

Fall 2014

Volume 21, No. 2

Heritage Horizons

...a memorial book was written in His *presence*, recording those who revered Him
and those who had the highest respect for His name...Malachi 3:16



Editor: Lenore Lang

Inside this Issue

1. Director's notes
- 2-3- Three Church Anniversaries
4. Armchair Traveler

A good thing
to remember,
and a better thing
to do,
is to work with
the construction
gang
and not with
the wrecking
crew.



NAB Heritage Commission
2100 South Summit Ave.,
Sioux Falls, SD 57105-2729

(605) 274-2731

nabarchives@sfseminary.edu

Point of View *by Lenore Lang*

Names, dates, pictures! When it comes to anniversary celebrations, those three items are frequently highlighted to refresh our memories. A look through our Heritage files confirms this. Hidden away in those files are stories, too, of trials and tribulations of early pioneers in the starting of churches. See pages 2 and 3 for 3 church celebrations.

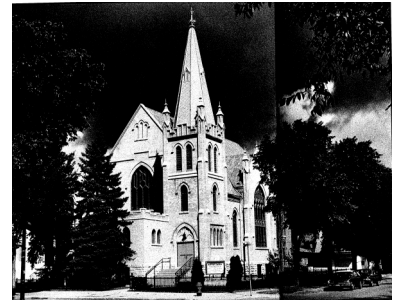
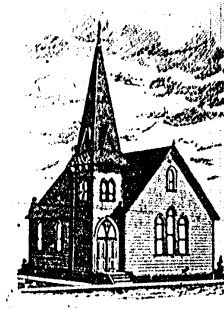
On page 4 we pay tribute to Louise Westerman, a dear and faithful Volunteer at our Heritage Commission.

Director's Notes *by Jackie Howell*

We are continuing a focus on local church histories in this issue. Did you know we now have 115 active NAB churches that are more than 100 years old? Each congregation has a story of God's work among them over a period of many years. God's faithfulness is evident!

These churches are listed on our web site. These churches have had as many as 5 buildings, multiple relocations and name changes to increase their opportunities to share the gospel. Church stories will be made visible on the web site in the coming months with selected pictures of the church buildings. We welcome contributions to this celebration of God's provisions.

Pictures of the first church featured on page 2 (McDermott Avenue Baptist) buildings are in this column to leave space for its story of 125 years.



CHURCH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

McDermot Ave. Baptist Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

In the early years of this church's history, one winter was so cold and heating costs so high, the choir loft was boarded up to conserve heat. And one winter, services were held in the basement, where three potbellied wood stoves supplied heat and unwelcome smoke. That was during the hard times following World War I.

As far back as 1867, Baptists of eastern Canada were concerned about evangelizing the territory to the West, and sent a missionary, Rev. Alexander McDonald, to Winnipeg to start a church. By 1885 with an ever-increasing number of German immigrants in the area, J. B. Eschermann began a German Sunday School class. It grew rapidly, so by December 31st of 1889, thirty-four of the members formed the church, The First German Church.

By the end of the first World War in 1919, the name was changed to McDermot Ave. Baptist Church. Rev. F. A. Petereit was the pastor who worked so faithfully in his seven and a half years of service that five more mission stations were founded and the Gospel was proclaimed.

The present church building was erected in 1907 and dedicated on February 9, 1908, a large, imposing all-brick Gothic-style structure which was described in the local newspaper as "a credit to the congregation...in the part of the city which many people have been accustomed to think of as uninhabited prairie." .

Through the years the church has given generously to help other sister churches, to establish a Christian boarding house for girls, to begin the NAB Immigration and Colonization Society, to reach out to give hospitality to military families, to host Awana and Ladies' Bible Study groups, and to provide excellent musical programs.

Today at its 125th Anniversary, the church is still giving praise to the Lord for His guidance and unfailing help through the years.

GRACE CHURCH, RACINE, WISCONSIN

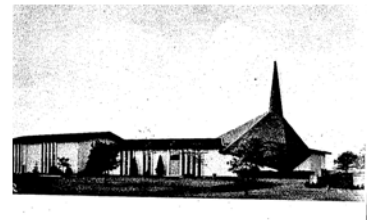
The year was 1854, when 17 German-speaking Christians in Racine decided they should form a church! On December 5th, that is what they did, calling their group the "First German Baptist Church". The Rev. J. Eschmann was their pastor. The city of Racine was only six years old at the time, with a population of 5,000. These 17 "founders" were sure their church would grow — and it did, so after two years, in 1856, they built a small meeting-place — at a cost of \$600!!

