

Johann (John) Wettle

Pastor 1850 – 1851

Wettle was born in Gunsbach in Alsace, France in December 7, 1820 making him thirty years old at the time of his hire.

Trained as a missionary in Basel, Switzerland. Ordained to the ministry by Gustav-Adolph-Society, he was sent to America in 1844 to preach the Gospel to the Germans here.

He lived in Belleville with his wife, Caroline and son Victor. Also in the house was a thirteen-year old girl named Elizabeth Stolberg.

Hired as our pastor on May 1, 1850. Salary was \$200.00.

Expanded the congregation by forty-eight members to a total of one hundred and twenty.

Quit in 1851 due to conflict within the church. Stemming from the conflict between the ruling princes and democratic government minded citizenry in Germany, political refugees fled the country to the United States. As a result, our German congregation expanded. Those new members “brought another spirit into the congregation than the one that blew until then. Their education, as well as their critical talents, undermined God’s word and desired that pure reason in belief and life be preached.”

Wettle, probably force by conditions, gave a sharp sermon against it on Sunday saying, “Everyone be damned who set their reason above their faith.”

A revolution broke out in the church. Wettle was charged with “abstracting the globe”, removed from his post, and the church closed to him. He left on January 28th 1851.

Served as the pastor of a church in Boonville in Cooper County, Missouri, in 1854.

Lived in Sandersville, Indiana in 1863.

Served as the pastor of the German Evangelical Church in La Salle, Illinois, in 1886.

He died on December 26, 1888 and was buried in La Salle.

Information Sources:

1909 70th Jubilee Booklet of St. Paul’s by Reverend Otto F. Pessel. Translation from the German by Lynn C. Koehler of our congregation, 1973

Research by:

Carol Kirby of the Belleville Public Library, Main Branch, Spring, 2016.

William P. Shannon IV, Curator, St. Clair County Historical Society, August, 2016

Obituary written by S. E. Hoffmeister, Pastor of La Salle Evangelical Church, La Salle, Indiana. Published in the Der Friedensbote, a German-language newspaper, of 15 January 1889. Courtesy of the Eden Seminary Archives, Webster Groves, Missouri.