

Great Hearts, True Faith, and Ready Hands

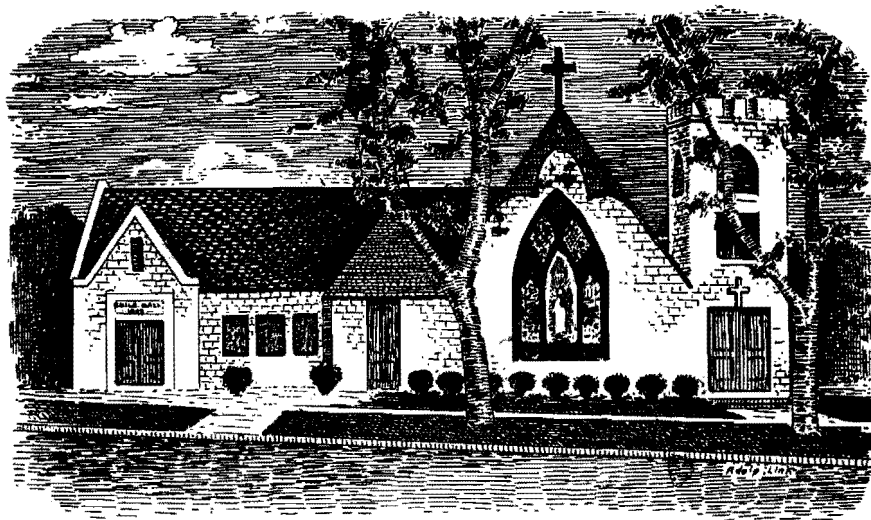
A History of St. Luke's Episcopal Church (Wamego, Kansas)

By Dr. J. Harvey Littrell

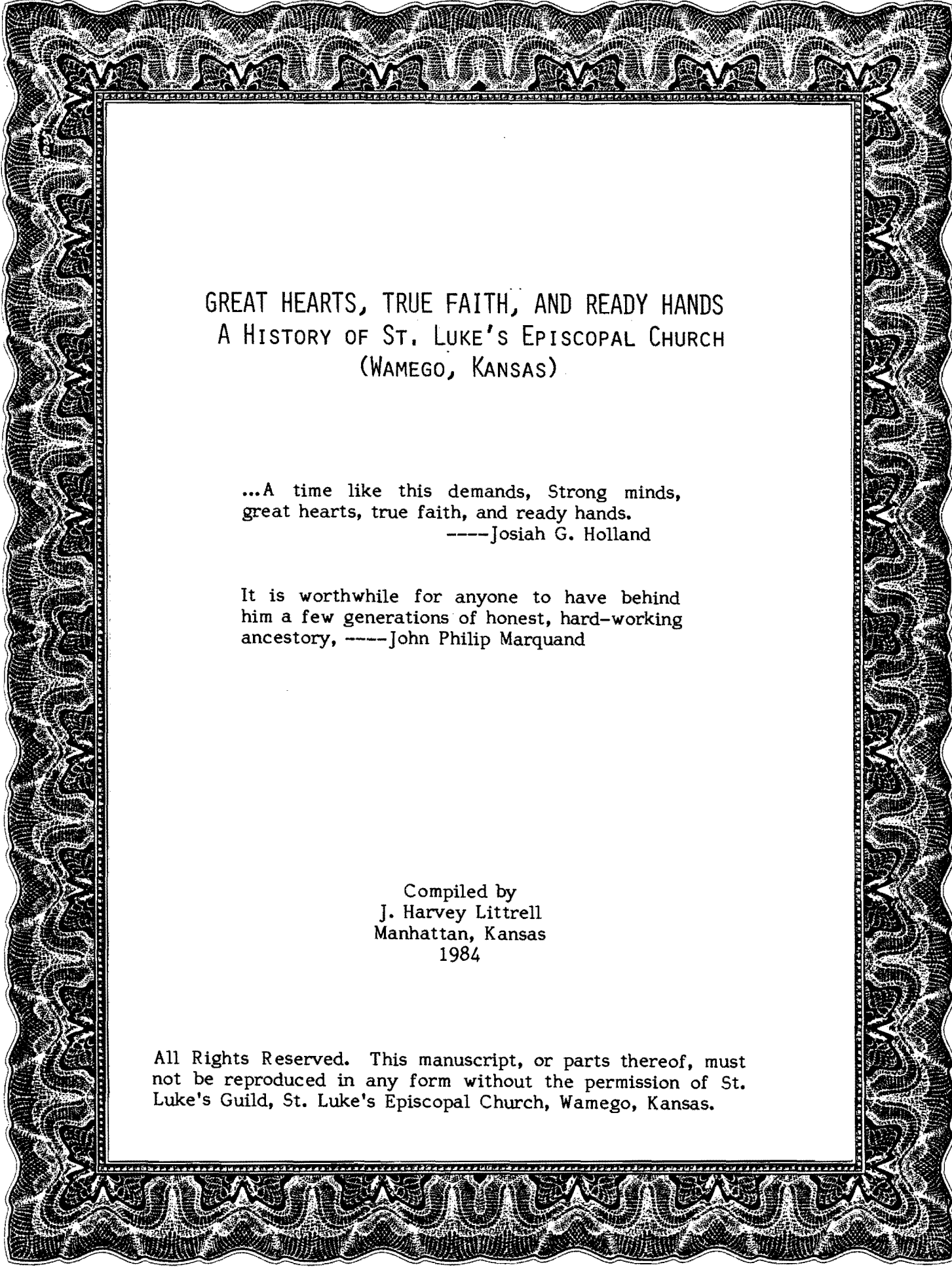
Dr. Littrell completed this history of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in 1984. It is a treasured history of the church from its earliest days thru 1984.

