

Saint Paul United Church of Christ, Barrington, Illinois
Saint Paul & UCC History

A. Denominational History – Congregational – Reformed – Evangelical – Christian.

1. Evangelical

- a. The German Evangelical Church was formed by King Frederick William III of Prussia on the 300th Anniversary (1817) of the Reformation, by uniting the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Prussia, which merger spread to a lot of the rest of Germany and is now the Evangelical Church of the Union.**
- b. Due to anxiety caused by Napoleon throughout Europe, more wars, poverty and sickness, many German people again immigrated to America, primarily to the Midwest as it opened for settlement in the early 1800s.**
- c. Lay and clergy leaders of this German immigration formed new churches near St. Louis, and the German Evangelical Church Society of the West in 1840.**
- d. Saint Paul Church, Barrington, Illinois, was organized as a church of this denomination in November, 1863, the same month that the townspeople voted to incorporate as the Village of Barrington.**
- e. The German Evangelical Churches also became leaders in education (Elmhurst College and Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, MO), health ministries such as Evangelical Hospital Association (now part of Advocate Health Care, including Good Shepherd Hospital), and ministries to children (orphanages) and senior citizens (nursing homes), such as Bensenville Home Society (now Lifelink Charities, owner of Greencastle of Barrington on East Main Street). Saint Paul Church was a charter member of the latter two organizations.**

2. Reformed

- a. Reformed brand of Christian Church was started by Ulrich Zwingli, a Swiss priest and peer of Martin Luther, in Switzerland in 1519.**

- b. German people in the Rhine Valley just north of Switzerland became members of the Reformed Church.**
- c. After the 30 Years' War in Germany, suffering from French armies sent by Louis XIV, a succession of poor harvests and finally the severe winter of 1708-09, large numbers of German Reformed emigrants came to America, settling primarily in Pennsylvania.**
- d. Became independent from their German Church after the United States was established, to become the German Reformed Church of the United States in 1793.**
- e. Became leaders in education (Franklin College in 1787, now Franklin & Marshall College, and Lancaster Seminary in 1825, both in Lancaster, PA), and home missions (American Indians in Black River Falls, WI.**

3. Congregational

- a. Congregationalism was born in England @ end of 16th Century (1500s)**
- b. Separatists & Puritans**
- c. Separatists – Robert Browne founded first church in Norwich, England in 1581.**
 - 1) Over concern of centralization of the Church of England.**
 - 2) Left England for Holland (in exile)**
 - 3) Then to America as the Pilgrims in 1620.**
- d. Puritans**
 - 1) First attempted to purify the Church of England from within.**

- 2) **The Congregational Puritans decided only way to give the people true control of the church – a) voice in selection of ministers, b) management of local churches & c) adoption of local creeds or confessions – was to leave the church. Came to America and settled Massachusetts Bay, a few years after the Separatists at Plymouth.**
- e. **Basic principles on which the government of the United States was established after the Revolutionary War were set forth by the Congregationalists more than a century earlier.**
- f. **Congregationalists were pioneers in America in education (Harvard, Yale & Illinois Colleges), publishing (Pilgrim Press still today), home and foreign (1806) missions (now joint with the Disciples of Christ Christian Church), and social action (e.g., anti-slavery).**

4. Christian

- a. **At the end of the 18th Century and beginning of the 19th Century, religious dissension in various denominations in various parts of the country – Methodists in Virginia, Baptists in Vermont and Presbyterians in Kentucky – caused many to leave those denominations, calling themselves simply Christians, and organizing the General Convention of Christian Churches in 1820.**
- b. **The Christian Church pioneered educational opportunities for women and were active in anti-slavery activities as well as foreign and domestic missions.**

5 Mergers

- a. **After the organization of these four denominations, and other small groups of churches joining them, the following mergers occurred:**

