

OUR HISTORY AT ST. STEPHEN'S

By Nelvin Yeakel, St. Stephen's Archivist

The Parsonage

ST. STEPHEN'S DIRECTORY

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HISTORICAL DATA

Congregation organized—March 28, 1897; charter members, 19.
Purchase of ground (45 ft. x 115 ft.) by Lutheran pastors of city.
Purchase price, April 6, 1897—\$200.
Donated to Congregation, September 10, 1897.
Cornerstone Laid, Ascension Day, May 27, 1897.
First Harvest Home Service, September 12, 1897.
First Sunday School Session in Church, August 8, 1897.
Charter granted to the Congregation, October 4, 1897.
Installation of Church Council, October 10, 1897.
First meeting of Church Council, October 19, 1897.
Received into Allentown Conference, November 1, 1897.
Estimated cost of Church Building, \$2500.
Debt of Church, October 1, 1897, \$1250.
Burning of Mortgage, July 15, 1906.
Purchase of ground (20 x 115), Sept. 10, 1903, \$25.
Dedication of Church and tenth anniversary, October 6, 1907.

BUILDING PROGRAM

Sacristy, 1912; Basement, 1913; enlarged, 1921.
Purchase of Ground (200 x 119), Center and Washington, Oct. 30, 1912, \$2000.
Erection of Parsonage, 1923; cost of Parsonage, \$13,137.31.
Burning of Mortgage, April 26, 1936.

Pastor Hartzell lived there for almost two years until October 10, 1925, when he accepted a call to a church in Nova Scotia. We do not know if Pastor Hartzell was married or had a family, as there is no mention of this in the archives. But it is known that he enjoyed playing tennis and even had a clay tennis court built in the back yard of the parsonage.

From St. Stephen's founding in 1897 until 1922, the congregation was served by a circuit pastor with Rev. Dr. Charles Cooper being the last.

On August 1, 1922, Rev. Luther Hartzell became St. Stephen's first full-time pastor. But there was not church parsonage for Pastor Hartzell, even though a large plot of land had been purchased on the southwest corner of Center St. and Washington Ave. in 1912 at a cost of \$2,000. Then, on January 7, 1923, council voted to erect a parsonage on this site, at a cost of \$11,083. It was completed on January 7, 1924.

It was a beautiful 3-story brick home with all the latest features of the time. It had five rooms on the first floor, five on the second floor, and two on the third floor. It became known as the "big brick home at the top of the hill."



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Rev. David Frederick answered St. Stephen's call as our second and longest-serving full-time pastor in February 1926. Pastor Frederick and his wife and son occupied the parsonage until his retirement in 1957. It should be noted that the parsonage's mortgage was burned at a service in 1936.

By the 1930's, it was notable that St. Stephen's Church was too small for the growing congregation. It had been the plan that a new church would be built on the exiting property between the parsonage and Washington Ave. But that idea was crushed by the city which planned to widen Washington Avenue.

Enter Rev. Jacob Longacre, St. Stephen's third full-time pastor and family to occupy the parsonage. They became the last occupants of the parsonage. Pastor Longacre and his family moved into the parsonage in 1958 and, upon his retirement in 1988, the parsonage became empty. At a meeting on March 1988, a vote was taken to sell the parsonage. It was later sold to Joseph DiGiacomo Jr for \$225,000. In July 1988, the wrecking ball demolished the 64-year-old parsonage and left only memories of a by-gone era. The "big home at the top of the hill" was now gone forever.