A desire for German worship services of the Evangelical church prompted twelve people to meet at the old opera house to discuss formation of a congregation. Their dream became a reality on August 11, 1894, when a larger group met to organize the German Evangelical Christian Church. A portion of the first constitution of the congregation, as translated from the original German script reads, “The name of this Christian union shall be and remain the German Evangelical Christian Communion (Church) of Cape Girardeau. This communion holds itself as a branch of the Evangelical Church of the United States of North America, as represented by the German Evangelical Synod.”

The new congregation asked an existing pastor to conduct worship services. At the time, he was serving as pastor of two other churches: the Salem Church, and The Evangelical Church at Dutchtown.

Early financial records were not preserved, but there is one rather vague record available, and it reads “Collections for 1898: Invalids Treasury of Synod- $1.15; Supplementary Treas. Of Synod-$0.20; Collection for district treasury-$1.50; Reformations collection-$3.50 (for a total of) $6.35”

The congregation utilized various existing community/church buildings to hold services for the first few years; in 1899, a building of their own became necessary. The two lots chosen to build upon were, at the time, at the edge of town, surrounded by cornfields. These same lots remain the home of our congregation at 33 S. Ellis Street; however, we’re far from “the edge of town” now! In 1919, an annex was added, increasing the seating capacity.

In 1922, the decision was made that all evening services were to be conducted in English instead of German. One year later, German worship services were discussed again. At this time, the conclusion was that “German services will be conducted four Sunday Mornings a month, but if there is a fifth Sunday, it shall be an English Service.” In 1924, the congregation voted to change the German services to English, except for one each month (at that time, the English services were attended by nearly twice as many as the German services)

The cornerstone of the new church, funded in part by the “new building fund” (established in 1922) was laid on October 25, 1929. The building took 6 months to build; dedication services for the new building were held on March 30, 1930. During the 50th anniversary celebration, a large contribution was collected, which allowed the liquidation of the building debt, and burning of the notes was part of the anniversary service in 1944.

In 1946, the Salem property, except for the cemetery, was transferred to our congregation, and many members of the “church in the country” switched their membership to our “church in town”. This same year saw the first publication of “Christ Church Chronicler” which is still produced monthly, and carries news of our congregation to the members. In 1948, we see the first mentions of a possible union of the Evangelical and Reformed Church with the Congregational Christian Church.

In the 1950s, the sanctuary was redecorated, and the kitchen facilities were modernized. There was also an addition of four organizations in the late 1950s: Twist’n Teeners, Christian Home Fellowship, Mary Martha Evening Circle, and Women’s Fellowship.

In 1962, the congregation was again feeling the need for expansion. The adjacent parsonage at the time was converted into office and Christian Education facilities, and a new parsonage was purchased at a different location. This same year, the Evangelical and Reformed Church merged officially with the Congregational Christian Church to form the United Church of Christ. At that time, the congregation chose to affiliate as “Christ United Church of Christ”. This caused confusion, because our church had been known as the
“Evangelical Church” for so long – to alleviate the confusion, we then officially became “Evangelical United Church of Christ”.

In 1973, revisions were made to initial plans for a Christian Education Building. In June of that year, the congregation voted to enter into a building program. A groundbreaking ceremony was held in August of that year, and the new building was dedicated in June of 1974. The mortgage for this building was burned in January 1983.

Over the years, our congregation and organizations have held fundraising endeavors that were/are known citywide, and have continued annually. The Men’s Brotherhood held Ham Suppers annually from 1970-2012. The Friendship Circle’s cookbook “The Yellow Book” was first introduced in 1974. The UCC Group cooked the first 280-300 quarts of apple butter in 1975, and built the “apple butter shelter” in 1977. Apple Butter is one of the few major fundraising efforts that still take place annually, with the help of the entire congregation. In 2017, we produced a total of over 500 quarts of apple butter (146 quarts, 663 pints, 132 half pints)! The Friendship Circle started an annual chicken and dumpling supper in 1983. We haven’t held a supper in a long while, but the Friendship Circle has passed on the tradition of rolling handmade dumplings to our ASAP Youth Group, which continues to be a regular fundraiser for them.

As the congregation has grown and needs and interests of members have changed; so have our organizations changed. The Mary Martha Circle was started in 1897, and continues as a women’s group to the present. They recently formed a Crochet Group, comprised of Mary Martha members, that meets weekly. The Union of Concerned Christians (UCC) Group was started in 1969. The Diaconate, originally called The Board of Deacons and Deaconesses, was first formed in 1970. A Mission Study Group disbanded in 1980, after 83 years. Koinonia was first formed in 1991 (is no longer active). In 1992, women who had begun meeting for Bible Study became a Covenant Prayer Group affiliated with the Upper Room Prayer Ministry. Additionally, we have our Board of Christian Education, Always Say A Prayer (ASAP) Youth Group.

In 2016, the congregation voted to change our name back to a more “historic” version of previous names, and is now recognized as “Christ Evangelical Church”.

As our membership decreased, we acquired a licensed pastor, and Pastor Dan continues to serve our congregation, leading service every Sunday at 10:30am. The Sunday School and youth group continue to have special activities once a month. We continue to have special music and a regular choir.