

*Amazing Archives*  
*The future of our past is ever present*

The year was 1839, 20 years after Belleville was incorporated as a village. 40 men and their families attended a meeting at the Belleville courthouse following a service given by John Jacob Reiss, one of the founders and fathers of the Evangelical Synod of North America. Pastor Reiss began preaching at Centerville (now Millstadt) 4 years earlier.

This would become known as the 1st congregational meeting of our church. Adolph Hildebrandt chaired the meeting. The charter members were asked by Reiss to decide on a name. It was decided to name the church **St. Paul's Church**, in homage to German immigrants' church, St. Paul's Church of Frankfort on the Main.

Our church's first constitution was adopted in April 13, 1839, which stated that Theodore J. Krafft, Sr. offered to donate land for a church, deeding the land to the congregation. During a board meeting seven days later, the board reported that Lot 17 of Krafft Addition had been donated. However, Governor Kinney and Theodore Hilgard, Sr. held a mortgage on the lot. On December 13, 1839, the 7 trustees of the German Protestant Church purchased the Lot 17 of the Flannagan and Krafft platt for \$200.00.

Four months after becoming the pastor of the German Protestant Church of Belleville, Rev. Reiss became unable to continue to lead the church due to illness.

In Service to God,  
Jo Ann Elmore, Archivist