Prayer
Scripture: Psalm 106:1-5
Hymn: 544 "For All the Saints"

At the end of the colonial period English speaking people of British stock—English, Scotch, and Irish—were dominant in all of the thirteen colonies. Of the groups from the continent the Germans represented about 8.7 per cent of the white population. The Dutch were next with about 3.3 per cent. The French composed about 1.7 per cent with French-speaking Walloons outnumbering those from France. There was a smaller number of Swedes. Most of those from the continent had come in national groups and had settled as national groups. As they spread in the colonies they tended to move in national groups. The Dutch and the Swedes were the residue of colonial empires that had been taken over by the English.

The Dutch Reformed and the French-speaking Walloons, who were also of the Reformed tradition, were the first to arrive from the Continent. Peter Minuit, the first Director of New Netherland, had been a ruling elder of the French Reformed church at Wesel. Jonas Michaeilius, the first Dutch minister in New Netherland, in addition to ministering to the Dutch, conducted weekly services for the Walloons in the French language and according to French traditions. Since he was not fluent in French he had to read his sermons.

When the English took over New Netherland from the Dutch in 1664 and renamed it New York, the Dutch stopped coming to America. Before the English takeover the Dutch had settled in what became New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and a few Dutch had settled in Maryland as early as 1659. The original Dutch settlers multiplied and by 1700 they had increased to around 8,650. Gradually they migrated to other colonies, especially to Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. By 1790 the largest number of Dutch were still to be found in New York, where out of a total population of 314,366 there were 55,000 Dutch. In New Jersey out of 169,954 there were 35,000 Dutch. In Delaware there were about 2,000 Dutch out of 46,310. Back in the period of Dutch control the Dutch had attempted settlements in the disputed region between New York and New England but had met strong resistance from the New Englanders. By 1790 there were about 600 Dutch in Connecticut, 600 in Massachusetts, 250 in Rhode Island, and about 500 in the territory that would be Vermont.

The Swedish Lutherans first settled in Delaware in 1637. Twelve more expeditions of settlers were sent over by the Swedish trading company before the Dutch seized the territory in 1655. Delaware was taken from the Dutch by the British in 1664. In 1693 the total Swedish population was about 942 in 188 families. The bulk of the Swedes remained in Delaware; very few from the old country joined them. Gradually a few of the Swedes migrated—a few up the Hudson but most moved South. By 1790 the number of Swedes had increased to about 21,000: 4100 in Delaware; 950 in Maryland; 3325 in Pennsylvania, 6650 in New Jersey; 2600 in Virginia; 700 in North Carolina, 325 in South Carolina; 300 in Georgia; 1500 in New York; 75 in Massachusetts; 50 in Rhode Island; 25 in Connecticut; 500 had moved West into what would be Kentucky and Tennessee.
THE HUGUENOTS

For twenty years before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the Catholic government in France put increasing pressure on the Huguenots. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes ended all tolerance. The French government did not intend to allow the Huguenots to migrate. Troops were stationed in Huguenot homes to harrass them into turning Catholic. In spite of all the measures taken by the government to keep the Huguenots in France, many managed to slip out of France, even with troops sleeping in their homes, and leaving everything behind, fled to Germany, Holland, England and any place that seemed to offer some refuge. From these countries many migrated to America. The reputation of the Huguenots for fervent piety and good living, for industry and the stories of the fierce persecution they endured and their faithfulness to their convictions, secured for them a welcome into the colonies in America. French settled in almost all the colonies, with the largest settlements in New York and South Carolina.

The Dutch Reformed of New Amsterdam extended a warm welcome to the Huguenots who were French Reformed. A number of the early Dutch pastors ministered to both Dutch and French. The Huguenots became so numerous in New Netherland that public documents had to be published in both Dutch and French.

The Huguenots continued to enjoy full religious toleration under the English when they changed New Netherland to New York in 1664. James II in his instructions to Governor Dongan ordered that persons of all religions were to be permitted to inhabit New York. No one was to be molested over religion as long as they did not disturb the public peace. Dongan in his report to the king in 1687 listed a Church of England meeting in the Fort and served by a Chaplain, a Dutch Calvinist Church, a French Calvinist church, and a Dutch Lutheran church. He also mentioned that there were a few Catholics, an abundance of Quakers, some Sabbatarians, some Anabaptists and some Jews.

