



The evolution of Parkway United Church of Christ began quietly when in 1838 a group of German immigrant families petitioned Rev. G.W. Wall at Holy Ghost Evangelical Protestant Church, to send a pastor to establish a congregation in the far distant St. Louis County. He agreed to hold monthly weekday services in the private homes of George Preiss and Phillip Reinhardt. The “German Evangelical Congregation of the River Des Peres, Missouri” was established and Rev. Louis E. Nollau agreed to serve the budding congregation.

The First log church was built in 1845 on two acres donated by Mr. & Mrs. G. Greb on Ballas Road just south of Manchester Road. A lovely cemetery is still in operation there by St. Paul’s Lutheran Church.

A difference in doctrine split the congregation in 1848. The Lutheran faction stayed in the original church (now St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church at Ballas and Manchester Roads) and the Evangelical followers relocated to property west of Ballas, south of Clayton Road where the second church was built. A small cemetery is still there in the Windmoor Place Subdivision.

The third church, a log structure, was built in 1863 on the North East corner of Clayton and Ballas Roads, with a cemetery now called Elm Lawn Cemetery. It was named “Zion Evangelical Church.” This was replaced with a brick building, dedicated August 20, 1871. The St. Louis County Historical Building Commission named this church a Historical Landmark in 1967. The Mar Thoma Church currently worships there.

A 686-pound church bell was purchased in 1885 and a tradition was begun, whereby the bell is tolled three times during the Lord’s Prayer so that farmers working in their fields could stop and join the congregation in prayer. This tradition is still followed to this day.

In the 100th Anniversary year 1938, many improvements were made to the building, including beautiful stained glass windows bought in Germany by Rev. Joseph Polster and installed by Unique Art Glass of St. Louis. Members had donated money as memorials for their family members. The church was renamed “Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church” after the 1938 merger of the Evangelical and Reformed Churches.

In 1955 the City Missionary Society of the Congregational Christian Church bought 4.5 acres on the west side of Ballas Road for future needs. Since a merger of the two denominations was eminent, Zion partnered with them, actually before the formal merger in 1957, which formed the United Church of Christ. In 1958, the name was changed to Parkway United Church of Christ (the final of seven previous names!)

Additional ground on the west side of Ballas Road was purchased and to celebrate the 125th anniversary in 1963, a new education building was dedicated. Having such a wonderful facility available, in 1969, some women members of the congregation founded the Parkway United Nursery School.

Oct 5, 1997 a Groundbreaking Celebration for a new sanctuary on the west side of Ballas Road was made possible in part by sharing with St. Luke's UCC in St. Louis the Marie K. Rechtern Trust. Christmas Eve 1998 was the first worship service in the new sanctuary. The old custom of the congregation each holding a small candle and singing "Silent Night" – the first verse in German-- has continued through the years.

Members and friends of Parkway made possible the installation of a Quimby Pipe Organ in 2001 and beautiful stained glass windows designed and made by Emil Frei and Associates Studio in 2003.

Rev. John Nourse retired in 2003 and was named Pastor Emeritus. The current pastor, Rev. Kevin Cameron, was installed in 2004. Five years ago, in 2008, the congregation voted to become Open and Affirming, a place of inclusivity and diversity, a place for ALL people to come and worship. Praise the Lord!



Several special events have been planned for the anniversary year. The Sunday School children, youth, and adults presented a 175th Heritage play, Parkway Through the Decades in February. A Spring Service with the theme, *Winds of the Spirit are Moving Through Parkway* and Brunch on April 21st welcomed Pastor Emeritus John Nourse to the pulpit and 50-plus year members were honored. On the front lawn, 175 brightly colored pinwheels turned in the breeze as we welcomed visitors and members. On June 30, our Sunday Worship Service will be *Jesus Left the Building*, focused on helping different charities around the community. We are extending our community outreach by renting the Historic Sanctuary to Mar Thoma, a Christian congregation originating in India; to three separate AA groups; Crossroads, a drug rehab program for teens and parents; as well as Power Boot Camp that trains participants in physical fitness. We have had a long-term relationship with St. Louis Children's Choir, which uses our former Sunday School House on the property plus other areas of the church.

On September 29, a special service with David Greenhaw, President of Eden Seminary, followed by a banquet is scheduled. To culminate the year, on December 8th, Rev. Geoffrey Black, President of UCC, will be our guest preacher. We are very proud of our heritage and look toward the future as a congregation full of hope and promise.

