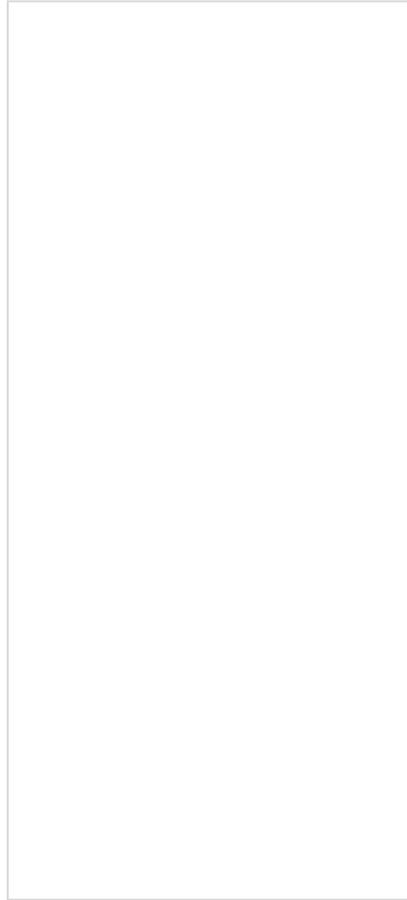
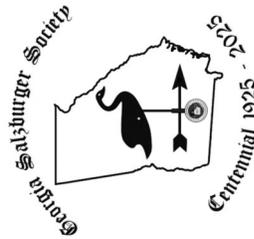


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Centennial T-Shirts on Sale
In Museum Shoppe.



The Georgia Salzburger Centennial

Centennial Banquet held at the Ebenezer Retreat Center was a memorable occasion. The hall was filled to capacity, and the sights and sounds reflected the festive atmosphere of celebration. The stroll through history included colonial period décor, greetings from past presidents, words of remembrance, and hopes for the future of GSS.

Some of the special highlights included the welcoming entry to the banquet center, featuring two vintage cars and an old tractor decked out in the colors of harvest and fall. Several attendees wore period clothing from the 1925 era, as you may glimpse from the photos here.



Special entertainment included music and songs reminiscent of the “Twenties” years, provided by Julie Wilde and her student vocalist, Sarah Beth Palmer. Photos of the GSS founding ancestors were displayed, the banquet meal was outstanding, and we were invited to tour the Martin Luther Legacy Exhibition upstairs after the program.

Ann Purcell presented a challenge to all Salzburgers to maintain the traditions and all that keeps our heritage sacred and strong.

An exciting surprise came from Richard Kessler, with Austin Smith presenting a sneak peek of the new documentary about Ebenezer, *500 Years in the Making*. The outstanding video was presented in full later on Sunday afternoon.



On Sunday afternoon, we enjoyed music through the century, presented in concert by powerful guitarist-songwriter Justin Vreeland. Now we know why he is described as “the finest Folkie making history”!

On Monday, the GSS Centennial Monument was officially unveiled and dedicated in front of the GSS museum to commemorate the efforts of our



ancestors who organized the GSS and those who have worked for the past 100 years to preserve and maintain the society, the genealogy, the grounds, and the church at Ebenezer.

What can you do to celebrate this unique centennial occasion? Please consider a gift of your time as a volunteer or a contribution toward the monument, further research, ongoing maintenance, exhibitions, or programs at Ebenezer. ~ Claudia Christiansen



Founded In 1925

Georgia Salzburger Society

An Affiliate Chapter of the Georgia Historical Society

ADDRESS for:
Georgia Salzburger Society
2980 Ebenezer Road
Georgia Highway 275
Rincon, GA 31326

OFFICE HOURS
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Phone: 912-754-7001
Email: gaslzbrgr@aol.com
Website: <http://govisiteebenezer.com>

OFFICERS
PRESIDENT: Noble Boykin
VICE PRESIDENT: Erika Bragg
SECRETARY: Gaye Royal
TREASURER: Jerry Groover
CURATOR: Patsy Zeigler
ASST CURATOR:
LOEST RESEARCH LIBRARIAN:
Tom Grovenstein
ASST LOEST RESEARCH LIBRARIAN:
Dylan Mulligan
REGISTRAR: Debra Herrin
ASST REGISTRAR: Sandra Wingate
PARLIAMENTARIAN: Charlie Arnsdorff
CHAPLAIN: Pastor Richard Johnson
PAST PRES: Claudia Christiansen
ADMIN ASST: Jennifer Nash

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
To March 2026
Linda Brannen Dot Cauley
Judy O'Neal Jean Thomas
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To March 2028
Julie Hynes Allen Kieffer
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Virginia Spano

Edited by
Published by Anne Miller

Newsletter
Published Quarterly
Send news and inquiries to the
GSS Office.



