

St. Lorenz Lutheran Church

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Lorenz

Address: 1030 W. Tuscola Street, Frankenmuth, MI 48734
Office: 140 Churchgrove, Frankenmuth, MI 48734
Phone: 989-652-6141 **Fax:** 989-652-9071
Website: www.stlorenz.org

Pastors: Brad Hubbard, Joel C. Kaiser, Shawn Fenske
and Joel Eden

Traditional Service: Saturday - 6:30 p.m.
Sunday - 8:00 & 9:30 a.m.

Contemporary Service: Sunday - 10:45 a.m.
in the Worship Center on the west side of the
school campus.

German Service: 2nd Sunday of the month- 11:00 a.m.

Tours: St. Lorenz Church, Historic Log Cabin Church,
Cemetery and the Museum

Church History: St. Lorenz Lutheran Church was established on August 18, 1845 when the first 15 settlers from Germany arrived on the spot along the Cass River that was to be their home. Arrangements had been made to buy 680 acres of land at \$2.50 an acre for the new settlement. Their leader was Pastor Friedrich August Craemer. Among the things they brought along were a processional cross, (still used today), and two large bells to call the people to worship. These bells can be seen in the old cemetery across the road from the church. *(See Bell Story at end of article.)

Their community was named Frankenmuth, which, in German, means the Courage of the Franconians. Their church was named St. Lorenz, after homeland churches in Nürnberg and Rosstal. The settlers had been sent by Pastor Wilhelm Loehe of Neuendettelsau, Germany, to be missionaries to the Chippewa Indians of this area and to the German immigrants who were coming to America in great numbers.

The next year, 1846, a larger group of 90 left Germany, and joined the settlers here in Frankenmuth. Among them were Johann Stephan and Margaretha Fürwitt Zehnder and others who were to play a leading role in the development of St.



*Missouri
Synod*

Lorenz and Frankenmuth. The grandson of Johann Stephan, Johannes Matthias Wilhelm Zehnder, gave up farming and went into the restaurant business. Today the Zehnders are famous for Zehnder's Restaurant and the Splash Village Hotel and Waterpark, the Bavarian Inn Restaurant and Bavarian Inn Lodge, two separate corporations owned by different Zehnder families.

There were many children in the second group so it was necessary to begin a school for them. They also started a school for the Indian children. The Indian children that attended the school lived with Pastor and Mrs. Craemer in their log cabin home, which also served as the first church. As the Indians moved farther and farther west, an Indian mission was established in 1848 in Chief Bemassikeh's village on the banks of the Pine River. This mission continued until 1869, when it was finally closed.

The growth of the congregation and the community grew in leaps and bounds. The young congregation had been worshipping in a log cabin since Christmas of 1846. They built a larger frame church in 1852, as the congregation numbered 345 baptized members, and the one-room school had forty-seven students. The frame church was enlarged in 1864 and served the congregation until 1880, when a new brick church of Gothic design was built on the north side of the road.



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By the time the congregation celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary in 1920, the parish had 2,215 members and 350 children attending St. Lorenz schools. In 1965 the question came up whether to split up into a number of smaller churches or to build on to the existing church. The latter course was taken. The church was enlarged so 1,200 people could be comfortably seated. New stained-glass windows were installed to tell the history of the congregation and the community. Only a few minor changes have been made since.

St. Lorenz Lutheran School also has taken some big strides since that 1846 beginning. In 1855, teacher Riedel taught everything in German to the 80 children in his schoolroom. However, by 1855, half the day was in German and the other half in English. In 1861, a second school district was established a mile west of the church. This continued until there were 8 one-room school districts in the Frankenmuth area.

At the 50th anniversary of St. Lorenz in 1895, the enrollment was 376. At this time there was only one public school district. Tax funds from the township treasuries supported the teachers of St. Lorenz. This changed in 1901 when the State Superintendent of Education ruled that this unique arrangement would no longer be permitted. In 1902, public schools were established in each of these districts, and the St. Lorenz Schools did not receive any more public tax funds. In 1928, St. Lorenz built a Central School on Main Street in Frankenmuth, and began the consolidation of these one-room school districts. This consolidation was completed in 1946. The enrollment was 360 at this time.

By 1956, St. Lorenz decided to build a new school on Churchgrove Road, having eight rooms for the lower grades. In 1969, St. Lorenz had added enough rooms to this school so that the Main Street School could be abandoned. A new pre-school wing and new dining room were added in 2003. In 2006, St. Lorenz Lutheran School had an enrollment of 511, with 30 teachers and a support staff of nearly 20. St. Lorenz Lutheran Church has a baptized membership of 4,760.

St. Lorenz Bell Now Connects Three Continents

When our first settlers came to Frankenmuth in 1845, they brought 2 church bells along, both cast in Nürnberg, Germany. The one bell is decoratively inscribed with the deacon St. Lorenz on one side and this Latin inscription on the other side: *Concordia, 1580, Res Parvae Crescunt, which means "Great things come from small beginnings."* These two bells were used for many years. In 1880, when St. Lorenz built the large brick church with the tall steeple, they purchased new bells. The bells brought over from Germany were put on display next to the replica log cabin church.

