

Konnarock Echoes

OF THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN WORK OF THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Volume VII Issue 1

Konnarock, Virginia

Winter 1951

A TEACHING MISSION

Education

So many of you ask, "What kind of school do you have at Konnarock?" This article will try to answer, at least in part, some of the questions you have in mind.

First, it is a Lutheran Mission School for the mountain area, and even farther away, for boys and girls of high school age. When the need arises, younger ones are received as boarding students and they attend the local public school.

Yes, it is a certified second-

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Dedication Visitors

From all directions they came, these loyal workers of the Church, to attend the Committee Meeting of the Southern Mountain Work and to celebrate the Dedication of the beautiful new stone St. Matthew's Church and the Tenth Anniversary of the Konnarock Medical Center. Three "top ladies" with the jovial representative of the Brotherhood came down by train

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Evangelism

In the family

Perhaps one of the greatest evangelistic losses to the Christian Church is the vast army of children who grow up not in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," but left rather to the chance that some day they may be "converted". It is a wonderful thing, therefore, to see a Christian family begun and to watch it grow into and in the Church.

At Laurel Valley we have been happy together with one of our young families. We would like you to meet the Woods Mitchells. Ten years ago Mrs. Mitchell, then Pauline Adams, was baptized as a girl. In time, she came to attend our Konnarock Lutheran School from which she graduated. In 1948, she was married to Woods Mitchell in Laurel Valley Church by the pastor. Mr. Mitchell was not a member of the Lutheran Church but came to services with his wife. It was a joy shortly after little

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A HEALING MISSION

Tenth Anniversary Celebrated

The Tenth Anniversary of the establishment of the Konnarock Medical Center was celebrated on December 10, 1950, in connection with the meeting of the Southern Mountain Work Committee of the Board of American Missions of the United Luth-



eran Church. Those present at this celebration were given a chance to look back over ten years and more of fine service from a medical program organi-

zed by Dr. H. C. Meyer with aid from Mrs. Meyer, his nurse-wife, and deaconess-nurse, Sister Sophia Moeller.

The celebration started with an anniversary dinner at Konnarock Lutheran School on Saturday night, December 9. At this time it was wonderful to hear the tributes paid to Sister Sophia Dr. and Mrs. Meyer for the efficient and consecrated service rendered in these mountains during the past ten years and more. The response of these faithful servants in the ministry of mercy was in the spirit of humility and deep gratitude for the opportunity of service where their service to the less-privileged has counted for so much.

The reports of Dr. and Mrs.

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A PREACHING MISSION



DEDICATION

Beautiful St. Matthew's Church, called by many "the Little Gem of the Mountains," was dedicated as the snow flakes were falling in a picturesque setting on December 10, 1950. The church was filled to capacity and the congregation overflowed into the Sunday School Annex.

The architect was T. Norman Mansell of Philadelphia. With a seating capacity of 180, the church was built for a total cash outlay of \$21,477. Additional donated material and labor amounted to \$8,115. Mr. H. W. Wyatt, Mountain Mission Maintenance Foreman, and member of the Church Council, was the builder.

St. Matthew's Pastor, The Reverend Rudolf F. Ludwig, was liturgist at the Dedication Service. Dr. R. Homer Anderson, Superintendent of the Lutheran Synod of Virginia, performed the act of dedication. Dr. R. H. Gerberding, Executive Secretary of the Board of American Missions, delivered the dedication sermon. Dr. Gerberding based his sermon on Psalm 29:2. "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." He graphically pointed out how the beauty of the appointments in the church glorified God and served as an aid in making the beauty of holiness manifest in the Christian life.

In the afternoon at 1:45 o'clock, the Tenth Anniversary of the establishment of the Konnarock Medical Center was celebrated. Thus the work of healing body and soul continues to go hand in hand.

At the close of the service one was heard to say: "Another long mile has been traversed in the three-fold program and progress of the teaching preaching, and healing mission of our Southern Mountain Work, to the glory of God and His Church."