President's Message

As you know, we recently celebrated a successful banquet and the centennial commemoration of the founding of the Georgia Salzburger Society. Special thanks go to our Centennial Committee and its chair, Claudia Christensen, for organizing the event—especially the wonderful entertainment. We are also grateful to the staff at the retreat center for providing outstanding decorations, a delicious menu, and excellent catering for the banquet.

Also, thanks to Julie Wilde for arranging for her voice student, Sarah Beth Palmer, to provide much of the musical entertainment. Thanks to all participating including those members who attended.

The total cost of the monument was over \$8,000 for the stone, inscriptions, and to have it transported and set in place. It is truly “monumental” and appropriate to commemorate the Centennial of the Society.

Further, the Board approved publication of colonial correspondence from Pastors Lemke, Triebner and Rabenhorst, who were pastors at Ebenezer from 1745 to 1782. The letters also continue into the early 1800’s after Pastor Triebner left Ebenezer.

One of the most amazing things about these letters is that they shed light on the attitudes and actions of the Salzburgers during the American Revolution. The letters have been housed at the Francke Institute in Halle, Germany. They also include a travel diary from that same period. The letters illuminate what has been a dark period of time in terms of what we know about Ebenezer from 1745 and 1800. (Continued on page 10)

The Importance old Photos Can Make:

Solemn eyes stare directly into the lens of the camera. The photos show a familiar face... but not someone you know. It is a photo of one moment in time— one person of great importance. The solemn gaze represents much more than a single moment.

Can you decide who the familiar gaze reminds you of? It is a “family resemblance,” a look of facial features that are alike or similar to another person, perhaps within your own family.



Walter Gnann

Often, these resemblances are found between people of different generations, such as a grandfather and grandson (see inset photos). Sometimes, they appear among cousins and other close relatives.

Have you ever stumbled across a photo and noticed a look-alike to someone you know? This has happened several times while exploring Salzburger ancestry and related family photos.

If you have photos of look-alike individuals in your family or related families, please consider sharing them.

As we continue to learn about Salzburger heritage, we can use these photos as visual links to the past and to Salzburger history. How can looking at old photos help us learn about traditions or the past? Photos provide an important glimpse into significant moments in time. They can also be great story starters!

We can learn much about earlier times by noticing details such as clothing styles, hairstyles, cars, architecture, and activities depicted in old photos.

Please consider allowing us to see your side-by-side photos showing your look-alike relatives (insert photos). Please send copies, not originals.

Let us know if you are willing to have your photos exhibited at Ebenezer as part of Salzburger Stories. Thank you for your interest in learning more about Salzburger history! ~ Claudia Christiansen



Gary Nizzi



Super Museum Sunday at Ebenezer 2026

You're invited to join us for Super Museum Sunday
on February 8, 2026, from 12 to 4 PM.

From 12 to 2 PM enjoy a delicious hot lunch served in the GSS Parsonage,
featuring chili and Brunswick stew.

Volunteers are greatly appreciated! If you'd like to
help, please call (912) 754-7001
or email gaslzbrgr@aol.com.





GSS MEMBERSHIPS APPROVED

November 9, 2025

Debra Stafford Herrin, GSS Registrar

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Tysan Eliza Corbin
Benjamin Theodore Dielmann
Matthew Jaxton Gillis
Elsie Hartman Wheat

IMMIGRANT ANCESTOR

Christian Oechslin
Urban Buntz
Johannes Scherraus
Peter Zipperer

REGULAR MEMBERSHIP

Amanda Edwards Hilton
Lance Leroy Hutto
Teresa Lynn Newton Lamb
Wanda Wood Millians
Crystal Adams Napier
Alexander Christian Sharpe
James Sheppard
Robert Owen Zetterower
Jerry Walter Zipperer

