



Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries

Proclaiming Liberty in Christ in the City

NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2017

Faith Among the Ruins

by Rev Robert Kieselowsky
Executive Director



Every day,
when I
leave my
front door,
I see a
beautiful
Roman
Catholic Church.

My daughters ride bikes in its shadow and hear its bells toll every half hour. It is one of the most beautiful structures in Philadelphia.

Except, it isn't a church.

There has been no congregation meeting in the building for twenty years. Instead, it serves as an assembly hall for a prestigious boys' preparatory school during the week and sits empty all weekend.

I began to wonder about the other church structures in our neighborhood in the center of the city—how many are still in service to the Word of God?

When visitors first see Philadelphia's magnificent skyline from the bridges and highways, they often notice what seem to be church spires. But those spires alone do not tell the whole story of the churches in Philadelphia.

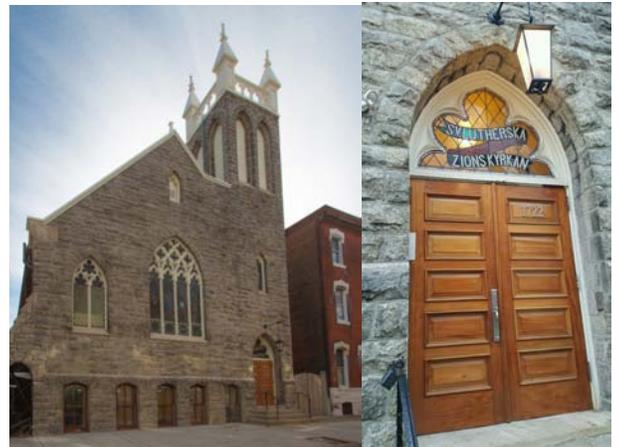
In 1922, the city began building what is now known as the Ben Franklin Bridge.



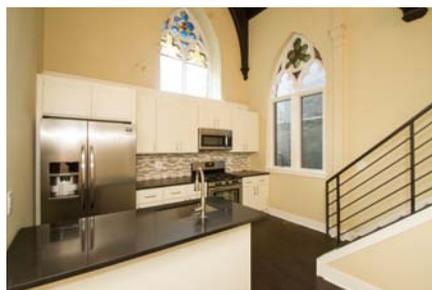
One casualty of construction was the oldest English-speaking Lutheran church in the world. It was torn down to make room for the bridge.

A quick stroll through our neighborhood reveals a more recent trend for church buildings: condos. Rather than completely tearing down buildings, investors renovated them into high-end luxury condominiums.

Recently, condos were carved out of the remains of a Swedish Lutheran church (*below*) just two blocks from where Logos Lutheran meets for worship. It underscores the need for a central location where the forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus is proclaimed and where people can find liberty from sin, the pain of the world, and the wiles of the evil one. (*continued on next page*)

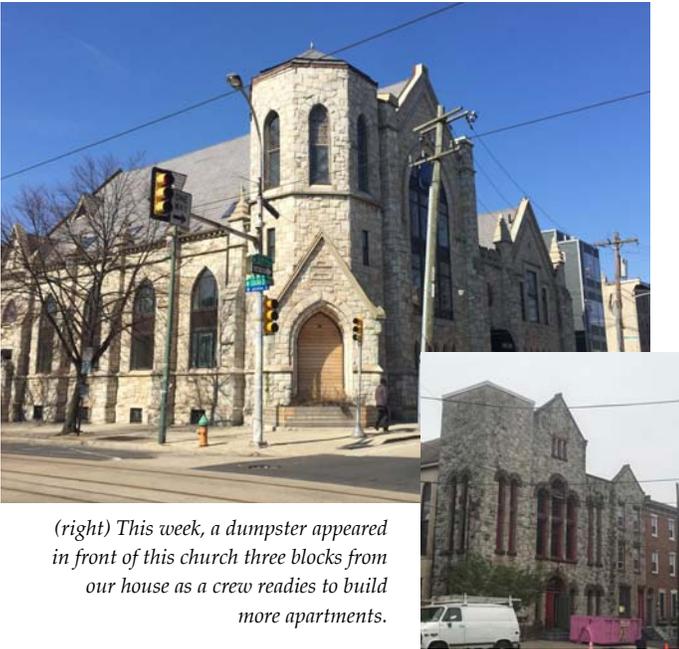


The Ben Franklin Bridge connects Philadelphia to Camden, NJ.



Faith Among Ruins *(continued)*

Within our neighborhood alone, at least five other church buildings have been renovated into living spaces. The same number have also been torn down.

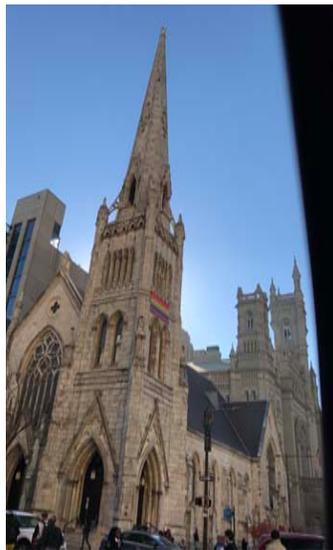


(right) This week, a dumpster appeared in front of this church three blocks from our house as a crew readies to build more apartments.

