

Churches in the Shenandoah Valley

St. Pauls United Church of Christ
106 S High Street
Edinburg, VA 22824



A brief History

The original St. Paul's Evangelical German Reformed Church in Edinburg was organized in 1855. Four members of the Reformed congregation from Union Forge Church outside of Edinburg proposed that an effort be made to build a church in Edinburg. They were Mrs. D.W. Prescott, Mrs. G. I. Zimmerman, Mrs. J. Lantz and Mrs. S. Rinker. The resulting original church was built on High Street where the present church building now stands. The cornerstone was laid May 2, 1856, and the building was dedicated on December u, 1857. The congregation was officially recognized on Easter Sunday, April 4, 1858. This church building was used for worship until 1911.

Now known as St Pauls Heritage Center
No longer used as a church

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On February 2, 1911, the congregation voted to build a new church on the same location. This cornerstone was laid on June 9, 1912. The church building was dedicated on February 9, 1913. A major feature of the new church was the beautiful stained glass windows which have been enjoyed by all and commented on throughout the ensuing decades.

In 1934, the name was changed to St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church when the German Reformed Church in the United States merged with the Evangelical Synod of North America.

In 1939, new construction included enlargement of the chancel, a vestibule behind the altar, and an addition to the rear of the church to house a completely equipped kitchen, vestry room, library, rest rooms and a social hall.

In 1954, excavation under the social hall was begun to make room for six additional classrooms, a nursery, and a recreational area. This new addition was named the J. Monroe & Mary Summery Hottel Memorial in memory of Professor Hottel, an 1876 BA degree graduate of the Polytechnic Institute at New Market, who in 1890 assumed principalship of the private school (Academy) that was conducted in the church for many years. Professor Hottel and Mrs. Hottel were instrumental in shaping the lives of a host of men and women in Shenandoah County and beyond.

In 1957, the name was again changed to St. Paul's United Church of Christ when the Evangelical and Reformed church merged with the Congregational Christian Church nationally.

In 1989, St. Paul's was the beneficiary of the estates of Mildred Lantz and Christine Lantz Tull, two ladies who grew up in Edinburg and became a traveled teacher and a librarian. This bequest provided St. Paul's with financial security and the ability to make benevolent contributions over the years to many local agencies and organizations and to make some major improvements to the church building and facilities.

St. Paul's was a vibrant, growing, and giving church for many years but due to later steadily declining membership, it became necessary, with much regret, to disband the St. Paul's congregation which took place on Easter Sunday, April 12, 2009.

The church building and parsonage were given to the Edinburg Heritage Foundation, Inc., an organization, begun in 1991 by Mary Ann Williamson, which has a long history of dedication and service to the community. The former St. Paul's United Church of Christ is now the St. Paul's Heritage Center. The Edinburg Heritage Foundation has made modest, appropriate and attractive modifications to the church building interior to ready it for service as the Heritage Center and it is now regularly serving that purpose as a gathering place and location for many community events

Written by Bill Roller, January 2012

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