

Kehrberg Family



he religious history of Frankenmuth is mostly centered around St. Lorenz Lutheran Church; but there is another church that has played a significant role in the community. St. John's Lutheran Church was formed as a merger of two small congregations in

Frankenmuth Township – St. Paul Lutheran Church, about four miles south of the village, and Bethel Lutheran Church, about two miles north of St. Lorenz. A few members were also formerly affiliated with St. Lorenz but were dissatisfied with procedures there.

There were 26 original male communicant members of St. John's on November 30, 1879. The first resident pastor was Rev. John Fritz, and for a long time, the church was referred to as "die Fritzen Kirche" (Fritz's church). Later it was nicknamed the "frame church" to distinguish it from St. Lorenz the "brick church" one mile west.

In the early years, the pastors of both churches did not associate with each other. Pastor Fritz wanted to join the Missouri Synod but Pastor Ottomar Fuerbringer of St. Lorenz prevented him from doing so. Later, in 1910, when St. John's became a member of the Wisconsin Synod, the altar and pulpit fellowship was recognized between the two churches.

St. John's congregation built their church in 1880. They paid their pastor \$250 a year plus a cord of wood to be supplied by each voting member. The salary was reduced to \$225 a year in 1882, but the congregation presented the pastor with a horse and buggy.

Several pastors served at St. John's in the early years, and at times, seminary students conducted services. The membership remained small.

Reverend August Kehrberg assumed the pastorate in 1934 and served the congregation for the next 27 years. He gave the church the stable leadership it needed and he was well-liked. Members of the St. Lorenz Church would often go to hear him preach. At times there were as many St. Lorenz members at the services as there were members of St. John's.

Pastor August Kehrberg was born in Marshfield, Wisconsin on December 31, 1894. He was baptized in January 1895 and confirmed in 1905. He married Lillian Hill on August 1, 1918 in Janesville, Wisconsin. Later the couple moved to Zilwaukee, Michigan.

Rev. Kehrberg has the distinction of being the first pastor of Frankenmuth to take an active part in the civic affairs of the community. He served as secretary of the Frankenmuth Rotary Club for many years. In April of 1974, the Frankenmuth Rotary Club presented Rev. Kehrberg with the prestigious Paul Harris Award for community service.

Rev. Kehrberg and Lillian had two children. Willard was a psychiatrist and Luther was a businessman. They had three grandchildren: Kent, Daniel and Noelle.

Pastor Kehrberg retired from St. John's Lutheran Church in 1961. He taught American History at Frankenmuth High School for the next 10 years. He was awarded a teaching certificate from Michigan State University.

Lillian Kehrberg died in 1977. Rev. August Kehrberg died January 25, 1986.



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