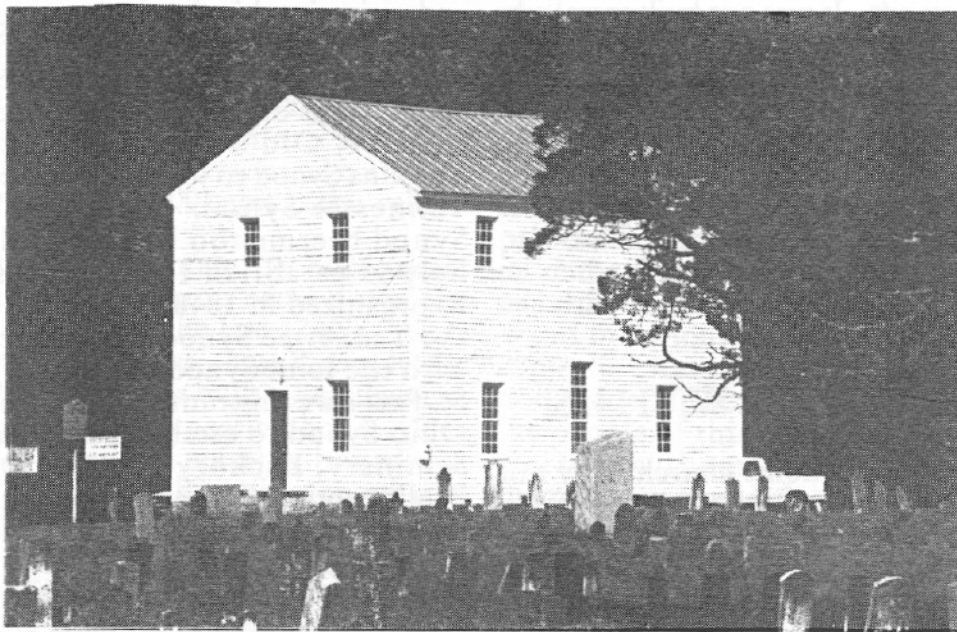


WELCOME TO OLD ST. PAUL'S!



THIS IS THE OLDEST CHURCH EDIFICE WEST OF THE CATAWBA RIVER IN NORTH CAROLINA

HISTORIC EVENTS

- 1745 - COLONISTS SETTLE IN CATAWBA AREA
- 1750 - JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH DIED
- 1757 - EARLIEST RECORDED CHRISTIAN SERVICES
- 1771 - LAND & BUILDINGS DEEDED TO CHURCH
- 1776 - REVOLUTIONARY WAR BEGINS
- 1781 - CORNWALLIS SURRENDERS TO WASHINGTON
- 1789 - NORTH CAROLINA BECOMES 12TH STATE
- 1818 - PRESENT HISTORIC CHURCH BUILT
- 1861 - CIVIL WAR BEGINS
- 1913 - MURRAY'S MILL BUILT

WHAT DOES THIS HISTORIC CHURCH STAND FOR?

This historic church stands as a symbol of the faith our forefathers proclaimed to the people of their time. We honor their memory by joining them in serving the one for whom this church was built; Jesus Christ, the one and only Lord and Savior! If we tell you about everything else but fail to tell you about Jesus Christ, then we dishonor the people who built and have maintained this historic building. When you visit an Indian village you learn about their religion and culture. When you visit a zoo, you learn their teachings on how people should relate to animals. When you visit a business or factory you hear and read their teachings on why they operate. When you attend a school

class, you must accept the ethics promoted by that particular school. You are now visiting our church, and for that reason you will be offered this free pamphlet and if possible, an oration which explains for what purposes this historic site stands. It was not built to merely serve as an historic site, nor do we maintain it for that purpose--we have a message to proclaim and we are not ashamed of it.

Jesus said, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Mark 8:38

COME WORSHIP WITH US!

If you do not have a home church, why not consider worshipping with us next Sunday morning at 8:15 or 10:30? We meet in our new building across the road. Plan to attend our annual Easter sunrise service here in our historic building.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:3

Old St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church is located in Catawba (Ka taw' ba) County, North Carolina, in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, one mile west of Newton. It was the first church of North Carolina established west of the Catawba River, tracing its roots back to before the Revolutionary War when America was still a colony of Great Britain. With a history spanning over 240 years, it is among the oldest of active congregations among Evangelical Lutheran churches in America.