The first French pastor, Pierre Daille, arrived in New York City in 1683 to minister to the Huguenot congregation. He had been a professor in the Huguenot theological seminary at Saumur until it was destroyed by order of Louis XIV in 1683. There were Huguenots on Staten Island, Hackensack, Bushwyck, Harlem, Rye, New Rochelle and New Paltz. In addition to ministering to the New York church, Daille sought to minister to all the Huguenots on Sundays for miles around New York. Twice a year he conducted worship in New Paltz. Pastor Peiret arrived in 1687 to become the associate of Daille, enabling Daille to itinere among the scattered congregations. In 1688 the Huguenots built a house for worship in Marketfield Street in New York. Pastor De Bon Repos arrived to minister on Staten Island and at New Paltz. Other French pastors came; among them Bondet, Vanden Bosch, Rou, Moulinar, Carle and Tetard. in 1696 Daille accepted a call to serve the Huguenot congregation in Boston where he would labor until his death in 1715.

New Rochelle, about twenty miles above the city of New York was settled entirely by Huguenots from Rochelle in France. It retained its distinctive language and customs until after the American Revolution. By 1700 there were five or six established French Reformed churches in the vicinity of New York City.

In 1662, John Touton, a French physician from Rochelle, made application to the General Court of Massachusetts for permission for the persecuted Huguenots to settle in Massachusetts. The court granted the petition and Huguenots began arriving in 1662. In 1686 the French erected a church in Boston. In 1696 this
church called Pierre Daillé from New York to serve as pastor.

The Huguenot migration was at its peak around 1700, with their settling in groups in all the colonies from Maine to the Carolinas. Huguenots founded settlements in New Jersey. From New York and New Jersey some moved into Pennsylvania. William Penn's advertisements brought flocks of Huguenots to Pennsylvania. Huguenots also settled in Maryland and Delaware. William III sent a large number of Huguenots to Virginia (in 1690). By 1700 there were a number of Huguenot settlements in Virginia. In Virginia where the Church of England was the established church, supported by taxation, a special act was passed in 1700 to relieve Huguenots of the tax obligation and to grant them freedom of worship. In the other states where there was the Anglican establishment similar acts favored the Huguenots. The Huguenots had bitter memories of France. There was a strong tendency by the second and third generations for them to give up language and customs and to mix with the inhabitants they found in the New World. In New England they tended to become Congregationalists, in New York they tended to become Dutch Reformed, in Maryland, Delaware and Virginia they tended to become Anglican. In Pennsylvania they tended to become Presbyterian.

Several Huguenot centers were established in South Carolina. Charles II of England, at his own expense, sent a company of Huguenots to South Carolina in 1679 to cultivate the soil, wishing to increase the supply of raw materials for England. The flow of Huguenot immigrants continued well into the eighteenth century. From South Carolina the Huguenots moved into Georgia, North Carolina and into what would become Tennessee.

The French Huguenots had a good reputation for piety and industry until the French and Indian Wars. When the war came between the French and the English the French became suspect of being French spies in spite of the fact that France had spurned them and that they had had little correspondence with France. The flow of Huguenots to America ceased. In 1790 there were approximately 54,900 French Huguenots in the colonies; the French and Indian Wars had greatly increased the tendency to surrender national identity and to melt into the general population.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE GERMANS

The largest national group from the continent that migrated to America was the Germans, but one must remember that the Germany of the colonial period was more of a geographical region than a united nation—it consisted of a host of petty states. In the Counter-Reformation the Catholics had regained much of Southern Germany. The Protestant portions of Germany tended to be either German Lutheran or German Reformed but there were a host of lesser sects. Some represented the Left Wing of the Reformation most often called Anabaptist. Some were the products of the Pietist movement. These smaller groups, usually called sects, were non-conformist groups that had been led out of the state churches by one or more charismatic leaders who put great emphasis on one or more main principles that they contended had been neglected by the orthodox group or groups. They were usually marked by strong denial of the world and strict discipline. They usually advocated a return to the apostolic Christianity of the first century church from which they maintained that the institutional churches had fallen. They were critical of the sacraments and clergy of the Catholics and Protestant state churches. They called for complete separation of church and state and condemned the use of civil authority in religion. They maintained that the true
church was a community of saints who practised a rigid discipline and who had withdrawn from unholy worldly concerns. They were often very severe in their judgment on existing society. Almost everywhere in Germany these smaller groups were fiercely persecuted. The religious wars that followed the Reformation left Germany ruined economically. The invasions by Louis XIV, especially in the Palatinate, brought more ruin and more persecution. The religious, political, social and economic conditions in Germany made the reports of America most attractive to the impoverished and persecuted Germans. When William Penn travelled in Germany his heart was touched at the plight of the people and he saw a ripe field for recruiting settlers for his "Holy Experiment." The result was the flood of German immigrants to America.

