

1885

North American Baptist Heritage Commission

Church Histories



Current building – original construction 1921

West Center Street Baptist Church, Madison, SD

West Center Street Baptist Church had its beginning in April 1885 as a Sunday School. The following month a church was started and soon became officially organized. The first building was erected in 1886 at a total cost of \$1750 for both building site and structure. The first parsonage was built in 1888. Lake Madison was the site of the first baptismal service in July, 1885.

In February of 1919, the church burned to the ground! Soon after, a new building site at the corner of West Center Street and Josephine Avenue was purchased and a larger, more beautiful structure was built. A house across the street was purchased as a parsonage. During World War I, use of the German language was prohibited. In 1932, English was used in all services except two prayer meetings a month. The church celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in June, 1935 and its 75th in 1960, the year in which one of the church members, Lucille Wipf, became a career missionary to Japan. On Saturday morning, November 11, 1978, the fire alarm once more was sounded and although not totally destroyed, the building was severely damaged. On April 13, 1980, the newly refurbished facility was dedicated. In 1985, the church celebrated its centennial. A fire again damaged the church in 1991 but it was extinguished before major damage occurred. The church celebrated its 125th Anniversary in 2010.

West Center Street Baptist became actively involved in church planting with Central Baptist Community Church at Hartford, SD, being the first plant, and the second in Dell Rapids, emphasizing the love for God, love for the Word, love for prayer, love for caring and sharing, and love for outreach in Madison and throughout the world. Twenty acres of land have been purchased in northwestern Madison with the hope of future construction. “We indeed are walking in the light of the day with the hope of tomorrow.” (Quote from 125th Anniversary booklet)

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

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

Madison Daily Leader, June 10-13, 1935. “Large Crowds Greet German Baptist Event;” “Women Present Jubilee Rites;” “Congregation to Conclude Local Event;” “Banquet will Close Jubilee;” “Baptists End Anniversary.”

Madison Daily Sentinel, June 10-13, 1935. “Many Attend Opening 50th Anniversary;” “Women Have Program in Church Fete;” “Local Church Ends Golden Jubilee Fete.”

Archival sources in North American Baptist Heritage Center:

50th Anniversary Souvenir Program, June 9-12, 1935.

60th Anniversary Program, May 13, 1945.

75th (Diamond) Anniversary, July 31st—August 1st, 1960.

Dedication Program, April 13, 1980, “Let us arise and build, so they put their hands to the good work,” (Neh. 2:18).

Centennial Program, July 5-7, 1985. “To God Be the Glory.”

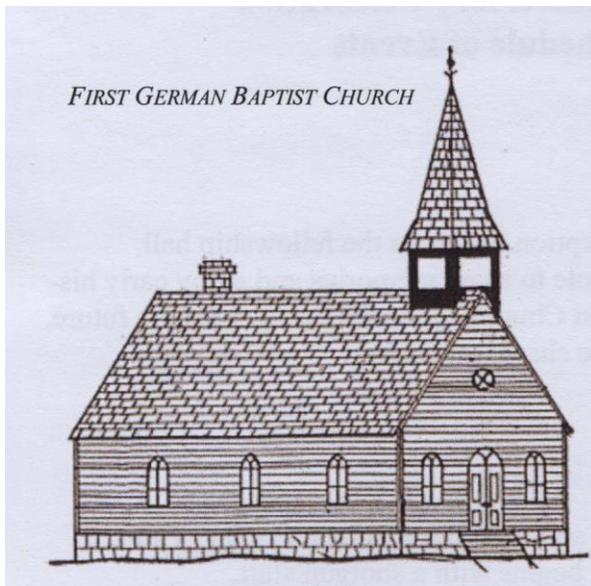
125th Anniversary Celebration: “Walking in the Light of today with Hope for tomorrow.”

August 13-15, 2010.

125th Anniversary CD; 125th Anniversary ornament (stained glass window replica).

German language documents

Assorted correspondence, bulletins, photos, and documents.



2nd building - 1902