This book is provided in PDF form for all who wish knowledge about the history of the small church with the Red Doors.

GREAT HEARTS, TRUE FAITH, AND READY HANDS
A HISTORY OF ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
(WAMEGO, KANSAS)



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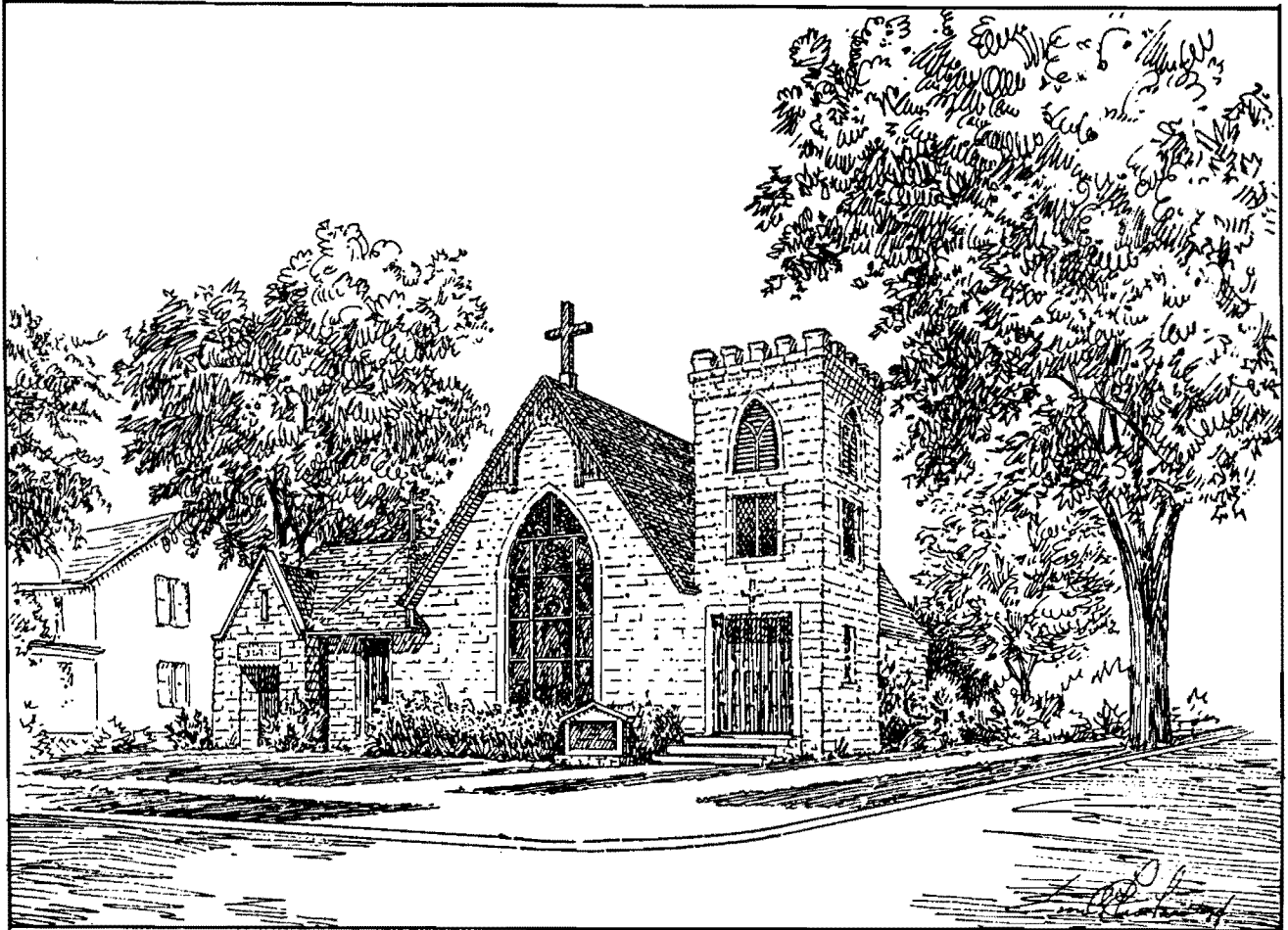
...A time like this demands, Strong minds,
great hearts, true faith, and ready hands.