IMMIGRANT ANCESTOR

George Gnann
John Lewis Weidman
Peter Gruber
Peter Gruber
John George Haid
John Michael Zeigler
John Michael Zeigler
Paulus Zieterauer
Peter Zipperer

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Walker Daniel Hilton
Waldo "Walt" Eli Lamb

SPOUSE

Amanda Edwards Hilton
Teresa Lynn Newton Lamb

IMMIGRANT ANCESTOR

George Gnann
Peter Gruber

FRIEND

Cynthia Mae Tiger

Laurel Hill Lutheran Church - Ebenezer Workday - October 4, 2025

Special thanks to members of Laurel Hill Lutheran Church for spending their Saturday raking, picking of sticks, planting, and cleaning the GSS grounds! It was wonderful seeing youth and adults working together! ~ Patsy Zeigler



In Memoriam

Mary Louise Kennedy	Dec. 24, 1935 - Oct. 17, 2025
Martha Oglesby Zeigler	Dec. 29, 1928 - Aug. 27, 2025
John Robert Peavy	Oct. 15, 1946 - Nov. 4, 2025
Henry Porter Burgstiner, Sr.	Sept. 19, 1945 - Nov. 10, 2025
Lisa Johnson Brant Guidos	Jan. 12, 1962 - Nov. 7, 2025
Donald "Donny" Mallard	Aug. 9, 1943 - Nov. 19, 2025
Francis Clifton Hutto	Dec. 24, 1942 - Nov. 18, 2025

Christmas at Ebenezer Saturday, December 6, 2025

Stroll through historic Ebenezer as it comes alive for the holidays—tour the landmark buildings, browse unique finds at the Marketplaz, and soak up festive entertainment beneath the pavilion.



Swabian Roots

Celebrating the Swabian Settlers of Ebenezer, Georgia, 1734 - 1753

No. 1

November 1, 2025

The Swabian Immigrants

A German named Leonard Rauner is listed in the First Salzburger Transport that arrived in Georgia March 12, 1734. He was identified as being from "Hirnstein one hours ride from Ulm," a Swabian city (see *Henry Newman's Salzburger Letterbooks*, p.372; *Detailed Reports*, Vol X, p. 133). Rauner is apparently the first Swabian to arrive in Georgia. A few members of this German tribe occasionally appeared in other transports. But in the Fourth Salzburger Transport (1741), more than one-third were Swabians, coming from towns and villages in the vicinity of Augsburg and Ulm. Then came the flood of immigrants from the Ulm region in 1750, 1751, and 1752—the First, Second and Third Swabian Transports. Of course, these travel groups were identified as "Swabian" because the people came from Swabian lands, primarily the Duchy of Württemberg and the Territory of the Imperial City of Ulm. By 1753 the Swabians were by far the largest ethnic group in colonial Ebenezer.

Swabian Names

There is sometimes a violent reaction when someone is informed that their family name is Swabian and not Salzburger. I have been told stories of serious anger and shouting when a "Salzburger" is presented information that his or her family does not originate in the Land of Salzburg. I have sometimes experienced this reaction. Nonetheless, names such as Buntz (Bunce), Gnann, Heinle (Hinley), Helmle (Helmly), Neidlinger, Niess (Nease), Oechsle (Exley), Paulitsch, Sherraus (Shearouse), Ziegler (Zeigler), and Zipperer—present in early Ebenezer—are Swabian names. The "-le" ending—such as in Oechsle, Helmle, and Heinle—denotes a quintessential Swabian name. The "-le" denotes a diminutive or little version of something, such as Oechsle (Little Ox), Helmle (Little Helmet), and Heinle (Little Heinrich or Little Henry). There are words in the Swabian dialectal language with "-le" endings, such as *Baimle*, a little tree, and *Gärtle*, a little garden. (Continued on page 5)

4



Museum News— Patsy Zeigler

Museum Gift Shoppe

Make someone's Christmas truly unforgettable with a gift from the GSS Shoppe. Our Commemorative Centennial Coins and Medallions are just \$15—perfect for your Salzburger family and friends. And that's only the beginning... there are so many treasures waiting to be discovered in the GSS Shoppe!



Donations to the GSS Museum

This display of a china doll and baby clothes was donated by Elizabeth Gnann Corey (Teena). The items include Teena's baby clothes along with her brother Jim's christening gown.