Our congregation began as a union church (Lutheran and Reformed) sometime between

1747 to 1757. By 1771 two independent Christian congregations emerged, St. Paul's United Church of Christ, which moved to Startown in 1900, and Old St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, which owns and maintains this eleven-acre property.

Old St. Paul's synodical affiliations began with the North Carolina Lutheran Synod when it was organized on October 17, 1803. In 1824, Old St. Paul's left the North Carolina Synod to join the more conservative Tennessee Synod. When the Tennessee Synod became too liberal, Old St. Paul's helped establish the Tennessee Synod Reorganized in 1848. After the Civil War, the Tennessee Synod Reorganized merged with the Joint Synod of Ohio in 1884. Old St. Paul's was instrumental in encouraging the Ohio Synod to establish St. Paul Practical Seminary, Hickory (1890-1910). Old St. Paul's continued its affiliation with the Ohio Synod when it merged with the Iowa Synod to form the American Lutheran Church in 1930, The American Lutheran Church in 1960, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1988.

THE FIRST SETTLERS

The Catawba and Cherokee Indians fought over the hunting rights to this region. This was virtually uninhabited when the first pioneers explored this beautiful land. The first colonists to settle in this area were people of German descent who emigrated here from Pennsylvania as early as 1745. They purchased the densely wooded land for as little as fifty cents an acre.

Andreas Killian (1702-1788) was one of those hardy colonists who first settled the land west of the Catawba River. A prominent marker in our graveyard tells his story. He came from Germany by boat and arrived in Philadelphia in 1732, the same year George Washington was born. By 1730 all the best land in Pennsylvania was already owned. So

when fertile and cheap land became available in North Carolina, Killian, like many others in Pennsylvania, brought his family in 1747 to a homestead on Clark's Creek.

Another early settler was Heinrich Weidner. Weidner was the second son of a German prince. Realizing that he would not become prince, he set sail for America. After exploring this region as a trapper, he used his wealth to buy over 10,000 acres in this valley.

Like Killian, the vast majority of pioneers who settled in this region came down the Shenandoah Valley in the late 1740's. After building their own homes, these Pennsylvania German (Deutch) people built a log structure to serve as a Christian meeting house. It is claimed that this first meeting house was nestled between two white pines in what is now the southeastern part of the cemetery close to the old cedar trees. Many of the settlers incorrectly referred to the Pennsylvania Deutch as "Pensylvania Dutch." Thus their meeting house was called the "Dutch Meeting House."

A legend concerning this first structure tells that soon after it was built lightning struck the cabin, and it burned to the ground. A new log cabin was erected next to the wagon road in the southwestern part of the cemetery in 1757. This building served as the church until 1818 when the present structure was built using logs from the 1757 building.

THE CENTER OF THE SETTLEMENT

The "Dutch Meeting House," as it was first named was built to serve two Christian congregations, the Evangelical Lutheran and the Reformed. The meeting house was the center of this settlement. It served as the church, school, marketplace, and general gathering place for the community. When someone wanted to butcher a steer, they would ring the church bell to let everybody

in the settlement know about it. They did not have refrigerators nor freezers to store the meat, so all of it needed to be sold or else it would spoil. They did not have shopping malls nor grocery stores. This was the place where everybody met. Many would spend their entire day here visiting with neighbors and travelers.

Records from the Reformed Church state that a Rev. Martin and Rev. Christian Theus preached to an already formed congregation in 1759. These men were 'circuit riders' who braved the rough frontier to preach God's Word in various settlements. Others would come, like Rev. DuPert in 1764, but they did not reside in the area. For almost 40 years the people of this community assembled to worship without a resident pastor to lead them. They would sing, pray, hear a sermon read from a book, and sometimes hear a testimony about how another life was changed by Jesus Christ. Baptisms, communion, and confirmation services had to wait upon the arrival of a visiting ordained minister.