Konnarock Echoes

Edited by

REV. C. ROSS RITCHIE, Superintendent
SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN WORK,
Konnarock, Virginia

WINTER 1951

Volume VII Issue 1

Greetings to all our friends and supporters of Southern Mountain Work. Space will not permit the enumeration of the names of all those who have participated in this Christian Ministry of Love.

During the past quarter-century there has been a steady and marked progress in your TEACHING, HEALING, PREACHING MISSION.

In the new adventure as superintendent of this growing work, I earnestly solicit your continued good will, gifts, contributions, and prayers. New doors are being opened in an ever-increasing service. Boys and girls are being taught and guided into the light and truth of the Christian Way of Life. Works of mercy are being administered to the physically sick, suffering and needy. The word of God is being preached to the hungry of soul and the sick in spirit.

To all our friends and supporters we say, "Thank you" and remember the words of our Master when He said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

We invite new friends to share in the Joy of this Ministry of Love.

We Express Our Thanks

"We thank you for the world so sweet.

We thank you for the food we eat.

We thank you for the birds that sing,

We thank you, God, for everything!"

At Konnarock Lutheran School this is one of the favorite blessings before lunch.

Sometimes we think that in our blessings there should be a small line about all the fine gifts of money, of clothing, of supplies, and of equipment that come from our many friends in the United Lutheran Church in America. For we are truly blessed in the kindness and thoughtfulness of our friends in the Church.

We Give Our Needs

The Master has said: "Ask — and ye shall receive!"

In the five years that I have spent in this mountain mission, I cannot remember one thing that we have asked for that we have not received. Some things have come as gifts from Women's Missionary Society Groups; some, from Brotherhoods; some, from Luther Leagues; some, from individuals some, from the Board of our Church — but each penny or item has in some way filled a NEED in our work.

So many times during the month, we receive letters from people asking what we need. We shall list the needs:

Our Urgent Needs

1. Funds for Doctor's Home.
2. Table linens and napkins for dormitory.

3. Books for adults and young people, reference, fiction, for newly-started library.

4. Irons for Konnarock Lutheran School and Iron Mountain School for Boys.

5. Office supplies: file cards of all sizes and manila envelopes especially.

6. Funds for paint and repair of Iron Mountain School.

7. Funds for dormitory equipment such as washing machines.

8. Funds to replace car for deaconess-nurse, Sister Sophia Moeller.

9. Funds for tuition and dental care and optical aids for students who are unable to carry their own expense.

10. Funds for a new silo on our training farm.

11. Educational movies for a library of films.

12. Records for music appreciation classes.

13. File Cabinets for administration building.

Our General Needs

1. Curtain material
2. Office supplies
3. Yard-lengths for home economics classes, buttons, and trimmings.

5. New or used clothing of any size or type.

New Superintendent Assumes Active Duties

The Reverend C. Ross Ritchie became the new Superintendent of the Southern Mountain Work on January 1, 1951. He comes to his new position after a fruitful pastorate of eleven-and-a-half years at First Lutheran Church, Lexington, N. C.

His first pastorate was in Rocky Mount, N. C., where he built Holy Trinity Church. For four years in World War II, he was an Army Chaplain, serving three years overseas.

He was the North Carolina Director of CHEY, and under his leadership that Synod raised 371% of its quota, the highest in the United Lutheran Church.

The new superintendent was born in Concord, N. C. He is a grandson of the late Dr. George H. Cox, who served for many years in the North Carolina Synod and the Holston Synod of Virginia.

He received his A. B. from Lenoir Rhyne College in 1924, his B. D. from the Southern Seminary in 1927, and his M.A. from the University of South Carolina in 1927.

He married the former Barbara Ada Brady of Columbia, S. C. They have two children, Barbara, a sophomore, and C. Ross Jr., a freshman, both students at Lenoir Rhyne College in Hickory, N. C.