- 1) The Congregational Churches and the Christian Churches merged in 1931 into the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches.**
- 2) Then in 1934, the General Synod of the Reformed Churches in America and the Evangelical Synod of North America merged into the Evangelical & Reformed Church.**
- 3) Finally, in 1957, The Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical & Reformed Church, two denominations of different national heritages and different church governments, merged to become the United Church of Christ.**

B. Saint Paul United Church of Christ, Barrington, Illinois.

- 1. Organized in November, 1863 (same month as the people of the Barrington Station area voted to become the Village of Barrington).**
 - a. Group of German settlers of the Barrington Station area agreed to organize an Evangelical Church of Barrington and vicinity.**
 - 1) Members present at the first congregational meeting in 1864 were: H. Reese, Sr., H. Reese, Jr., F. Reuter, H. Sandman, G. Heimerdinger, T. Hochkirch, G. Meyer, F. Lange, A. Matz, J. L. Schwemm, C. Schwemm and J. Mueller.**
 - 2) Preceded in Barrington by the Methodist Episcopal Church (now Barrington United Methodist Church), and a Baptist church (now the Community Church of Barrington at Grove & Lincoln Avenues).**
 - 3) In 1864, two acres were purchased from H. Sandman for \$80 for property located east of the Mobil gas station on East Main Street (which remains today as St. Paul Cemetery), before obtaining property for the church building. Worship services were held in a public school building.**

- 4) **Decided on February 13, 1865 to build a church building, originally planned to be on the cemetery site, but changed to the present East Main Street site when it became available as a gift from Rev. Hartmann, a professor at a seminary in Lake Zurich. Corner stone was laid on June 2, 1865. The Village of Barrington was incorporated by the State of Illinois in February, 1865.**
 - 5) **Served by two part time pastors from 1863-64, who were ministers of the church in Long Grove. First resident pastor, John Hinziker, served from 1865-66, when the church was again served by part time pastors until January, 1867, when the congregation decided to become inactive, which was until they obtained another resident pastor in August, 1868.**
- b. **The congregation struggled financially through the rest of the 19th Century, with 8 resident pastors serving from 1868-97. There were then 8 resident pastors for the next 60 years from 1897 to 1957. There have been 6 Senior Pastors, 4 Associate Pastors and 2 Interim Pastors for the last 57 years since 1957.**
 - c. **New parsonage was built in 1894 where the church's parking lot is now located, and was there until 1971. The previous parsonage is now a residence at 311 North Avenue.**
 - d. **German was the official and only language spoken in church services for many years**

The church received a special Bible written in German from Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany for its 50th Anniversary in 1913, which was locked up during WWI, for fear it would be destroyed.

In the congregational meeting on January 13, 1916, it was decided that an English service would be held on the last Sunday of each month. The first minutes of a congregational meeting written in English were on January 13, 1924.

A major highlight during the celebration of the congregation's 75th Anniversary in 1938 was a worship service conducted in German by Rev. Eugene Wilking, Pastor from 1909-15.

- e. The church building received many improvements over the years:**

In 1890 a church bell was installed in the steeple, which is the same bell there today.

A basement now known as Memorial Hall was put under the original building in 1911.

Significant remodeling and expansion was completed in 1922. Another was completed in 1942, and the last around 1980 as it is today.

New and improved organs were installed in 1922, 1948 and around 1970.

The Educational Building was built in 1955.

For the past few years, the Building Renovations Committee, more recently the Elevator Committee, worked on an extensive renovation project – the completed air conditioning and upgraded kitchen, and the remaining elevator project.

- f. Saint Paul Church celebrated its Centennial Anniversary in 1963, at the same time as the celebration of the Village of Barrington's centennial, and its 125th Anniversary in 1988, both of which celebrations included visits from former pastors and/or their spouses if still living. The church's Sesquicentennial was celebrated in 2013.**
- g. The church has changed its name over the past 150 years, primarily due to denominational name changes or mergers, but it remains a place to nourish its members spiritually and improve the life of the community.**