

ZION EVANGELICAL and REFORMED CHURCH

The origin of Zion Church goes back to 1895, when Mr. Christ Trost, a member of a neighboring church at Trenton, organized an Evangelical Sunday School in New Baden. This Sunday School grew and prospered and soon led to thoughts of organizing a church. The first meeting place of the Sunday School was in a room of the Public School. Prior to this the families had attended church in neighboring towns. During the summer of 1895 a Sunday School picnic was held. The interest continued and in 1898 the church was organized. It was known as the German Evangelical Zion Church. Those serving on the first church board were: Andreas Mueller, president; William Stolz, secretary; Rudolph Hertenstein, treasurer, and Louis Butzow, member.

A plot of ground was purchased and the erection of the church began in August, 1898 and was dedicated December 11th. The Reverend Fritz, pastor of the Summerfield church, was in charge of the dedication. In 1899, the church officially joined the Evangelical Synod of North America, which later became the present Evangelical and Reformed Church. Reverend Fritz and student pastors from the church seminary at Wellston, Missouri, supplied the pulpit until July 16, 1899, when the first full-time pastor was installed, Reverend H. F. Grotefendt. A parsonage was built at this time and still serves as the home for the pastor.

The oldest organization of the church is the Women's Guild, which originated on October 11, 1898. It was known as the Ladies Aid and had 40 church members. This group has contributed much to the building of the church. In 1922 the organization became affiliated with the Ladies Aid Federation and in 1941 became a part of the Women's Guild. The church choir has been active for more than 50 years; at present there are 12 members. The Adult Fellowship Club of the church was founded in 1947.

The church was re-decorated and services were held on the Fiftieth Anniversary. On March 2, 1950 fire broke out in the church hall and spread throughout the church, causing complete ruin to the re-decorated church. The congregation, together with Reverend Harold Behle, began a complete rebuilding program immediately. The rebuilt church was dedicated on June 3, 1951.

The present pastor is Reverend G. F. Brink, who has served since 1953. The church council members are: President Gustav Bassler; Vice-President Harry Krausz; Recording Secretary Raymond Brede; Financial Secretary Raymond Ullrich; Treasurer Oscar J. Mallrich, and Member William Bitterberg.