THE Mennonites

Some of the most unpopular and most persecuted of the Germans were the remnants of the Anabaptists. Most prominent among the surviving Anabaptists were two interrelated groups. One was the group in Southern Germany near the Netherlands border that was the result of the labors of Menno Simons (1496-1561) who had gathered and molded a quiet, pacifistic group known as Mennonites. The other was a group in Switzerland founded by Jacob Amman (1644-1730) who emphasized a stricter discipline.

One of the first Mennonites who responded to Penn's efforts to recruit settlers was the son of a Mennonite family living in Heilbronn in the Palatinate. A letter from the father on hearing from his son in America has survived. It was dated February 6, 1981:

Dear Son: Your letter from far away America...gave us great joy.... America, according to your writing, must be a beautiful land....

Dear Henry, since you have been away from us conditions in South Germany have become very much worse. The French have wrought much devastation..., and besides we now suffer from the plague of high taxes. Thousands would gladly leave the Fatherland if they had the means to do so.

A merchant from Frankfort was with us last week and informed us how along the Rhine a number of families have banded together to accept the invitation of an Englishman named William Penn, who had recently visited that community, to settle in that beautiful land and there establish new homes.

After I had received this information I went at once to our minister, whose parents live at Worms on the Rhine, and begged him earnestly to learn what truth there was in these reports and to find out, if possible, if there would be any opportunity for us to join them....He then informed me that these reports were all true....

It is the good providence of God that has shown these burdened people so glorious a land. We...are only waiting for a good opportunity when the dear Lord will bring us to you. Your brother Peter is learning shoe-making and will soon be free. America is the only dream of Elizabeth. Catherine, only six years old, asks us daily, 'Will we soon be going to our brother in America?'

The first group of Germans to accept a haven in Pennsylvania were thirteen families from the Mennonite settlement in the small city of Crefeld in the Rhine Valley near the Dutch border. Some of the Mennonite community in Crefeld had been won to Quakerism by English missionaries who had come to the region as early
as 1655. The Mennonites were only a tolerated group and when some of them became Quakers they were even less favored by the town authorities. William Penn's agent at Rotterdam secured passage on a ship, "Concord" for the thirteen families who wanted to come to America. They arrived in Philadelphia on October 6, 1683. A place was ready for them in Germantown.

Francis Daniel Pastorius (1651-1720), a lawyer of Frankfort-on-the-Main, a Lutheran pietist who had become a Quaker, was the founder of Germantown. He had been an intimate friend of Spener and had become a friend of Quakers associated with William Penn. Pastorius had become the agent for the Frankfurt Land Company, a utopian group of pietists in Frankfort who had been granted twenty-five thousand acres in Pennsylvania. Penn had granted six Mennonites 18,000 acres provided they planted a colony. Pastorius had also become the agent for a group of Quakers in Frankfort who wanted land in Pennsylvania and for the Mennonites in Crefeld. He had arrived in Philadelphia in August, 1683, two months ahead of the Crefeld company, and had secured 15,000 acres of land from Penn and had laid out Germantown. Pastorius became the leading citizen of the town; he was mayor, clerk, schoolmaster, and assembly representative. The Crefeld settlers were weavers rather than farmers. There was little demand for their looms. The soil around Germantown was good. The settlers were industrious and peaceful. They established a reputation for integrity and for respecting human freedom. In 1686 they built a common meeting house to be used by both Quakers and Mennonites. In 1690 they decided each group would hold separate services. The Mennonite congregation in Germantown in 1690 numbered ninety-nine members out of a Mennonite population of some two hundred-fifty. The Quakers built their own meeting house in 1705. The Mennonites built their meeting house in 1708. The Mennonites at first took an active part in governmental affairs, but soon withdrew, leaving the government to the Quakers and later to the Scotch-Irish and Anglicans. The Mennonites were ahead of the Quakers in social views. As early as 1688 they chided the Quakers for supporting slavery. They said, "Have these poor negers not as much right to fight for their freedom as you have to keep them slaves?" Three Quakers joined Pastorius in sending to the Monthly Meeting in 1688 a protest against slave holding—the first such action in the colonies. The protest was transmitted to the Yearly Meeting at Burlington where it was quietly suppressed.

