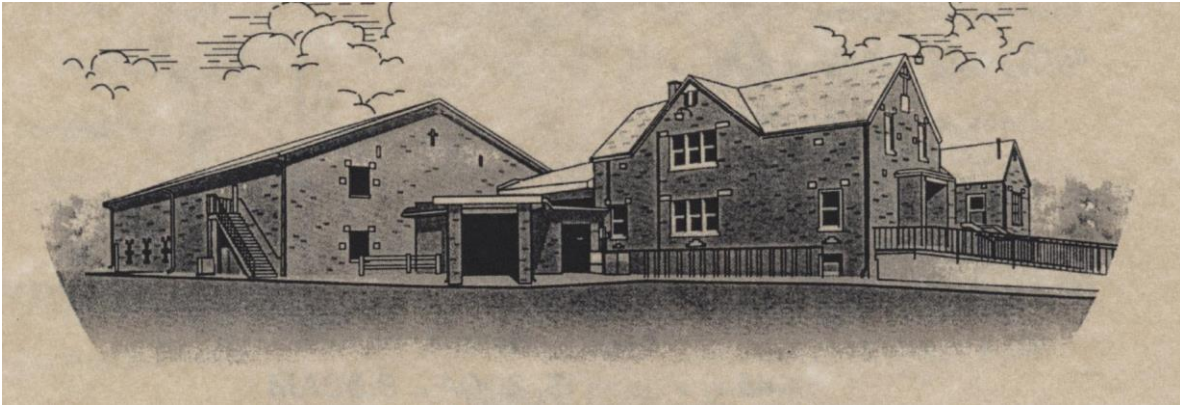


1879

North American Baptist Heritage Commission

Church Histories

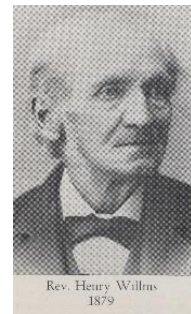


From 125th Anniversary book, 2004

First Baptist, Ellinwood, Kansas

A church by the side of the road? That is what the Great Bend Tribune wrote about the First Baptist Church of Ellinwood, Kansas, commending the church for being a vital and active one throughout its 125 year history. Linda Kenyon, staff reporter, indicated that the members have added onto the current building three times, and now have three full time pastors with approximately 200 people attending Sunday services.

The church has a rural location, and was the second rural church built in Barton County there in Kansas. Organized in May 28, 1879 under the leadership of the Rev. Henry Wilms, Senior, the congregation met in homes until 1886, paying then for the use of the Herter school house. By 1893 the members bought two acres of land for \$25 the site of the present church. In that year of 1893 a white, wooden church and parsonage were dedicated.



Rev. Henry Wilms
1879

In 1940 the Congregation changed the name from the German Baptist or South Side Baptist Church to First Baptist Church, and seven years later dedicated a new church building. This new building was constructed during World War II when building supplies were scarce. Darla Carson, chairman of the anniversary committee, commented that “there was nothing else to spend money on.” Lead was scarce for stained glass windows, so the first windows were clear glass, later replaced by stained glass. Somehow the records of this stained glass replacement were lost over the years.

1879

New additions to the church building include an educational wing in 1967, with remodeling of the sanctuary, and a new fellowship hall in 1997.

Originally the services were conducted in the German language but in 1920 the members decided to have English services two Sunday evenings a month. A German Sunday school class was finally disbanded in 1944. Today the church program is vital and growing, including an active AWANA program for 120 children, a women's organization, Sunday school and youth ministry, prayer ministry and home Bible studies. This strong Bible believing church is active in its support of missions, as it has been since its beginning 125 years ago, a blessing to all, - "a church by the side of the road."

Bibliographical sources:

75th Anniversary booklet 1879-1954

125th Anniversary booklet 1879-2004

Archival sources in North American Baptist Heritage Center:

Highlights from the past 125th Church Anniversary

