

North American Baptist Heritage Commission

Church Histories



Immanuel Baptist Church, Kyle Texas

“The ocean liner, now on the last day of her voyage, plowed tranquilly through the rolling waters of the Atlantic. In a few hours the immigrants on board would step out into a new land of new aspirations and new expectations.

A few days later wagons drawn by sturdy mules were wending their way across the continent, not all to the same place but all for the same purpose: to establish a new home in the “land of liberty.” This dream was realized on March 14, 1883 when two families arrived in Kyle, Texas. The long journey from Hessen, Germany, was finished.” (Excerpt from 1961 church history)

On February 15, 1886, a group of these German settlers met to organize the Immanuel Baptist Church under the name of the First German Baptist Church. There were sixteen charter members with names like Heidenreich, Wiegand, Mueller, and Siebenhausen. During the coming years, additional families were added: the Marstellars, the Lengefelds, the Ahlhardts, and the Schmeltekopfs. The first service of baptism was conducted on March 5, 1886, as two Wiegand sisters were added to the church.

In 1891, Brother Marstellar made available two acres of land for the building site and the pastor’s home. Two years later a church was built, and on March 25, the buildings were dedicated debt-free to the Lord. In September of that year, the first pastor, Rev. J.A. Benson, was installed. In 1931 Rev. C. H. Edinger began his service, during which Sunday School wings were added while repairing fire damage to the roof. In September 1940, the church building caught fire and was totally destroyed. The present structure of native stone was dedicated on

1886

May 5, 1941. A pipe organ was donated and installed by Otto J. Hofmann. At the same time, the name was changed to Immanuel Baptist Church.

Other significant events in the life of the church were:

- Nov. 1966—became “parent” of the first church extension work of the Southern Conference, the Anderson Road Baptist Church in Houston
- July 1976—steeple dedicated in honor of the Emil Schmeltekopf family
- 1995—parsonage of native stone was completed and dedicated
- April 3, 2005—dedication of the Christian Life Center
- Feb. 28, 2010—Hispanic Ministry launched
- June 26, 2011—125th Anniversary celebrated

Those who entered the ministry from Immanuel: Edward, Robert, and Donald Schmeltekopf; Edmund Lengefeld, Roland Ahlhardt, Curtis Lengefeld, Christina Sparks

Missionary service: Rev. and Mrs. C. Richard (Frances) Mayforth—Japan; Rev. and Mrs. Keith (Glenda) Eitel—Cameroon; Mr. and Mrs. William D. (Luci) Lengefeld—Japan

Written by Lucille D. Lengefeld, NAB Heritage Commission [June, 2015]

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

“Development of the Kyle German Baptist Community: 1937-1967”. Minnie Knispel, author.
“Immanuel, God With Us”—compiled by Rev. H. John Vanderbeck for the 65th Anniversary
“Immanuel Baptist Church to observe 70th Anniversary.” Hays County Citizen, Feb. 24, 1956
“Das iglesia: A historic church adapts to serve a changing population.” Hayes Free Press, June 2011

Archival sources in North American Baptist Heritage Center:

Typed history—Immanuel Baptist Church, Kyle, Texas, [75th Anniversary] 1886-1961

Typed history—85th Anniversary Observance of the Immanuel Baptist Church, Kyle, Texas, July 25, 1971

Typed history—History of the Immanuel Baptist Church, Kyle, Texas at the 90th Anniversary Observance, June 13, 1976

Souvenir booklets and programs

Assorted photos



First building



New building after fire