The second wave of German immigration to Pennsylvania was composed of German-speaking Swiss Mennonites, who arrived about 1710. A warrant was issued in 1710 for 10,000 acres to ten persons, "Switzers lately arrived in the province." The land had been purchased from the Proprietor for 50 pounds Pennsylvania money, to be paid in six annual installments subject to one shilling quitrent annually for every one hundred acres. The land was the rich farmland around Peguea Creek in Lancaster County. The good farmland attracted many other Mennonites. Those from the Palatinate by-passed Germantown for Lancaster and surrounding counties. Lancaster soon became the principal Mennonite center in America. Gradually some Mennonites joined the movement westward. Mennonite immigration greatly slowed down with the opening of the Seven Years' War (1756) and after 1760 for half a century very few Mennonites came to America.

When the Mennonites came to Pennsylvania they brought with them the statement of principles adopted at Dort in 1632 and which had been signed by representatives of the congregations in Holland and northwest Germany. The churches of the Palatinate had adopted the statement in 1660. Mennonite theology was Biblical rather than philosophical. They were more interested in rules of human conduct than in theological statements. Almost every phase of activity was
regulated, calling for many cases of discipline. Gross sins were punished by excommunication administered by the elders with the consent of the congregation. As prosperity increased pride was a common sin. Mennonite men wore beards; the mustache was banned as the mark of a military man. Mennonites held that religion was a matter of inner conviction. They rejected infant baptism. Baptism followed a profession of faith. They advocated non-resistance and in Europe with their doctrine of the separation of church and state had insisted that Christians could not hold office. They held that governments were necessary and that Christians should pray for the authorities. In Pennsylvania where the Mennonites found the separation of church and state already a fact they did not find it necessary to make the same distinction between the Christian and the worldly government. Some Mennonites held office in Pennsylvania and it was the Mennonite vote that kept Quakers in control after they had ceased to be the majority. Mennonites refused to take oaths. They continued to insist on dress that would distinguish them from the world and forbade marriage outside their group. Women wore a little cap in worship. Mennonites practised food-washing, and the kiss of peace.

Mennonites were not troubled by a lack of ministry in their frontier settlements. They did not have to wait for some outside authority before organizing. Each congregation conducted its own affairs, choosing its own officers—a bishop, elders, and deacons. They were chosen by lot. With such an uneducated ministry they clung tenaciously to their old European customs and there was little chance for progress. Frequently in new German settlements made up of Germans from various religious groups the first church would be a Mennonite or Dunker church even though they were outnumbered by Lutherans and Reformed who had to wait for ministers from the continent. Although Pennsylvania afforded the opportunity for complete freedom for mission work the Mennonites were not known for aggressive mission work in the New World.

It has been estimated that about 2500 Mennonites arrived in America in the colonial period, making up about one tenth of the number of German immigrants. A few Mennonite families moved down the Cumberland Valley from Pennsylvania into Maryland and Virginia.

**THE AMISH**

The Amish began to arrive in Pennsylvania in significant numbers in 1727. They came in larger numbers in the 1740s. They were a more conservative group of Anabaptists founded by Jacob Amman (1644-1730) in Switzerland about 1693. Amman was a Mennonite preacher who urged a stricter observance of early Anabaptist practices, especially in discipline. They were known for their doctrinal rigidity and the complete shunning of excommunicated members, known as "avoidance." The faithful were not to eat, drink, visit, buy or sell with an excommunicated person. The Amish were also known for their plain dress, especially the wearing of hooks and eyes instead of buttons which were considered vain. They were in accord with other Mennonites in such matters as the refusal to bear arms, to take oaths, the insistence on believers' baptism, freedom of conscience, and separation of church and state. The Amish opposed the use of church buildings as a step toward ritualism, usually meeting in barns or homes. They refused to form any general church organization. They insisted on educating their own children but opposed the founding of colleges. They established rural communities.

