

Building Our Church

St Paul's Blue Church's history is interwoven into the growth and development of the Lehigh Valley. The Lehigh Valley was settled in the first half of the 18th century. Settlers were primarily German, English and Welsh in the Upper Saucon area. Coopersburg was settled by Mennonites from Holland. The valley soon became a center of cooperation among Mennonites, Moravians, Lutheran and Reformed traditions for worship. The area is surrounded by low lying hills to the west, south and east. Both valley and hills were covered with fertile limestone soil which attracted settlers. It is part of the Delaware River watershed. In 1746 Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg described the road to Sacuum Church (later St. Paul's) as "most difficult" and the area as forsaken among the mountains. Agriculture was the basis of the economy. The land known as the Saucon Valley was owned by William Penn. When William Penn died in 1718, his grandsons sold land to William Allen, who then re-sold it to Conrad Walb in 1737. The land, including a few acres occupied by St. Paul's, was subsequently sold to Philip Geisinger in 1758. Geisinger sold 3.5 acres to the Saucon Church (later St. Paul's) and donated a half acre. The 3.5 acre deed is dated 30 December, 1757. Additional purchases of land were made for a cemetery.

The congregation began occupying its present site in the early 1740's although the land had not been deeded to them. In the 1750's a new building was constructed. The second building (1763) was a stone structure not far from the present building. It was built with stones taken from the surrounding hills. The church added an organ built by Philip Wind, an important local organ builder.

The second building stood until the present stone structure was built in 1833. The 1833 church was built on existing and new land purchased in 1826. The corner stone was laid on April 28, 1833. Much of the material was donated by members. Members donated their time and skills to build the church. The name of the congregation was officially changed to St. Paul's Lutheran Church when the current building was dedicated in 1833. For many years the stone structure was covered with stucco which contained blue pigmentation leading to the label "Blue Church". In 1873 the church purchased a new pipe organ from Heintzelman Organ Company of Allentown, PA. A third organ manufactured by Durner of Quakertown was installed in 1950. It was originally in St. Paul's of Catasauqua. In 1927 Victor Gambrell, a professional sign painter from Philadelphia, was chosen to create the Good Shepherd painting in the sanctuary.

The church bell played a significant communication role in the Saucon community. The bell tower and steeple were dedicated on November 29, 1891. The bell tolled for start of services, but it also rang out to announce the funerals of church members. During the week it rang at midday to call farmers from the fields to a meal. It was important in announcing special occasions such as the Armistice for World War I, declaration of war and the end of World War II. The bell still rings at the start of church services and at set times during the day including playing hymns..



In the early twentieth century the building experienced numerous upgrades as the surrounding area was increasing in population. In 1918 kerosene lamps were replaced with electric lights powered by a generator. When PPL brought electricity to the area in 1933 new wiring and lights were installed. The kitchen added appliances to facilitate gatherings. The church steeple was removed in 1926 due to multiple lightning strikes. The same year stained glass windows were installed. A piece of land with a spring was donated and that facilitated indoor plumbing. The heating system was installed in 1921 and upgraded to a coal system in 1948. It was replaced with modern heating in the past decade. The plaster that gave Blue church its fame was removed in 1944 due to cracking and peeling. From 1877 until 1940 the barns on Apple Butter Hill Road were sold to parishioners to park their horses during services. Automobiles removed the need for sheds but created other needs. In 1969 a parking lot was built

In 1978 an expansion was approved. Approval was given for the moving of 32 graves to allow for the new addition. Ground breaking took place in 1981 and the building was dedicated on June 20, 1982.