The oldest deed for the land and buildings is dated May 20, 1771, and recorded in the Registrar's office, Lincolnton, North Carolina. It shows that by this time the name of the church had been changed to the "South Fork Church". The following is part of that deed: 'This indenture made the 20th day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-one and in the eleventh year of our reigning; Between Paul Anthony...and christian churches Lutarin and Presbetaren of the state named, commonly called the South Fork... Witnesseth that for and in consideration of the sum of two pounds current & lawful money of N. C....have sold...unto said two churches for a meeting house place...all that...parcel of land containing ten acres, ...being in the county of Tryon in said Province, Beginning at a White Oak in Paul Anthony's line & running w. 60

poles to a stake, thence n. 32 poles to a stake, thence e. 60 poles to a stake, thence s. 32 poles to the Beginning it being part of a tract of land was granted unto the said Paul Anthony by patent bearing date 25th day of April in the year of our Lord Christ 1767 and all buildings, houses, etc.'

According to the deed it is clear that there were two distinct congregations. It was no longer a true union church. There were separate records kept by the Reformed and Lutheran congregations. Although it is assumed that they worshipped together, it is quite possible that they worshipped at different times in the same building, also. If they began as a union congregation, it is clear from the deed that by 1771 they were no longer a union congregation. Thus Old St. Paul's is not only the oldest surviving Christian church west of the Catawba, but it is also the oldest surviving Lutheran congregation, also.

"And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he who doeth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 John 2:17

A SCHOOL TEACHER BECOMES A PREACHER

It takes courage and insight for a person to change their career in mid-life. Here is the story of one man who did. His name was J. G. Arndt. When he came to America in 1773 he was a school teacher, but after a couple of years he answered God's call to become a preacher of God's Word. He eventually became the first resident pastor of this church, then known as the South Fork Church, and the first resident minister west of the Catawba river. His name then, before it was "Americanized," was Johann Gottfried Arends.

An old journal, written by Arends, gives insight into the advent here of the first

preacher. He was to be the first Lutheran minister ordained in the state, and the first president of the North Carolina Lutheran Synod. The book dates before the Revolutionary War and is written in old script, much of the history being in German. It is entitled, The Journal of J. G. Arends, and is being preserved at the Archives of the North Carolina Synod, Salisbury, NC.

Born December 11, 1740, Arends was a graduate of the Teacher's Seminary in Hanover, Germany, and a native of Goettingen. He decided to come to North Carolina in response to a request for a school teacher and a pastor made by two churches in North Carolina in 1772. Rev. Adolphus Nussman and Mr. Arends left their homes in 1773 to come to America and serve Organ and St. John's churches, both of Rowan County. In 1775, upon the request of the congregation and Rev. Nussman, Arends was ordained to the gospel ministry by Joachim Beulow, Missionary and Inspector over North and South Carolina.

The earliest record of the appearance in the local area of the Rev. Arends is his administration of Holy Communion to children at South Fork Church in August, 1776. Some of the partakers listed in Arends journal were: "Boys, Jacob Kransster, Wilhelm Seigmann, Jacob Killian, Michael Klein, Johannes Seigmann, Johann Georg Siegmann, Henrich Wittenburg, Girls, Anna Margaretha Bolicken, Anna Maria Siegmann, Philipa Adams, Elizabeth Bolichen, Christina Bolichen."

Arends served as a 'circuit rider' for many of the oldest churches in Western North Carolina. To be a 'circuit rider' meant a probable minimum of two or three days in the saddle each week, in all weathers, fording many streams, without maps or signposts, and infrequent public accommodations. Some church buildings existed, used jointly

by all the Germans and other church groups. However, homes were certainly often used for worship services. Worship and Bible study materials were scarce and expensive.

Soon after Arends became a pastor, the Revolutionary War began. Due to the war, it became impossible to order and receive any kind of materials from Europe. The British blockade would not permit ships to bring in any supplies that might help the colonists survive and win the war. Thus the Revolutionary War was a great hardship on these settlers who were still striving to civilize a wilderness land.

John Wilfong, Sr. was one of those men who served as a soldier in the Revolutionary War. He was only 14 years old in 1776 when the war began. He survived the war and lived a full life in this area. He was a member of the South Fork Church and is buried in our historic graveyard.

