

1890

North American Baptist Heritage Commission

Church Histories



Central Baptist Church, Waco, Texas

The date was March 4, 1890. The place of the meeting was the home of Rev. Joseph Gronde, 916 Austin Avenue. The purpose of the meeting was to organize the First German Baptist Church of Waco, Texas. Dr. Rufus C. Burluson, then president of Baylor University, presided at the meeting. The church in reality began as a mission of the First Baptist Church of Waco. The little church found it difficult to keep a pastor and for the next sixteen years thirteen ministers supplied the pulpit. Under the leadership of Rev. A. Becker the church became self-supporting in 1928.

Rev. Roy W. Seibel led the church in its decision to relocate, from the little hemmed-in site on the corner of Ninth and Clay Avenue, and to the open spaces where a new community was in the making. Dedication Day for the new building was February 12, 1950, with a church membership at that time of 158. Under the leadership of Rev. Louis R. Johnson, the need arose for additional Sunday School space. A new educational wing was planned and construction completed in December, 1956.

Central Baptist was often referred to as a “singing church.” The choir reached its highest degree of perfection under the direction of the pastor’s wife, Mrs. Louis Johnson, in the 1950s. Sons and daughters of the church who entered full time Christian service include Dr. Charles W.

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Koller (president of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary for 25 years), and Margaret Kittlitz (Cameroon mission field), among others.

Written by Lucille D. Lengefeld, NAB Heritage Commission [January 2016]

Bibliographical sources: [Published articles – Baptist Herald & Other]

Archival sources in North American Baptist Heritage Center:

Silver Jubilee Program of the BTU, Central Baptist Church, Waco, Tx: Nov. 20, 1937

Golden Jubilee Program, March 24-25, 1940 (3 copies)

Dedication of church, February 12, 1950

Dedication of Sunday School Annex, March 3, 1957, and 67th Anniversary (4 copies)

75th Anniversary, October 15-17, 1965 (5 copies)

Community Analysis for planting an Hispanic Congregation out of Central Baptist Church in Waco TX: Stephen T. Reilly, Feb. 11, 1996

Correspondence

Historical Highlights, 1890-1988

Assorted photos



First Meeting House built in July 1890



Second church structure built in May 1917



Sunday School Annex at 2901 Connor Ave.
Completed in December 1956