 1983 – US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Guion Bluford became the first African American in space, on the Space Shuttle Challenger.
- \* November 2, 1983 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was designated a federal holiday, to be observed annually on the 3rd Monday in January.
- \* July 12, 1984 – Geraldine Ferraro became the first female Vice Presidential candidate to represent a major US political party, chosen by Democratic Presidential candidate Walter Mondale.
- \* January 28, 1985 – 45 music stars gathered under the name “USA for Africa” to record “We Are the World,” which would go on to sell more than 7 million copies and raise more than \$60 million for African famine relief.
- \* April 23, 1985 – “New Coke” soda debuted and quickly flopped, resulting in a return to Coca-Cola’s original formula rebranded as “Coca-Cola Classic.”
- \* June 27, 1985 – The iconic American highway Route 66 was decertified after 59 years.
- \* July 13, 1985 – Live Aid, a worldwide rock concert of over 75 acts, took place at Wembley Stadium in London and JFK Stadium in Philadelphia, raising over \$100 million for African famine relief.
- \* September 1, 1985 – Wreckage of the RMS Titanic was found.
- \* September 22, 1985 – A benefit concert for America’s farmers, the first Farm Aid concert was held in Champaign, IL.

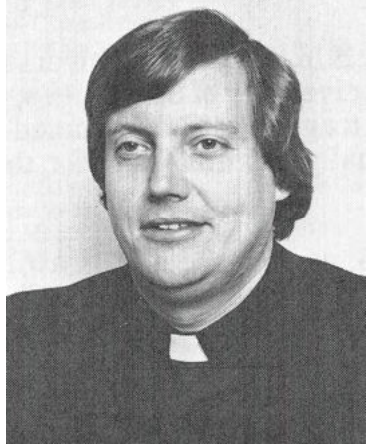
- \* January 28, 1986 – The Space Shuttle Challenger exploded 73 seconds after liftoff due to the failure of O-ring seals that were impacted by record-low temperatures at launch.
- \* April 26, 1986 – A poorly designed experiment resulted in nuclear disaster at Chernobyl, Ukraine, Soviet Union.
- \* January 1, 1988 – The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was formed in Chicago, IL. It merged the American Lutheran Church (ALC), the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC).
- \* August 8, 1988 – The Chicago Cubs hosted the first night game in the history of Wrigley Field.

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 'St. 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 details regarding this topic are found in Chapter 3 – Pastors. Additional details from Church Records and The Corner Church News from the applicable years. Photos from St. Daniel's archives. Additional photos and newspaper clippings from albums owned by Margie Baerncopf, Joyce Hassler, and Nancy Wolfskill.

**#StDaniels #StDanielsLutheranChurch #EckKirche #CornerChurch  
#OnTheHillOverlookingRobesonia #RobesoniaPA #1751StDaniels2026 #275thAnniversary  
#HolyHighlights #History #OurHistory #ReverendEdwardCloughen #ChurchFire  
#ParsonageMove #NewChurchBuilding #MemorialGarden #ChurchRecord  
#CornerChurchNews #ALotHappensIn275Years**

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| <h3 style="text-align: center;">Preface to 1977 Yearbook</h3> <p>The preface of any work of literature serves to inform the reader concerning the aims of the author and the means he will employ to achieve those aims. While I do not claim to be the "author" of our life together as a congregation, nevertheless, I feel that this message should serve a similar purpose as we look ahead to the months before us.</p> <p>The next year . . . indeed, the next year and-a-half will be a busy period of time . . . an exciting segment of our life together as a group of the People of God . . . a challenging rebirth, if you will, of St. Daniel's Church.</p> <p>Consider our situation at this time for a moment: We have a new Pastor; we will have new worship, and social, and educational facilities . . . at a new location . . . and more than anything else, I have sensed in the short time I have been with you, a new spirit, a new dedication, a new feeling of what the Church should be in our community.</p> <p>Therefore, what follows in this publication is not merely another yearbook in a long string of yearbooks. It is not simply a rote recitation of what acts took place in 1976 and what the carbon copy will be for this year.</p> <p>Rather, it is my hope that each of you will see in the following pages a new start for St. Daniel's Church . . . a new start in spirit as well as in construction. And, as we look ahead to our future years together as the people of God here in Robesonia, may His abiding presence guide and continue to challenge us to serve him faithfully, and in that service to find our joy in continuing dedication, enthusiasm, and self-sacrifice as imitators of the One in whom we daily have new life.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Edward W. Cloughen, <i>Pastor</i></p> |  |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Pastor Cloughen's introductory message in the 1977 Church Record.<br/>He had been on the job at St. Daniel's for about 3 months.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                      |



### ***Clergyman Installed***

The Rev. Edward W. Cloughen, left, was installed Sunday night as pastor of St. Daniel's (Corner) Lutheran Church, Robesonia. Taking part in the service were the Rev. Dr. Wilson E. Touhsaent, center, president of the Northeastern Synod, and Mark Wolfskill, council president. — Eagle Photo.

