

## **Congregational History**

Good Shepherd began as a result of a survey conducted by The Reverend George J. Frank, Jr. during the summer of 1966. After a full summer of surveying nearly 3,000 homes, a nucleus for a congregation seemed assured.

An interest meeting was held on September 15th at Thompson School in Middletown for the purpose of explaining the steps necessary to organize a congregation. At that meeting the tentative name "The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd" was selected.

The first service was held at Thompson School on September 26, 1966. Two weeks later Sunday Church School began. Good Shepherd's organization meeting was held on April 27, 1967 and the organizational worship service took place three days later. Pastor George Frank was called by the congregation to serve as its first pastor effective July 1, 1967. Pastor Frank remained with Good Shepherd for twenty-eight years until his retirement on October 15, 1995.

Pastor Jean Vargo was called to the congregation to serve as a part-time Assistant Pastor beginning in May of 1994. After Pastor Frank's retirement, Pastor Vargo was appointed by the New Jersey Synod to serve as the congregation's Interim Pastor to help facilitate the transition into a new era.

In April of 1996, The Reverend Michael C. Gebhart was called to Good Shepherd and his Ministry began in July of that year. Pastor Gebhart served until July 30, 2000, and The Reverend Penelope Stechmann served as Interim Pastor until The Reverend David K. Louder was called in July 2002. Reverend Ed Schmidt served as interim Pastor until the Reverend John Elstad began serving July, 2010.

Our present church site was purchased in November of 1967. A little over a year later, ground was broken for the building. The dedication service was held on September 14, 1969. Good Shepherd became self-supporting in January of 1972. Two additional expansion projects have been completed on the facility, in 1980 and 1991.