



The Rev. Eugene Strebel

Rev. Eugene Strebel discusses prison work

The Rev. Eugene Strebel, temporary pastor at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Bainbridge, is also chaplain at the Lancaster County Prison.

Rev. Strebel is the first person to hold the position of chaplain at the county prison. Previously, volunteers provided religious services at the prison.

A study conducted by the Lancaster County Council of Churches indicated the need for a professional chaplain at the jail. The county commissioners, however, did not feel that the county could afford a full-time chaplain. They did approve of hiring a part-time chaplain.

Rev. Strebel was appointed to the new position in August, 1978.

Strebel and his family had moved to Lancaster in 1974. One reason why Strebel was appointed was that the last church he had served full-time was in Freeport, Long Island, a racially integrated church. Because of the large number of blacks and Puerto Ricans among the inmates at the prison, a man was needed as chaplain who had lots of experience with racial minorities.

Rev. Strebel had had to leave his Freeport church after he had suffered a heart attack. He had settled with his family in Lancaster because of reasonable tax rates and real estate costs, because of employment opportunities for his wife (a financial executive secretary), and because of the large number of Lutheran churches in the area where he might assist. With his relevant experience, Rev. Strebel was available for the

part-time chaplaincy at the prison.

Although the position calls for him to put in only 20 hours a week, Rev. Strebel normally puts in twice that much time at the prison.

He sees every prisoner, interviewing each one. He gets the religious background of each inmate and counsels with them and with their families.

He deals not only with the inmates but with the staff members and their families also.

He schedules all religious services, four on Sunday plus a Bible study class, and four services and a Bible study class during the week, as well as a special religious service for the high security in the prison, mostly inmates who will be transferred to federal or state prisons.

"I'm here as a visible presence," says Rev. Strebel. Each day he walks through all the cell blocks. Any inmate could stop him and make an appointment.

Rev. Strebel feels that workers in the prison are underpaid. He thinks they should receive the same pay as police officers. He believes that prison workers do as much work as policemen.

There are a tremendous number of volunteers who come into the prison to help with the work. Without them, the prison would not be able to function.

Rev. Strebel feels that the problems faced by workers in a prison are formidable. "We have a terrible system of justice," he says. It really stinks. It hurts the poor more than anyone else, those with little or no education."

Lots of the inmates are mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed. "Yet the state says they are responsible for their actions...That's a lot of crap."

He does not think that alcoholics should be put in jail. (They are among the best workers in prison.) They could be best helped in half-way houses, and for half the money that is being spent on them now, Rev. Strebel believes.

"We have men in here with no opportunity to pay their fines, and all that's keeping them in here is their inability to pay their fines."

Although there are lots of inmates in jail who do not belong there, Rev. Strebel does believe that "there are those who must be separated from society. They belong in prison."

"But a good 50 per cent do not belong here and could be dealt with in other, more effective ways."

"The warden, Thomas Schlager, is doing a tremendous job. He is progressive and open to suggestions, but under the present structure, is intensely conscious of security."

"It's a fun thing to work here. I enjoy my relations with the inmates, with the correctional officers, and with the staff. If I didn't enjoy it, I wouldn't put in so much time."

Practically none of the inmates of the jail have any active affiliations with churches. Every conceivable religious group comes into the jail to hold services, including the Amish. A lot of the inmates were

baptized, but dropped out of their churches. A few take on an active religious life, and of those who do—"We don't see them here anymore," says Rev. Strebel."

A frequent phenomenon is "prison religion." The inmates are frightened, they need hope, and sometimes turn to religion, but then, when they are sentenced, they drop their religion. "It's like plea-bargaining for them," says Rev. Strebel. They want to make a deal with God; they serve God if He'll get them off with light sentences. When God doesn't come through with His end of the bargain, they drop their end.

But the chance for a religious change is always available in the Lancaster County Prison. Says Rev. Strebel, "When a man comes in here, he is still a man and a human being. He can always become what the good Lord wants him to be."

Although Rev. Strebel is recuperating from a heart attack and works at a part-time job and is only filling in temporarily as pastor at the Bainbridge church—he is a very busy man. He has always been active.

When he was first recuperating from his attack he took up making hook rugs, doing latch hooking. He was in a Catholic hospital, where the sisters were soon referring to him as the "lutheran hooker."

Rev. Strebel and his wife have two sons, Andrew James, 14, and John Thomas, 10, and live in Manheim Township.

The Rt. Rev. Dean T. Stephenson to visit St. John's Episcopal Church, Marietta

The Rt. Rev. Dean T. Stephenson, the Diocesan Bishop of the Episcopal Church, paid his annual visit to St. John's Episcopal Church, Marietta. While there, he dedicated two vases which were presented by the nieces and nephews of the late Miss Elizabeth Miley. Also dedicated was a censor presented by Mae Betz, in memory of her husband, Moses Betz. Taking part in the dedication were Mrs. Robert Long, Mrs. Dan Mackinson, Mrs. Mae Betz and Scott Kling. Following the dedication, Miss Sherry Rae Hammill was made a child of God by way of the Sacrament of Baptism. The Rev. A.S. Red, Rector of St. John's, assisted the Bishop in the Baptism.

The Bishop laid his hands on the heads of sixteen confirmants and signed them with the cross. Those confirmed were: Sherry

Lynn Albert, Martha Delores Breckline, Michelle Lynn Fletcher, Randy Scott Fletcher, Leanne Krow, Paige Jennifer Kulman, Mary Jane Jones, Jill Marie Kyler, Gina Marie Landis, Scheryl Ann Landis, Angie Lynn Roberts, Rose Mary Stotz and Melissa Anne Young. This service of confirmation is part of the initiatory rites which are affirmations of the baptism vows. The Bishop then celebrated the Holy Eucharist, assisted by the Rector.

During the service a travel valise and a leather bound prayer book were given to Terrence Shope as a going away gift. Shope will be employed in the Negev Desert, Israel, for the next two years. Mrs. Terrance Shope will remain in this country and continue to serve the church as its organist. A reception followed, served by the Episcopal church women of the parish.

Junior high basketball (cont)

[continued from back page]

25	Conestoga Valley 53
68	Eastern 44
26	Eastern 21
34	Dallastown 30
57	Wheatland 48

ninth graders
Wayne Chappel
Mark Martin
Bill Miller
Kevin Fantom
Darrel Risberg
Andy Shank

Ted Stephens
Steve Swope
eighth graders
Gil Cornwill
Wayne Emenheiser
Bobby Hiestand
Keith Mueller
seventh graders
George Rice
Mike Sarbaugh
Mike Shelly

Coaches
Jim Zuch
Bernie Thome

January Blood Bank month

January has been declared "National Volunteer Blood Donor Month" by the American Association of Blood Banks. The Columbia Hospital Blood bank is joining the Association in helping to meet the goals for the month.

The Columbia Hospital has organized a Blood Assurance Plan in which a member of the family donates one pint of blood per year thus guaranteeing blood for the entire family, should they need it during that year. A single person may also join by donating a single pint of blood a year and designate any three people to receive coverage for the year. The blood bank will transfer credits to any AABB member hospital throughout the United States. The Board of Directors, Medical Staff and Laboratory Department of the Columbia Hospital recommend and invite all the members of the community to join the Blood Bank.

The Blood Bank if also offering free premarital blood tests in exchange for a donation of one unit of blood per couple. Plans are also available for organizations, churches, plants or small groups of employees not covered by Blood Bank plans.

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