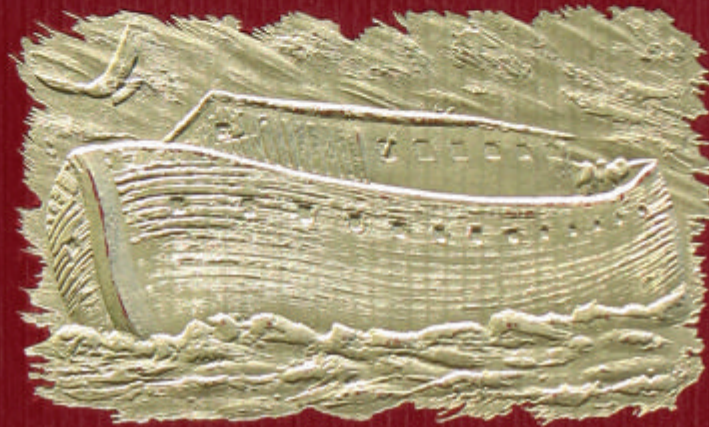


# THE ARK CHURCH



**"A Place of Safety in the Storms"**

*“I want you  
to call it,  
‘The Ark  
Church’.  
Because  
I want it to  
be a place  
of safety in  
the storms.  
I want it to  
act as an  
Ark, for the  
shipwrecked  
souls I will  
be sending  
to you  
to mend.”*





The Ark Church, a miracle of God, really started in the summer months of 1982. My wife Audrey met Susan Hoerner, (our church Treasurer) through a friend of Susan's, at the Miamisburg Swimming Pool.

This friend invited Audrey to a Bible study being held at Susan's home, and Audrey accepted. After attending a few sessions, Audrey and Susan became friends.

Susan's husband Jim (one of our Deacons) called me to ask if I would help him better learn the Bible.



*Claiming the property for the Lord's use.*

I responded, "I don't know that much about the Bible." Jim answered, "Maybe not, but I know that you know it better than I do, so would you help me?"

*"So we set every other Friday night as our 'Bible study' night. Little did I know then what this would lead to."*

I said I would try. So we set every other Friday night as our Bible study night. Little did I know then what this would lead to. We began to meet at our home.

After two or three meetings, Jim called and asked if I would mind if he brought a friend along that



*First Sunday morning worship service on July 22, 1982.*

Friday night. I replied, "Yes, I would mind, because I'm not a very good speaker and I'm a little backward." Jim insisted, saying the man really wanted to attend. So I told him it was OK to bring his friend.

*"When I walked into the living room that evening, not only was Jim and his friend there, but ten other people were waiting for the 'Bible study' to begin."*

At the time I was parts manager at a G.M. Dealership in Lebanon, Ohio. On the Friday night I was to meet with Jim and his friend, I was delayed at work.

I called Audrey and asked her to have everything ready when I got home, clothes laid out, etc., so I could shower and dress hurriedly.

I had no idea how the Lord was working! When I walked into the living room that evening, not only



*Stettler Evangelical Lutheran Church as it appeared October 17, 1948. Built in 1803, it is the oldest Lutheran church building in Ohio.*



*Pastor Campbell's Ordination by Pastor Swint, July 18, 1982.*



*The Campbells' first Sunday service.*



were Jim and his friend there, but ten other people were waiting for the Bible study to begin. One young man even had his guitar to accompany singing, if we so desired. To this day we don't know how they all got there.

"What are you people doing here?" I asked. They said they had heard there was a Bible study going on here. I said, "Nope, you heard wrong."

*The Ark Church mortgage pay off, November 1986.*



But the Lord had "His" way and we had our first group Bible study. (1 Corinthians 1:27 "But God hath chosen the foolish...")

In the weeks that followed, we grew from that first twelve, to about thirty five. (Some were churched, some unchurched).

It was at this time the Lord began to deal with me down in my spirit. I asked everyone at the next

Bible study to pray for me, because I felt the Lord was really moving in my spirit, in a way I had never experienced before.

On a Tuesday morning as I was driving to work, Jesus entered my car. He told me that he was calling



me to pastor a flock. I began to weep. Jesus said, "As I was with Moses, so shall I be with thee. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee, all the days of thy life." He told me, "Don't advertise, trust me for the growth." (Joshua 1:5)

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*"We're going to start a church.  
That's all I knew,  
but I was now ready to follow the  
Lord's call on my life."*

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I called Audrey as soon as I got to work and told her, "We're going to start a church." That's all I



*Our first sanctuary*





*Ground Breaking for the new building June 2, 1985.*



knew, but I was now ready to follow the Lord's call on my life.

At nights I began to lay out the constitution and by laws in order to incorporate and operate under, with the Lord leading and guiding. I had eighteen cents in my pocket to start the church with.

At the next Bible study I told the people it would be our last, because we were starting a church. I specifically asked Susan Hoerner that night to pray for a "church" that we could meet in. I did not want to meet in just a "building".