Christmas Market Platz

We would be grateful for donations to help fill the Market Platz for Christmas at Ebenezer! If you're can, please donate homemade jellies, pickles, baked goods, breads, candies, handmade crafts/articles, or vegetables and fruits. Every item you donate supports repairs to the syrup shed and is truly appreciated! Thank you,
Patsy Zeigler ~ Contact number (912) 655-4555



Landing Day: March 14, 2026

The Georgia Salzburger Society will celebrate Landing Day on Saturday, March 14, 2026.

Old Ebenezer will be the focus of this year's event. In addition to the annual festivities, there will be a short presentation in the social hall followed by a tour of Old Ebenezer.

~ Erika Bragg



13

FROM THE DESK OF THOMAS GROVENSTEIN

Loest Research Librarian



Greetings Cousins!

As we watch the leaves change into autumn colors, it is also time to see the changes coming to the grounds of New Ebenezer. Those of you who have read the letters in the quarterly newsletters over the last few years know that our great hope is that your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren will join us and become “official” Georgia Salzburgers, listed in the records for life. If you are reading this letter and have never been to New Ebenezer, or have visited but not brought your children or grandchildren, then we are especially interested in seeing you!

There is much to see here at New Ebenezer. One of the oldest continuously used Lutheran churches in America is the Jerusalem Church at New Ebenezer, established in 1734. You can visit the Fail House, a late colonial farmhouse containing many items that hark back to a very different time. Built in 1836, the Parsonage is now used as our office space and includes both our meeting room and overflow from the museum collections. The first orphanage in Georgia was established in New Ebenezer in 1737. We also have an amazing museum with a gift shop that offers books and resources for those wishing to explore their genealogy and delve deeper into our well-documented history. Located within the museum is the Loest Research Library (LRL), a very special room containing the combined works of many researchers from our past. Much of the information came to us from Halle, Germany, including writings from the first pastors of Jerusalem Church.

As I write this letter, the newest addition to the way we share our historical information is being updated. The Georgia Salzburger Society (GSS) Board is working hard to bring in more of our youth. One way we are doing that is through new educational posts that will be installed throughout the Ebenezer Historical Site. These 4” x 4” wooden posts will each feature a number, a title, and a QR code. When scanned—using a QR reader such as the camera on your smartphone—the code will display up-to-date information in both written and oral formats. Several of our local GSS members will be reading the content of these informational segments, which will be uploaded to the Library’s YouTube channel. We hope to begin installing the first ten posts early next year, and additional posts will be added as the need arises.

We look forward to seeing you here at the Loest Research Library and hope you will bring us your genealogical questions. Have an amazing Thanksgiving and Christmas!

(Continued from page 4)

How the Swabians Became Salzburgers

All people with German names, whose ancestral roots were in early Ebenezer, came to be called “Salzburgers.” By the mid-to-late 1800s this view was part of the culture of Effingham County: the Swabian identity apparently was forgotten. Contributing immensely to this development was the 1855 publication of P. A. Strobel’s *The Salzburgers and Their Descendants*. For the next one hundred and twenty-nine years this book was the definitive and authoritative history of the Georgia Salzburgers. But this work was seriously defective in that Strobel completely omitted the coming of the Swabians to Ebenezer. Dr. George Fenwick Jones, in his history—*The Salzburger Saga* (1984)—corrected the Strobel omission. In Chapter 5, entitled “New German Settlements and Swabian Transports,” Dr. Jones wrote about the people of the Ulm region coming to and settling in Ebenezer.

Dr. Jones expressed his opinion of the Strobel work in his *Saga*. He wrote at the beginning of the “Introduction” (page ix):

The story of the Georgia Salzburgers was first told more than a century ago, by the Reverend P. A. Strobel in his delightful *Salzburgers and Their Descendants* (Baltimore 1855) . . .

Although highly meritorious for its day, this account has meantime become woefully obsolete in view of the mass of source material now available but unknown to Strobel.

The Strobel book not only had become obsolete, but it also misled descendants of early Ebenezer settlers by identifying nearly all as Salzburgers.