Superintendent and Mrs. Ritchie moved on the field during the first week of January. The following day they were greeted with a nice, white blanket of snow which covered the whole

mountain area. Repeated snows and much rain soon had the roads in bad condition. Though travel was slow and the way new, Superintendent and Mrs. Ritchie soon began to find



their way over the mountain roads to the outlying churches conducting services for the vacant congregations and making friends with the community people.

The friendly faces of Superintendent and Mrs. Ritchie are already familiar ones about the school buildings and they are quickly adapting themselves to the duties of counselling, guiding, and directing the manifold activities of the Southern Mountain Work.

Ministry of Music

We were enriched in January at K.L.S. Chapel by a concert of sacred music presented by the choir of the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, under the direction of the Reverend W. Richard Fritz. The members of the Seminary Choir were at the same time given an opportunity to become better acquainted with our Southern Mountain Work.

One of the highlights of the occasion was a visit by the Choir to the State Convict Camp for colored prisoners located at Konnarock. The pastor of the Konnarock Parish conducts service at this camp twice monthly. The prisoners make a receptive and devout congregation. Director Fritz brought the Choir to the

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Address For Gifts

Send all contributions or gifts as follows:

By parcel post or mail:

Southern Mountain Work
Konnarock, Virginia

By freight or express:

Southern Mountain Work
Chilhowie, Virginia.

Ministry of Music

camp intending to sing one number for the men. However, in the face of such an enthusiastic reception, this grew into four numbers. The spirit of the occasion, then, swept audience and performers into a regular song festival "a la Meistersinger". The prisoners produced a prize quartet which rendered two numbers excellently: then the Seminary Choir performed again. Another quartet from the camp appeared; again the theologs. Then, the whole body of about eighty prisoners rendered "Walk in Jerusalem Just Like John"; and the seminarians climaxed it all with their rendition of "Onward, Christian Soldiers."

A subsequent letter from some of the prisoners to Pastor Fritz states: "We wish to say the singing was wonderful; and hope and pray that in the near future you will all come again."

One of the inmates of the camp was recently confirmed and given Holy Communion by the pastor of St. Matthew's. Three others have asked to be baptized.

Education

(Continued from page 1)

ry school and in good standing with the Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Good students at K. L. S. make good students at any other school. Of the students who have graduated since 1946, a boy is a senior at Lenoir-Rhyne College; another completes the two-year course at Warren Wilson; a third is a freshman at Berea, preparing to study dentistry; a fourth boy is doing postgraduate work at K. L. S. Of the girls, one is a junior and one a freshman at Appalachian State Teachers College; two are sophomores at High Point College; two are first-year students at Marion Junior College; and two are seniors at Marion College; one has graduated from Marion College; and one girl is a student nurse. Other graduates are serving their country in the Armed Forces; some have married and have established Chris-

AUDIO - VISUAL PROGRAM

The mountain mission program of color slides with a recorded commentary has been well received. If you need a program for your organization in which the members can see and hear about this important mission project, write us to schedule the program for you.

tian homes, two of them bringing their husbands and babies into the church. Others are working in industry, on the farm, and several are teaching in rural mountain communities. A recent word from a high school principal in a near-by state commended the training given at Konnarock Lutheran School.

The Program is four-fold: the development of the spiritual, the mental, the physical, and the social.

Since the school is entirely supported by the United Lutheran Church in America, religious education is emphasized. Each student studies Bible in courses arranged by the Virginia Department of Education, for which he receives unit credit. These courses are taught at present by the Principal. One period a week, the Pastor teaches "Confirmation" and "Church History." Hymn-playing, church-music-singing, leading morning devotions in chapel, teaching Children of the Church, and taking part in Luther League, attending Sunday School and all services of the church are other means for developing religious training and experience.