In 2004, the Bavarian Museum in Augsburg, Germany put together an exhibit "Emigration from Bavaria to America since 1683." In their request to the Frankenmuth Historical Museum for items to display, they included the St. Lorenz bell. The bell would be a focus point for that exhibit because it was such an extraordinary thing that the first Frankenmuth settlers would bring a couple of bells along with them. Sending the bell turned out to be a near impossibility, so it was decided to make a replica.

Judy Zehnder Keller had impressions of the bell made and sent to J. Grassmayr GMBH & Co., a bell casting company in Innsbruck, Austria. They cast a replica and sent it to Augsburg, Germany where it became part of this exhibit.

This special exhibit, called "Good Bye Bayern/ Grüß Gott America – Emigration from Bavaria to America since 1683," opened up on June 24th and continued to September 26, 2004 in Nördlingen, Germany. Besides the bell, a number of other items from Frankenmuth became a part of this exhibit: a springerle board, carved by Christoph Nuechterlein (1851-1930), a picture of the Zehnder "Schlachtfest," showing the participants with all the sausages they made, and a number of other artifacts and documents. It was visited by thousands of people, including the Zehnder/Keller family from Frankenmuth.



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When the bell was cast, the question was what to do with the bell after the exhibit was done. Judy has worked closely with Dr. Horst Becker from Neuendettelsau, Germany on many different projects. Neuendettelsau has numerous mission societies from which missionaries have been sent to Frankenmuth, Tanzania and New Guinea, just to name a few. Dr. Becker was sent to Tanzania, Africa in 1959 and served there for many years. He suggested the bell be given to a poor village church where it would be well received and treasured. Nearly 90% of the one million population of this remote area of Tanzania near Mt. Kilimanjaro are Christians. A strong spiritual connection of three continents (Europe, North America and Africa) would also be accomplished via the travels of this simple bell due to the mission-related significance it held.

In August of 2005, the Zehnder/Keller family, Don, Judy, Michael, Martha and William went to Tanzania with Dr. Becker and his wife Martha, to dedicate this bell. On Sunday, August 14th, the bell was dedicated at a 4-hour service, at the recently remodeled Lutheran Church in the village of Fuka, in the West Kilimajaro District of Tanzania. A festival meal of goat was part of the festivities.

While in Tanzania, the Kellers offered to bring a couple of church members to Frankenmuth, Michigan. They would receive training in the hospitality and tourism business, and offer them to experience the many facets of church life here in America.

Subsequently, Mr. Saltieli Munisi, Assistant General Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, and Mr. Allan Kimaro, Assistant Manager of the Uhuru Hostel, visited Frankenmuth from March through May in 2006. The experiences they had here have been put to good use, since their return to Tanzania.

This is a copy of the document Grassmayr made to give the details of the bell. It was delivered to Augsburg to express their thanks for giving them the honor to cast this bell.



Es wird, daß er mit GOTTES Hilfe
aus 22 teilen Zinn und 78 teilen Kupfer
durch die hitz des feuers eine Glocke für Augsburg / USA gossen hat.



132 kg 60,2 cm
töne: Oberoktave c/3 Prime c/2 Unteroktave c/1
Weis g/2 Quinte h/2
85 Sekunden Nachhall

Meister Grassmayr entbietet sich, Euer Wohlgehoren,
für den hochgeschätzten auftrag zu danken und hiermit die Glocke darzugeben,
damit diese durch ihren klang den menschen von Augsburg / USA für ewige zeit
friede bringe und freude bereit.

die Glockengießer Grassmayr
in der stadt Innsbruck in Tirol - Österreich
2004



Other Local Churches

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Address: 1200 E. Genesee St., Frankenmuth, MI 48734
Phone: 989-652-6201
Website: www.stjohns-frankenmuth.org
E-mail: stjfrk@tir.com

Worship Services: Sun. - 10:00 am
Sunday School: Sun. - 9:00 am, Sept. through May

Blessed Trinity Catholic Church

Address: 958 E. Tuscola St., Frankenmuth, MI 48734
Phone: 989-652-3259
Website: www.blessedtrinityfrankenmuth.org
E-mail: office@blessedtrinityfrankenmuth.org

Weekend Mass Schedule. 5:00 p.m. Sat.,
9:00 & 11:00 a.m. Sun.

Holy Day Mass Schedule: 12:00 noon and 7:00 p.m.
on the Holy Day

Frankenmuth Bible Church

Address: 565 Churchgrove Rd., Frankenmuth, MI
Phone: 989-652-3535 **Fax:** 989-652-3807
Website: www.frankenmuthbible.com
E-Mail: fbcmath@airadvantage.net

Worship Services: Sun. - 8:15 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and
11:15 a.m.

Frankenmuth United Methodist Church

Address: 346 East Vates St. Frankenmuth, MI 48734
Phone: 989-652-6858
Website: <http://www.fmuthumc.org>

Traditional Service:
Sun. - 9:30 a.m