After the Revolutionary War came to an end, communication with the German homeland was re-established. This made it possible for additional pastors to come and serve in America. Two years after the war ended, Arends, who was forty-five years old, accepted the call of the Catawba area congregations to be their first resident pastor and moved to the present Lincoln County. In 1785 his journal records 'John Arends at the South Fork.' He acquired a plantation about one mile from his wife's father, Michael Rudisill, on Leeper's Creek, a tributary about halfway between the Catawba River proper and its chief South Fork.

His move did not end his ministerial work in the Rowan and churches further east, as he continued to visit for at least four years and conducted confirmations. Like most German immigrants, Arends changed his name to an American version, which was spelled "Arndt." He also put an end to the

superstition of using unmarked gravestones in our cemetery. Some of the pioneers feared that the devil would harass them until Resurrection Day if Satan could identify their grave. After Arndt's arrival here in 1785, graves were inscribed in German with name, dates, and other information. During the remainder of his life, Arndt served his community in many ways. According to George Shuford, in the book, Life Sketches of Lutheran Ministers: NC-TENN Synods (Columbia, SC: 1966), he was not only a pastor and teacher, but he was a community leader, informal banker, and practical physician. In 1803 the North Carolina Lutheran Synod was organized with Arndt chosen as its first president, though he was 63 and almost blind. He continued to serve the Lord Jesus Christ until his death on July 9, 1807.

"He hath promised us, even eternal life." 1 John 2:25

ERECTED ANNO DOMINI 1818

All time is measured according to the year Jesus Christ was born. The years before the birth of Jesus Christ are referred to as "B.C.," which means "before Christ." The abbreviation "A.D." stands for "anno Domini," which is Latin for "in the year of our Lord." In the same way Jesus Christ separates time, so does He separate all people—those who believe in Him and those who do not. As brave witnesses for Him, the members of Old St. Paul's took a risk when they decided to build a new church. It would require a tremendous sacrifice, but they made that sacrifice in the year of our Lord 1818.

Our historic building was erected during the pastorate of Rev. Daniel Moser (1790-1839). In Life Sketches Of Lutheran Ministers (p. 148), it is written of Moser that "he maintained honor, dignity, and firmness, ... As a preacher, he was firm in the faith, and

worthy of his vocation." It would have been necessary to have that kind of firm leadership in order for a small country community to build such a fine, sturdy church which you see still standing here today.

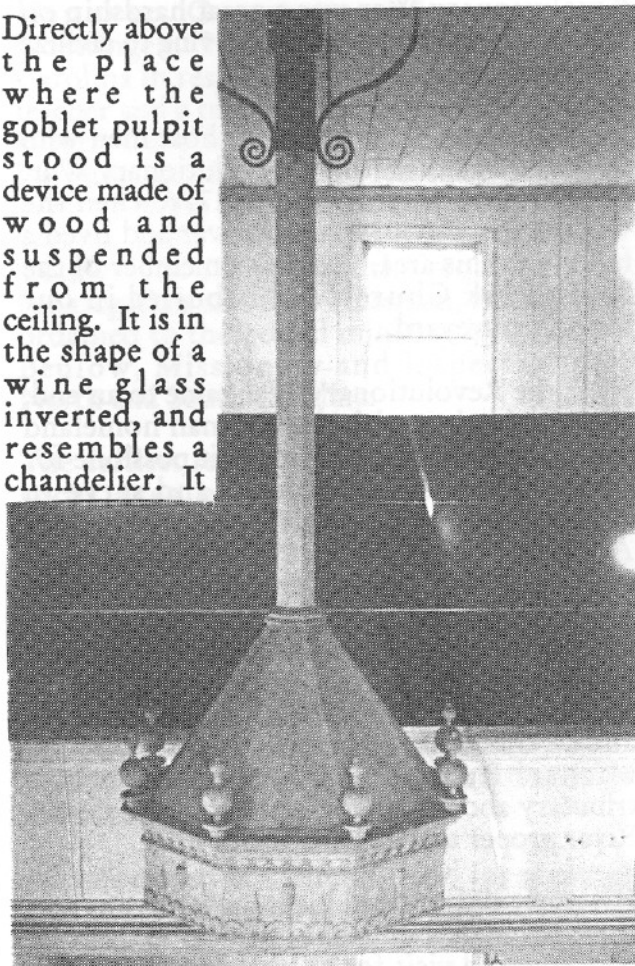
In the fall of 1817 the sixty year old second structure was dismantled. Mr. Henry Cline was the young carpenter who used the sound logs from the old log cabin to build a two-story sanctuary in less than six months. How did the eighteen year old Cline and his helpers do it? First of all the huge logs used in the project were weatherboarded and sealed. The nails used were home-made. And yet the church was built high enough to accommodate a gallery above the first floor. It was indeed an amazing work of architecture for that time and place.