The Amish first settled in Berks and Lancaster counties, but gradually drifted by colonies farther west.
THE PIETISTIC SECTS

All the Protestant churches of Europe and America in varying degrees were influenced by the revivifying role of the Pietist movement of the seventeenth century. The "collegia pietatis" (spiritual societies) and the Pia Desideria of Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705), the founder of Pietism, were a challenge to intellectualism, formalism, and ethical passivity that spread through the Protestant churches at the end of the Reformation. Pietism brought a revival of emphasis on the priesthood of all believers and the resulting role of the laity. Pietism put new emphasis on the conversion experience and genuine Christian behavior. Personal piety, in depth Bible study, charitable concerns and missions were exalted above doctrinal concerns. Pietism met stiff opposition but exercised a great revivifying influence on both German Lutheran churches and German Reformed churches. Spener exercised great influence in the founding of the University of Halle by King Frederick of Prussia. Spener's disciple, August Hermann Francke, became pastor, professor and leader in the Halle circle that exercised a great influence on German education and church life. It became a center of world missions.

The criticism of the coldness and formalism of the churches resulted in the forming of separatistic pietistic movements. Two groups of German Pietists who migrated to America in colonial times were the Dunkers and the Moravian Brethren.

THE DUNKERS

The earliest organized Pietist group to come to America was the Dunkers or German Baptists. They preferred to be called "The Church of the Brethren." They received a variety of nicknames: Dunkers, Tunkers, Taufers, Tunkards, Dunkards, Dippers. These names were derived from the German word "eintunken", meaning "to dip" and was given them because of their triune immersion for baptism. The founder of the movement was Alexander Mack, a man of considerable means, who had become dissatisfied with the deadness of the Reformed Church in which he had been reared. Mack became a radical Pietist. When he withdrew from the Reformed Church in the Palatinate he had to flee. In 1700 he took refuge in Schwarzenau, a village in the county of Wittgenstein in Westphalia. In Schwarzenau Mack became friendly with Christopher Hochmann who had been a student at the University of Halle. Under the influence of Francke he had become an extreme Pietist. Mack and Hochmann gathered a little group of pious people who met for Bible study and prayer. Hochmann opposed forming a church organization, fearing the return of the evils that had led him to withdraw from the church. Mack felt it was necessary to form a church as a means of carrying on the work. In 1708, under his leadership the little group, after study and prayer, went down to the river Eder. There one of them, chosen by lot, led Mack into the river and baptized him by dipping him face forward into the river three times in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Then the other seven were baptized in the same manner by Mack. This little group constituted the first Church of the Brethren, or Dunkards. They "covenanted and united together as brethren and sisters into the covenant of the cross of Jesus Christ to form a church of Christian believers." They had learned the practice of triune immersion face forward in a flowing stream, from the account of early Christian customs in the pietistic church history of Gottfried Arnold.

The little group in Schwarzenau revived many of the ideas and practices of the early Anabaptists. They sought to be a "plain" people living in strict
obedience to the New Testament. For a time they advocated celibacy and community of goods. They sought to restore the rites of the primitive church. Their worship consisted of a "love feast", followed by the Lord's Supper, then by footwashing, and was concluded with the "holy kiss of charity" and the "right hand of fellowship." They revived the anointing of the sick. The group grew rapidly.

As news of the Schwarzenau group spread into neighboring provinces, other congregations were formed. One of the new groups was at Marienborn in the Palatinate. Fierce intolerance caused the Schwarzenau group to move to West Friesland and the Marienborn group had to move to Crefeld. Peter Becker became the leader of the Crefeld group.

In 1719, Peter Becker, attracted by the advertisement of Penn's agent and encouraged by the Frankfort Land Company, led the Crefeld congregation of about 120 persons to America—the first of the Dunker migrations. They first settled in Germantown but soon scattered into several settlements. From the beginning they worshipped in homes. In 1723 Peter Becker conducted a revival that led to many conversions. This revival inspired the Dunkers to form their first congregation in America. In 1723 seventeen of the Dunkers gathered at the home of Becker in Germantown and formed this first Dunker Church in America. Becker was chosen elder. That first day six new converts were baptized in Wissahickon creek, after which they gathered around a long table in the home of another member, the women on one side of the table and the men on the other. They held a service of worship consisting of songs, prayer, and Scripture reading, followed by the washing of one another's feet. This was followed by a meal, then by Communion, and was closed with the "holy kiss of charity" and the giving of the "right hand of fellowship, a prayer and a hymn."

