

**St. Paul's United Church of Christ
St. Louis, MO
175th Anniversary (1844-2019)**



Our rich German heritage is immediately apparent when one considers the name our founding parents gave to our congregation — The German Evangelical Congregation of St. Paul at Mathees Creek.

In the early 1800's, because of hard times in Germany, the great German migration came to America. Many of these immigrants came by way of New Orleans, traveled up the Mississippi River and settled in Missouri and Illinois. St. Louis became the focal point of these early pioneers.

In 1840, six German Evangelical ministers met at Gravois Settlement, an area now known as Mehlville. At this meeting the German Evangelical Church Society of the west was formed. One of the pastors at that meeting, Rev. C. Nallau, helped in that year to begin the congregation now known as St. John's Church in Mehlville. Only four years later, in 1844, he came into our area and founded our church, now known as St. Paul's United Church of Christ Oakville.

From these humble beginnings sprang many church sponsored institutions — Eden Theological Seminary, Deaconess Hospital, the Emmaus Homes, the Evangelical Children's Home (Now Every Child's Hope), and Good Samaritan Home for the aged. St. Paul's has been part of this growth and concern from its very inception.

For many years we were a rural congregation, and for the first 74 years of our life, services were held in a small log building located near Heintz and Old Baumgartner Roads. In 1905, the congregation purchased three acres of land on Telegraph Road. A parsonage and schoolhouse were also built that year.

On July 7, 1918, the cornerstone of the first sanctuary was laid when the congregation moved to 5508 Telegraph Road. In 1919, the original church building at Heintz and Old Baumgartner was sold and the ground used for an addition to the church cemetery. In 1949, an addition was built on the rear of the church building, three additional acres of ground were purchased, and in 1953, another addition was added to the existing building. During 1955, the congregation adopted plans for building an auditorium, kitchen, and classrooms. Construction began in 1957, and a dedication was held on April 13, 1958. The following year the congregation purchased an additional seven acres of land north of the church, including two residences. Shortly thereafter, one of the residences was used as a parsonage; the other was converted to church offices and a church school annex.

Some ten years later, in 1967, we conducted our first capital funds drive. Pledges were secured for a two-year period so that all existing debts could be liquidated as part of our 125th anniversary celebration. We refurbished and redecorated our sanctuary early in the year. On May 11, 1969, we rededicated our sanctuary. We concluded our 125th anniversary with a month long celebration in the fall of 1969.

The following year we began some long range planning for future growth. Once again we conducted a capital funds drive. In 1972, we completed a new parsonage and began planning for our new educational building.

During the closing months of 1975, we conducted our third successful three year capital funds drive. The next year we began construction of our new educational building which was completed and dedicated in 1977.

One of the highlights in 1991 was the burning of the mortgage for this building.

Since 1980, our membership has grown significantly. To meet the needs of our growing congregation, the focus of our ministry has been to provide additional leadership and programs. In 1981, an extensive program in athletics was instituted for children, youth, and adults.

The mid to late 80's was a period of rapid growth in the Oakville community. Many young families began moving into the area and St. Paul's began reaching out to these families with new Church programs and our Church family began to grow. From 1984 until 1988, over 100 new members became a part of our Church family. In the fall of 1987, St. Paul's extended a call to our first Associate Pastor.

The congregation consisted of 813 members as we welcomed 1988.
As we entered the decade of the 90's, we welcomed our 1000th member to St. Paul's

In 1994, St. Paul's celebrated our 150th Anniversary. This year-long celebration included a special Anniversary Sunday each month with opening presentations in German and then translated into English. St. Paul's memories of our 150 years included guest speakers, special music, and great fellowship.

In 1997 the newest addition to the building, (a new sanctuary, reception area, nursery, elevator, and classrooms), was dedicated. About 10 years later the old sanctuary was remodeled and turned into what is now the Heritage Room. It now hosts countless weekly gatherings and special events throughout the year.

In 2001 St. Paul's purchased TreeHouse Preschool. The preschool had been operating at St. Paul's since 1976. The preschool is now open 5 days a week from 6:30 a.m.— 6:00 p.m. and is a full-fledged early learning center. It has 8 classrooms ranging from birth through pre-k and a staff of more than 40.