Rev. Cloughen's installation - November 7, 1976. *Reading Eagle* photo.



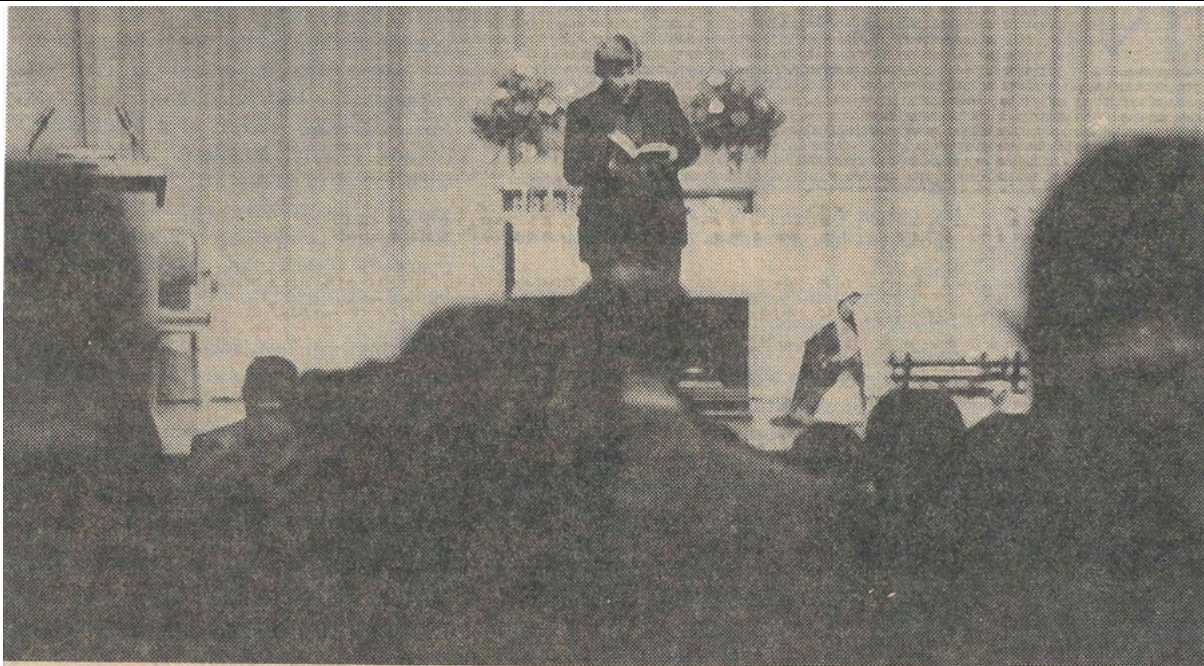
This photo is very similar to the previous one; however, this one is interesting because it shows the stage in the Sunday School building, with the round stained glass panel of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Photo courtesy of Nancy Wolfskill.

Right:

The 1911 cornerstone box is located in the rubble of the church after the fire that destroyed it. Pictured are Mark Wolfskill, Rev. Cloughen, and Carl Labe. *Reading Eagle* photo. Margie Baerncopf clipping.



CORNERSTONE BOX FOUND — Mark Wolfskill, left, council president of St. Daniel's (Corner) Lutheran Church; The Rev. Edward W. Cloughen, center, church pastor and Carl Labe, council member, view a lead box recovered from a cornerstone at the burned-out church Wednesday. The cornerstone was laid in 1911 and the box contains a Bible, a newspaper, communion bread and wine and a magazine, according to church records. Two other cornerstones still to be located are dated 1751 and 1814. Mr. Labe said the recovered box will be opened at a special Christmas Eve service. — Eagle Photos.



PREACHES SERMON — The Rev. Edward W. Cloughen of St. Daniel's (Corner) Lutheran Church in Heidelberg Township preaches to about 300 members of the congregation in the Conrad Weiser High School auditorium Sunday. The congregation is using the auditorium until it can rebuild the church which was destroyed by fire last week.



