


FIRST CHURCHES

EARLY CHURCH SERVICES WERE HELD IN PRIVATE HOMES OR SCHOOLS. BY THE EARLY 1850S EFFORTS TO BUILD PERMANENT DENOMINATIONAL BUILDINGS IN THE NEW VILLAGE OF RIPON WERE UNDERWAY.

- People arriving from the eastern United States founded Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal and Congregational churches.
- Then the Irish came to help build the railroad in the 1850's and established a Catholic Church.
- German and Polish settlers began to arrive in 1860, building their own Lutheran, Methodist, and Catholic churches.



First Baptist Church

Built in 1857, the building is located on East Fond du Lac Street. In 1853 it was decided to organize a church and name it First Baptist Church of Ripon. The Baptist Society was legally established in January 1855. The congregation appeared stable but not growing, and it appears the church disbanded sometime in the 1920s. The building is currently the headquarters of the American Legion Post #43.



St. Wenceslaus Church

Established in 1896 at 415 E. Fond du Lac St., to serve Polish and German speaking immigrants, with the current 1907 brick structure replacing an earlier building that burned. It merged into St. Catherine of Siena Parish in 2005, and was decommissioned in 2018.



The First Methodist Church

Methodist services in Ripon were first held in 1844 in the Ceresco settlement and in 1856 a small church was built at Union & Park. A new Methodist congregation formed in Ripon and built at the corner of State & Ransom in 1899. The German Methodist Episcopal Church had organized a German society in 1890 and that year built its own building on the corner of State and Elm. (Above) The two churches merged in the 1930s. The current church resides at Liberty & Elm Streets.



First Evangelical Lutheran Church

Also known as "the whiskey church," in 1864 a group of Prussian immigrants established the congregation amidst the Civil War. The stone church was built in 1865 on Scott St. The congregation was formed amid the growth of Lutheran, Methodist, and Catholic churches for German and Polish settlers in the 1860s. The church later became part of Our Saviour's United Church of Christ in 1965.



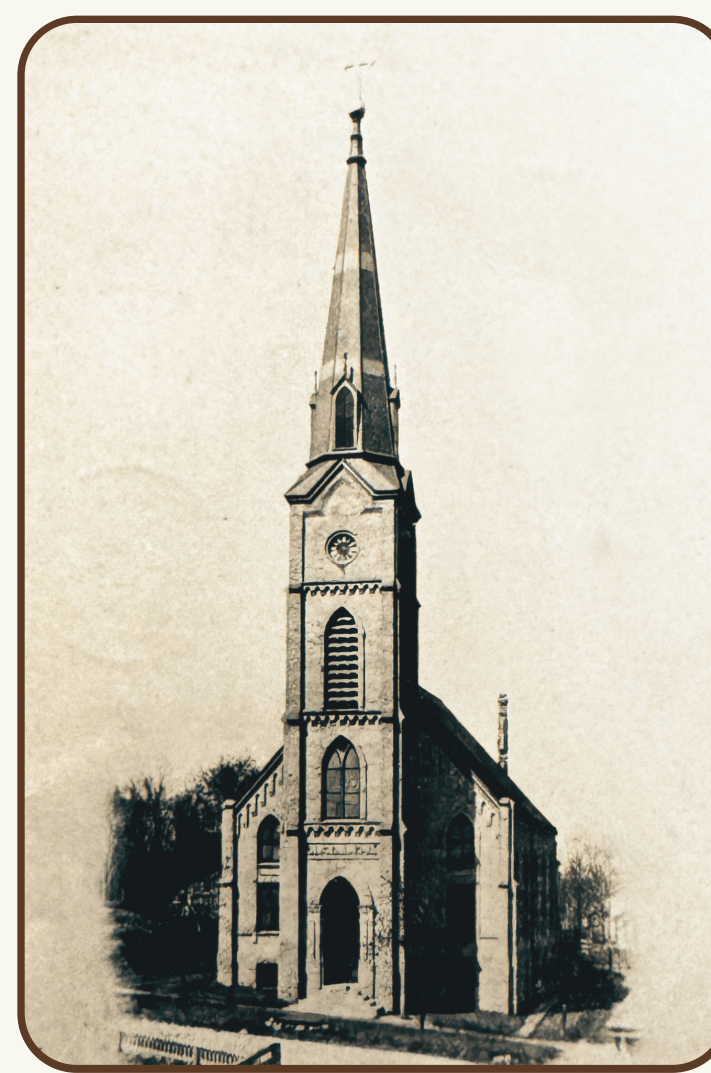
St. Patrick's

Building the railroad brought the Irish by 1856. An acre of land was purchased from John S. Horner in 1856 at the current Oshkosh and Hamburg Street corner. The deed stipulated a church be erected within 2 years. Father Gray, an Irish priest, took charge of the new parish in 1857. The parishioners were poor and money was scarce which caused delays in the building. The building was dedicated in honor of St. Patrick in September 1861. Later, the building was moved to Blossom St, and the church merged into St. Catherine's of Siena.



St. Peter's Episcopal Church

St. Peter's is located at 217 Houston St. It was established in 1860. Originally known as Grace Church, the parish met in a local store until its permanent building was constructed in 1861. In 1865, the parish was renamed St. Peter to honor the dedication of St. Peter Cathedral in Ripon, Yorkshire, England. The church building was built in the American Carpenter Gothic architectural style. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places.



Grace Lutheran Church

In 1866, an anti-alcohol faction of the First Evangelical Lutheran left to form Grace Lutheran Church. The church members bought the old Congregational Church building on College Hill, and in 1888, built a new church on that site.



Congregational Church

Organized in 1850, the Congregational Church is Ripon's oldest continually operating church. In 1850, a meeting was held in the dance hall of Mapes' hotel (present site of City Hall) to form a church which they voted to call "The First Congregational Church of Ceresco" They built their first church on Ransom St., in 1853. The current church building was constructed in 1866-68 just south of the original. (Above: Original church visible in background)