----Josiah G. Holland

It is worthwhile for anyone to have behind
him a few generations of honest, hard-working
ancestry, ----John Philip Marquand

Compiled by
J. Harvey Littrell
Manhattan, Kansas
1984

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Luke's Guild, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Wamego, Kansas.



ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Wamego, Kansas

Organized: May 22, 1870
Building Consecrated: May 20, 1900
Bell Tower Consecrated: May 22, 1921
Guild Hall Constructed: 1925

FOREWORD

Most Americans are thrilled when they hear intoned the majestic phrases we all cherish,—phrases such as, "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility...", or "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty....".

Parishioners of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Wamego, Kansas should be equally thrilled when they read the words written by the people who organized St. Luke's Church on May 22, 1870.

We whose names are here unto affixed, deeply impressed with the importance of the Christian religion and earnestly wishing to promote its holy influence in the hearts and lives of our selves our families and our neighbors do hereby aposticate ourselves to gather under the name and style and tital of the parish of St. Luke's Church Wamego Pottawatomie County State of Kansas and by doing so do adapt the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America and Diocese of Kansas.

Wamego May 22nd 1870

These words marked the beginning of the Episcopal church in Wamego. The same words were written again in 1889 in the vestry minutes, when the church was revived after a lapse of many years. However, the word "aposticate" was changed to "associate", spelling was corrected, and punctuation was used.

The above statement written by our predecessors had its focus on people, and the influence of the Christian religion on them. Similarly, I want this history to be a story of people—a story of their dreams, their triumphs, their discouraging moments, their humorous and jolly occasions, and their times of sorrow. Although they are included for historical purposes, a recital of dates and financial statements has not been the major purpose for writing.

If by writing this history, I help those living now and in the future to know better those individuals who established and maintained the Episcopal faith in Wamego, then my purpose has been fulfilled.

Daniel Webster once said, "He who careth not from whence he came, careth little whither he goeth". If this book succeeds in stirring up a feeling of caring about St. Luke's past and future directions, then I will feel my efforts have been rewarded.

J. Harvey Littrell
Manhattan, Kansas
September 1984

*To a long time friend
J. Harvey Littrell*

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

So many individuals made contributions to this book, it is difficult to be certain that all are mentioned. Louise, my wife, deserves special mention. At a Guild meeting she volunteered that I would be willing to write a history of St. Luke's. After my initial shock, I have been grateful. The task, though time consuming, has been most enjoyable and intriguing. Louise travelled with me to collect data, reminded me of remarks interviewees made when I forgot them, and read the manuscript critically.

The previous writings of three individuals, A. M. (Ollie) Bittman, Ella Balderson, and June Meyer, pointed me toward sources they had found when they wrote historical accounts of St. Luke's church. I was able to check their sources, and failing to find them quoted from their works. Mrs. Isabel Rogers Hill had saved "everything" during her long years in St. Luke's. Her daughter, Gloria Hill Marten, made materials available to me which otherwise would have been lost forever.

Parishioners were invited on three different occasions to tell about their experiences at St. Luke's. Many individuals, both of long years of attendance at St. Luke's, and those of lesser years, responded to the invitation. Others answered my questions, either in formal interviews, or informally at the coffee hour. Dorothy Whitmyer graciously consented to read and criticize the manuscript. It was helpful to be able to read the manuscript to Ella Balderson. She verified details of long ago event.

