

Forty Years a Pastor in His Master's Service



REVEREND ALLEN LUTHER BENNER, D. D.

Today marks a happy and noteworthy event in the busy life of our beloved pastor, in which the members of Grace Church are privileged to share and rejoice. It was forty years ago that Pastor Benner began his Ministry in the Christian Church. Since then he has served with fidelity two congregations—St. John's Lutheran Church, Richmond Hill, N. Y., and Grace Lutheran Church, Lancaster, Pa.

As a faithful servant of His Master, he has brightened the lives of untold hundreds with comforting words and loving deeds.

From every member of Grace Church and affiliated organizations are offered congratulations on the attainment of this milestone, and it is our prayerful hope that Pastor Benner will be with us for many more years, guiding and counselling us, in "The Way, the Truth and the Light" and keeping us steadfast in the service of Christ, Our Saviour, Whom to know aright is Life Eternal.

GRACE NEWS

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

JUNE 11, 1944

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

North Queen at James Street

REV. ALLEN L. BENNER, D. D., PASTOR

Organ Prelude—"Duetto" *Mendelssohn*
Processional Hymn No. 276—"Love Divine, all loves excelling"

THE SERVICE—10:45 A. M.

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Introit and Collect

Anthem—"Beautiful Saviour" *Christiansen*

The Epistle—John 4: 16-21

The Gospel—Luke 16:19-31

The Apostles' Creed

Duet—"Hark, Hark My Soul" *Shelley*

MISSSES GRACE SAUER AND BLANCHE McCLUNE

Announcements

Hymn No. 212—"Lord, speak to me, that I may speak"

The Sermon—"Forty Years in the Ministry" PASTOR BENNER

Offertory—"O Come, Let Us Worship" *Baines*

Prayer

Hymn No. 348—"O Love that will not let me go"

The Benediction

Recessional Hymn No. 368—"Thou art The Way"

Organ Postlude—"Marche Pontificale" *Lemmens*

The hymns and the anthems sung at this service are all favorites of Pastor Benner.

Pastor Benner will be the speaker at the 40th Anniversary of the ordination of a classmate, Rev. Carl Hirzel, pastor of the Lutheran Church of The Covenant, Brooklyn, N. Y., on Friday evening, June 17. The church event will be held in Triangle Hall, Richmond Hill, just two blocks from Pastor Benner's former parish.

MEETINGS

Monday, June 12—Mrs. Weaver's Class, 7:30 P. M., at the home of Mrs. Helen Cowan, 621 Grandview Boulevard.

Tuesday, June 13—Luther League, 7:45 P. M.

BEQUEST FOR GRACE

Robert C. Haberstroh, Esq., has sent word that under the provisions of the last will and testament of Mr. I. C. Mishler, there is bequeathed to our church the sum of \$300. Some of our older members may remember Mr. Mishler as a brother of Mrs. Kate Sheaffer, of blessed memory. One of our memorial windows was placed by the Mishler family. He resided in Altoona for a number of years, but his bequest shows that he did not forget Grace. We who are still living and giving ourselves to Christ's cause, may remind ourselves of an opportunity to serve Christ even after we die by remembering the church in our wills. Let us attend to this now if we have not done so. Our thanks for these friends are herewith expressed.

Our Ministerium President Pays High Honor to Pastor Benner

From the President of the Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania, Dr. Emil E. Fischer, has come the following tribute to Pastor Benner on the occasion of his forty years in the ministry. It is truly the sincere expression of a devoted friend, who rejoices with Grace Church in the leadership and devotion to Christian ideals as exemplified daily by Pastor Benner with his warm and cheering presence.

It is always a privilege for the President of the Ministerium to have the opportunity to pay tribute to the faithful services of one of the Ministerium's pastors. But this privilege becomes a matter of pure joy when its recipient is an intimate friend as well as a faithful pastor.

