



# Madison County Genealogical Society



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## Churches in Green Garden Township

Submitted by Charlton Ryan and Tommie Ann Tracy

The **Zion Evangelical Church** was also known as the **Evangelical United Brethren Church**, and also as the **Schmitt Evangelical Church in Green Garden**. It no longer exists. Its cemetery is located 6 ½ miles west of Madison, then 2 miles south, then .1 mile east. It is frequently referred to as the **Schmitt/Rottler Cemetery** and today as the **Zion Evangelical Cemetery**. The church was located across the road to the south of the cemetery. One of the early ministers was Rev. William C. Frey whose son William H. Frey married Johanna "Anna" Schmitt. She was the daughter of Christian Schmitt and Philippina Gabelman who gave the land for the cemetery. The land for the church was sold for a minimal amount by the Daniel Knapp family and reverted back to the family when the church disbanded.

**St. John's Lutheran Church**, founded in 1874, can be seen today in a lovely location with an expansive view of fields on gently rolling hills as its backdrop. Their first pastor was Rev. J. Rupprecht of Christ Lutheran Church in Norfolk. The homes of its earliest members, Philip Scheer, Philip Knapp, Jacob Gabelman, and Mrs. Catherine Knapp, served for meeting places until a church could be constructed. In 1877, with the arrival of Rev. Jacob Hoffman from Kansas and construction of the new building, they held the church's dedication service.

Almost a decade later, the congregation was ready for a new church. They built it and dedicated the second church in 1891, using the older building as a school. About 1909, a choir was organized under the direction of Mr. O. A. Sunderman. A newer school was built in 1916, and the St. John's Lutheran Church we see today is the third church, dedicated 21 October 1924.

The earliest pastors who have served here were: Rev. J. Hoffman (1877-1887); Rev. E. Denninger (1888-1906); Rev. E. Just (1906-1928); and Rev. O. Wehrman (1928-1938).

The St. John's Lutheran Cemetery is located just behind the church, which is 6.5 miles west and 1 ½ miles south of Madison. It is in fine condition and well maintained. Our Society is currently engaged in listing all the graves located there.

**Sources:** Q-125 Book Committee. Images of Yesterday . . . Visions of Tomorrow: 1867-1992. Madison, NE. (1993). 67-68.

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