



## 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Moment

**“He who promised is faithful” (Heb 10.23)**

### THE LITTLE CHURCH GROWS: 1848–1851

The members of “First Saint Paul’s,” having parted ways with their Reformed brethren, grew in significant ways in the next few years. Although only four members stuck with Pastor Selle on the day of the division in 1848 (church documents identify them as R. Ohm, C. Michel, C. Bluess, and W. Brockschmidt), the members soon bought a piece of property on what is now Grand Avenue, between Wells and Franklin, for \$600. On February 8, 1849 the congregation resolved to construct a 34’x55’ church building (with a steeple) for a sum not to exceed \$260. When estimated construction costs rose to \$800, the project seemed impossible. Pastor Selle used the publication *Der Lutheraner* to appeal to fellow Lutherans for help. An Indiana congregation helped raise additional funds, and the church was dedicated on July 15, 1849. One month earlier, in another key milestone, the congregation had become an official member of the Missouri Synod at its third annual convention.

By 1850 the congregation had 50 voting members and a Lutheran day school with 49 students, all taught by the pastor. In 1851 the congregation called its first teacher, George Henry Fisher from Germany, to assist the pastor. He served for 31 years in that capacity. The day school exemplifies the commitment of German Lutheran immigrants to passing on the faith to their children.

1851 was also significant in that it saw the departure of Pastor Selle, who accepted a call to a congregation in Crete, IL. One reason for his departure was a fear that he was too closely associated with the church’s “division”—and that a new shepherd would promote healing. This paved the way for the calling of Rev. Henry Wunder—arguably the “largest” figure in the church’s history—who arrived in 1851 and would serve as pastor for 62 years.