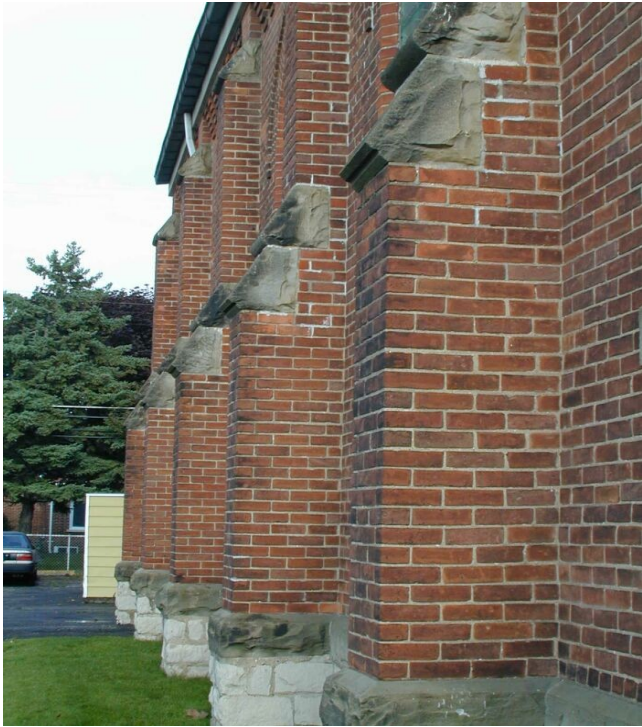


St Paul Church



First St Paul Church c 1864







ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Although some details about the founding of the oldest church in Warren vary slightly from source to source, it is generally agreed that on June 12, 1864, a group of German speaking residents met for the first time in an old frame building on 7th Street (across Mound Road from the current site in the old Village of Warren) to organize St. Paul's Evangelical Church. Led by their first pastor, the Reverend Philip Werheim, the first marriage ceremony was performed on July 23, and regular services, conducted entirely in their native language, held the parish together as they built their congregation. The first parsonage was built in 1876, on a nearby site to the present church, which was erected through the efforts of the men of St. Paul's, who actually excavated and constructed the building. A cornerstone containing a German Bible and the names of all the congregation was laid in a dedication ceremony.

Soon, a Sunday school and a "German School" (to teach the language and prepare confirmands) were in operation (1877) and in 1885, the Reverend O. Keller began 23 years of service, with English first spoken in church in 1908. An organ was purchased in 1910 for \$2,000.00 (this manual unit was motorized and pipes moved to the balcony in 1919). In 1921, the church lost its 35-foot steeple when it was struck by lightning and it had to be removed. That same year, a new brick parsonage was built on the south side of the church. St. Paul's became a community-meeting place when its hall was built behind the sanctuary and was opened to school activities and social events. A significant moment in the church's history was reached in 1935 when German was dropped entirely from the services, prompted by the influx of new residents into the area. By 1939, the 75th anniversary, their congregation boasted of 200 members. Historically there were 1111 baptized, 802 confirmed, 506 married and 509 funerals conducted.

In 1953, the basement beneath the Sanctuary was excavated and six classrooms, a crib room and a ladies' lounge were constructed, again in a volunteer effort (with other classrooms built later in the basement of the parsonage). A new education unit was built in 1958, at a cost of \$169,000, to supplement the other educational facilities.

When the church celebrated its 115th anniversary in 1989, their pastor of the past 28 years, Rev. J. Wallace Zink, was the guest speaker and members also noted the service of the Rev. O. Keller, the church's fourth clergyman, who was the last German-speaking minister and is buried in St. Paul's Union Cemetery.

In 1956, the Evangelical Church aligned with the United Church of Christ, which we celebrate 50 years as part of this denomination.

In 1957, the Christian Education classrooms were added to the church. Along with the Fellowship Hall