

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The following story was compiled from the book "From Settlement to City, Brighton, Michigan 1832—1945" by Carol McMacken and the website of St. George Lutheran Church. This book detailing Brighton's early history can be purchased from the Society by contacting Nancy Fredenburg at 517-304-5044.

St. George Lutheran Church

The Evangelical Lutheran St. George's Congregation of Livingston, Michigan was the name chosen by a group of approximately twenty-five families who met on April 23, 1845, in Genoa, for the purpose of forming a church. The Reverend Frederick Schmid, the first Lutheran missionary in Michigan conducted the meeting at which it was determined that the congregation of approximately 100 adults and children, while devout, had barely enough resources to sustain little more than life's most essential necessities.

Religious services were conducted in German and were held in homes, barns, and in the log schoolhouse. Recognizing that money was scarce and that there was a need for a permanent structure that could accommodate the congregation, Dr. E. A. Buck made the journey to his native Germany of obtain the financial resources to build a church. While there he not only received \$600 but he was also presented with a baptismal font, a communion set, a church record, a contribution plate, and a church seal with the imprint of St. George slaying the dragon.

Three years later, Richard Beherns Sr. conveyed two acres of land at the corner of Herbst and Hubert Roads to be used for a church and a cemetery. Louis Dorr, an expert carpenter and joiner, was given the task of constructing a building that measured 25x36x16 ft. at a cost of \$310. Pastor Schmid officiated at the dedication of the new building in 1849, exactly four years after the initial meeting in Genoa.

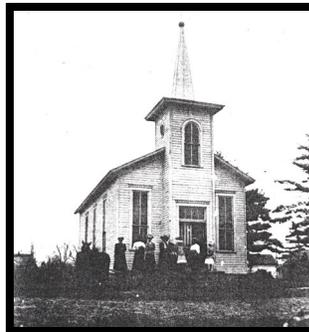
Thirty-four years after the decision had been made to form a religious community, the cornerstone was laid for a new church and a parsonage on three acres at the corner of Crooked Lake and Bauer Roads. The editor of the Brighton paper noted, in June of 1880 that "The Lutheran Society contemplates erecting another church in Brighton. We now

support six churches and still there's room." The church, larger than the previous one, measured 32x50 and was built at a cost of \$2,800.

In January of 1920 there was some talk of moving the church to the village of Brighton. By December of 1921, the elders of the church voted to make the move. The members subscribed \$7,000 for the work. Herman Risch, Oscar Schoenhals and Con Weber went to work on the details of the move. The property of Phillip Conrad was purchased for \$5,000. Conrad's property on the corner of Main and 4th contained a house, occupied at that time by the Roy Newcomb family. The residence was thought to be modern throughout and all agreed that the house would be ideal for a parsonage and the lot would make a prominent site for the church.

In 1922, the Genoa church was dismantled, loaded on wagons and transported to Brighton. It was placed on the newly purchased land. The members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church consented to let the congregation use their church until the Lutheran Church was ready. The Christmas sermon delivered by the Reverend Pastor Swinehart was titled, "The Greatest Christmas Gift." The cornerstone for the church was laid on April 26, 1922.

September 2006, the original pump organ was located and graciously donated to St. George. It can be seen in the library area where it is on display. In 2020, St. George celebrated its 175th anniversary.



St. George c 1880



St. George c2023