In addition to the persons named above, the following were very helpful. Howard and Glenna Johnstone, Alfred and Dorothy Burgess, Ella Johnstone Crandell, Florence Birk, Mabel Mitchell, Georgia Vilven, Edna Batchelor, Laurence and Isabel Mertz, Ethel Doll, Richard Pugh, Jan Vanderbilt, Joyce Elcock, Bill Sessler and his sister, Mrs. Guy Nowels, and Myrlene and Richard Winkler.

The staff members of the Diocesan Office at Bethany Place were gracious in allowing me to use materials stored in that building. The Archivist in the Spencer Research Library in Lawrence, where the Diocesan records are now stored, was most helpful in retrieving old records for my use. The Librarians in the Wamego Public Library tried to be certain the microfilm reader was free whenever I arrived to read old newspapers on microfilm.

I am especially thankful to all the St. Luke's Guild Secretaries and to the various Clerks of the vestry who kept such good notes through the years. The fact that both Wamego papers had as their editors, K. D. Doyle and Arch Gilmore, and that Ella Balderson was an early day reporter, probably accounted for the good coverage St. Luke's had during the years. All were Episcopalians.

Finally, I wish to thank the women of St. Luke's Guild for wanting to preserve the history of our church.

J. Harvey Littrell

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PLAN OF THE BOOK

After reading the historical records and interviewing long time members of St. Luke's, the writer believed that the information gathered seemed to be best organized into six major categories. Each of these categories was called a "Part".

There was the period of years beginning in 1868 when interest for the establishment of the Episcopal Church arose and waned. These years have been described in Part One and called "The First Two Decades --- Hope and Despair".

In 1889, a group of women were responsible for re-awakening interest in St. Luke's. In Part Two the story of the efforts of these women in getting a church built is told. This Part is entitled, "The Formative Years --- A Dream Fulfilled". Part Three, "Perseverance Overcomes Adversity", relates the trials and tribulations of a small church and the energy and perseverance the people possessed in order to overcome the difficulties. The author believes this part of the story should serve as an inspiration for the present and future generations.

Perhaps the liveliest time in the history of the church is told in Part Four, "The Guild Hall Years". This Part was written to salute the women of the 1920's and 1930's. If it hadn't been for these women, St. Luke's may have gone the way of many Episcopal Churches in small, rural communities.

Part Five covers the longest period of time---three decades. These were the decades when a major war was fought, and great social changes were coming about in communities, homes, and individual life styles. Because of the length of the Part entitled, "Years of Change", a section has been devoted to each of the three decades, the Forties, the Fifties, and the Sixties.

The narrative ends with a description of "The Second Century --- A Renewed Spirit". In Part Six an attempt has been made to show how the Spirit which prevails in the church has helped the members to maintain the church at a high level of good feeling, renewed spirituality, and enthusiasm.

Throughout the book, italic type has been used to indicate that the material being quoted is handwritten. To preserve the flavor of the times, no changes have been made in the syntax, spelling, or punctuation of these quotations.

The pictures used were selected to enhance the written material. It was not financially feasible to include all available pictures, nor to have all members, past and present, pictured.

Four Appendices have been included. Appendix A has copies of some source materials used in making the study. The purpose for their inclusion was to give readers a feeling for the kinds of research materials which are available.

Several families in St. Luke's have had individuals in either four or five generations who appear in the Parish Record Book. The record of these families is in Appendix B. Only individuals were included who appeared on the list of those who had been baptized, confirmed, married, or buried by rectors of St. Luke's. The only exception to this plan was to include those who appeared on the rolls in the earliest days of the church. This exception was made because many of these individuals had been baptized, confirmed, and married prior to coming to Wamego, and the church was in limbo in the 1880's when they may have died.

Appendix C has a list of all individuals who have been confirmed in St. Luke's. In Appendix D, three lists appear. The first gives the names of those who attended the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of St. Luke's, and the second the names of those who attended the centennial anniversary. The names are listed the way the people signed the guest registers. The third list includes all individuals who were on the Parish Roll in 1984, prior to September.

Concerning the Author

J. Harvey Littrell is a Professor Emeritus at Kansas State University. He taught, published, and did research in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education. An Episcopalian for over four decades, he has served as Senior Warden, Vestryman, Lay Reader, and Church School Teacher in several parishes where he has lived. Presently, he is Senior Warden at St. Luke's Church in Wamego.

Dr. Littrell, an amateur genealogist, has published two family histories which have been accepted by the Library of Congress. He is a member and state officer in the Kansas Society of Mayflower Descendants. He also has membership in Palatines to America, the Franklin County (Ohio) Genealogical Society, and the Riley County (Kansas) Genealogical Society. He is serving at present as president of the latter society.