The next morning she told Jim about the vision, but failed to tell him about the motorcycle. As they walked outside, Susan started towards the van. Jim, (not knowing that part of the vision) said, "No, let's take the motorcycle." and handed her a helmet. God was in control!

*"It looked run down, but there were pews, song books, an organ, a piano and lots of cobwebs inside."*

They rode up to the church, walked around it and looked inside. It looked run down, but there were



pews, song books, an organ, a piano and lots of cobwebs inside.

The Hoerners, tried to find out from a neighbor across the street from the church, who owned it, to no avail. They came to our home to ask Audrey and I to follow them to the church. They were so excited! When Audrey saw it, she said "It looks like something out of Walton's Mountain."

At the time, I wasn't quite so excited. Probably because God was opening doors for us so fast and I was scared.

*Shelter construction began in spring of 1986.*



Susan did just what I asked, and in the middle of the night, God gave her a vision. In her vision she saw a church building that she had seen some years previously. That was to be the church we started in. It is the oldest Lutheran church building in Ohio.

In this vision, she saw herself and Jim, putting on their helmets and riding up to the old church on their motorcycle.



*Pastor ministering in hospital.*



*Our first Christmas Outdoor Drama, December 1986.*

I then found out from a church neighbor that the owner was St. John's Lutheran Church on Gephart-Church Rd. It was known as the Stettler Lutheran Retreat, but it was vacant and run down.

Two families had tried to keep the retreat center going, but finally gave up. So Pastor Edwin R. Fidler of St. John's Lutheran Church, invited the two families to attend his church and the Stettler Property was decided over to St. John's.

I told the Hoerners to go home and I'd try to call St. John's Church to find out if the property was

*"Do you see the miracle?  
God was confirming to me  
that he was in the work.  
I needed that!!"*

available. I tried several times that Saturday to reach them, but to no avail. So I decided to wait until Sunday morning and again try to reach them. I

*Mr. Rose and Architect William Schulke inspecting sanctuary footer.*



*Digging footer for new sanctuary.*



was not realizing what the Lord was about to do. ("...Before they ask I will answer." Isaiah 65:24)

That same Saturday evening, as the Hoerners were relaxing on their front porch, a former friend of Susan's walked by. They hadn't seen each other in some time. Their children had played baseball



together and the practice fields were by Jim and Susan's home. She had to pass by to go to or from the diamonds that night. (Coincidence? No, God!!) Susan asked her in the course of conversation which church she went to. She responded, "St. John's Lutheran Church."

Susan then asked her if she knew anything about the old church on Union Rd. Susan's friend said "Not only do I know about it, but my husband is the head

*Erection of first stud wall for sanctuary.*



of the committee to lease it or sell it.” Do you see the miracle? God was confirming to me that he was in the work. I needed that!!



When Susan called to share about what her friend had said, I asked her to have her husband call me, later that night. He called and we made arrangements to meet with their board on Sunday morning after church to walk through the Stettler property.

The ceiling in the sanctuary was falling in, the oil stove on the annex side had a bad spill and the floor was uneven, but despite all this, we thought it was beautiful.

Pastor Fidler arrived and said, “Here’s the front door keys. You can use the church and we’ll work something out later.”

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*“The ceiling in the sanctuary was falling in, the oil stove on the annex side had a bad spill and the floor was uneven, but despite all this, we thought it was beautiful.”*

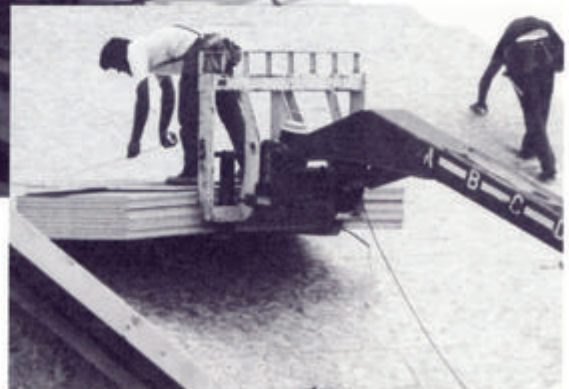
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I said, “But you don’t even know me.” He replied, “No, but I know you are a Godly man and I think God will use you here.” I still refused and asked him to go back to his board and tell them we’d like to lease it, with the option to buy. (The property had approximately four acres.)

The next evening, Pastor Fidler came to my home after the board meeting. They had agreed to fix up the property (ceiling, rest rooms, etc.) and lease it to us for two hundred dollars a month. I accepted, saying, “My tithe will pay that, so we’ll take it.” They agreed to all repairs as long as we leased it and also mowed the grass.



*Sharon and Billy Schulke  
...everyone helped.*





Now, I set out to get things done. First, I went to the Lord and asked, "Lord, what do you want to call this work, just reveal it to me, will you?"

Next I called my former pastor, Reverend John Swint, pastor of Miamisburg Assembly of God. I asked him to come over, for I needed to talk to him as soon as possible.



I asked him if he'd be willing to lead the ordination service when our local body ordained me. Pastor Swint agreed to do it.