Other congregations were formed in the German communities where the Brethren settled. The congregation at Conestoga in Lancaster county was formed in 1724. Conrad Beissel was chosen elder. Other congregations were formed in Skippack, Oley, and Coventry. Several others were formed in the next decade.

In 1729 Alexander Mack arrived with some thirty families of the congregation of West Friesland. He immediately assumed the leadership of the expanding movement. Four years later a third group under the leadership of John Naas came over strengthening the movement. With these migrations the European history of the Dunkards ended. The Dunkards moved west with the other Germans. Some members were lost amidst the adversities of the thinly settled frontier. Some were lost to the proselyting efforts of other sectarian prophets. By the end of the colonial period the Dunkards had a little less than a thousand members scattered in some twenty congregations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland.

The Dunkers were congregational in church government with an uneducated ministry drawn from the people. They had no confession of faith other than the New Testament. Their doctrines, beliefs and practices were strongly influenced by two early statements. Christopher Hochmann's "Confession of Faith", prepared in 1702 and later printed by Christopher Saur in Pennsylvania in 1743 had considerable influence, especially on Mack. Mack, himself, before coming to America had put his conception of New Testament teaching on the Christian life in his A Short and Plain View of the Outward yet Sacred Rites and Ordinances of the House of God.
The most famous of the Dunkers in the colonial period was Christopher Sauer (or Sower, 1693-1758), the first German printer in America, and the first to edit and print a German newspaper. Sauer was educated at the University of Halle. He came to America in 1724. Sauer farmed for a while in Lancaster County. In 1731 he moved to Germantown where he practiced medicine. He began a printing business in 1738 and in 1739 began to publish his Hoch-Deutsch pensylvanische Geschichts-Schreiber. In 1743, with type brought from Germany, he published a large quarto edition of Luther's Bible with the Apocrypha. It was the first Bible in a Western language printed in America and became the Bible of early German settlers in America of all creeds. Later several editions of this Bible were published. Sauer established a papermill, an ink factory, and the first type foundry in America. He was one of the leaders in establishing a high school in Germantown. He printed Sunday School cards for the Dunkers many years before Robert Raikes introduced the Sunday School in England.

Morgan Edwards, the Baptist minister in Philadelphia, 1761-1771, in his Materials Towards a History of the Baptists in Pennsylvania, both British and German, based on interviews and his own observations, published in 1770, has left the following description of the Dunkers:

They (the Tunkers) use great plainness of language and dress like the Quakers; and like them will never swear nor fight. They will not go to law nor take interest for the money they lend. They commonly wear their beards and keep the first day Sabbath, except one congregation (Ephrata). They have the Lord's Supper with its ancient attendants of love-feast, washing feet, kiss of charity, and right hand of fellowship. They anoint the sick with oil for their recovery, and use trine immersion, with laying on of hands and prayer, even while the person is in the water; which may easily be done, as he kneels down to be baptized and continues in that position till both prayer and imposition of hands be performed.... Every brother is allowed to stand up in the congregation to speak in a way of exhortation and expounding, and when by that means they find a man eminent for knowledge and aptness to teach, they choose him to be a minister and ordain him with imposition of hands, attended with fasting and prayer, and giving the right hand of fellowship. They also have deacons, and ancient widows for deaconesses; and exhorters who are licensed to use their gifts statedly.

THE EPHRATA SOCIETY

Conrad Beissel, the first elder of the Conestoga congregation of the Dunkers, led a rather unique secession from the Dunker fellowship in 1732 to form the Ephrata Society, located in Lancaster County. Beissel was the son of a drunken baker of Eberbach in the Palatinate. He served an apprenticeship and became a journeyman baker. He was converted by a group of Pietists in 1715 and after his conversion was described as one whose "reason became so enlightened that he could easily solve the most intrically involved matters." While he was employed as a baker in Manheim he formed such a violent dislike for the wife of his employer that for the rest of his life he was prejudiced against women and marriage. He moved to Heidelberg where he associated with a group of Pietists who had separated from the church. He was arrested and imprisoned. After a trial before the ecclesiastical court he was banished. He visited Schwarzenau and Crefeld where he was impressed with the Dunkers or German Baptist Brethren. With two companions, Stuntz and Stiefel, he managed to find passage to Boston in 1720. He made his way to Germantown. Finding no demand for his trade as a
baker, he served an apprenticeship to learn the weaver's trade in the home of Peter Becker, the Dunker elder. At the end of his year as an apprentice he and his two companions withdrew to a cabin in the forest near Conestoga. Their hermit life attracted the curiosity of the settlers of the neighborhood and especially the attention of the more pietistic fanatics. Beissel came to the conviction that no solitary person could be fruitful to God. He requested baptism at the hands of Peter Becker and was accepted into the Dunker fellowship. With his striking and winsome personality he soon gained considerable influence among his new brethren and when the Conestoga congregation of Dunkers was formed he was chosen as "elder."