Today this edifice still stands, stately and solid, with a seating capacity of 250 people. The pulpit and altar are located near the east wall. The pews throughout the church are crude, straight-backed benches, arranged on three sides of the building. There are five tiers on the first floor for the children in the northwest and north quarters, five for the men in the south quarter, and four for the women in the southwest quarter. The women's section is equipped with foot rails for three of the four pews so that mother can make a better lap to hold her child. The pews downstairs had open backsides because of the bustle worn by the women years ago. Upstairs in the gallery the pews are divided into three sections, each with four pews. The building is rectangular in shape, has a door at each end and in the center of the west side. Just inside the end doors are the steep narrow winding stairs to what was once the slave gallery.

Windows in the gallery are very small square openings. There are three on each side and two on each end. Windows downstairs are longer but no wider than those above. There

is only one on each side of the front door and only one at each end, as the steps to the gallery are on one side of the doors. Three windows are on the east side. There was formerly a goblet pulpit, located very high, which enabled the preacher to be as near the gallery as to the first floor. In 1905 it was replaced by a roomier, rectangular pulpit built against the east wall. It is not as high but it still has to be entered by a flight of steps.

Directly above the place where the goblet pulpit stood is a device made of wood and suspended from the ceiling. It is in the shape of a wine glass inverted, and resembles a chandelier. It



was made for a sounding board to enhance the volume of the speaker's voice. A legend claims that if the preacher tells a lie, then the sounding board will come crashing down on him.

Charles J. Preslar, Jr. reports in his book, A History Of Catawba County (Salisbury, NC: Rowan Co., 1954, p. 96) that, "In 1818, a second deed was made on the property by John Smyre to John Wilfong, Sr. and John Propst, they being appointed to care for the church property. The deed, written in a splendid hand, is in legible English."

According to legend, a runaway slave was murdered in 1862 by his owner in the southwest corner of the gallery. Brown-colored stains in the shape of handprints can still be seen on the floor in the first pew.

After the Civil War, George Luther Hunt was tutored for the Lutheran ministry by Adam Miller, Jr. and began his thirty years of ministry at Old St. Paul's in 1868. He resigned in 1895, only to be called again in 1905 when the Lutheran congregation divided. The Lutheran congregation which became a part of the liberal Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod moved to Startown. Those who continued in the conservative Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio remained at this site. Because the spiral staircase to the pulpit was too difficult for Hunt to climb, a new pulpit was built against the east wall. Our current pump organ was purchased in 1905, also.

In 1952, the members of Old St. Paul's built a new sanctuary and fellowship hall across the road from this historic building. An old school house which stood in the present church park for many years was torn down in 1953. Walter Hunt, a grandson of Rev. Luther M. Hunt, can recall attending school there until he reached the fifth grade in 1916. In 1956, a parsonage was built and Rev. Calvert Love was called to serve as our first full-time resident pastor. In 1974, an educational wing was added to our fellowship hall.

What does the future hold for Old St. Paul's?

We want to continue to serve our Lord Jesus Christ with a strong ministry that reaches out to our community with the love of God. This is the story of our past, and we want to continue to do that in the future. One way that we hope to accomplish this is by building a new multi-purpose building across the road near our education wing.