I learned to know Dr. Benner soon after I became pastor in Brooklyn in 1907. We were members of the same Synod, neighbors to one another on Long Island. During the thirty-seven years of our friendship there have been days when we have rejoiced with one another and days when we have mourned with one another. But the experiences of the days and years have served only to increase the esteem and affection in which I have come to hold my friend. His unshakable faith and trust in God, his uniform kindness and humility, his fidelity to his calling as preacher and pastor, his balanced judgment and wise counsel have won for him not only a position of honor and respect among his brethren but of confidence and affection among all who have come in contact with him.

We congratulate him on the fortieth anniversary of his ordination, and pray that God would continue to bless both him and Mrs. Benner, who has stood so helpfully by his side through all the years, and grant them the riches of His grace in the days that lie before them.

DR. EMIL E. FISCHER,
President of the Evangelical Lutheran
Ministerium of Pennsylvania

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see:
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for Thee.

A Fruitful Ministry!

In commemorating today the forty years of service Pastor Benner has spent so outstandingly in the Christian Ministry, it was decided at the last meeting of Church Council that this issue of Grace News should contain expressions of tribute and appreciation of his leadership, of his devotion to his duties, and his unswerving faith in the Risen Christ as the Way of Salvation.

The committee appointed to compile this folder was confronted with the task of not disclosing to Pastor Benner its details. This, however, was accomplished with a little persuasion, so that what appears in this issue, will be a complete surprise to him.

Most of the members of Grace Church can remember when Pastor Benner preached his first sermon here, July 1, 1921. It was a sweltering day, but that was no deterrent to the capacity congregation. The "new pastor" immediately won the hearts of his new flock, and for these twenty-three years, he has served us faithfully and has brightened our lives and quickened our zeal for the things of the Spirit.

His first pastorate was St. John's Lutheran Church, Richmond Hill, N. Y., which he began serving in June, 1904, preaching his first sermon on the tenth, shortly after his graduation from Mt. Airy Seminary. It was a small congregation by whom he was called and which used a hall for services. During the week-days, the hall was used by others for amusement purposes, so that the young pastor, confronted with janitorial duties before each service, had to keep an even temper and learn the hard way. His ready smile and his enthusiasm for his chosen calling served him well to overcome these minor obstacles. From a Sunday School of five teachers and officers, and thirteen scholars, and a congregation of less than one hundred, he builded well, and in a short time a site was selected and a church built. The congregation grew to six hundred, and the Sunday School was the largest in Richmond Hill. Then the call came for a wider field of service in Grace Church, Lancaster. Reluctant to leave the handiwork of his youth, he finally decided to come to Lancaster, although the parting with staunch friends was hard.

Pastor Benner's labors in our midst have been fruitful from his very first service and through the years that have followed, in which our church organizations have expanded in numbers and influence, the debt on the church wiped out, our benevolences paid in full year after year, our current expenses met, and improvements made to our temple of worship. Four young ministers, acting as assistants, have been wisely counselled by him, and they are reaping the benefits of his training in other fields. We have also had a Parish worker, and several deaconesses to help in the work of the congregation which today totals nearly twelve hundred.

What has endeared Pastor Benner to his congregation and to a vast circle of friends here and in other cities, is his human touch, and his resolute faith in the redeeming grace of our Risen Christ. Of him it can be said, like the saint of old—"He labors for Eternal Life."

His sermons, so full of the messages of righteousness, have taught his listeners, that the noble things in life should always be the objectives of the followers of Christ. As a preacher of the Gospel, his greatest power is in clinging to truths of the Bible.

And his gentleness in his visits to the homes and to the sick rooms, and his inflexible devotion to the right, have instilled in us that greatest of all truths, that "God is good."

His tender solicitation for the welfare of our young men and women in the armed service is evidenced in his appealing prayers for their safe return, when the Church must be prepared to meet the changing mood of the world and develop and deepen the spirit of good will.

To you, Pastor Benner, the congregation of Grace offers today its felicitations on the attainment of forty years of loving and fruitful service in the Master's Vineyard. We earnestly pray that together, we can continue for many years to come, under your inspirational guidance, to advance the Kingdom of our God, and of His Christ.

In the Cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.
When the woes of life o'ertake me,
Hopes deceive and fear annoy,
Never shall the Cross forsake me;
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.