They were glad for this building, because until then, they had been meeting in homes, in the Court House, or even in the English Baptist Church. Twenty years later, in 1876, they were able to erect a two-story church building and parsonage at a cost of \$4,000! God continued to bless them with revivals and outreach, so that

they outgrew their second building: a good problem for any church to have, and the members were able to build and dedicate the third building in 1904. The church called itself “The Friendly Church “ and had an important mission statement: “Our MOTTO: Christ first and always! OUR AIM; To lead every person to accept Jesus Christ as Savior”.

The First World War took its toll on the church family, however, with various kinds of persecution because of the church’s name and use of the German language, so the name was changed from *German Baptist* to *Grace Baptist Church*. At first, even with the change, services were conducted in both German and English, with only English being adopted in 1924.

The Lord continued to bless the work by faithful members so that in 1967 once again there was a new church building — at a cost of \$250,000 including the cost of five acres of land. Thirty years later, in 1997 there was ground-breaking for another new building, with the name changing to *Grace Church*. Today the members celebrate the 160th anniversary of the church which ministers to more than 1,200 families of different cultures, quite a change from the 17 people who began it 160 years ago!



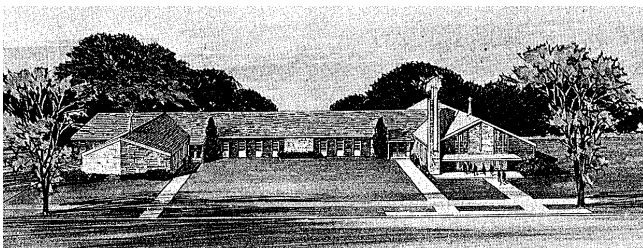
IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, KANKAKEE, ILLINOIS

Ten people! That is the number of people who banded together in 1864 for the purpose of starting what is now the Immanuel Baptist church! On March 12th of that year those ten people organized the church and pledged the amount of \$320 to purchase a chapel which was owned by the Episcopal church. The name they chose: The First German Baptist Church of Kankakee.

Remember, back then in 1864 those were War Days, and yet in spite of that, the church developed with a steady and healthy growth, so that by 1889 the members were able to build a new church at a cost of \$6,000. By 1904 the church was able to build a parsonage.

Various changes took place within the congregation. In 1916 the church voted to change from the traditional single communion chalice to individual cups, not an easy transition for some. And up until 1918 the German language had been used in whole or in part in the carrying on of the Lord’s work, but later the language was changed to English only. Also on January 1, 1918 the church name was changed to *Immanuel Baptist Church*.

By 1923 the members undertook an extensive remodeling project of the church building and this remodeling was carried out well and in a spirit of harmony. By May 1960 church growth made a new building abundantly necessary and this was accomplished. In addition the church reached out with zeal for outreach in support of missionaries.



Now we can look back on 150 years of church life for the Immanuel Baptist Church and give praise to the Lord Who has guided the members through the years and has blessed the church, for His glory.

THE ARMCHAIR TRAVELER *Berneice Westerman*



Thank you for your prayers during the time of my sister's illnesses. Her cancer returned and her mind was not comprehending the situation, but God showed His guidance and inspiration to me through these experiences.

I am learning much more of her valuable living, as friends keep sharing with me all she did and the many ways she helped with the money she gave as gifts. "Lord help me to be faithful by following her example!" Bee

Faithful Servant Louise Westerman goes home

Louise Westerman served as coordinator of volunteers for the Heritage Commission for more than 20 years and also represented the women's work on the Board of Governors. Louise was an encourager and skilled at matching people and tasks to preserve our North American Baptist heritage. She supported and consulted with Bee as she planned priorities in accomplishing goals. Louise provided home-baked refreshments and facilitated fellowship as well as productive work. She blessed all of us.



Louise was born on October 19, 1921 in Corona, South Dakota to parents Harm and Reaka (VanDeest) Westerman. Louise graduated from Lennox, S.D. high school in 1939 after which she began her career with the Northwestern Bell Telephone Company where she was employed for 47 years before retiring in 1986.

Louise exhibited great kindness toward her elderly parents, caring for them until their deaths. She was a long-time member of Hillcrest Church in Sioux Falls and gave of her means to help wherever she could. She did enjoy traveling and one of her destinations on these trips was to visit her sister Berneice, who was a missionary in Cameroon.

We join Louise's siblings, brothers Raymond and Elmer and sister Berniece in missing her quiet, effective ministry and encouragement.

