

This Week in Eden History

April 2 | William Locher



Photo of William Locher published with his obituary in the April 26, 1934 edition of the Evangelical Herald

Casper William Locher, 1887 Eden Seminary graduate, President of the Evangelical Synod of North America, and former Chair of the Board of Foreign Missions, died on April 2, 1934.

Locher was born June 1, 1866, in Gold Coast, West Africa where his parents were missionaries sent by the Basel Mission Institute. The family immigrated to the U.S. in 1870 where his father, Christoph Locher, joined the Evangelical Synod and served Saint Paul's, Evansville, Ind.; Trinity, Londonville, Ohio; and St. Paul's, Elyria, Ohio.

After studying at Elmhurst and Eden, Locher was ordained by his father July 10, 1887. His first pastoral call was to St. Paul's, Elyria to fill the position left vacant by his father's death on Feb. 6, 1888. Locher went on to serve parishes in Chicago; Lorain, Ohio; New Albany, Ind.; Baltimore, Md.; Washington, D.C.; and Steubenville, Ohio, and was

President of the Pennsylvania and Atlantic District, 1930–1934.

Locher's life-long passion for mission work led the General Conference to appointed him to the Board of Foreign Missions. He served 19 years and was chairman from 1920 to 1930. The work of the Board expanded significantly during the 1920s with the establishment and expansion of mission efforts in Honduras. The Board of Foreign Missions reported a total of 48 mission personnel for the India and Honduras fields in 1929.

When Locher was elected President of the Evangelical Synod in 1929, he entered office at a challenging time as the Great Depression deepened. In addition, merger negotiations with the Reformed Church were in their final stages. It was suggested that the stress placed a heavy load on Locher's health. After a brief struggle with influenza and pneumonia, he died in St. Louis at Deaconess Hospital. Eden Seminary bestowed an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree on him in 1930.

Eden Theological Seminary Archives
475 E. Lockwood Ave.
St. Louis, Missouri 63119
(314) 252.3141

<https://www.eden.edu/the-archives-at-eden-theological-seminary/>