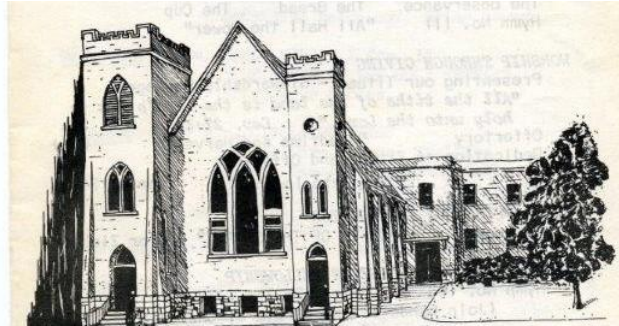


North American Baptist Heritage Commission

Church Histories



Oak Street Baptist Church, Burlington, Iowa 145 years in 2014

Founded in 1869, the church had its beginnings in the hearts of eleven German Baptists from Brome, Germany. This group had left their fatherland to look for new opportunities in America, with Henry Rieke as leader. Together in Burlington, they incorporated as the First German Baptist Church on November 15, 1869. They met in the Rieke home until they could erect a church building in 1870.

In that founding year of 1869, the group called their first pastor, Rev. John Kohrs, my great-grandfather, from Germany and he served for six years. Other pastors followed through the years, and the church records show growth in baptisms each year, and growth in influence throughout the Burlington community.

Today the membership roll lists 330 members, with Rev. Gary Karas serving as pastor. Some years ago some members began another church in a different area of town, the Crossroads Community Church with Jason Unsicker as pastor, and today the two churches cooperate in matters of church camps and other youth activities. So the work begun 145 years ago continues, to the glory of God and the growth of His kingdom.

Adapted from *Heritage Horizons*, spring, 2014

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