Beissel raised such fierce opposition from his Dunker brethren with strong vocal opposition to marriage and strong insistence on the observance of the seventh day as the sabbath of rest, that in 1732 he withdrew from the Dunkers and formed in Lancaster county the "Ephrata Society." Most of the Conestoga congregation of the Dunkers followed him into his new community, sometimes called "The Order of the Solitary." He emphasized celibacy but allowed married people to hold membership in the community. Most honored and the backbone of the community were the "Order of Spiritual Virgins" and the "Solitary Brethren." Other than the observance of the seventh day most of the religious observances were similar to the Dunkers: triune immersion, foot-washing, kiss of peace, right hand of fellowship.

Beissel was a gifted leader and skillful propagandist. Converts flocked to the community. He won many among the Dunkers—even a few whole congregations who came as a body. He attracted members from several German groups with pietistic leanings. Most of his converts were humble people, but he was able to win a few of the most prominent leaders among the colonial Germans. One early convert was the wife of Christopher Sauer, the well-known printer. Another was Johann Conrad Weiser, an elder in the German Reformed Church at Tulpehocken—one of the most prominent leaders among the Germans. He soon converted John Peter Miller, the minister of the German Reformed Church at Tulpehocken where Weiser had been an elder. Miller was one of the most gifted preachers and one of the most able theologians among the German Reformed. His conversation created a sensation and enabled Ephrata to draw heavily from the German Reformed. Weiser and Sauer's wife eventually withdrew from Ephrata but Miller gained the reputation of being one of the ablest linguists and most learned men in Pennsylvania. The Continental Congress appointed him to translate the Declaration of Independence into several European languages. Weiser withdrew from Ephrata when Beissel rebuked him for having four children by his wife while he was supposed to be living in celibacy. Later he was reconciled to the community and returned for a short time. In 1743 his son-in-law, Henry M. Mühlenberg persuaded him to join the Lutherans.

By 1741 the community had erected separate buildings for the "solitary Brethren" and the "sisters." Both were clothed in very unattractive monastic garbs designed to conceal "that humiliating image revealed by sin." The women wore veils. All followed a very strict regimen. Every week on the evening of the sixth day each one had to examine his own heart in his cell and prepare a written statement as to his or her spiritual condition that was handed to the superintendent. By 1745 they had erected a large group of buildings that included a printing press, a paper mill, a cloth mill, a grist mill, a bookbindery, and the "Saal" or chapel—the largest building of its kind in Pennsylvania. The chapel was built without iron—literally following Moses' injunction, "Thou shalt
not lift up an iron upon them." (Deuteronomy 27:5). All the buildings had very tall, high pitched roofs. All the projects were communal operations. Profits beyond the needs of the community were used for charity. A large number of books were published at Ephrata including a number of hymn books, devotional books, the Mennonite book of martyrs (Blutige Shau-Platz) and the Chronicon Ephratense. Ephrata became one of the principal cultural centers of Pennsylvania. It was noted for its beautiful singing. Beissel produced a constant supply of music, composing over a thousand hymns.

Ephrata did not publish articles of belief. Michael Wohlfarth, a member of the community is said to have explained to Benjamin Franklin that the absence of articles of belief rested on the conviction that Ephrata did not consider that it had arrived at the end of its development. The community wanted to stay open and not make the mistake of so many who had discovered that esteemed doctrines were not true and that errors had been found to be truth. If the community bound itself to the pronouncements of founders or elders it would become unwilling to improve. Franklin is said to have praised the community, "This modesty in a sect is perhaps a single instance in the history of mankind, every sect supposing itself in possession of all truth, and that those who differ are so far in the wrong."

When Beissel died in 1768 Miller became the superintendent. The community soon began to decline. After Miller's death it disbanded.