A week before my ordination, the Lord spoke to me one morning while I was shaving. He said, "I want you to call it, 'The Ark Church'. Because I want it to be a place of safety in the storm. I want it to act as an Ark, for the shipwrecked souls I will be sending to you to mend."



*Church members ministering at nursing home.*



On July 18, 1982, I was officially ordained to the ministry, as Pastor of The Ark Church. We received eighteen charter members into this local body.

I called the incorporation office in Columbus, Ohio to tell them the name. They checked their files

*1989  
Christmas  
program in  
incomplete  
sanctuary.*



and said, "You cannot call it 'The Ark', because there's already something in the state named 'The Ark'. You must get written permission from

*"All at once, I had a vision of how to turn the shelter and garage into a sanctuary and Sunday school rooms and offices."*

them to use that name." I knew that wasn't the Lord. I told her I'd call her back.

I went to the Lord with my problem, and he said, "Call her back and tell her the name is 'The Ark



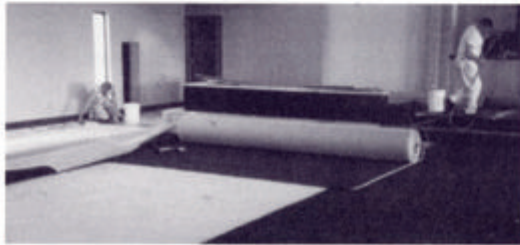




Church." I was obedient. The lady checked her files again. She said "Yes, you can use that name." Praise God, we were on the way!!

We had been leasing the building for about two years when I saw Pastor Fidler at the bank. He asked me why we didn't buy the property.

I explained that we didn't have much money. We only had about thirty eight members at that time (children included). He said, "Make us any offer."



The property appraised for \$59,900.00 by their appraiser. Then we had a spirit filled Christian man whose appraisal was \$55,900.00.

We prayed and then offered them \$25,000.00. They counter offered with \$35,000.00. We agreed to purchase the property for \$30,000.00, with \$5,000.00 down. The balance was \$25,000.00 and the Lord paid it off completely in two years, with no offering plates.

Then we built a picnic shelter and storage garage



*Sanctuary interior  
completed August 10, 1990.*



behind the church and used it about four times throughout the year. One day as I was walking out in the field and praying, I said, "Lord, we're out of room in our old building. Our membership is now at 90. What do we do?" The Lord said, "Use what you have." I said, "Lord, I don't have anything." He said, "Yes you do." And as I turned my head, I saw the picnic shelter and garage. All at once, I had a vision

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*"We have seen many saved,  
baptized in the Holy Spirit  
and delivered in our  
nine plus years of ministry.*

---

of how to turn the shelter and garage into a sanctuary, Sunday school rooms and offices. I immediately called William Schulke, a licensed



*Operation  
Barnabus  
outreach  
ministry.*

architect in our church and asked him if the changes were feasible. He said, "Yes, we can do it."

We started out by faith and today you are sitting



*"It is finished"  
November 1991.*

in the result of that faith. It's debt free! We did not borrow one dime on the building. Nor did we pay one dime of interest. But, by faith, with no offering plates ever being passed, the Lord did it, and today we are debt free. (Ephesians 3:20)

It would take a book to tell you each and every miracle the Lord has done. For instance, when he stopped the rain so the roofing could be finished.

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*"The spiritual growth and unity  
that binds us as a family,  
has never been greater."*

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How he supplied different gifts of \$8,000.00, \$5,000.00, \$4,400.00, \$4,000.00 and \$1,000.00 just at the time of need.

We have seen many saved, baptized in the Holy Spirit and delivered in our nine plus years of ministry. Cancer has been healed, marriages healed and restored in Jesus, broken hearts healed and all sorts of other miracles have been done as the Lord said would happen. People have been set free of evil spirits that had them in bondage. The spiritual growth and unity

that binds us as a family, has never been greater. Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ has truly given us above and beyond anything we could ever ask or think—as he always does.

The Ark Church supports six missionaries monthly. We also have a ministry called "Operation Barnabas", that feeds and clothes the needy. To date, we have given out over 35,000.00 pieces of used clothing and literally hundreds of pounds of food. Our "Seeds Tape" ministry provides free audio tapes of our services to shut-ins, and our "Singles" ministry is flourishing.

"Abba Father" is a ministry of a young couple in our church, who are foster parents. We pray over, encourage and help support in anyway we can, the raising of the children that God puts in their hands.

There is no way to tell you of the sacrifices that were made to bring us to this day. This historical book gives you a brief idea of what the Lord has done, and is doing, in and through us as a local body.

Let me close with this, I went to a former pastor as we began The Ark Church. I wanted to seek advice and counsel as I was entering the ministry. I was looking for encouragement, but this is what he said to me, "If it's of the Lord, it will go, but if it's not, it will bomb."

Thank God it hasn't bombed and never will in Jesus name. We are on our way to bigger and better things—spiritually speaking.

Yes, this is how it all began...

In Jesus Name and For His Glory,

*Pastor Dale R Campbell*

*Pastor Dale R. Campbell*