"A time to rend, and a time to sew."
Ecclesiastes 3:7

TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON

Neal D. Wilfong's Tombstone Inscriptions of the Old St. Paul's Church Cemetery (1969), recalls his memories of Old St. Paul's bicentennial celebration on October 4-11, 1959. He writes, "During the memorable week special worship services were attended by members of both the Lutheran and the Reformed Church (now the United Church of Christ) in the amiable manner shared by the two communions continually since their organization two centuries ago in colonial North Carolina. Practically all the Lutheran and Reformed congregations in western North Carolina are transplants" of the historic Old St. Paul's Church.

THE RESIDENT PASTORS OF OLD ST. PAUL'S

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
Romans 8:18

J.G. Arends 1785-1807
Philip Henkel 1805-1814
Daniel Moser 1815-1820
David Henkel 1820-1831
Adam Miller, Jr. 1835-1846
P. C. Henkel 1849-1869
George L. Hunt 1868-1895
J. C. Moser 1896-1897
E. J. Sox 1897-1899

F. K. Roof 1900-1905
 George L. Hunt . . . 1905-1907
 L. P. Propst 1907-1909
 R. M. Carpenter . . . 1912-1916
 J. C. Barb 1916-1924
 Luther M. Hunt . . . 1925-1938
 Royal Walther 1938-1943
 Sylvanus Schillinger 1944-1956
 Calvert Love 1956-1961
 Charles Boaz 1962-1970
 Luther Knauff 1971-1987
 John H. Groth . . 1988-present

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

THANKS BE TO GOD!

In A History Of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church: Hickory, NC (1941) written by N. M. Newton and Royal Walther it concludes, "Today the old graveyard behind the "Dutch Meeting House" contains the remains of many who have long since been forgotten, many whose names exist only as half-obliterated markings on weatherbeaten stones. The epitaphs express a sentiment which has long since passed away, a sorrow which has long since been healed; and yet, the old names so crudely inscribed represent in their rough simplicity a few of that noble race who were the founders of America."

SOME OF THE LEGIBLE TOMBSTONES

(R indicates Row, # indicates number)

Rev. Geo. L. Hunt 1832-1910, R 18 #808
 (Preacher and Shepherd)
 Beulah Artila Hunt 1889-1893, R 17 #781, (4 yr. old)
 Noah W. Killian 1837-1863, R 11 #567
 (Civil War Veteran)
 Nicbloos Wagner 1774-1796, R 9 #522
 (early German marker)
 C.M. Hildebrand 1836-1868, R 10 #530 (32 yr. old)
 Rev. Royal E. Walther 1906-1957, R 7 #456 (Pastor)
 Abraham Mauser ? 1702, R 7 #397 (German marker)
 Michael Kelin 1772-1790, R 7 #399 (German marker)
 Noah Hallman 1825-1893, R 6 #375

(Mexican War Veteran)
 Jacob Baker Sr. 1743-1786, R 6 #344
 (Old English marker)
 Leonhard Killian 1723-1795, R 6 #341
 (early German marker)
 Andreas Killian 1702-1788, R 5 #287 (Erected in 1952)
 G.L.D. 1777, R 4 #240, (Initials only)
 Michal Rudisill 1785-1867, R 3 #191
 Rev. Macom A. Huffman 1887-1958, R 2 #187
 Rev. Adam Miller 1801-1868, R 2 #141 (Pastor)
 Bessie Herman Haltiwanger 1895-1942, R 1 #73
 (Pastor's wife)
 Iris L. Hawn 1915-1944, R 1 #64
 (World War II Veteran)
 William A. Bolick 1895-1918, R 1 #50
 (World War I Veteran)
 John Wilfong Senr. 1762-1838, R 1 #24
 (Revolutionary War Veteran)

This brief historical sketch was compiled by Rev. John H. Groth to celebrate the 170th year since our historic church was built (1818-1988). It was revised in 1991 using some information from two of our previous official historic booklets which were written by Mrs. Doris Boaz and Rev. Luther Knauff.

We hope you have enjoyed your visit to Old St. Paul's. Be sure to visit the Catawba County Historical Museum, 1716 S. College Dr., Newton (465-0383) and Murray's Mill, Catawba while you are in the area. Our phone number is 465-4154. Our address is: Old St. Paul's, 2035 Old Conover-Startown Highway, Newton, NC 28658.

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." John 20:31