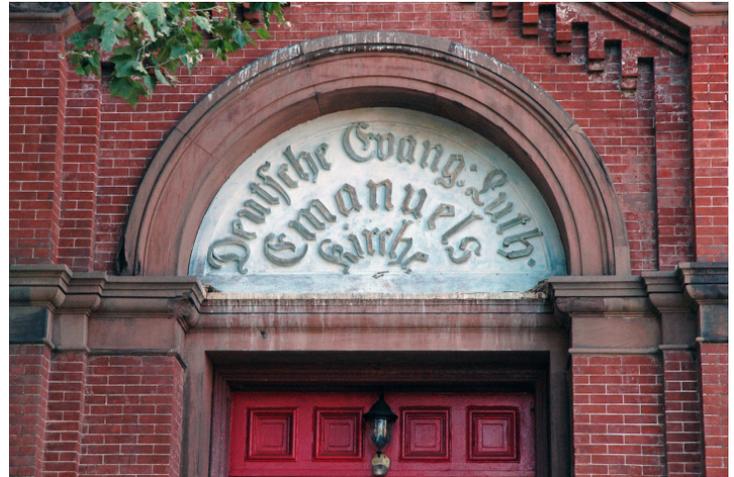
Not only are many churches being torn down or converted into condos, those still holding services have often abandoned the basic tenets of the historic Christian faith.

The Gospel of salvation from sin and death in Jesus Christ is often replaced with popular ideologies that are not part of the teaching of Holy Scripture. *(right)*

Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries exists to proclaim liberty in Christ Jesus. It is imperative that the proclamation of Christ continues in our section of Center City.



I have recently spent a great deal of time on the phone with students who are coming to the city to study and professionals coming to the city for work—each looking for a Lutheran congregation focused upon Christ’s Word and Sacraments in the heart of the city. It is a delight to invite them to worship with us at Logos Lutheran.



We certainly live among the ruins of faith, as religions other than Christianity take root in the city. The Emanuel Lutheran church building *(above)* has been converted into a space for a Buddhist temple in a neighborhood of primarily Vietnamese immigrants.



Last year, a new Mormon temple and meeting hall were completed on the main parkway *(left)*. With them, we have seen a growing number of Mormon missionaries walking the streets of the city.



Islam also has a growing presence in many parts of the city. Just north of us on Broad Street, a four million dollar mosque was recently built, the largest in Philly. The sign at a neighborhood mosque *(left)* directly attacks the Christian teaching of the Trinity.

In the middle of so many influences, Christ gathers His beloved church around His Word to lead them to forgiveness and salvation. What a privilege to be a part of it!

Key factors behind establishing Logos Lutheran in Center City:

- Philadelphia lost over one third of its population during the second half of 20th century. Churches left the city as people moved into the suburbs. During the last 15 years, however, the trend has reversed.
- Downtown Philly has grown by about 200,000 since 2000. It is second in the U.S. only to Manhattan in population density.
- More than 43% of Philly jobs are located in Center City, along with many colleges and universities.
- Within the 10-block radius surrounding Logos Lutheran, the largest number of people identify themselves as “no religious preference” or “spiritual without religious preference.” (source: *Mission Insight Demographic Study, 2015*)
- The worship space for Logos is just blocks north of the intersection of the major highways, subway, trolley, and regional rail lines. This provides the greatest accessibility for people across the entire region.
- Logos Lutheran’s Easter Divine Service was the first time an LCMS congregation gathered in Center City to receive the Lord’s Supper and to celebrate His resurrection.
- The light of Christ’s Gospel shines brightest in the darkness. ***Your help is essential! Please continue to support the first-ever LCMS congregation in Center City.***

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LOGOS LUTHERAN
CENTER CITY PHILADELPHIA
www.logoslutheran.org

Vicar Updates

- Many thanks to **Vicar Jacob Benson** for his dedication and work this year. We wish him godspeed as he returns to his studies at Concordia Theological Seminary (Fort Wayne).



- We are delighted to welcome **Vicar Christian Einertson** this summer, following his first year at Concordia Seminary (St Louis).



Vicar Einertson is a native of Marietta, Georgia and has degrees in Modern Foreign Languages and Music-Voice with Sacred Music Emphasis from Augustana University (Sioux Falls, SD). He has performed as a vocal soloist with orchestras and choirs, enjoys singing in Laudamus, the touring choir at Concordia Seminary and regularly plays organ at congregations in the St. Louis area.

An avid traveler and student of languages and cultures, he has been blessed to study in a number of countries. During his travels, he has enjoyed getting to know some of the churches in fellowship with the Missouri Synod in other countries, and he is passionate about the spread of the gospel and the promotion of sound Lutheran doctrine throughout the world.

He looks forward to the opportunity to explore Philadelphia and learn about the unique joys and challenges of ministry in urban areas. Most importantly, he is thankful for the opportunity to get to know the saints in Philadelphia and be of service to the people of God here.

Rev Adam DeGroot has accepted a call to St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Albuquerque, NM. Please continue to pray for him and his family during this time of transition.



Proclaiming Liberty in Christ to the City

Please contribute to the work of Christ in Philadelphia. Return this form with your check in the envelope provided. Make checks payable to **Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries**.

Please ensure we have your correct contact information.

Name _____
Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email address: _____ (optional)

Donate online at phillyministries.org

Your contribution to Philadelphia Lutheran Ministries is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. You will receive a letter as a tax receipt. PLM is a Registered Service Organization (RSO) of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

P.O. Box 15155 Philadelphia, PA 19130 www.phillyministries.org



P.O. Bos 15155

Philadelphia, PA 19130

Upcoming Reformation Event

Dr. Phillip Cary

Professor of Philosophy at Eastern University; author, lecturer, blogger



Saturday, October 21, 2017

1:00pm-5:00pm

628 North Broad Street

Philadelphia

Dr. Cary will present a seminar on the life and theology of Martin Luther. This is part of PLM's celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.