

Exploring the cemetery: the WWI Era and Rev. Weicksel

Last month I wrote about Rev. Weida who served the congregation throughout WW II. That made me think about who might have been pastoring the church during World War I. That person was Rev. Frederick Arndt Weicksel. Rev. Weicksel was the son of Rev. Henry and Angelina Weicksel, and was born in Wilmington, Del., on Jan. 6, 1867. He attended Muhlenberg College and then studied at the Missionary Institute in Selingsgrove. Following his ordination in Philadelphia in 1893, he went to Numidia, Pa., and served that congregation until 1905. From 1905 until 1915, he was at Zion Lutheran in Leola.

In 1915 he was called to serve the Lutheran Parish consisting of the churches in Brickerville, Penryn, Rothsville ,and Akron.

Shortly after the arrival of Rev. Weicksel, German services were discontinued in Rothsville. I've written previously about this language controversy in Lutheran congregations. Rothsville continued German services longer than most congregations, but I suspect that war with Germany finished off the practice.

He remained with these churches until his retirement in 1937. In 1935 the Rothsville church voted to withdraw from the joint parish and become its own, separate parish, but Rev. Weicksel remained.

Weicksel was married to Elizabeth Wolfgang on Mar. 8, 1887, and they had at least 7 children. He died August 21, 1948, and was buried in Machpelah Cemetery, Lititz.

Searching for a glimpse into the Jerusalem community 100 years ago, I found the minutes of a congregational meeting held in 1921 and recorded by Rev. Weiskel. They read as follows:

"Rothsville, Pa., May 16, 1921.

The annual congregational meeting was held on above date with 21 members of the congregation present. The meeting was opened with prayer by the Pastor, Rev. F. A. Weicksel. The Sect. read the minutes of our 1920 Annual meeting and were approved as read.

The Treasurer's report was given which showed the Receipts for the year \$1,722.80. Expenses \$1619.00. A balance in the Treasury of \$103.80. The Pastor by instructions was ordered to appoint an auditing committee, which he did, appointing Messrs. **F. G. Royer, D. B. Habecker and E. R. Leeking**, who reported the account correct as read.

The Pastors report was given, which showed the following. Infant Baptism-14; Adult Baptism-1; Accession by Renewal of Faith-2; Accession by letter-1; Dismissals-5; Marriages-1; Private Communion-4; Funerals-9 (3 members).

The resignation of Bro. E. K. Singer as Deacon and Treasurer was presented, and after a long deliberation was accepted with regret, a vote of thanks being given him for his faithful service to our church.

The nomination of council members was next in order. The following being nominated

Elder: **Lemon Koehler** to serve two years

Deacons: **A. Lincoln Stauffer**, to serve two years; **Benjamin Shaar**, to serve two years; **Wm. Styer**, to serve two years; D. B. Habecker, to serve one year on the unexpired term of E. K. Singer.

Trustee: **F. M. Bowman** to serve three years.

These members were elected by acclamation.

The salaried officers were then nominated.

Organist: **Miss Estella G. Leeking**, to serve one year

Asst. organist: **F. H. Gable**, to serve one year

Janitor: Mr. **Ivan Frank**

Ushers, Choir (Chair?): Ivan Frank

These officers were elected by acclamation.

The Salary of the Pastor was fixed at \$50/per month

The Salary of the Organist was fixed at 10.00/per year

The Salary of the Asst. Organist was fixed at 10.00 per year

The Salary of the Janitor at 7.00/per month”

Lititz Record (Lititz, Pa.), Thursday, Feb. 9, 1933, p. 1:

"Frank H. Gable

Frank H. Gable, 57, died Sunday night at 9:05 o'clock at his home on East Main Street of a complication of diseases after an illness since November.

Mr. Gable was engaged in the automobile business for many years and was a dealer here for some time. In that capacity, his fair dealing and good nature made hundreds of friends in town and County. As a member of the Rothsville Lutheran Church, he had served on the Church Council, as Sunday School Superintendent, church organist and as a teacher of a class.

He was born at Owl Hill and resided in Rothsville before coming to Lititz twelve years ago. He is survived by his wife who was Lydia Albright before marriage, a son, Alton, and a daughter, Mildred, at home; and a sister, Mrs. Edwin Leeking, of Rothsville.

The remainder of the minutes deal with the duties of the janitor, which included keeping the Old Cemetery clean. The meeting was then adjourned.

What struck me while reading this is that virtually all of the individuals mentioned in the minutes are buried in the cemetery. The exceptions are Benjamin Shaar who is buried at Bergstrasse Cemetery and E. K. Singer at Salem, Kissel Hill.

There were the movers and shakers of the congregation in 1921. I wrote about several of them in the articles about the stained-glass windows. Their dates are given below, and to the right is an obituary for Frank Gable, who has not been mentioned previously.

Francis G. Royer (1860-1933)

Edwin R. Leeking (1890-1960)

A. Lincoln Stauffer (1892-1972)

Franklin M. Bowman (1874-1954)

Frank H. Gable (1875-1933)

Daniel B. Habecker (1866-1923)

Lemon Koehler (1861-1947)

William W. Styer (1877-1946)

Estella (Leeking) Hackman (1896-1981)

Ivan Frank (1890-1930)