Falsely Identified “Salzburger” Families

Strobel wrote: “Salzburgers had abandoned the church of their fathers” (*op. cit.*, p. 261). He then named some of the “Salzburgers” who had joined other denominations (p. 262). Among these families he identified: “the Hineleys, Sherraus . . . Neidlingers . . . Oechleys (now spelled Exley) . . . occasionally, a Gnann . . .” These families, as others in the list, that Strobel identified as “Salzburgers,” were in fact of Swabian descent. Thus, all the people in early Ebenezer with German names came to be called “Salzburgers.” ~ Vince Exley, Editor

Stepping Into Ebenezer's Past:

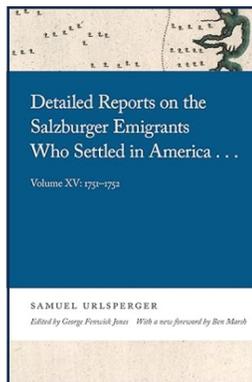
Why Volume XV Belongs on Your Shelf.

After recently reading **Vince Exley's** article, "How the Swabians Became Salzburger," in *Swabian Roots*, Vol. 1, I was curious to know more about life at Ebenezer. I knew the *Detailed Reports* would be a good place to learn what happened when the flood of immigrants from Ulm arrived at Ebenezer. I picked up Volume XV, 1751–1752, to begin my search. I didn't intend to read for hours, but this volume is filled with such interesting information that I kept finding one more thing—and then another!

Boltzius is journaling, so his writing is filled with vivid adjectives that help the reader imagine what both the newly arrived immigrants and the longtime settlers were facing during those very transitional years in Ebenezer. It is especially fascinating if one of your ancestral families is mentioned or involved in an incident or situation being recorded.

The topics range from sickness and seasonal weather—including unexpected storms—to favorite scripture verses and hymns sung for worship or burials. By this time, some families had built homes and were acquiring furnishings beyond the basics. Boltzius notes who enjoys more decorative items and who prefers simpler ways of living. He also comments on changes in society, including the movement and activity of different tribes, shifts in slavery, advances in planting and crop production, and even scientific explanations for the success or failure of various crops.

If you don't have *Detailed Reports*, Volume XV, now is a great time to pick one up from the GSS Book Shoppe—either as a gift for yourself or for someone special this Christmas! ~ Claudia Christiansen



2026 GSS Calendar On Sale

Walter Augustus Gnann
Walter Augustus Gnann was born August 12, 1866, the eighth of nine children born to Clara and Mary G. (Westman) Gnann of Wilkes, Georgia.

(On November 26, 1903, Walter Gnann married Henrietta Elizabeth Shevick, the daughter of Joshua Christopher and Susan F. Elizabeth Shevick. The Rev. Tillman W. Shealy married the Grooms.)

Walter and Henrietta were the parents of seven children: Irene as Clara, Bertha as Anna, Anne Elizabeth, Edward Augustus, William Sidney, Emily Marie, and Miriam Evelyn.

Walter Gnann was elected in December of 1955 to serve as the temporary President of the Georgia Salzburger Society.

Walter died December 1, 1958, and was buried in the St. Paul cemetery by his wife Henrietta, who had passed twenty years earlier.

Walter and Henrietta on their wedding day in 1907 and right in their golden years.






JANUARY 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	January 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31		January 2026 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31		ORDERED BY: GSS Book Shoppe 2980 Ebenezer Road Rincon, Georgia 31326 (912) 754-7001

The Georgia Salzburger Society's fifth annual calendar is available to order.

This year's calendar was created to honor the founders of the Society: sixteen of the Georgia Salzburger descendants who attended the founding meeting on September 2, 1925.

This 12-month calendar features a short biography and several photographs of each founder per month with four additional biographies included.

These wall calendars measure 11" x 17" and make great Christmas gifts. They are designed to be keepsake booklets that will hold their value long after the year is over. **Each calendar costs \$18.** Out-of-town shipping is available. See the order form below.

All proceeds from calendar sales will benefit the Georgia Salzburger Society's special account for PUBLICATIONS, which will be used to help fund the transcription and translation of the letters of Lemke, Rabenhorst, and Triebner.

