



St. Luke's United Church of Christ

471 North Main Street Wilkes-Barre, PA 18705

www.stlukeschurchwb.org

Who Was our Founding Pastor Reverend S. C. Meckel?

SEBASTIAN C. MECKEL was born February 7, 1826 in Coblenz, on the Rhine River, in the Kingdom of Prussia (part of today's Germany). He arrived in the United States circa 1851, where he settled in Newark, NJ and worked as a coach trimmer while pursuing religious studies. In June 1856 he was ordained by Bishop Simpson at Poughkeepsie, New York, and was then appointed to lead a Methodist Episcopal Church in Schenectady, NY, where he preached for three years. He then transferred to Albany, NY where he was pastor for three years, and from there proceeded for two years to Buffalo, NY. He then returned to Albany due to ill health and only did local preaching and continued his work as a coach trimmer. During the Civil War, in 1864 he enlisted in Company H, Ninety-first New York Veteran Volunteer Infantry, and served as a non-commissioned officer. He was engaged in several battles in Virginia, including near the Weldon Railroad, at Fredericksburg and received a sabre wound in fierce fighting at Harpers Ferry.

After the war he came to live at 51 Hollenback Avenue in Wilkes-Barre, resuming his work as a coach trimmer and part-time preacher. In 1874 he was married to Louisa H. Joline, daughter of Henry and Susan Joline, natives of Easton, PA. He dabbled in Republican party politics, and served as chaplain of the (Grand Army of the Republic) GAR association in Plymouth.

In 1878 Rev. Meckel was asked to lead the new German Reformed Church then being established in Plymouth Borough. In the early 1890s he was asked to help in the founding of St. Luke's German Reformed Church in Wilkes-Barre. He was the first pastor of the church, serving from the church's formal incorporation in December 1893 to his retirement in 1897. Rev. Meckel died at his home on March 5, 1916 and is buried in the historic Hollenback Cemetery in Wilkes-Barre.



The **Rev. S.C. Meckel Chapel** was established at St. Luke's in 1911, and was rededicated as a memorial in 1937. The **Rev. S.C. Meckel Memorial Chapel** remains an important place of worship inside today's **St. Luke's United Church of Christ**, 471 North Main Street in the **City of Wilkes-Barre**.