Homemaking and general farming are developed through a four-year course in home economics for girls and the doing of household jobs. For boys, manual training and agriculture and practical work on the farm. All household tasks are done by the girls. Each student works at the school two weeks in the summer to prepare and can next winter's food.

Music continues to be the third major emphasis at K. L. S. Every boy and girl is offered piano or voice lessons or both. In addition to individual lessons, all the girls meet twice a week for choir or music appreciation. Once a week the entire student body meets for mixed choir. Once a week there are also voice-ensemble classes, piano-ensemble classes, and a church music group (for learning hymn-playing). So during much of the time, "There's music in the air" in our school.

Regular academic subjects enable students to graduate with sufficient credits. Four years of English, including literature and grammar, three of social studies, two of mathematics, two of science, and two of French are required.

A recreational director has charge of the physical and social phase of the program. A sturdy station-wagon and a special fund are invaluable aids in making this work effective. Physical education classes are usually termed "recreation." Basketball and other outdoor games are greatly hindered by

weather conditions, but hiking is enjoyed in spite of unpleasant weather. School parties and movies, planned and operated to a large extent by students, include the youth of the community.

Also giving valuable supervision and care in the physical development is the mission doctor and his wife. Their service stresses the importance of prevention of disease and guidance in nutrition. This year a thirty-six hour Red Cross Home Nursing Course will be given to all Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Girls, by our deaconess-nurse.

The whole program of our Southern Mountain Work is united in one complete program under the able direction, aid, encouragement, and supervision of the superintendent, and with the full and loyal support of the United Lutheran Church in America, and the splendid work and example of the efficient and consecrated teaching staff, who try to make Konnarock Lutheran School a school where each student can and does grow "in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and man", as did Jesus our perfect example and our blessed Saviour.

Anniversary

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Meyer and Sister Sophia reflected a tremendous growth in the medical and health service rendered to the Konnarock Valley during these ten years. At this celebration it became evident that it soon would be necessary to expand the medical personnel in order to carry out the program of efficient medical service as has been rendered by our church in these Southern Mountains during the past ten years.

It was noted that all of the 142 babies but one, delivered by Sister Sophia — who was called the "angel of mercy of the Helton Valley" — are living. This one child died at the age of two with pneumonia.

All of the normal deliveries in the area are done by Sister Sophia and five midwives trained by Dr. Meyer. The fact that no babies or mothers have been lost in childbirth is attributed to the close co-operation between the midwives and the doctor and a thorough prenatal clinic program.

The medical program has been one largely of preventive medicine. It was revealed that more than 40,000 treatments have been administered over the ten-year history.

"The Church has truly activated the Christian faith, in its medical program. Every treat-

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Dedication Visitors

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from the North. Mrs. Oscar Schmidt, respected member of the Board of American Missions, came in with her usual great big smile and was greeted as our beloved "Aunt Florence." How good to have again the faithful president of the Women's Missionary Society of the United Lutheran Church in America! Mrs. C. W. Baker, Jr., was greeted for the second time during her term of office with a hearty welcome at Konnarock. Dr. Nona M. Diehl, Executive Secretary of the Women's Missionary Society, and Mrs. Baker were valuable guests not only because of their fine spiritual messages and congenial personalities, but also because they represent the approximately 100,000 women in the United Lutheran Church in America, who so loyally support Southern Mountain Work. Time was too limited in those three busy days for sufficient talking and praying and planning together with these three gracious ladies.

Mr. Fred W. Konemann, vice president of the Brotherhood of America, through his briefly-spoken words, made us not only conscious of his genial presence, but he made us feel the strength and forward look and plans of the Brotherhood.

Dr. R. H. Gerberding, Executive Secretary of the Board of American Missions, and Mrs. Gerberding along with Dr. Paul Andrew Kirsch, Divisional Secretary of the Board of American Missions, and Mrs. Kirsch, drove in with smiling gracious greetings, and like good "uncles and aunts" they brought sweets for the boys and girls. Classes were interrupted long enough to permit students to express their genuine welcome through their broad smiles.

