



Otto Frank Pessel
Pastor 1905 – 1935

Wife named Clara. She became very active in St. Paul's Church.
Received college education at the Evangelical St. John's Seminary in Berlin, Germany. Gained theological training at Eden Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. Pastoral experience of twelve years at churches with large congregations.

Hired on September 17, 1905 and began on September 24th of that year.

Church gained electricity, a steam heating plant, and plumbing.

Our 70th Anniversary was celebrated in 1909.

Sunday School enrollment, church membership, and the number of affiliated organizations increased during Pessel's tenure.

In 1910, he began efforts to bring a hospital and a nursing home to Belleville.

In 1920, he held a fundraiser in the form of selling stickers for a dollar. The effort raised four thousand dollars which was invested. The monies were turned over to the newly chartered hospital corporation in 1947. In 1955, groundbreaking took place for Memorial Hospital.

On July 29, 1926, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Kohl purchase the Adam Gintz property of four acres and a home at 1021 West E Street in Belleville. The donated it to St. Paul's for an old folks home. Pessel and a new women's organization, the "Daughters of Naomi", raised twenty thousand dollars to renovate the property and it became known as the St. Paul Old Folks Home with thirteen original residents. Later, it added the St. Paul Apartments and recently added a new nursing facility.

The congregation voted to change the name of the church three times: 1911- Evangelical St. Paul's congregation of Belleville, Illinois, 1919 – the church was accepted into the Evangelical Synod of North America and became St. Paul's Evangelical Church, and in 1934 – St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church.

The first publication of the monthly printed booklet called "Our St. Paul's" appeared in October, 1925. It was replaced by "Our St. Paul News" and the current "OSP."

March 11, 1923 saw the dedication of the Parsonage. It was located east of Heritage Hall directly in front of the present playground. It was torn down in 1962.

In 1925, the original 1839 church bell was returned to the church from Belleville's public school system and later, hung in the bell tower for our 1939 Centennial. It remains in St. Paul's today.

Our first assistant pastor was hired, Reverend Ludwig Kurtz. He later resigned in disagreement with the church practice of holding chicken dinners as fundraisers.

On October 31, 1931, Pessel resigned but the congregation voted not to accept it. He finally retired on July, 29, 1935 and received the title of Pastor Emeritus. He died on January 30, 1936.

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

Moments in History pamphlets compiled by Archivist Alice Jerome for insert to St. Paul's Church Service Programs during the 150th Anniversary year (1989)

The History segment of the St. Paul UCC 175th Anniversary insert to the Belleville News-Democrat newspaper of Sunday January 12, 2014. Material researched and prepared by Alice Jerome, Archivist of St. Paul's Church.

Milestones of Our Heritage, St. Paul's publication celebrating the 150th Anniversary year, 1989. Proof copy.