

Saint Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

1126 South Barr Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802

Where Barr and Madison Street meet in the city of Fort Wayne, Indiana, there is a spot of ground which can truly be called historic, both as far as Fort Wayne, as well as the Lutheran Church in America, are concerned. It is the property of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, the second oldest Lutheran Church in Indiana and one of the oldest in the western part of our country. It has belonged to this congregation since 1839, at which time the first, single frame church was erected by the little flock of Lutherans which had been organized as a congregation two years previous.



Ever since this first simple edifice was built, the congregation has maintained a house of worship on this spot, evermore enlarging its facilities to meet the demands of the growing membership. Thus, a second church building was provided in 1847, which building, however, soon became inadequate, making an addition necessary in 1862. Though two daughter congregations branched off to form new parishes during the next two decades, it again became necessary to provide more ample facilities. On January 15, 1887 a resolution of vision and courage was presented to the congregation and was adopted. It reads as follows:

"At present there are many older members of the congregation who are still alive, and they have the wish that they may be privileged to lend their aid, so that the congregation may obtain a stately house of God, which might serve as a memorial of their gratitude and zeal for the Kingdom of God to the coming generations"

The magnificent cathedral-like building which was erected and dedicated on September 15, 1889, was indeed a testimonial of great zeal. However, no doubt, to test and train His people for greater things, it pleased the Lord to reduce this splendid edifice of worship to a gutted somldering ruin by a disastrous fire on December 3, 1903. In deep humility and sobriety the congregation set about with courage to rebuild the church, of which only the damaged foundations and walls remained standing. In April of 1905 the restored beautiful edifice was dedicated to the glory and service of the Triune God.

This fine temple of worship served the congregation well; however not without wear and the usual deterioration of time and the elements. In 1943 the congregation decided that the time had come for a complete renovation of



its stately sanctuary. Thus, it was determined that a thank offering should be gathered to make possible these necessary improvements in connection with the Fortieth Anniversary of the present restored building in 1945. A sizable fund was collected. However, the work had to be postponed because of the scarcity of materials due to the Second World War, which was in progress.

In 1947, the work of repair and renovation was begun on the exterior, which was completely tuck-pointed and painted. In the summer on 1948 the roof was repaired, and plans were made for the execution of the entire renovation program. The actual work began in August of this same year and continued to the end of January 1949. The entire church was modernized and beautified. This included new radiation and heating, new wiring, new lighting, the installation of five stained glass windows in the chancel, redecoration of the entire interior, a new chancel rail, and a new floor covering. Though the original funds were not adequate for this ambitious program the congregation nevertheless courageously and joyfully dedicated itself to this worthy task.

The Churches of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation

- 1837** First Place of Worship - The Court House
- 1838** Second Place of Worship - School House Harrison and Superior Streets
- x1839** First Church on Present Site
- 1847** Second Church on Present Site
- 1862** Second Church on Enlarged
- 1889** Third Church on Present Site
- 1903** Church Damaged by Fire
- 1905** Restored Church Dedicated
- 1955** Heritage Hall was built and connected to the Church with a Front and Back Cloister
- 1982** Church Placed in National Register of Historic Places