Alone from nearby North Carolina came the efficient Chairman of the Southern Mountain Work Committee, Mr. H. E. Isenhour, ready for any responsibility placed on him by the Church, includ-

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VACATION IN THE MOUNTAINS

Our mission school opens its doors to summer guests. If you and your family want to spend a quiet and restful vacation in the mountains, at a small cost, plan to come to Konnarock. Write for particulars and make your reservations early.

Dedication Visitors

(Con. from previous page)

ing the easy presiding at the many sessions held during the three big days at the mission.

Many were the visitors from near and far, in spite of extreme cold and snow, who joined with the Mission Family and representatives of the Church to rejoice and celebrate. Included in this interesting group were the mission pastors who reviewed the work in the mountain parishes by discussion and moving pictures. Enlightening reports were given by each pastor present: The Reverend F. M. Speagle of the Watauga Parish; the Reverend Raymond L. Booze, of the Gladesboro Parish; the Reverend Kenneth G. Killinger of the Attaway Parish; the Reverend Edwin F. Troutman of the Boone Parish; and the Reverend Rudolf F. Ludwig of the Konnarock Parish.

Last, but not by any means least, came the two - "Pops": The Reverend A. Kenneth Hewitt, D. D., beloved, who had lived and served in the mission as Superintendent for ten years; and the Reverend C. Ross Ritchie, joyfully greeted as the new superintendent, soon to begin work.

So these red-letter days at Konnarock were blessed by these Christian friends from far and near, who came to rejoice and to praise because of the special grace manifested by God in the beautiful new stone church and in the service of the medical missionaries, Dr. and Mrs. Meyer.

Our guests did not stay with us long; but their presence, their messages, their interest linger long and happily in our memories.

Evangelism

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Joseph Woods, Jr., was born to have the parents bring the child for Holy Baptism. This was an especial joy, because it is unusual for fathers whose church background is unsympathetic toward infant baptism to consent to the baptism of their little ones. Immediately following the baptism of this child, the father expressed his desire to come into the Evangelical Lutheran Church. He was catechized and confirmed.

At the beginning of this year, Mr. Mitchell was elected to the Church Council and to the office of Sunday School Superintendent. He has been the faithful church sexton at Laurel Valley for the past winter, walking on some wintry days five miles to get the fire going. "Little Joe", as he is called, comes to service regularly with his

parents. It was a rich and meaningful sight last Sunday to see him lift his little hand, when the offering plate came around, and drop in his mite. His "nurture" has begun.

Last week Mr. Mitchell followed in the steps of so many of our young people. He left for Delaware to find work. There is no industry in or around Konnarock to hold its young man-power. In time, Mrs. Mitchell and the baby will probably follow the husband and father, and the Konnarock Parish will have fed some more young Christians into the world; God grant also to the Church at large.

In the Congregation

Messiah Congregation of the Southern Mountain Work Helton Parish has been vacant for a year. Nevertheless, in the last quarter of 1950, fifteen were added to its confirmed membership of sixty-five, and an infant received in Holy Baptism.

The Holy Spirit used several means to bring about this "mass" intake of so small a congregation. The congregation had been supplied through the year by the pastor of the Konnarock Parish and a pretheological student during the summer months. The new members all come from a settlement way up on the mountainside known as "upper Helton."

Several of the group had attended a revival service. When asked about their church membership, they had declared their desire to go into the Lutheran Church. Their acquaintance with and affection for the Lutheran Church was awakened through two girls of the family. These girls had attended our Lutheran School at Konnarock and, while there, they had been confirmed at St. Matthew's. The previous pastor and Sister Sophia Moeller had visited, cultivated, and ministered.

