

Salem Evangelical United Church of Christ

Ninth and State Streets - Late Gothic (Victorian) Revival - 1876

John S. McKeen, Architect

In February 1847 a group of "Lippers" who were liberal members of a German congregation called "die Berckirch" formed a missionary society known as "De evangelischem Missions-Verein in Quincy, Illinois." Around Easter Sunday, 1848 Rev. Christoph Jung and his group took the name "De Deutsche Evangelische Salem's Gemeinde" (The German Evangelical Salem's Congregation.) The first meetings were held in his home at 725 Maine Street and later in the old Congregational Church building at Fifth and Jersey, present site of the Quincy Herald Whig.

The group purchased lots from Governor John Wood on April 6, 1848 and in May the congregation started their first church building, a brick structure on the corner of Ninth and State Streets. The building was 36 feet wide and 48 feet long, faced south and had a modest steeple with one bell, made in 1850. A small parsonage was included in this project. Members of the congregation provided much of the labor. Most of the money, of the \$3,000 cost, came from Pastor Jung. Dedication of the church was on Thanksgiving Day, 1848. In 1852 the congregation was officially organized and the first constitution was adopted. In 1863 the building was enlarged when 20 feet was added to the length.

In 1875 the congregation decided a larger church was needed and on January 31 of that year the plans for the present building were approved. During the time of construction a special "boards" church was used on the corner of Eleventh and State Streets. The cornerstone was laid in pouring rain on June 25, 1876. The original part of the building was 110 feet long and 60 feet wide with a spire of 237 feet. The building was dedicated on September 23, 1877, total cost being \$36,492.72.

The interior contains the magnificent sanctuary with a lower level and full balcony, seating a total of 800 people. In the front is the ornately carved walnut apse, a high pulpit and cathedral chairs. It is reported how members of the congregation worked on the building. The women carried bricks in their aprons to the men who carried them up the scaffolding and laid them in place. In 1910 a major redecoration took place. The organ, which had been in the rear of the building, was moved to the front and in its place was positioned a large stained-glass window. New carpeting was laid and the fresco was repainted. The sanctuary was again redecorated in the early 1950's and the early 1980's. As a part of the 1950's work new side windows were dedicated, new pews and carpeting were installed and the center aisle was created.

In the tower of the church is a set of three bells, named James, Bertha and Peter. The smallest bell, weighing 1000 pounds, James, is the original bell taken from the previous building. It is 22" tall and 28" in diameter and was cast by C. W. Coffin in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1850 at the Buckeye Bell Foundry. The second bell, Bertha, weighs 1500 pounds and was cast by J. G. Stuckstede and Brother in St. Louis, Mo. in 1877. Bertha is 32" tall and 40" in diameter and is inscribed "Deutsche Ev Salems Gemeirnde." The largest of the bells, Peter, weighs 3000 pounds and was cast in St. Louis at the same time as Bertha. This largest bell is 40" tall and 52" in diameter. The bells are rung by hand.

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(over) cat.