

## Exploring the Cemetery: The World War II years

From 1941 until 1946, Jerusalem Lutheran was served by Pastor Willard G. Weida. Rev. Weida was born Jan. 10, 1914, and graduated from Kutztown Normal School, Muhlenberg College, and the Philadelphia Seminary. He was ordained by the Ministerium of Philadelphia in 1941, so Jerusalem Lutheran must have been his first charge. After leaving Rothsville, he served other congregations until his retirement in 1979. Despite retirement, he was a visitation pastor for several more years. Pastor Weida died Apr. 24, 1988, and is buried in Lynnville, Lehigh County.



Within the last month, the church received a letter from his daughter, Kathryn Weida Shaeffer, enclosing several photos from her father's collection. Mrs. Shaeffer's note reminisced that she enjoyed summer visits with Grace Miller, and that a silver bread plate engraved with a representation of the church, given to her mother at a church anniversary dinner, is still serving the family and in use by her daughter.

Pastor Weida's confirmation class of 1941 is shown to the left in a photo taken in the Pastor's living room. The girls in the front are Miriam, Esther and Reba Garner; the boys in the back are Walter Carvell, Graybill Becker, and Robert Groff.

This class graduated in 1942 and another photo was taken on the steps of the church. Left to right, they are Graybill Becker, Robert Groff, Walter Carvell, Reba Garner, Esther Garner, Miriam Garner, and Rev. Weida. Finally, there is a photo of the church as it appeared in 1941.

Graybill Becker (1925-2018) and Walter Carvell (1929-2005) are both buried in the cemetery.



Reba, of course, is our very own Reba Weit (b. 1928), daughter of William S. and Hattie (Stark) Garner. Her sister, Miriam (b.1926) married Walter W. Wolf. Walter died in 2005; Miriam still lives in her home in Ephrata.

Esther Garner (1927-2016) was a cousin to Reba and Miriam. She was the daughter of Phares S. and (Sus)anna (Miller) Garner and married Clair Meiskey of Lititz. She is buried in the Moravian Cemetery.

Robert Groff is a tough name to track. The only Robert Groff living in Warwick Township in 1940 is Robert Henry Groff, son of Benjamin and Elsie (Steinman) Groff. Robert H. Groff (1927- 2006) died in McKinley, Texas.

Thank you, Kathryn Sheaffer, for sharing these memories.