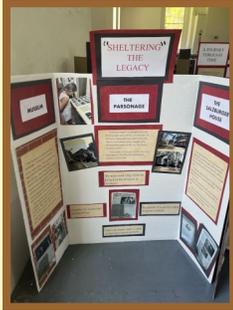
Order your 2026 calendar by mailing a check and this form to the Georgia Salzburger Society, 2980 Ebenezer Road, Rincon, Georgia 31326. **Enclose \$18 per calendar ordered.** Out-of-town shipping via USPS Priority Mail costs an extra \$11.50 for a maximum of three (3) calendars. For orders of more than three (3) calendars, please call the GSS office at (912) 754-7001 for shipping costs.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

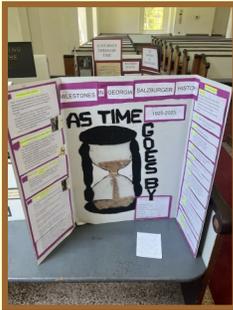
Winners of the Hinely Poster Contest



Sadie Pilcher
4th grade



Colt Pilcher
8th grade



Samantha Dostal
9th grade



Mason Pilcher
12th grade

(President Message - continued from page 2) The letters are quite enlightening as the state of Ebenezer and Jerusalem Church during the Revolution. Included are letters from Pastor Rabenhorst, who was in favor of the American cause, and from Pastor Triebner who was generally regarded as a Loyalist. Their competing views on the conflict parallel the divisions within the people of Georgia and the country as a whole at that time.

We believe the letters will be of substantial interest to historians and scholars studying Salzburger, Georgia and American history during the Revolution.

We, as a Society, have the responsibility and privilege of taking up the mantle to commemorate our ancestors' labors in the growth and development of American character and progress.

One of the primary purposes of the Society as set forth in our Constitution is the publication of historic documents and writings illuminating life in colonial Ebenezer. We are attempting to raise funds to assist in the publication of these letters. The total cost is relatively substantial. The payment will be spread over four years. We have already received a pledge from the family of Reverend Donald Hanberry which should cover approximately 25% of the total cost. We are formulating a committee which will be chaired by Jeanie Thomas to oversee the raising of these funds.

However, we still need to raise funds both for the monument, which is currently in place, and for these publications.

Please contact the Society office to contribute to these funds and you may designate whether you want the donation divided between the monument and publications or solely to one or the other. We intend to note and honor the names of the contributors and those in whose memory contributions were made for these projects. ~ Noble Boykin

Heritage Day in Pictures!



Heritage Day Centennial Weekend

Monday: Heritage Day

Friday: Centennial Banquet

The Centennial Banquet at the Ebenezer Retreat Center was a memorable, full-house celebration featuring colonial décor, greetings from past presidents, and reflections on the past and future of GSS.



Heritage Day Monday brought more beautiful weather as volunteers showcased Colonial clothing and games, basket weaving, chair caning, early Georgia agriculture, corn shelling, and pottery. The pavilion buzzed with interactive children's activities, including a student scavenger hunt. During the business meeting, guest speaker Friederike Lippold shared ideas for future collaborations between the Georgia Salzburger Society and the Francke Foundations. Many thanks to the volunteers, donors, and all who traveled to celebrate the rich Georgia Salzburger heritage!

Saturday: Savannah Historic Tour and Workshop

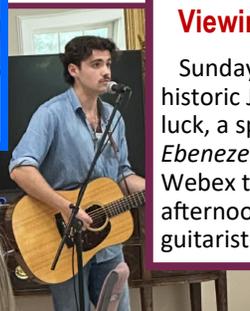
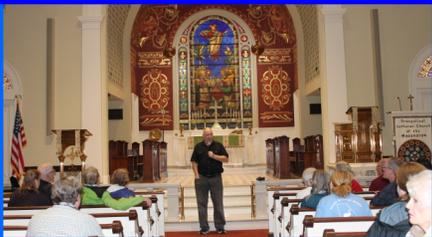
Saturday kicked off with the morning Savannah-Salzburger trolley tour and wrapped up with Treutlen research workshop in the afternoon.



Sunday:

Viewing, Webex Presentation & Concert

Sunday was a beautiful whirlwind—worship in historic Jerusalem Lutheran Church, a lively potluck, a special showing of Austin Smith's *New Ebenezer – 500 Years in the Making*, a fascinating Webex talk by Dr. Juergen Groeschl, and an afternoon concert of century-spanning music by guitarist-songwriter Justin Vreeland.



More pictures have been posted on Facebook. [Visit Ebenezer](#)