

North American Baptist Heritage Commission

Church Histories



Building dedicated 1993

Word of Life, Alpena, Michigan

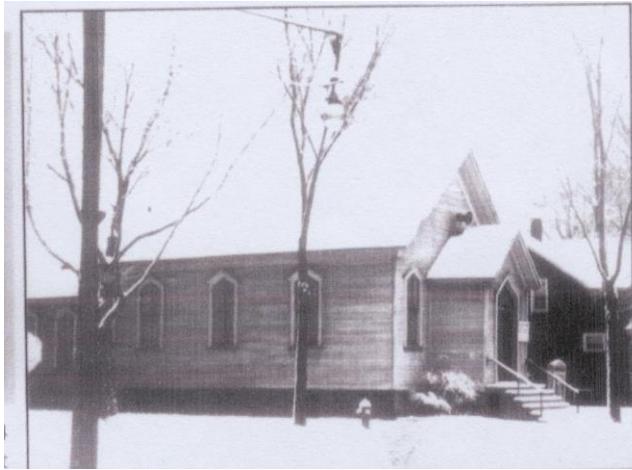
The Alpena church was organized in 1884 by three charter members as the “First German Baptist Church of Alpena.” Four other people were added by baptism on the same day. The first pastor, Rev. Victor Rocho, began his pastorate in September of 1884.

The corner of Fourth Avenue and Sable Street was the location of the first church, which was built in 1888. In 1936, the name of the church was changed to Fourth Avenue Baptist Church. By 1940 all services were held in the English language. Five lots were purchased in 1948 on the corner of Ripley Boulevard and Clinton Street where a new edifice was erected several years later. The church, known as Ripley Boulevard Baptist Church, became self-supporting in 1940. In 1984, a three-day centennial celebration was held. The present Word of Life Baptist Church was constructed in 1993 on Bagley Street. The sanctuary will accommodate 550 people, with a balcony which can seat an additional 150 people.

In 1973, the church became involved in a bus ministry which picked up children for Sunday School and church services. The church also has an active AWANA program. The buses carried the motto, “We just love kids!” which is a very true statement!

Twenty-one pastors served the church from 1884 to 1984 (the first 100 years and three pastors in the last 30 years). The church has an active women’s organization, Men’s Brotherhood, Young People’s organization, and Sunday School.

1884



Building in 1888



Ripley Avenue building

Bibliographical sources:

“The Bus Ministry: It Works in Alpena” by Jacob Ehman. Baptist Herald: June 1958.

“Ripley Blvd. Baptist Church in centennial celebration.” THE ALPENA NEWS: Saturday, August 11, 1984.

“Some Baptists move to new home.” THE ALPENA NEWS: Wednesday, April 13, 1994.

Archival sources in North American Baptist Heritage Center:

60th Anniversary Program, November 10-12, 1944

Dedication Program (booklet) December 9, 1956

1884 to 1984 Centennial Booklet; Centennial Book (Hardcover)

Centennial Program—August 10-12, 1984; Centennial license plate

Church Covenant, Doctrinal Statement and Constitution

Copies of assorted historical documents and clippings, donated by Beverly Joy

1938 Correspondence; quarterly reports

Web site history printed in April 2001