

Mennonite Heritage Center
565 Yoder Road
Harleysville, PA 19438
Ph: 215-256-3020

Finland Mennonite Church, Pennsburg, PA
Archival Collection

Finland Mennonite Church was founded as part of the Franconia Conference home missions program. In 1930 Linford Hackman and Llewellyn Groff began home visitation in the poor rural community of Finland in Milford (Bucks Co.) and Marlborough (Montgomery Co.) Townships. A Sunday School was opened in May 1931 with Clayton Godshall, Jacob C. Kulp, and Henry Ruth in charge. More workers from the Franconia Conference soon joined the effort—Leroy & Alice Wismer, Asher & Viola Souder, Marvin & Kathryn Benner, Chester & Naomi Cassel and others. Originally, the Finland congregation met in a rented store building, but in 1939 a simple new meetinghouse was constructed on land donated by Mary Ziegler of the Zeigler's Apple Cider family. The meetinghouse received two additions and was remodeled twice, continuing to serve the congregation into the 21st century.

On March 12, 1933 Claude Moyer Shisler was ordained as minister for Finland Church and served in that position until 1970. Claude Shisler and his second wife Naomi Derstine did much to preserve materials related to the history of Finland congregation and their collection is a valuable source of information. In 1970, David Kriebel Benner replaced Claude Shisler as pastor and served in that position until 1985. Kenneth Seitz and Warren Wenger filled the interim until Steven Landis of Landisville (Lancaster Co.) became pastor in 1987. In 1994 Steve Landis moved to a pastorate at Franconia Mennonite Church, and Al Detweiler of Boyertown filled an interim until Richard Lewman was installed as pastor in 1995.

Forrest L. Moyer
August 24, 2004

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**** For related material see Claude and Naomi Shisler Collection. ****

Inventory:

1. Album of photos, clippings and memorabilia, particularly related to 50th Anniversary (not in box)
2. Recording (3 cassettes) of 50th Anniversary celebration -- May 9-10, 1981
3. Sunday School attendance and offering record books, 1946-48, 1950-56
4. Sewing Circle minute books, 1936-72
5. Sewing Circle account books, 1936-73
6. Record of meetings (kept by Claude Shisler), 1931-40
7. Workers Meeting minutes, 1952-64,
and Congregational Meeting minutes, 1968-70, 1973, 1976-81
8. Church Council minutes, 1968-81
9. Church Council and Congregational Meeting minutes, 2001-03
10. Photos – Sunday School and Summer Bible School
** See Claude and Naomi Shisler Collection – many more photos **
11. Directories 19??, 1965, 1967, 1969, 1973, 1975, 1977 pict., 1981 pict., 1985, 199? pict., 2003
12. Communion lists (1937, 1958-59), membership lists (1960, 1985),
Sunday School lists (1935-36), and “Members Received” list (1932-75) by C. M. Shisler
13. Financial Reports, 1940-81
14. Young People’s Meeting programs, 1944-61
15. Youth Group minutes, 1952-57
16. Sunday School reports to Franconia Conference, 1951-52, 1954-56,
and Congregational reports for Mennonite Yearbook, 1959-67, 1969
17. Newspaper clippings and historical write-ups
18. Dedication program and sermons – September 16-17, 1939
19. Anniversary celebrations—25th, 50th
** includes chronology of first 50 years **
20. Cemetery information
21. Constitution (1977) and other policy documents
22. Esther Freed Troyer (missionary to Africa) – letters and photos
23. Pastoral letters and pastoral transition documents
24. Programs and brochures (miscellaneous), 1940-81
25. Sewing Circle/WMSA/WMSC notes and correspondence, 1959-90
26. Information re. members/attendees. RESTRICTED.
27. Worship Bulletins, 2000-2002 (previous years in bound volumes)
28. List of records submitted to MHEP by Claude M. Shisler