During the summer months, Mr. Hugh George Anderson, a sophomore at Yale, supplied the parish. He held four Bible Schools, including one in Upper Helton. There is no church building; but, nothing daunted, Mr. Anderson held classes in the little public school building. About this time, the rumor started in the neighborhood that the Lutherans had a different Bible. A true "defender of the faith", Mr. Anderson lugged the pulpit Bible from Messiah Church up the mountain and showed it around to refute the skeptics. One of the zealous evangelistic church councilmen of Messiah Congregation now wooed and cultivated the prospects. He informed the regular supply pastor of the

whitened harvest. Now catechization began.

During October and November when the nights were starry and frosty, up the mountain went pastor and deaconess. Sister Sophie's Jeep made the climb except for the last stretch, which called for foot work. Membership classes were held in two homes. One night there were twenty-three listeners crowded into a small living room. Another night a baby started to cry. Sister Sophie rocked and hushed the baby while the instruction continued for the truly devout listeners. These nights seemed like glorious trips to the top of the world. When you reached the top, you paused to breathe in the bracing air and looked down and back on the mountains and valleys. The moon was shining, the stars were glittering; or, if you were early, the setting sun was sanctifying the whole panorama. And, then, you were on the King's business. It was a refreshment to hear one of the fathers say, "You haven't given us anything but what's in the Bible."

Then came the day for baptisms and confirmations. It was Lord's Acre Sunday at Messiah Church. Friends and members filled the Church. The offerings from the fruits of the fields and barns came to \$127. Just before the adult baptisms, one of the men candidates expressed his uncertainty to his neighbor; perhaps, he really needed to be IMMERSED. One of Messiah's church councilmen, sitting immediately in front of him overheard. He paged through the Bible in his hand, found Ezekiel 36:25, turned around and asked the questioner to read it. The man read; he murmured his satisfaction; his doubts were allayed; he was baptized. That quick and effective sword of the Spirit was found in the words: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." At the afternoon service that same day, that same brother presented his baby for baptism.



Faithful members of Messiah Church are still waiting for a

pastor to take over in their pretty log parsonage. They are being fed with services by the shepherd of the mountain work, the Superintendent C. Ross Ritchie. But they, too, long for a man on the field, for there are stretches which are white unto the harvest.

Anniversary

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ment is made in the name of Christ and His Church . . . The medical program is constantly operated as an auxiliary to building the Church", declared Dr. Meyer.

The success of the Konnarock Medical Center from the viewpoint of community health is noted in the remark by a well-known Rural Sociologist: "The work of the Konnarock Medical Center in the field of preventive medicine insofar as could be ascertained could not be matched elsewhere in Virginia."

On Sunday afternoon, December 10, the public celebration of the Tenth Anniversary was held. Mr. H. E. Isenhour, Chairman of the Mountain Work Committee, presided.

The high spiritual plan of the occasion was set by the devotional address delivered by Dr. Nona Diehl. The Reverend Doctor Paul Andrew Kirsch paid tribute to Dr. and Mrs. Meyer. Greetings on this occasion were brought from the Board of American Missions by Executive Secretary The Reverend R. H. Gerberding, D. D.; for the Woman's Missionary Society, the President, Mrs. C. W. Baker Jr.; for the Brotherhood, Vice President Fred W. Konemann; for the Lutheran Synod of Virginia, President J. Luther Mauney, D. D.; for the Council of Southern Mountain Workers, the Reverend John W. Bischoff of the Red Bird Mission at Beverly, Kentucky. Greetings filled with appreciation were brought from the local community by Mr. W. M. Buchanan and Mr. C. D. Blevins. Mr. Buchanan compared the medical work done by Dr. and Mrs. Meyer in this mountain area to the sun as it rises over the mountain tops to bring light to the dark valleys of suffering. The closing prayer and benediction were pronounced by Superintendent-elect, the Reverend C. Ross Ritchie.

As the result of the rapidly growing medical program, the need for more room and more personnel in the Konnarock Medical Center, the Committee on Mountain Work have passed the resolution to raise funds for the building of a home for the medical missionary in Konnarock.