## Handbells Dedicated

3/21/77  
Teresa Wolfskill, a member of the bell choir at St. Daniel's (Corner) Lutheran Church, Robesonia R.D. 1, shows the Rev. Edward W. Cloughen, pastor, one of the handbells dedicated Sunday morning. — Eagle Photo by Owen C. Stout. *Reading Eagle*



Above: March 21, 1977 – Dedication of new handbells. Pictured are Pastor Cloughen and Teresa Wolfskill. *Reading Eagle* photo by Owen C. Stout. Joyce Hassler clipping.

Above: June 25, 1978 – Pastor Cloughen at the dedication of the Memorial Garden. Margie Baerncopf photo.

Below: September 4, 1977 – Pastor Cloughen leads the groundbreaking ceremony for the new church. Margie Baerncopf photo.

Below: October 22, 1978 – Pastor Cloughen leads the ceremony for the laying of the cornerstone. Photo courtesy of Nancy Wolfskill.





Left: November 5, 1978 – Dedication of the new church building.

Pictured are Vernon Bright; Rev. Wilson Touhsaent, President of Northeastern PA Lutheran Synod; Pastor Cloughen; Mark Wolfskill; Robert Koch.

*Reading Eagle* photo by Owen C. Stout.

Joyce Hassler clipping.

Right: December 7, 1986 – The burning of the church mortgage after only 8 years.

Pictured are Pastor Cloughen; Richard Labe; Rev. Dr. Harold Weiss, Bishop of Northeastern PA Synod of the LCA; Samuel Thomas.

*Reading Eagle* photo by Owen C. Stout.

Margie Baerncopf clipping.



CONFIRMED BY REV. EDWARD W. CLOUGHEN ON NOVEMBER 26, 1978



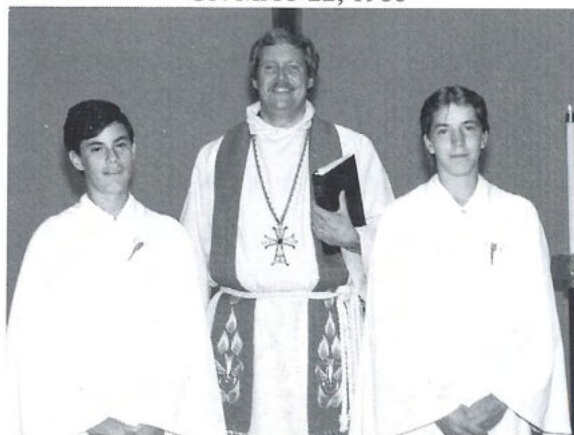
Dale Brewer  
Stacey (Himmelberger) Haag  
Michael Yoh

Esther (Brigel) Harp  
Kay (Matthew) Oswald  
Roger Yoh

Lisa (Hartman) Erdman  
Karen (Ulrich) Degler  
Douglas Wolfskill

Pastor Cloughen's first Confirmation Class,  
which was the first Confirmation held in the new church.

CONFIRMED BY BY REV. EDWARD W. CLOUGHEN  
ON MAY 22, 1988



Michael Heim

Duane Feeg

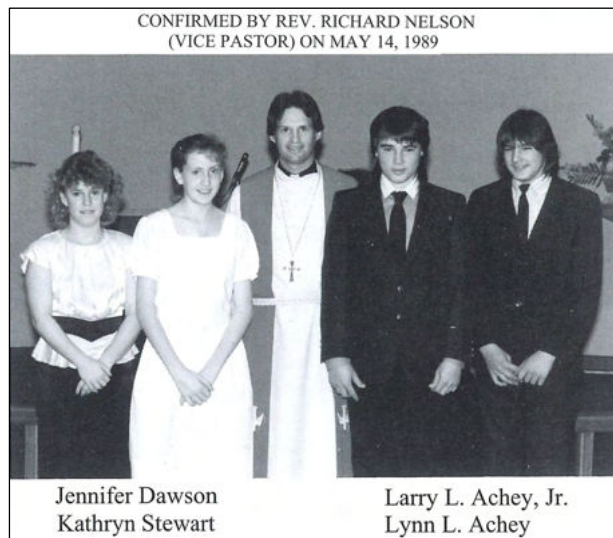
Pastor Cloughen's last Confirmation Class.



1980 – Notice the quilt frame leaning against the wall behind Pastor Cloughen.



1988 – Pastor Cloughen.  
Photo by Olan Mills.



Vice Pastor Richard Nelson's only Confirmation Class.