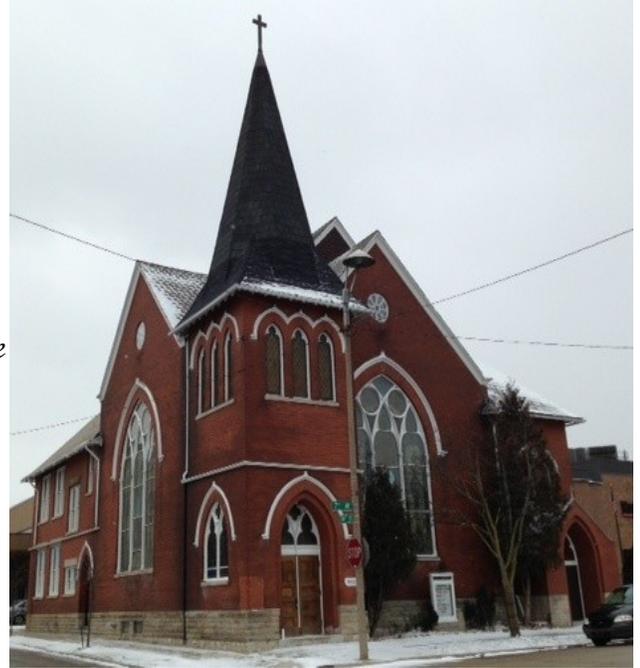


## *A Look Back in Time*

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*The Old First Baptist Church located at 5824 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a contributing property within the Library Park Historic District and is listed as part of the National Register of Historic Places. The Old First Baptist Church is in a mixed-use neighborhood just south of Kenosha's downtown and sits on a large lot that has very little landscaping.*

*Section 15.04 of the City's Zoning Ordinance establishes standards for designating structures and sites as historic and the site or structure must meet at least one of these standards. It was determined that the Old First Baptist Church is architecturally significant under Standards 1 and 3: "exemplifies or reflects the City's...architectural history; or embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen..." The Old First Baptist Church is a fine example of the Gothic Revival architectural style. The Gothic Revival style, originally a mid-nineteenth century architectural style, continued well into the twentieth century for church architecture, and the Old First Baptist Church's Gothic Revival appearance is a good example of this architectural trend. The church has a high level of architectural integrity and is typical of turn-of-the-century church construction. Its historic congregation was one of the first religious groups established in Kenosha and contributed to the social and cultural history of Kenosha.*



*The Old First Baptist Church is a two and one-half story red brick structure built in 1903. The main block of the church features a steeply-pitched multi-gabled roofline that extends into a hipped roof over the two-story north and west wings of the building. There is a square tower at the southeast corner of the building that features a tall tent roof. The main block of the church is punctuated with numerous pointed or gothic-arched window openings, some filled with pictorial stained glass. These openings are decorated with pointed segmental brick arches topped with delicate stone arches. In the square tower, the belfry openings are tripartite gothic-arched openings filled with leaded glass and decorated with arcaded gothic arches. The window openings in the north and west wings of the church are individual or paired single-light, double-hung sashes decorated with flat stone lintels on the first story. The main entrances to the church are in the large square tower and in a projecting entry pavilion at the northeast corner of the main block. These entrances feature paired wood paneled doors topped with gothic-arched transoms and are decorated with segmental brick and stone arches. An entrance along the south wall of the west wing is recessed behind a segmental brick gothic arch. There is also an entrance in the north wall of the building. It is a plain wood paneled door topped with a plain square transom. The entire building sits on a raised cut limestone foundation. Although over 100 years old, the Old First Baptist Church is in good condition with most of its original details intact.*

*The Rev. Jason Lothrop, a Yankee Baptist minister from New York State founded the Old First Baptist Church in 1838, making it one of the earliest religious organizations in Kenosha. The First Baptist Church was an early leader in providing religious and cultural services to Yankee settlers. The first building for the congregation was erected in 1847 or 1849 on this site. A new building was erected in 1880 for the almost 100 members of the church. When this building became fire damaged, it was decided to erect a new structure in 1903, and this is the church building that sits on this site. In 1975, the First Baptist Church merged with the Calvary Baptist Church in 1981, this congregation erected a new building at 3700 47<sup>th</sup> Ave. The Old First Baptist Church building is still being used today by a religious group.*

*The Gothic Revival style was popular in residential construction between 1850 and 1880. Even churches built at the present time often have Gothic Revival influences. The hallmarks of the style in churches include a steeply-pitched roofline, large towers with tall steeples, and many pointed arch openings. The Old First Baptist Church is a good example of the Gothic Revival style because it has all of these features executed in an attractive and well-proportioned manner.*